When two become one

By Community Engagement Team
Bright Vision Hospital

“I wish to get married!”

This was one of the first things Mdm Chong told Bright Vision Hospital (BVH) staff when she was admitted to the hospital’s palliative care unit.

Mdm Chong, in her early 50s, suffered from an end-stage progressive disease. During her stay in the hospital, her sweet smile, politeness and pleasant personality won the hearts of BVH staff and patients. The enduring love between Mdm Chong and her long-time partner moved many to root for them to get legally married while she still could.

With this in mind, the BVH palliative care team and Mdm Chong’s family worked on a tight timeline to obtain a special marriage licence from the Registry of Marriages. The family and the entire palliative care team pitched in to organise a memorable wedding party.

It all came to fruition on 17 January 2014 as the bride made her way “down the aisle” to BVH’s Sky Café where the marriage was to be solemnised. Family members and BVH staff witnessed the moving ceremony.

The proceedings started with an opening prayer followed by the pastor exhorting both bride and groom to remember their duties and roles in marriage. In light of Mdm Chong’s condition, the couple’s pledge to each other to be “faithful in sickness and in health, in good times and in bad, and in joy as well as in sorrow” was especially apt.

Moving moments aside, the happy couple was in high spirits throughout the entire ceremony. Their families expressed their gratitude to all who attended the nuptials and supported the wedding couple. Mdm Chong was extremely happy that every moment was spent with her beloved family. The delightful afternoon came to a sweet close with tea and delectable macaroons.

As for Mdm Chong, she passed away peacefully a few days after her wedding. Her time spent in BVH has left an indelible mark on those who have known her, and bears out this saying by American author Maya Angelou:

“Love recognises no barriers. It jumps hurdles, leaps fences, penetrates walls to arrive at its destination full of hope.”

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### Calendar of Events

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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| 1 Sep to 1 Dec | **BVH Photography Contest – Passion In our Community (PIC)** by Bright Vision Hospital  
Please contact us at enquiries@bvh.org.sg for all queries about this event. |
| 6 Sep        | **BVH Charity Walk**  
by Bright Vision Hospital  
at Punggol Park  
Please contact us at enquiries@bvh.org.sg for all queries about this event. |
| 6 Sep        | **Operation Theatre 2014: Atlas Unbound**  
by HCA Hospice Care  
at Kallang Theatre  
Registration: ohtefive.wix.com/atlasunbound |
| 6 Sep        | **Metta Charity Run 2014**  
by Metta Hospice Care  
Starting & End Point  
Big Splash, East Coast Park  
Registration: www.metta.org.sg/mettarun2014 |
| 19 to 20 Sep | **Peer Support Training for Volunteer Carers**  
by Assisi Hospice  
For Volunteer Carers. To register, please email Chin Hui at yu_ch@assisihospice.org.sg or call 6461 9358. |
| 19 to 20 Sep | **Clinical and Practical Training for Volunteer Carers**  
by Assisi Hospice  
For Volunteer Carers. To register, please email Chin Hui at yu_ch@assisihospice.org.sg or call 6461 9358. |
| 20 Sep       | **SHC-LCPC Multidisciplinary Palliative Care Forum: Palliative Care for Home-Alone Patients**  
by Agape Methodist Hospice, a community outreach of Methodist Welfare Services  
at HCA Auditorium  
Registration: www.singaporehospice.org.sg |
| 27 Sep       | **Orientation for Volunteer Carers, Volunteers with special skills, and Volunteers in general**  
by Assisi Hospice  
For all volunteers. To register, please email Chin Hui at yu_ch@assisihospice.org.sg or call 6461 9358. |
Don’t miss these upcoming events!

**2 Nov**

**Assisi Hospice Charity Dinner 2014**
by Assisi Hospice

at Pacific Ballroom, Pan Pacific Singapore

To make a donation, please contact us at assisi@assisihospice.org.sg

**28 Nov**

**Christmas Light Up 2014**
by Assisi Hospice

at Assisi Hospice

To make a donation, please contact us at assisi@assisihospice.org.sg

**29 Nov**

**Prostate Cancer Public Forum**
by Singapore Cancer Society

at Mochtar Riady Auditorium @ SMU Admin Building

For more information, call 6421 5804 or email education@singaporecancersociety.org.sg

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**18 Oct**

10.00am – 3.00pm

**End-of-Life Care Roadshow**
by HCA Hospice Care and Nectar Care

at the School of the Arts Concert Hall

For more information, contact us at communications@hcahospicecare.org.sg

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**24 Oct**

12.30pm – 6.00pm

**The Japan Singapore Inter-professional Collaboration Public Forum**
– Redefine Our Golden Years
by Bright Vision Hospital

at The Academia (SGH Campus)

Please contact us at enquiries@bvh.org.sg for all queries about this event.

