

Donations from Henkel (Malaysia) Sdn. Bhd.



Presentation of cheque

Dr Boon Chai Peng (PPCS, Medical Director) receiving the cheque from Mr Jason Lee (Henkel, General Manager)



3 units of Roho cushions

From Left - Lai Peng; Amarjit Kaur; Mr Jason Lee (General Manager); Ms Wu Yoke Khuan (Quality Manager); Mr Ng Foo Leng (Project Manager)

Another workshop on

“LIVING, GIVING & CARING”

for current & future care-givers

Topics for the day:

- “Caring from the heart”
- “How to care for patients”
- “Dealing with death and dying”
- “How can palliative care change the lives of others”

Target groups:

- (1) Those who want to know about Palliative Care
- (2) Those who want to be volunteers
- (3) Those caring for the elderly, sick or disabled

Date	Saturday, 30 May 2009
Time	9:00 am to 5:00 pm
Venue	Conference Room, Fatimah Hospital, Ipoh
Closing Date for registration	15 May 2009
Speaker	Dr Loh Ee Chin, Lecturer, UMMC
Medium of Communication	Mandarin

For more information, please contact Lai Peng at 05-5464732

ROYAL PATRON:

Duli Yang Teramat Mulia Raja Muda Perak Darul Ridzuan, Raja Dr Nazrin Shah Ibni Sultan Azlan Muhibuddin Shah
DK, DK II (Selangor), DKSA, SPCM, SPTS, SPMP (Perlis), PhD (Harvard)

HONORARY ADVISOR: Dr Rosalie Shaw PSM, MBBS Hons (Monash), FRACMA, FACHPM, BA (Melbourne), BEd (Melbourne), RN, RM

Impressions of Speaker & Participants of Volunteer Training Course

held on 12 & 26 February 2009

Thoughts on Dying Well

It is a great blessing and a privilege to be able to care for the dying as a palliative care volunteer. It provides the volunteer with many insights on death and dying, and hence opportunities to reflect on one's mortality and what one needs to do to die well.

My first encounter of someone dying in pain and anguish was in 1982. I saw my favorite cousin die painfully, both physically and emotionally. She was 33. Palliative care was unknown then. Little did I know then, that the painful memory of her dying would lead me to train as a volunteer in palliative care a decade later. I became a palliative care volunteer in 1993 at the Mary Potter Hospice in Wellington, NZ, having trained as a volunteer there a year earlier. I returned to Ipoh in 1994 and have been with PPCS as a volunteer since its inception in February 1995.

At a recent talk on "Dying, death and bereavement" to new volunteers being trained at PPCS, I asked the volunteers how they would want to die. It was no surprise to hear that all wanted a pain-free peaceful death surrounded by their loved ones. This would be their dream death. Nurse Sumathy who joined in the session said she would choose to die of cancer than a fatal heart attack as it would give her precious time to say goodbye to her family, especially her children. There is much wisdom in her preferred choice.

To realise any dream whether it be a dream home, job, holiday or wedding, one needs to plan and work towards that dream. Dreams remain dreams if no effort is expended. So, what kind of planning and work is required to have a dream death? Also, in today's increasingly



stressful world, dying from cancer is a real possibility. As such, are 'dream deaths' possible for those dying from cancer? Below are some brief personal thoughts.

As a palliative care volunteer, I have seen much emotional pain suffered by the dying. It is almost always the emotional mind pain that does not get resolved unlike physical body pain which can be eased with pain medication and management. I see that when emotional pain is eased, the patient seems to be able to better endure his/her physical pain. However, even when a patient does not suffer body pain, he/she still suffers enormously when there is unresolved mind pain. It has become clearer and clearer to me in recent years, that in order to avoid or minimize mind pain at death's door, we need to train our minds early in life whilst we are still physically well. It is a paradox that whilst we care and train our bodies meticulously for health and physical fitness, we have not done the same for our minds.

Mind training requires a paradigm shift in our thinking and attitude to life. We have to learn to accept and embrace 'death' as part of life. This is needed to lift barriers and open up holistic communication with loved ones. For generations, discussing death or dying has been considered 'pantang', taboo or tempting fate. I have seen how difficult it has been for patients when family members have denied them the space

to talk about their dying and impending deaths or even refuse to let the patients know of their cancer. To die well, death and dying has to be talked about more freely and frequently among family members as an everyday topic way well before any impending deaths in the family.

