

## “Arabian” Experience

I joined PPCS in 2004. In June 2006, I left for Riyadh, Saudi Arabia because I wanted to see a bit of the world.

I arrived in Riyadh in the middle of the hottest month (temp >40°C). I was assigned to the paediatric oncology ward. My team of nurses was from Jordan, Phillipines, South Africa and Syria. It is really sad and sometimes heartbreaking to see small children afflicted by this disease. Fortunately, Saudi Arabia is a rich country which can provide the most amazing and latest equipment, technology and medication to their people. Can these fantastic equipment really help



Wong Shau Mun and her “international” colleagues in Riyadh

a patient??? Each day we try to bring some cheer to these children. There is a playroom in the ward filled with toys and a “play” therapist to play with them.

During the play session, we hope the children can momentarily forget about the pain from their disease, chemotherapy and

multiple invasive investigation. We always celebrate and a party is held whenever a child completes chemotherapy. The nurses are always trying to lighten up by having a good laugh. Truly, laughter is really good medicine.

I appreciate the experience and learnt that no matter how bad life may seem to be, there is always someone out there who is worse off. So be happy, don’t worry and appreciate our lives. Lastly I am really glad to be home in Malaysia.

**Wong Shau Mun**  
Palliative Care Nurse

## PPCS at the 6<sup>th</sup> ASEAN CONFERENCE ON PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

It was a hastily assembled motley crew of volunteers, staff and committee members armed with PPCS “extras” that descended upon the Asean Conference on Primary Health Care (27 and 28 March 2009) at the Impiana Casuarina Hotel. Anyone who cared to or aimlessly wandered in our way was treated to a bombardment of persuasion, just short of coercion, to purchase an “extra” to add to their already fine collection. Truth be told, many of them were great bargains and we managed to sell three fabulous quilts made by our volunteers. I think if we could sell PPCS “extras” in 2 days amounting to \$3000, then we could almost sell anything. Great job, gang! And we welcome anyone out there who has more unneeded things at home to contribute to us!

**Lin Hui Yi**



Sultan Azlan Shah of Perak showing interest



Ms Lin Hui Yi, Community Awareness, Relations & Education (CARE) Chairman



PPCS staff helping out

### ROYAL PATRON:

Duli Yang Teramat Mulia Raja Muda Perak Darul Ridzuan, Raja Dr Nazrin Shah Ibni Sultan Azlan Muhibbuddin 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

# Volunteers' views of "LIVING, GIVING & CARING"

for current and future care-givers workshop

On 30<sup>th</sup> May 2009, Saturday, a group of about 50 people were asked a gruelling question as to why we were not in Jaya Jusco shopping, but instead in the Conference Room in Fatimah Hospital. Some knew their objectives clearly, that is, to learn how to take care of patients who are in their final stage of life while a group of nurses were there simply because they were asked to be there by the hospital! This was the scene of the ice-breaking session with Dr Loh Ee Chin who was there to give us a workshop with the theme "Living, Giving and Caring" in Mandarin.

Dr Loh started the workshop by relating her own experience as a hospice doctor. She recalled how she helped a 17-year old girl with uterus cancer and her family members, to take care of her needs and help her realise her dream of decorating her big house into a garden house. From this, she illustrated the main aspects of caring which is CARE. What is CARE? It is an acronym which means

- C**ommunication
- A**ttitude
- R**espond appropriately
- E**mpathy

It is very important for volunteers to be able to **Communicate** with our patients. How do we communicate? Just lend our ears and listen very attentively and occasionally nodding our heads to show that we are listening. Give patients every opportunity to express their feelings,

anger or frustration. Eye contact is necessary, but most of all, always remember the golden rule, i.e. we must spend 80% of our time listening to the patient and talk only 20% of the time. We should encourage patients to express themselves, and sometimes lead them to respond by asking questions such as "Is it like this?", "How?", "What happened next?", etc. Allow the patients to share their dreams, happiness and outlook. Give them every opportunity to express themselves, help them to realise their dreams, give them hope to live and not wait for death to come knocking on their door.

**Attitude** is another important aspect for volunteers when we give care to patients. The purpose of palliative care is to enhance their quality of life. Therefore, it is our duty to help every patient and not be selective to help only those we like. Dr Loh pointed out that it is the difficult patient who will need our help and love most. As a volunteer, it is a privilege for us to be able to help a person live with dignity and fulfill his/her dreams. Give our blessings in whatever way, be it a long-term or short-term dream and respond appropriately.

**Respond Appropriately** is to respond to the patients' needs or requests in suitable conditions without restraint or reservation. For example, Dr Loh related her experience with a 2-year old boy who had a tumour in his stomach. He gradually learnt to share his favourite raisins and polo mint candies with the nurses in the ward. However, he was still not ready to share his goodies with Dr Loh! One fine day, he offered her after licking the polo mint candy! Dr Loh responded appropriately



Dr Loh Ee Chin

by graciously allowing him to put his polo mint in her mouth.

**Empathy** is not sympathy. Put ourselves in somebody's shoe and try to understand how the patient feels. As Dr Loh pointed out, it is easy in theory but difficult to practise. However, with a compassionate heart and a list of many other attributes such as being caring, patient and trustworthy together with a balanced mind, we must always strive full-heartedly to give our care and concern to those in need. Indeed it is in giving that we receive.