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**25 Oct**

10.00am – 12.30pm

**HCA-Kang Le Day Care Centre Official Launch**
by HCA Hospice Care

at Blk 2 Marsiling Drive

For more information, contact us at communications@hcahospicecare.org.sg

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**2 Nov**

**Assisi Hospice Charity Dinner 2014**
by Assisi Hospice

at Pacific Ballroom, Pan Pacific Singapore

To make a donation, please contact us at assisi@assisihospice.org.sg

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**28 Nov**

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**Prostate Cancer Public Forum**
by Singapore Cancer Society

at Mochtar Riady Auditorium @ SMU Admin Building

For more information, call 6421 5804 or email education@singaporecancersociety.org.sg
A/Prof Goh is no stranger to the palliative care sector nor to Singapore Cancer Society (SCS). Having dedicated her career to the development and establishment of palliative medicine as a specialty, the fruits of her labour have benefitted many patients and their families who are supported all the way to the very end. It is because of her determined efforts to ensure that everyone who needs palliative care receive it that a range of hospice and hospital palliative services is available to people suffering from life-limiting illnesses today.

A little known fact about this pioneer of the palliative care sector is that SCS was where she and a group of volunteers first started the hospice home care service in the mid-1980s before going on to help establish several palliative care services in the community, including Assisi Hospice, and the largest home care service, HCA Hospice Care.

Since 1996, she has helped develop the Asia Pacific Hospice Palliative Care Network, legally registered in 2001 in Singapore, to support the development of palliative care in the Asia-Pacific region. She currently chairs the organisation. In 1999, she started the Department of Palliative Medicine at National Cancer Centre Singapore, leading to palliative care services being established in all public-sector hospitals in Singapore and palliative care being recognised as a medical sub-specialty in Singapore in 2006.

A/Prof Goh is an internal medicine specialist by training, with a PhD in molecular biology. She currently practises as an accredited specialist in palliative medicine at the Division of Palliative Medicine, National Cancer Centre Singapore.

In April this year, A/Prof Goh returned to SCS as a Visiting Consultant to share her invaluable insights based upon her years of experience in spearheading the growth of the palliative care sector in Singapore.

As a Visiting Consultant to SCS Hospice Services, she provides guidance to the doctors and nurses in field training and offers advice in professional patient consultation and case management. Her expertise and guidance will be pivotal in building the capacity and capabilities of the SCS Hospice Services team.

Apart from A/Prof Goh, SCS currently has two other Visiting Consultants on board, namely, Dr Kok Jaan Yang and Dr Norhisham Main. These specialists in palliative medicine help ensure that the SCS team of doctors and nurses are in tune with the best practices in palliative care. Beyond palliative care, SCS also provides psychosocial services and has a dedicated team of medical social workers and counsellors to provide the necessary psychosocial support to patients at home. There is also a full-time Occupational Therapist who provides home rehabilitation assessment. In addition, patients who are in need of the necessary medical equipment are also able to rent some of these equipment from SCS.

SCS provides holistic hospice care for patients with advanced cancer in the comfort of their own homes. Our Hospice Care team comprises medical and allied health professionals who make regular visits to patients and their families.

With the strengthened team of palliative care professionals and backed by a budget of an estimated $10 million for the next five years, SCS is directing concerted efforts towards the projected growth of its hospice care services so as to continue serving patients better.
Carpe Diem, Nurses!
(Seize the Day, Nurses!)

By David Cheong, Corporate Communications Manager
Dover Park Hospice

They bustle down the corridors of the hospice each day with a cheerful demeanour and a kind greeting. Dressed mostly in “scrubs”, they routinely check in on patients and prepare medication and dressings for wounds. Some nurses are in civvies – after the morning handover and team discussions on the condition of patients, they strap on heavy bags and tug along travel luggage filled with the necessary medication, dressings and other medical supplies before heading off from the hospice to visit patients at their homes.

Watching them attending to patient matters from dawn to dusk, one can’t help but be aware of the heavy burden they carry for patients under their care.

Nurses play a very important role at the hospice, and thankfully, there is a day in the calendar year where we acknowledge their invaluable contributions. On Nurses’ Day, which falls on 1 August, we celebrate with our nurses and honour and thank them for their commitment and dedication to the cause.

Here, we ask our nurses what inspired them to pursue palliative care nursing as a profession, and what drives them:

Hospice Inpatient Nurse
Lee Jing Ru (Staff Nurse)
I’ve always wanted to be a nurse ever since my youth as I enjoy helping people. On one occasion, I was hospitalised due to a high fever. The nurse who took care of me was very caring and this inspired me to take up nursing as my career. I got to know about hospice care when I was doing my degree. I was attached to Dover Park Hospice for a week and saw how the nurses took care of the patients. I was very touched and inspired by the devotion to duty and the respect the nurses had for the patients at their end-of-life stage. This experience made me decide to specialise in palliative care.

I love my job as a nurse and the open nature of the relationship I share with my patients. It is not easy to undertake palliative care, and sometimes I too have to temper my emotions when caring for the patients. Life and death is a process, and I’m honoured to share this journey with patients and their families, and support them. Being a nurse is my passion and I strongly live by the motto of “Do something you like – you’ll never need to work a day in your life”.

About Dover Park Hospice
Dover Park Hospice provides in-residence hospice care as well as 24-hour home care support, to bring comfort, symptom relief and palliative care to patients with advanced illness regardless of age, race or religion, as well as support for grieving families.

