



PRESS RELEASE
2 October 2009

FIRST EVER EVENT IN SINGAPORE TO BREAK A TRADITION

SINGAPORE, 2 OCTOBER 2009 – ACRES (Animal Concerns Research and Education Society) is delighted to announce the launch of its unique event “Break The Tradition, Spare The Sharks”, to encourage everyone to break the tradition of consuming shark fins.

Held at The Atrium @ Orchard, this first-of-its-kind 3-day event coincides with World Animal Day and features members of the public breaking shark fin soup bowls. The broken pieces will be used on the spot to create a work of art— a gigantic 15m-long mosaic of a shark along Orchard Road.

An estimated 100 million sharks are killed each year to meet demand for shark fin soup, and Singapore is the world's third-largest shark fin trading centre, according to UN's Food and Agriculture Organization.

“This tradition is not only cruel, it is wasteful and hugely destructive, because when sharks die, the entire marine ecosystem also collapses. It is time for us responsible global citizens to break this tradition” said Mr. Louis Ng, Founder and Executive Director of ACRES.

This weekend, ACRES is encouraging people to symbolically break this habit, by smashing a shark fin soup bowl, sending a message to the world that sharks are more valuable than soup.

“Some things are created perfect but humans and their traditions are fallible. Therefore sometimes we need to break the tradition” said Espn Star Sports presenter Jamie Yeo, who was amongst the eleven celebrities who graced the opening event and pledged to go off shark fin soup, before smashing their soup bowls symbolically.

Samples of an equally costly, cruelty-free, vegan alternative to shark fin soup will be distributed free of charge during the event, courtesy of Fairmont Hotels & Resorts – the only hotel in Singapore who has made a conscious choice to stop serving shark fin soup.

“We believe that we all have a link to our planet, the choices we make and the food we eat should always sustain and benefit the only home we have. The meaningful initiatives and goal of ACRES' event resonates with Fairmont Hotels & Resorts' passion and dedication towards creating a sustainable environment. We support this campaign and hope that it will create much-needed awareness to prevent the further demise of the planet's apex predator - the sharks” said Ian Wilson, General Manager of Fairmont Singapore.

After this weekend, a group of artists will transform the broken pieces into permanent works of art that will be displayed in exhibitions and featured in ACRES' education programmes. Every single bowl will have a second life, as something beautiful and educational instead of something cruel.

“We don't deserve to have a limb cut off and left to bleed to death, so why should they? Shark's fin soup is so passe.” said Melody Chen, TV presenter and actress. Her husband, Randall Tan, agreed, “Traditions aside, how could one stomach shark's fin soup when there is so much cruelty afflicted in producing such a dish? You don't have to condone such practice to gain status.”

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Notes to editors

- The event will be open to the public daily from 10am - 10pm until Sunday (4 October).
- ACRES is a local animal protection charity and Institution of Public Character aimed at fostering respect and compassion for all animals. It currently has more than 18,000 individuals on its supporter database.

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Animal Concerns Research & Education Society