We had a short reflection at the end of the day and I was touched by the nurses' reflections too, i.e. they have learnt a different lesson from the norm. They learnt how to relate to their patients with empathy and had no regrets in coming for the workshop.

With heartfelt thanks, I would like to say a big "thank you" to Dr Loh, Dr Koh, Dr Boon, Nancy, Shau Mun, Guddi Roy and last but not least PPCS for organising the workshop, being so sporting, being with us and helping us to become volunteers to respond appropriately and for all their sacrifices. Three cheers to PPCS and to all those who have worked behind the scenes too. Thank you once again and keep up the good work!

**Wong Koon Yoke**  
Volunteer



Volunteers' views of "Living, Giving & Caring"... (continued from page 2)

Hearing this talk by Dr Loh Ee Chin has enriched my knowledge of palliative care. The insight of palliative care includes:-

- \* Communication - To communicate with patients, we have to listen to the patients. After having spoken, the patient feels at ease and happier. Emotional distress helps and brings quality to patients' lives.
- \* Patients' decisions - We normally expect patients to do what we think, is right for them. We seldom ask what they want. However, whatever decisions the patients may make, we should try our best to carry them out.
- \* Unfulfilled wishes - Last but not least is what the patients' final wishes are in life and try our best to help them fulfill.

We would like to thank Dr Loh Ee Chin for the invaluable knowledge. Thank you.

Linda Kong  
Volunteer

## *A Society Where Care Giving Is Their Business*

The Perak Palliative Care Society (PPCS) organised a jumble sale on Sunday, 14 June 2009. The aim of the sale was to create awareness within the community and to raise funds for the society. Some of the youths from the Wesley Methodist Church Ipoh were called upon to help out with sorting out the items in terms of pricing and so forth. It was indeed a pleasant experience to see that the people of Ipoh continue to be benevolent in supporting a worthy cause. The jumble sale was well patronised by the community. Things that were donated varied from books, clothes, electronics, toys, and jewellery.

For many of us, it was the first time being volunteers in such an event. It was a colourful, inspiring and rewarding experience. At first many of us were doubtful as to its success because people only trickled in slowly at the start, but as the day progressed, more and more people came in. As such it is safe to say that things ran smoothly and a substantial amount was collected in funds.

Money collected from the jumble sale will be used towards providing continuous support for those in need of palliative care, providing them comfort and relief. For us youths, it was indeed a very fulfilling and humbling experience. And the photos speak for themselves.

Methodist Youth Fellowship  
Wesley Methodist Church, Ipoh



# DONATIONS received during April – June 2009

Names	RM
<b>DONATION - APRIL 2009</b>	
Wan Yu Li	2,000.00
Lee Wai Lin *imo Tan Siew Eng	500.00
Leong Moh Kit imo Woo Mee Kom	2,500.00
Chong Li Han imo Au Siew Pheng	500.00
The Late Mr Lau Bin Keng	500.00
Chin Chon Peng imo Lee Hean Yin	150.00
Loke Chee Mun imo Chung Siew Fah	6,000.00
Penny Foong	120.00
<b>DONATION - MAY 2009</b>	
Wan Hoong Cheong	100.00
Ng Choke Kwan	100.00
Loh Siak Yew	100.00
Andrew Chin imo Chin Kap Seng	540.00
Chong Yew Li	1,000.00
Chow Ying Ping	200.00
Leong Chao Seong	10,000.00
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Goh Eng Seng	100.00
Kong Yoke Loong	100.00
Ng Swee Mun	2,000.00
Liew Yew Kong	100.00

Names	RM
Imo Chen Eng Thor	200.00
Chin Chon Peng imo Lee Hean Yin	200.00
Kok Chin Yow	100.00
Datin Annie Chang imo Dr Chang Cheng Chuan	1,000.00
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Khafri Alymann Kamarulzaman	2,000.00
Imo Goh Eng Seng	500.00
Leong Wah Kheong	5,000.00
Tenby World Sdn Bhd	400.00
<b>DONATION - JUNE 2009</b>	
Ramesa a/l Periasamy	100.00
Estate of Tan Kean Hoe	2,000.00
Dato Chan Yew Mun imo Chan Peng Yong	2,000.00
Gill Eye Specialist Centre	1,000.00
Khafri Alymann Kamarulzaman	500.00
Foo Yuk Wai imo Foo Fu Kien	2,000.00
Aren Coomarasamy	100.00
The Late Mr Lau Bin Keng	1,000.00
Lau Tiam Poh	200.00
Dr Chew Swee Seok	200.00
Wendy Yeoh	50.00
Wong Tuck Fook	50.00
Peter Wong Architect	100.00
Narborough Plantations Plc	4,000.00
Riverview Rubber Estates Berhad	6,000.00
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Cheong Wai Yue imo Cheong Tong Man	150.00
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Low Kit Wai	100.00
Lau Joon Hwa imo Kong Sow Mei	500.00
Tan Eng Hye imo Tan Yew Hock	500.00
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Khor Ho Teik imo Ang Poh Eng	500.00
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Ajit Pall Singh Sidhu imo Wariyam Singh	500.00
Inner Wheel Club of Ipoh East, Perak	1,000.00
Promserv Electrical (Perak) Sdn Bhd	500.00
Melidia Alymann Kamarulzaman	1,000.00
Chan Meei Yoong imo Chan Ngan Foong	700.00

\*imo = in memory of



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