Home Care Nurse
Susan Chan (Nurse Clinician)
How I marvel at many of Dr Rosalie Shaw’s (see note) teachings when I took up hospice palliative care. One valuable lesson I have learnt is responding to the question: “Have I made a difference to the patients I’ve visited today?” – this is a constant reminder to myself to stay connected with those I tend to and to be mindful of their needs. Through providing hospice palliative care work, I’ve learnt to stay true to myself and my intention to be honest in my encounters with patients. I find that only then would we be able to see the uniqueness in each person. Each person has a story; a story of their journey.

Our nurses performing the Bagam traditional dance from Myanmar, during the talent competition.

A trio of nurses dressed as Chinese Princesses at the Nurses’ Day celebration held at Dover Park Hospice on July 25, 2014.

Home Care Nurse
Lee Jing Ru (Staff Nurse)
I’ve always wanted to be a nurse ever since my youth as I enjoy helping people. On one occasion, I was hospitalised due to a high fever. The nurse who took care of me was very caring and this inspired me to take up nursing as my career. I got to know about hospice care when I was doing my degree. I was attached to Dover Park Hospice for a week and saw how the nurses took care of the patients. I was very touched and inspired by the devotion to duty and the respect the nurses had for the patients at their end-of-life stage. This experience made me decide to specialise in palliative care.

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Dr Rosalie Shaw, an Australian, was Medical Director of Hospice Care Association (now known as the HCA Hospice Care) from 1992 to 1998; Medical Director of Dover Park Hospice from 1996 to 1998; and Consultant with the Department of Palliative Medicine, National Cancer Centre Singapore from 1999 to January 2010.
In this article, Ms Stella Kew writes about her experience with the Star PALS team of HCA Hospice Care in looking after her daughter. Ms Kew’s daughter was recently judged well enough to be discharged from the Star PALS paediatric palliative care service – the programme’s very first ‘graduate’.

No one should ever believe that palliative care means a dead end for their child; if anything, palliative care should be looked upon as being “a helping hand, a guiding light, and a ready friend”.

Our little girl, Lois, was diagnosed with cerebral palsy when she was born. Because of her delayed development, she needed a nasogastric (NG) tube for feeding, and often fell ill.

That NG tube especially was a huge obstacle for us. We took Lois home when she was three months old, but found it almost impossible to insert the tube. Would you believe that I used to bring Lois all the way to the National University Hospital from our home in the east, just to have the tube inserted?

I didn’t have any choice at that time, because I was afraid of hurting her. The many warnings about what could go wrong made the task so much more stressful.

Then, in December 2012, a host of angels stepped into our lives: Dr Chong Poh Heng, Nurse Lily Li Kejia, Nurse Alice Heng, and later, Nurse Serene Wong and the rest of the Star PALS team. It was so reassuring to know that I could call on them whenever I had any difficulty, and receive guidance and help right away.

The team increased my family’s confidence and ability to handle Lois on our own by sharing their knowledge and expertise with us. Dr Chong was the realistic one who kept us informed on what we should expect because of Lois’s condition, while the nurses were a great source of positivity who would always keep our spirits up and our hopes going.

They didn’t just draw the line at caring for Lois, but also took good care of our whole family. They would shower attention on Angel, Lois’s older sister, during their visits. When they noticed we were especially tired, they would automatically arrange sessions with the MediMinders, who would look after our children so that we could take a much needed break.

The Star PALS team has rejoiced with us during all our joyful moments and shared our triumphs in caring for Lois: seeing her get weaned off the NG tube and begin eating on her own. They were there to watch our mischievous daughter learn to pull Angel’s hair, babble, walk, and now, become Star PALS’s very first ‘graduate’.

Now that Lois is officially discharged from the Star PALS programme, we look forward to her next milestone. We hope she’ll be able to speak soon, with help from the early intervention programme at the Cerebral Palsy Alliance School.

Not surprisingly, I’ve become a great advocate for palliative care and Star PALS. Whenever I meet other parents in a similar situation, I’d immediately start asking, “Have you heard of this service? Have you considered getting help from them?”

That’s how much their services have helped our family.
The musical is the fifth edition of the medical students’ biennial production Operation Theatre (OT5), which is dedicated to raising awareness and funds for different sectors of the social services community.

This year, HCA Hospice Care is fortunate to be selected as OT5’s beneficiary. We spoke to the key leaders in the team: Alex (OT5 Head), Jing Yuan (Dance Head), Ben (Music Head), and Magdalene (Costumes Head).

**HCA: Tell us about your team.**

A: There are members from all cohorts – everyone coming together contributing their talents is the most beautiful part of our working together.

JY: My team of dancers is united by the vision, “To move, to dance, to inspire”. We want to put up a spectacular performance that will touch the hearts of our audiences.

B: We are all passionate musicians with different musical backgrounds. It is our common goal that, with our music, the drama on stage will thoroughly captivate our audience.

**HCA: Why did you select us as your beneficiary?**

A: Palliative care and death are still very much taboo topics in our country. I want to bring about more awareness and generate more discussion of the topic.