Next, we need to acknowledge life as an all inclusive package of birth, ageing, sickness, death and loss. With birth, there will be sickness from time to time. There is also ageing and dying every single moment. Each passing moment brings us one moment closer to our death. At some points in life, we will lose loved ones. This is the truth of life and reality. I have seen patients and even family members unable to accept the cancer and impending death, choosing to deny the inevitable, hence suffering in confusion, despair and anguish. When we can accept sickness, death and losing loved ones as inevitable, we no longer live in denial and hence live life more fully.

Finally and most importantly, we need to learn and consistently practice the art of letting go. The inability to let go of being separated from one's loved ones, possessions or past grievances is a cause of much emotional pain and suffering for the dying. Learn to observe the mind now. How at ease is it in letting go of views, possessions, anger or grievances? If there's resistance, train it to be at ease. A mind that is trained to be at ease with what is, will know firstly, how to live at ease whilst alive, and secondly, how to let go with ease when dying. With practice, letting go becomes second nature and becomes a *fait accompli* for the final act. When one can let go completely, there will be complete peace. I believe that this is how we can live and die well with grace. This is how a dream death can be realised, whether from cancer or otherwise.

Judy Chua
Speaker



Impressions of Participants (continued from page 2)

My friend told me about the PPCS talk during lunch one day and without hesitating I said, "OK, I am going." That was brave of me and I was left with a slight nagging feeling. You see, I am one of those unfortunate persons who cannot take death very well. Basically I cry buckets even when it's a total stranger dying.

So, armed with packets of tissues I turned up at the PPCS centre for the first session. It was conducted by Dr Boon. She gave us an insight on what palliative care meant and had many pictures as examples of the different cases they came across. I remember being struck by one particular picture. The patient was very thin, obviously at the last stage but his eyes were clear and bright, he looked directly at the camera with a hint of a smile. I choked back my tears as I felt his courage and serenity. It humbled me.

We discussed death in the next topic with Judy Chua, and what it meant to us individually. Our group was quite forthcoming and Judy was impressed that the majority of us actually had some kind of plan or at least gave it some thought.

The second session started with Guddi Roy giving an in-depth presentation on volunteer training (the important dos and don'ts) and their activities. I appreciated this session for myself personally as it helped me prepare myself mentally for the volunteer programme. And lastly, we had a practical session with S/N Sumathy on changing sheets while there is a patient on a bed. Everyone who attended the talk was open and cooperative and although every session ran for two and a half hours, it did not feel long or boring.

During our last session, a patient's family member who attended as an observer made some personal comments, "Under palliative care, my husband was treated as a real person and not just a number in a long line of patients."

Lee Siew Peng, *Participant*

I have always thought people with compassion and kindness can do any volunteer work. But after I took two sessions of elementary training course at Perak Palliative Care Society, I realize with compassion and kindness are not enough to help people. I need to learn the skill and the right attitude.

Mrs Loo Voon San, *Participant*



STATISTICS OF HOME CARE PROGRAMME (HCP) AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2008

Total no. of patients cared for since June 1995	1,783
Total no of patients cared for year 2008	245
No of home visits by Palliative Care Nurses and volunteer nurses	2,605
Home visits by Doctors (MD & other volunteers)	134
Home visits by Lay Volunteers	44
No. of bereavement visits by Palliative Care Nurses	87
Patient-nurse phone contact during office hours	2,011
Patient-nurse phone contact after office hours	124
No. of patients who borrowed equipment	235
Total mileage covered by Home Care Team	30,690 km
Total patient days	24,547

15th Annual General Meeting goes smoothly

Thursday evening, 19 March 2009, saw the fifteenth Annual General Meeting of the Society. A quorum was achieved by 5:50 pm and the meeting was duly opened by our President, Dr Koh Wai Keat, who thanked those present for their attendance and support of the Society.

Written reports on the year's activities were presented by the President beginning with the President's report, followed by reports from the Treasurer, the Medical Director, the Education and Training Committee, the Human Resource & Development Committee, the CARE Committee, Volunteer Coordinator and the Funding and Appeal Committee. All were duly approved by those present without any questions.

The meeting then considered the audited accounts, which were also approved without question and this was followed by the formal appointment of Messrs Ernst & Young as auditors for Year 2009.

As this was a non-election year for the Main Committee, the business was covered quickly and smoothly and then those present retired to enjoy refreshments.

