



Dance Marathon participants get into the swing of things at Mega Ice.
「香港舞動馬拉松」參加者在 Mega Ice溜冰場隨著節拍起舞。

Step off the ice and turn on the heat

Dancers and skaters share the floor as a unique venue brings joy to visitors and hope to others

A leisurely day of shopping is a lovely way to relax and, when the destination is MegaBox in East Kowloon, there's always something more.

On a Saturday this August, shoppers were surprised to find an exciting dance marathon that occupied centre stage for eight hours. Professional dancers took the lead as the crowd joined in. Everyone started moving to the groove as they learned new dance steps – hip hop, jazz, belly dance, Indian dance and more.

Some had come specifically for the dance marathon. Others had been out for a day's shopping when they decided to stay and participate.

They were drawn to a familiar sound – music and laughter emanating from the mall's main arena. Mega Ice is always filled with happy people having fun. But something seemed different this day and, as they looked towards the rink, the shoppers could see a little boy dancing on a stage. He was moonwalking to Michael Jackson's Beat It, while an enthusiastic crowd cheered him on.

Mega Ice is an ice rink – yet on this day, hundreds of people were dancing. A closer look provided the answer. This shopping mall was proving its versatility by providing for two separate activities – skating and dancing – at the same time. In a well-organised arrangement, the rink was divided in two. On one side, skaters were enjoying their weekend activity on the ice; on the other, the venue was hosting the grand finale of the inaugural Hong Kong Dance Marathon.

The innovative idea of Mega Ice as a multifunctional venue has been used with great success before. When the rink, or part of it, is covered with a special layer, it transforms into a surface suitable for all kinds of activity. Previous events have included a winter fashion show, where models wrapped in fur and down looked snug on the ice. Parties, charity events and festivals have all been staged on Mega Ice, the theatre-style design providing maximum exposure. Popular, too, is Theatre on Ice, where children learn figure skating and drama in preparation

for their participation in a gala public performance.

On this day, the purpose was to raise funds for Suicide Prevention Services. This non-governmental organisation befriends people who are suicidal, despairing or in emotional distress, helping to restore their will to live. Supporters felt the best way to raise funds was to organise an event that celebrates life, and thus they formed the idea of a Dance Marathon.

Held on consecutive weekends throughout the summer, the event promoted a positive lifestyle attitude through fun, healthy activity. Two-hour mini-marathons had been held at various locations, but when choosing a venue for the eight-hour grand finale, organisers knew that Mega Ice was perfect. It is cool, naturally well lit, and has the space and facilities to accommodate large gatherings. Most importantly, it is family-oriented, ensuring a good crowd. With expansive windows more than 30 metres high, looking out across Victoria Harbour, the venue also provides spectacular views for dancers and spectators alike.



Above: Mrs Wendy Kwok, founder of Suicide Prevention Services, presents a souvenir to Dance Marathon founder Mr Richard Kwang. Right: Dancers of all ages take part alongside skaters right beside them. 上圖：生命熱線創辦人郭炳湘夫人頒贈紀念品予香港舞動馬拉松創辦人鄺迪熙先生。右圖：各年齡的參加者展露舞蹈才華，和溜冰人士一樣盡興。

The grand finale attracted people of all ages – men, women and children. Some, like the little boy on stage, could dance like Michael Jackson; others were beginners, tentatively learning new steps. But the unifying feature was that they were all having fun, relaxed and carefree, laughing with each other as they moved to the music. They were cherishing life and were happy to know that they were also raising money for a good cause.

Hundreds of dancers were drawn there for a range of reasons.

Angela, 18, was out shopping with her parents when she first saw the dancing being beamed from Video Eye, the giant video screen set high above the mall's main atrium. Intrigued, she followed the sound of music and immediately wanted to join in. "This is so much fun," said a giggling Angela, several hours later.

"I will definitely tell my friends about this marathon, and we will all be back next year."

Nine-year-old Thomas loves to dance. Already a talent competition winner, he had attended every stage of the Dance Marathon. The Michael Jackson lookalike said "MJ is my hero". So when Beat It came on, he was invited on stage to perform his expert moves.

Family groups were there, too. Businessman Kevin Kobayashi, president of Canon Hongkong – one of the Dance Marathon sponsors – was dancing with his wife and three children. He was moved by the positive energy radiating around the arena. "You can really feel it," he said, gazing around at so many happy people all moving in sync. "And it's so hot outside," he added. "We are cool and comfortable in here."