M: During our palliative care attachment, we’ve seen how HCA provides medical, financial, social and spiritual support to patients and their families. We felt a need to contribute to this too.

JY: We medical students tend to forget to look beyond the hospital and to recognise the obstacles that patients face at home. HCA addresses these problems and must be supported in its endeavours.

**HCA: What does OT5 mean to you?**

M: OT5 utilises artistic talents and develops creative ideas. Most importantly, the knowledge that we are putting up this production for HCA is an impetus that drives us to work with persistence and enthusiasm. It’s our way of doing a little to give back to society.

JY: To me, being part of a production that is aimed at helping the less fortunate is really meaningful and fulfilling. To be able to do this through dance, which is our passion, is simply wonderful and we hope everyone will support these efforts.

B: OT5 has given me the opportunity to create music that will be performed to the public – and music is nothing if not performed. Knowing that we will be raising funds for charity gives me a unique sense of fulfillment: I can do what I most love – writing and performing music – for a higher well-deserving cause.❤

The Operation Theatre cast started rehearsals in April.
It all started with a pledge from Eilian Lim to help out in the hospice care sector in Singapore after the death of her father-in-law. He had received and benefitted from hospice care before he passed away.

Eilian was very grateful for the kindness that her family had received from hospice care and took steps to show her appreciation.

She suggested an unusual fundraising event – one which combines her childhood passion for Cantonese opera and her wish to do something good for Metta Hospice Care.

Earlier this year, Eilian and her opera teacher, Mr Ling Dong Ming from Sin Ming Sing Cantonese Opera Centre, paid us a visit and sprung on us a lovely surprise. They informed us that Metta Hospice Care Centre had been chosen as the sole beneficiary of a Cantonese opera show they planned to stage. The performance was staged on 5 July 2014 at Kreta Ayer People’s Theatre. All production costs were borne by the producer.

The show titled “宿世情仇 (Entwined Destiny)”, is based on the Buddhist sutra, “The Compassionate Samadhi Water Repentance (三昧水忏法)”. This story was adapted from a Gezai Opera rewritten by local talent Ms Sally Low with the music score by China’s Mr Wen Gan Song. Eilian roped in professional artistes who were also her good friends, namely, Ms Cheng Wing Mui and Mr Pak Wan Long from Hong Kong and Mr Li Jiang Lin and Mr Deng Zhong Ping from mainland China.

The opera played to a packed house. It was exceedingly impressive and well-received.

The event was graced by Guest of Honour, Dr Lily Neo, MP of Tanjong Pagar GRC, who was accompanied by Metta’s very own Executive Director, Venerable Shi Pu En.

At the finale, the performers surprised the audience when they appeared on stage holding lighted lotuses in their hands. The audience responded with well-deserved resounding applause. The funds raised from the performance was a whopping $115,471.

The whole process of putting the show together took Eilian and Sin Ming Sing Cantonese Opera Centre two years to prepare. Metta Hospice Care would like to express our gratitude to Eilian, Mr Ling, Sin Ming Sing Cantonese Opera Centre, donors and volunteers for their magnificent efforts and contributions in staging such a successful concert. It was a night not just to remember but also to treasure.

There are no words that can do justice in describing Eilian as a person. Metta Hospice Care is very fortunate to have met such a remarkably outstanding yet humble partner to work with and who has given us much support and good advice. By her actions and speech, it is clear that she is a very compassionate person who is full of determination to overcome all obstacles to achieve her goals. She was tireless in ensuring that the concert would be a success.

“Every great dream begins with a loving heart.”
Live Well, Leave Well: Singapore Hospice Council continues its community outreach initiatives via collaborations with the various Community Clubs, Residents’ Committee and Family Service Centres.

For more details on the line-up of SHC’s community outreach activities, please visit our website at www.singaporehospice.org.sg

This year marks the 11th year in which Metta Hospice Care worked alongside the Singapore Red Cross, Changi Simei Community Emergency & Engagement Committee and Changi Simei Community Emergency Response Team in a blood donation drive.

What was special about the annual blood donation exercise this year was the participation of a new partner – Changi Simei Indian Activity Executive Committee.

The event was held on 23 June 2014 at Changi Simei Community Club. It was graced by Ms Jessica Tan Soon Neo – MP for East Coast GRC. The exercise was a resounding success with more than 139 donors each walking away with a certificate of appreciation and a memento.

Metta Hospice Care has been actively involved in undertaking corporate social responsibility activities for the community since 2004. ❤
SPCC 2014, chaired by Associate Professor Edward Poon from Ang Mo Kio Thye Hua Kwan Hospital, was the sixth edition of the biennial Singapore Palliative Care Conference organised by Singapore Hospice Council. With the theme of “Building Bridges, Enhancing Care”, the Conference, once again, provided a platform for experts, medical professionals and allied health professionals to converge, learn and share. The Conference continued its multi-disciplinary approach wherein the sessions were crafted to target clinicians, allied health professionals, volunteers and general practitioners.