Lin Hui Yi
Asst. Secretary

DONATIONS received during December 08 - March 2009

Names	RM
DECEMBER (15TH-31ST) 2008	
Mdm Liow Yun Mooi	100.00
Mr Cheng Bah Chye	300.00
Lee Moa Chun	300.00
Chin Chon Peng imo Lee Hean Yin	100.00
Neoh Ho Keat	100.00
Teoh Kok Eng	100.00
DONATION - JANUARY 2009	
Ng Jia Jia imo* Chan Poh Lin	50.00
Syn Yang Leong imo Chan Poh Lin	100.00
Chan Kim Yon	1,000.00
Yip Yow Chooi	300.00
Loh Fon Thye	100.00
Richard Foong Kean Wai	100.00
Foong Beng Lum	100.00
Liew Ee Ling	50.00
Liew Yee Yee	50.00
Chan Yat Lum	100.00
Henkel (M) Sdn. Bhd.	590.00
Dr Kumar a/l Thiagarajah	250.00
Karen Chong Suet Fun	300.00
Peter Chin	100.00
Tham Soo San	300.00
M/S Ooi Eu Chong S/B	300.00
Xin Xie Charitable Group	4,500.00
Foong Mei Fong	100.00
Lee Chee Leong	20.00
CSP Coatings S/B	20.00
Chin Chee Weng	20.00
Poon E-Lin	20.00
Boi Si Wan	20.00
Jane Lee Chooi Chin	20.00
Teo Jyr Shen	20.00
Lim Mei Poh	20.00
Waiko Engineering Works S/B	200.00
Barbara Chan	120.00
Chin Chee Keong	20.00
Gan Pung Leong	20.00
Yeoh William	20.00
Chong Fom Moi	20.00
Lai Hing Wai	20.00
Mak Yeng	20.00
Chuah Seong Boon	20.00
Steven Chiew	20.00
Wong Chee Hua	20.00
Chin Mee Foong	20.00
Bodhi Buddhist Centre	1,240.00
Ng Tee Keat imo Kee Chin Hon	360.00
Chan Lai Yoong	300.00
Shireen Mahendran imo Daisy Koh Wai Sim	500.00
Chin Chon Peng imo Lee Hean Yin	120.00
Stella Choo Ee Leng	500.00
Imo of Mdm Chong Ah Yim	1,000.00
Chin Chun Nyeau	200.00

Names	RM
DONATION - FEBRUARY 2009	
Dr Chang Cheng Chuan	100.00
Chen Soo Wah	20.00
Chen Siang Kee	20.00
Chen Suet Fern	20.00
Chan Kong Ming	100.00
Tan Yoke Yeng	100.00
Lee Wan Cheng	100.00
The Late Mr Lau Bin Keng	500.00
Lai Yun Sang	100.00
The Family of the Late Thomas Yau Yet Sau	560.00
Ling Guat Ling	100.00
Cheong Sang	50.00
Wan Jan Li	10,000.00
Liew Ee Ling	50.00
Liew Yee Yee	50.00
Liew Yee Heng	50.00
Romila Marketing imo Mr Koh Choong	2,000.00
Yeoh Hoe Khew	100.00
Chin Chon Peng imo Lee Hean Yin	200.00
Loke Yeong Weng	50.00
Loke Kit Yooi	50.00
Wong Chiew Kin	60.00
Mdm Lee Tai	100.00
Cheng Kok Sen	100.00
Sin Kwai Lan imo Choo Khoon Yin	60.00
DONATION - MARCH 2009	
Hartini Bt Khiruddin	100.00
Hamdan Bin Saad	100.00
The Late Mr Lau Bin Keng	500.00
Kwan Yee Leong	30.00
Cheong Wai Yue imo Kam Shoo Ching	500.00
Yayasan Teratai	10,000.00
Sawaran Singh	100.00
Chin Chon Peng imo Lee Hean Yin	200.00
Shirley Thean Yoke	100.00
Cheong Sang	50.00
Liew Swee Min	500.00
Denis Goh Ee Kin	100.00
Lee Fook Foon	100.00
Chong Yoke Ling	150.00
Lee Moa Chun	300.00
Wong Loi Fun	100.00
Khafri Alymann Kamarulzaman	1,000.00
Zihanz Alymann Kamarulzaman	1,000.00
Chew Lai Sin imo Khong Khee Kong	100.00
Foo Yuk Wai	100.00
Yeoh Peng Kuan imo Ooi Saw Lean	1,000.00
Lim Feei Feei imo Lim Keng Jew	1,000.00
Sam Sathianathan imo Deborah Moses	100.00
Tan Guan Choo imo Yeap Buan Tee	40.00

*imo = in memory of