The creation of positive energy was a key driver behind the Dance Marathon. Its aim was to show that, even during low times, there is joy to be found in living, sharing and celebrating. Organisers were so impressed by the response to their initiative, particularly the grand finale, that they plan to make the Hong Kong Dance Marathon an annual charity event. Suicide Prevention Services will continue to be the beneficiary.



冰上勁舞 熱動全城

要享受優哉游哉的購物樂趣，位於東九龍的大型購物商場MegaBox必定能為你帶來更多驚喜。今年8月的一個周末，這裡舉行了一個長達八小時的舞蹈馬拉松，專業舞蹈員帶領群眾嘗試各種新奇舞步，包括hip hop、爵士、肚皮舞及印度舞等。有不少熱愛跳舞的人專程來到MegaBox參加這個活動，而顧客則在購物之餘，被舞台上強勁的音樂節拍深深吸引，駐足旁觀，甚至參與其中。

商場內的溜冰場Mega Ice經常笑聲滿載，那天卻有點不同，所有人的目光均凝聚在場內舞台上的一位小男孩身上。原來他正在模仿天王米高積遜於「Beat It」中的moonwalk舞步，贏得場邊觀眾熱烈的鼓舞助慶。

經過細心策劃及安排，Mega Ice溜冰場那天被一分为二，溜冰愛好者可在場館其中一面繼續享受溜冰的樂趣，而另一半場地則用作舉行首屆「香港舞動馬拉松」之壓軸活動。

Mega Ice乃一個多功能場地，只要把部份或整個溜冰場鋪上特別的覆蓋層，便可變成適合任何活動的場地，劇場式的設計讓四周的觀眾一覽無遺。這裡過往亦曾成功舉辦過不同類型的活動，包括一個由模特兒在冰上展示各種皮草及羽絨時裝的冬季時裝展，以及各式派對、慈善活動及節日慶祝活動等。當中最受歡迎的首推冰上劇場，小朋友可以學習花式溜冰，為他朝作公開演出作好準備。

是次舞蹈馬拉松活動旨在為「生命熱線」籌款，這家非政府機構專為有自殺傾向、感到絕望及情緒受到困擾的人士提供服務，使他們情緒得以舒緩，從而積極面對人生。機構支持者認為籌款的最佳方法莫過於歌頌生命，故想到以舞蹈馬拉松的形式進行。

這個夏天，「香港舞動馬拉松2009」連續於多個周末舉行，以充滿歡樂及健康的形式，宣揚正面的生活態度。長約兩小時的「迷你舞

動馬拉松」曾於不同地點舉行，至於長達八小時的壓軸節目，主辦單位則認為在Mega Ice舉行最適合不過，這裡天然光線充足，地方大而且有足夠設備來舉辦大型活動，商場以家庭客為主，可確保有一定人流。加上高30米的落地大玻璃窗，讓參加者及觀眾都可欣賞迷人的維港景色。

當日的活動吸引不同年齡人士參加，有模仿米高積遜跳得維妙維肖的小朋友，亦有舞蹈的初學者，所有人都樂在其中，手舞足蹈，跟隨音樂節拍起勁舞動，在體會生命的可貴之餘，亦能籌款行善。

數百位參加者都有各自參加的原因。

18歲的Angela與父母來到MegaBox購物，看到商場中庭的電視螢幕播出馬拉松的實況，她便隨著音樂走到台前，更即場參加，一跳便是數小時。Angela興奮雀躍地表示，這項活動實在有新意及有意義，明年一定邀請朋友一同參加。

九歲的Thomas熱愛跳舞，也曾於天才表演中勝出，這次「香港舞動馬拉松2009」的各項活動，他全有參加。他視米高積遜為偶像，更打扮成米高一樣，當「Beat It」的強勁音樂節拍響起，他便應邀上台獻上最拿手的舞步。

此外，亦有不少家庭參與其中。佳能香港有限公司作為是次活動的贊助商，主席兼行政總裁小林一忠先生亦帶同太太及三個兒女一同參加。他表示，看到周遭的人隨著音樂載歌載舞，一同綻放出正能量，令他深受感動。加上當日室外氣溫悶熱，他們得以在冰場上享受涼快的歡樂，實為一大樂事。

舉辦「香港舞動馬拉松」的目的，便是要製造正能量，讓人明白即使遇到低潮，亦可從生活、分享中找尋快樂。是次活動得到各界熱烈響應，壓軸項目的氣氛更被推至高峰，因此，籌辦單位決定以後每年繼續舉辦「香港舞動馬拉松」，為「生命熱線」出一分力。