SPCC 2014 was held at the Singapore Polytechnic Convention Centre at 500 Dover Road, Singapore 139651 from 28-29 June 2014. The two-day pre-conference workshops, of which there were seven, were held on 26 & 27 June 2014 at Tan Tock Seng Hospital’s Annexe 2. The seven pre-Conference workshops conducted were:-

- Palliative Care: Leadership and Teams
  - Rev Dr Peter Speck

- Music and Quality of Life in Palliative Care
  - Dr Cheryl Dileo

- Paediatric Palliative Care
  - Ms Joan Marston

- Education in Palliative Care: St Christopher’s Approach
  - Dr Nigel Sykes

- Nursing Leadership in Palliative Care
  - Prof Margaret O'Connor

- Grief and Bereavement
  - Mr Ivan Woo

- Palliative Care, Public Health and Health Economics
  - Dr Jeremy Lim, Dr Eugene Shum and A/Prof Joanne Yoong

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  - Prof Margaret O'Connor

- Grief and Bereavement
  - Mr Ivan Woo

- Palliative Care, Public Health and Health Economics
  - Dr Jeremy Lim, Dr Eugene Shum and A/Prof Joanne Yoong

Once again, this year’s Guest-of-Honour was Minister for Health, Mr Gan Kim Yong whose speech highlighted the following areas:-

(i) Raising the quality of palliative care

(ii) Enhancing accessibility of palliative care

(iii) Ensuring affordability of palliative care

(iv) MOH’s active collaboration with partners, such as Singapore Hospice Council, to multiply public education efforts

(For the full speech, please refer to http://www.moh.gov.sg/content/moh_web/home/pressRoom/speeches_d/2014/speech-by-mr-gan-kim-yong--minister-for-health--at-singapore-pal.html)
Not a single dry eye by the end of this session on “Paediatric Palliative Care” where Nurse Lily Li (HCA), medical social worker Carolyn Ng and parents of a patient recounted their caregiving journey.

Conference registration: Bustling!
The SPCC has been growing and it is largely thanks to the local delegates. However, this year, we were pleased to see a higher number of foreign delegates which totalled 80 – this is the highest we have recorded thus far. This certainly reflected well on the content and maturity of our scientific programme. A big “Thank You!” to the Scientific Committee of Dr Ong Yew Jin (Scientific Chair) and Dr Yee Choon Meng (Co-Chair). After Singapore, Australia once again accounted for the highest number of delegates with 28 registrations. Other countries from the delegates originated included Hong Kong, Japan, Malaysia, France, India, New Zealand, the Philippines, Cambodia, the USA and even Zambia.

The total number of speakers at this year’s Conference was 49 which included six international faculty members, three of whom (Dr Peter Speck, Dr Nigel Sykes and Professor Margaret O’Connor) were brought in as Distinguished Visitors by the Lien Centre for Palliative Care (LCPC). We thank LCPC for their generous support.

A total of 86 posters and four oral presentations were featured at the Conference. The best oral presentation was awarded to Dr Chetna Malhotra from LCPC for her work entitled “Physicians’ Recommendations, Perceived Roles, Knowledge, and Attitudes Regarding Treatment of Patients with Advanced Serious Illnesses in Singapore” and the winner of the poster presentation was Dr Lo Tong Jen from Dover Park Hospice (Title: An Audit on the Antibiotic Use at the End of Life among Inpatient Hospice Patients – are we contributing to the over-medicalisation of dying?)

To all our delegates, our SPCC 2014 Organizing Committee members, our local and foreign experts cum speakers as well as our wonderful volunteers, a very big “THANK YOU!!” for making this year’s Conference a success. None of this could have happened without your help and support.

See you all the next conference – the ASIA PACIFIC HOSPICE CONFERENCE 2017 – right here in Singapore! Stay tuned! ❤
Kampong Assisi Raised More Than S$1M from Annual Charity Fun Day 2014

By Community Engagement Team
Assisi Hospice

Assisi Hospice held its annual Charity Fun Day on 15 June 2014 at SJI International in Thomson Road. The goal of this community engagement event was to raise $900,000 to meet the operating expenses of hospice and palliative care services.

The event was graced by the Speaker of Parliament, Mdm Halimah Yacob (Guest of Honour), and the Patron of Assisi Hospice, Mdm Ho Ching. Event co-organisers were property group City Developments and integrated facility management company CBM, while SJI International was the gracious venue sponsor. Other event sponsors included Singapore Totalisator Board, Singapore Turf Club, Pan Pacific Singapore, Park Royal Hotel Singapore, People’s Association, Sembcorp Industries, Tung Lok Group and YHS (Singapore).

The event’s theme “Kampong Spirit” played tribute to the strong bonds between the hospice and its various stakeholders – FMDM (Franciscan Missionaries of the Divine Motherhood) sisters, volunteers, sponsors and staff of Assisi Hospice. For more than 40 years, this strong community spirit has helped to sustain the hospice and enable it to continue its mission to care for the lives in its charge.

Charity Fun Day 2014 is a good example of the importance of that “Kampong Spirit” in Assisi Hospice. Prior to the event, 22 churches opened their doors to permit the sale of tickets to the event by the hospice’s staff and volunteers, as well as FMDM sisters. Kind volunteers came to pack and count the tickets, plan the event and source for stall-owners and partners. Most hearteningly, schools, corporate partners and volunteers from all walks of life streamed in to help at the actual event itself – as car park wardens, logistics co-ordinators, performers, stall helpers, emcees, photographers, drivers and general helpers.

Continued on page 14...
About Assisi Hospice

Assisi Hospice, established in 1969 as Assisi Home for the poor and sick, was reconstituted in 2007 to focus on caring for those with life-threatening diseases. It is a Catholic mission hospice that accepts people, from all faiths, traditions and walks of life, who need its services. Assisi Hospice is also the only palliative care provider in Singapore to provide in-patient care, home care and adult day care.

Attended by some 10,000 fair-goers and supporters, Charity Fun Day 2014 was a stupendous event that successfully brought in a total collection of more than $1 million, more than 10% beyond the target! Happily too, Assisi Hospice made many new “kawan”s and supporters.

The Hospice wishes to acknowledge, with grateful thanks, the many generous sponsors and volunteers, staff, the Guest of Honour, our Patron, without whom this event would not have been the resounding success it was.

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HCA Hospice Care’s terminally ill patients don’t journey alone. We’re with them, every step of the way, providing them with free medical and psychosocial help in their homes.

To celebrate this year’s World Hospice & Palliative Care Day (11 October), Dr Tan Poh Kiang, HCA’s President, will be running his own 100k km journey from 10-11 October to raise $100,000 for the patients of HCA Hospice Care.

Be a part of this journey. Donate to our cause at www.hca.org.sg/100k.

Direct your questions to communications@hcahospicecare.org.sg.

Scan here and make a donation at www.hca.org.sg/100k
Make-A-Wish Project

By Tay Jia Sen, Counsellor
Metta Hospice Care

Metta Hospice Care is honoured to receive the support of The Singapore Ireland Fund (TSIF) for its Make-A-Wish project.

Since the Make-A-Wish project was implemented in April this year, we have managed to “make an average of two wishes come true” each month. The wishes of patients included outings, birthday celebrations and helping them to reconnect with family members with whom they have lost touch. It is always heartwarming to see the smiles of the patients and their family members when we organise little events that provide them with some respite from their illness and allow them to celebrate life.

With funding from the TSIF, we were able to help patients enjoy some simple pleasures, which they had missed out on due to the limitations imposed by their medical condition. Oftentimes, the thought that someone cares enough to fulfill their wishes gave them great satisfaction and peace of mind. It is truly enriching to be a part of such experiences.

Established in 2009, TSIF through the good work it has done has deepened the long-established relations between Singapore and Ireland.

About Metta Hospice Care
Set up in June 2000, we are part of the Metta Welfare Association. We offer free home hospice care to the terminally ill of all races and religion. An inter-disciplinary team of doctors, nurses, spiritual advisors and a social worker-cum-counsellor helps our patients live out the last phase of their lives with dignity till the end.

Mdm Mary making a birthday wish.

Mdm Wong fulfilled her wish to eat a meal by the beach.

Mrs Siva celebrating her birthday with Metta Hospice Care staff.

Metta Hospice Care staff with Mdm Mary Tooh, a beneficiary of the Make-A-Wish Project.
Different faiths hold religious sessions at BVH

By Community Engagement Team
Bright Vision Hospital

Spirituality and faith can positively influence the various dimensions of life, including the physical and mental health of elderly patients.

As a community hospital providing holistic care to its patients, Bright Vision Hospital (BVH) has taken steps to provide spiritual and religious support for its Christian and Buddhist inpatients on a regular basis.

Christian patients will now be able to attend religious services held at BVH’s Yen Pei Hall, from 3.00 pm to 4.00 pm every second and fourth Thursday of each month. Led by volunteers of Bethany Church, each service comprises three segments, namely worship, sermon and communion. The services aim to strengthen the participating patients’ faith, as well as uplift their spirits.

The Buddhist services are held on the other two Thursdays of the month, and are run by the Buddha’s Light Association (Singapore), or the Fo Guang Shan Association. During the services, volunteers lead patients in an hour of “blessed chanting”. The serenity of the room allows patients to focus on the chanting, while meditation helps them to relax and achieve emotional balance. Patients will also have the opportunity to interact with one another and share their life stories.

BVH hopes that these forms of spiritual and religious support will enable patients to cope with the stress of their illnesses, and assist in their recovery or lighten their final journey.

About Bright Vision Hospital
Bright Vision Hospital (BVH) is a 318-bed community hospital offering intermediate and long-term care services. BVH provides inpatient services for rehabilitation, palliative, sub-acute and chronic sick patients.

It is a fully integrated hospital that provides a seamless continuum of holistic and quality healthcare, especially to the needy, the sick, and the elderly.
The Retreat that Started It All

By Syameen Koh, Medical Care Officer
Metta Hospice Care

The Hundred Dragons Hall located at Metta’s affiliated Buddha Tooth Relic Temple was filled with well-wishers on the morning of 11 June. Lots of staff and devotees across many of Metta’s affiliate organisations gathered at the temple located at 288 South Bridge Road to wish Venerable Shi Fa Zhao a happy birthday.

The idea that became a reality
During a retreat in 1992 at the Golden Pagoda Buddhist Temple in Tampines, Venerable Shi Fa Zhao had made a vow to provide a hospice service to the community. Two years later in 1994, Metta Welfare Association was established by a group of temple devotees. After much determined efforts, Metta Hospice Care was set up. It started to obtain funding from the Ministry of Health in 2001. Metta Hospice Care, through the guidance of the Singapore Hospice Council (SHC), has continued to play an active role in serving the community’s needs in the area of palliative care. Situated in the HDB heartland, the hospice also supports SHC in the drive to increase awareness of hospice care and services in the community.

An Illuminating Talk on Difficult End-of-Life Care Decisions

By Sumytra Menon, Deputy Director, Policy Analysis & Community Engagement (PACE)
Lien Centre for Palliative Care

Baroness Professor Ilora Finlay was the Lien Centre for Palliative Care (LCPC) Distinguished Guest Speaker on the subject, “Difficult Decisions at the End of Life – International Updates”, at a talk held on 24 April 2014.

Baroness Finlay is a Professor of Palliative Medicine at Cardiff University, a member of the House of Lords where she actively debates on health issues, and the Chairperson of the Implementation Committee for Palliative Care Strategy in Wales.

In her talk, she clarified the differences between withdrawing and withholding treatment, as well as between assisted suicide and euthanasia. She made it clear that withdrawing or withholding treatment is not assisted suicide, but rather allowing the patient to die from the disease. She also explored the problem of collusion between family members and health professionals in the Asian cultural context, and updated the audience on recent developments regarding assisted suicide and euthanasia in other countries.

Eminently qualified to speak on this complex topic, Baroness Finlay mesmerised her 130-strong audience of healthcare professionals with her informative and entertaining talk.
About HCA Hospice Care

Established in 1989, HCA Hospice Care is Singapore’s largest home hospice provider. It also offers a day hospice programme for mobile patients who do not require round-the-clock nursing care. It has a multidisciplinary teams of doctors, nurses, medical social workers and counsellors. Apart from its main facilities at Jalan Tan Tock Seng, HCA Hospice Care operates a day hospice centre and four satellite centres in other parts of Singapore. The satellite centres act as administrative centres and contain a home care showroom.

Kang Le – HCA’s Spanking New Day Hospice

By Community Relations Team
HCA Hospice Care

Flashback – on 4 December 1995, our first and well-loved day hospice centre at Jalan Tan Tock Seng began operations.

Fast forward – on 28 April 2014, almost 19 years later, our second day hospice centre, HCA-Kang Le Day Care Centre, opened its doors to its very first patients in Block 2, Marsiling Drive, #01-21. The centre caters to patients living in Singapore’s northern and western regions.

“There’s definitely a strong need for a day hospice in the location,” HCA Hospice Care Chief Operating Officer, Elizabeth Koh, said. “We have so many patients who reside in those areas.”

Until the opening of HCA-Kang Le Day Care Centre, our first Day Hospice Centre at HCA’s headquarters used to serve patients from all over Singapore. Staff members would drive out in passenger vans in the morning to patients’ homes across the island to transport them safely to the centre, and drive them home in the evening.

The daily commute imposed a strain not only on our staff, but also on patients. The long travel duration particularly for patients residing in the north and the west of Singapore also proved a major dampener on patients’ enthusiasm for visiting the Day Hospice Centre.

HCA aims to resolve these problems through the Kang Le Day Care Centre. The new centre has not only shortened the travel time for patients in the areas it services, but also made operations at the Jalan Tan Tock Seng day hospice much more efficient.

Kang Le will help to support the expected increase in the demand for day hospice care in Singapore in coming years. Based on our research, 25-30 patients will continue to be at the Jalan Tan Tock Seng facility each day. We expect 15-20 patients a day at Kang Le for the next several years. Five staff members currently tend to those at Kang Le compared to eight staff at Jalan Tan Tock Seng.

Operationally, Kang Le runs just like at Jalan Tan Tock Seng. Patients are referred to it by HCA nurses, doctors, and medical social workers. They are kept engaged at the centre with activities as diverse as art and craft, mahjong, karaoke, light exercises and physiotherapy. Patients enjoy the social support of the staff, volunteers, and other patients in similar situations. Volunteer and student visits and performances are regularly scheduled, as are outings to various attractions across Singapore.

The name Kang Le is derived from the Chinese characters 康乐 which mean ‘healthy’ and ‘happy’. It portrays our mission to keep patients with life-limiting and life-threatening illnesses as emotionally, mentally, socially and physically healthy and happy as they can be.

Our day hospice centres serve ambulatory patients. Feel free to contact us at communications@hcahospicecare.org.sg should you have any queries about admission or voluntary work.

Join us at the official opening of HCA-Kang Le Day Care Centre!

Date: 25 October 2014
Time: 10.00am – 12.30pm
Venue: Blk 2, Marsiling Drive, #02-21, S(730002)
THIS is a dessert made out of a vegetable! Made from pumpkin, it is a puree and tastes much like that favourite Teochew yam dessert, ‘Or Nee’.

Except that it is healthier!

There is no lard, it uses low-glycemic gula melaka and since it is made from pumpkin, requires less sweetening. (Gula melaka has a low-glycemic index rating which means it doesn’t cause your blood sugar levels to shoot up)

Indeed how often do we have a sweet made out of a vegetable and without dairy?

This pumpkin puree, topped with a scoop of coconut ice-cream, is as simple as it is tasty.

I merely boil the pumpkin in a syrup sweetened with gula melaka, then mash it into a puree.

You could also sweeten it instead with barley or rice malt syrup, which is less sweet and recommended under the macrobiotic diet, followed by some cancer patients. Find the malt syrups at organic shops.

I then add either lotus seeds or ginkgo nuts that are boiled till tender in the same syrup. Pumpkin seeds if added will add textural interest to the dessert.

Now, the topping is a challenge.

Since dairy is not recommended for cancer patients, you could rely instead on a swirl of coconut milk. Or you could make your own coconut sorbet: that is, a frozen slush made from coconut milk, freshly squeezed if possible. Coconut milk is a good substitute for dairy.

To make the sorbet, you could use an ice-cream machine but you could also churn the icy mixture by hand with either a fork or a blender.

Pumpkin, as with all colourful fruit and vegetables, is full of antioxidants, particularly beta-carotene, fibre, potassium and vitamins A and C and all these must offset the less healthy stuff in the cup!

❤

\[Pumpkin\text{ } Purée\]

\textbf{Pumpkin Purée with Lotus Seeds}  
\textit{(For 4-6)}

500g pumpkin  
3 cups water  
¼ cup gula melaka (palm sugar), broken up. Alter the amount used to your own taste, or even substitute this ingredient with rice or barley malt syrup  
½ tsp. salt  
½ cup lotus seeds (or gingko nuts), available ready peeled  
2 tbsps. pumpkin seeds, for garnish  

\textbf{Method:}

• Using a spoon, remove the seeds and membranes from the pumpkin half. Peel and cut pumpkin into chunks. Leave aside.  
• Place water and gula melaka in a pot and heat till sugar dissolves. Or else use barley or rice malt syrup.  
• Add lotus seeds (or gingko nuts) and cook gently till tender. Strain and reserve separately nuts and syrup.  
• Cook pumpkin pieces in strained syrup, with the salt, till soft.  
• Using a potato masher or a handheld blender, mash pumpkin into a silky puree, together with the remaining syrup.  
• Stir in sweetened lotus seeds to the puree.  
• Serve a dollop of puree, topped with a scoop of coconut sorbet (see recipe below) or just coconut milk. Garnish with pumpkin seeds.

\textbf{Coconut Sorbet}  
\textit{(Makes 4 cups)}

1 cup caster sugar or rice or barley malt syrup  
1 cup water  
2 cups coconut milk  

\textbf{Method:}

• Place sugar and water in a pot and stir over low heat until dissolved. Cool in the fridge.  
• Add coconut milk to the cooled syrup and stir to combine. Pour into an ice-cream machine and churn according to the manufacturer’s instructions until the sorbet is firm. Freeze.  
• Or else freeze mixture in a plastic tub. Remove at intervals to break up ice crystals with a fork.

Sylvia Tan is a cookbook author who writes a fortnightly healthy cooking column in The Straits Times, Mind Your Body supplement on Thursdays. Her healthy recipes are also published in her books, "Taste" and "Eat to Live", available in the bookshops. You can send a message to Sylvia on her Facebook page www.facebook.com/SylviaTanMadAboutFood.
Mdm Ong, who had advanced cancer, fulfilled her wish of seeing her youngest daughter get wed with the help of the Khoo Teck Puat Hospital’s Palliative Care team – before passing away peacefully three days later.

Mdm Ong was admitted to Khoo Teck Puat Hospital (KTPH) in January 2014. While interviewing her, Nurse Clinician Sim Lai Kiow, from the Palliative Care Service, found out that the patient’s daughter Jane (not her real name), would be getting married in February.

Given her many years of nursing experience, Sister Lai Kiow was worried that Mdm Ong might not be able to hold out till then, and suggested that Jane consider bringing forward her wedding and holding it in the hospital instead. After consulting her fiancé and family members, Jane agreed to have the nuptials held on Sunday, 19 January.

However, Mdm Ong’s condition took a turn for the worse confirming Sister Lai Kiow’s worst fears. Intuitively, the latter felt that there was a possibility that the terminally-ill Mdm Ong might not last till 19 January. The family and the Palliative Care team decided to advance the wedding to Friday, 17 January, instead.

On the special day, Mdm Ong was transferred to the Lily Room*. Jane and her groom walked down the “aisle”, which was actually the hospital corridor, in their wedding finery to the room, accompanied by an entourage of relatives and a pastor.

In the presence of a visibly delighted Mdm Ong, the couple exchanged vows and rings, and had their union consecrated by the pastor. Mdm Ong subsequently passed away on 20 January.

“The occasion was very touching and heartwarming. As a mother myself, I can relate to how we want to witness and celebrate the momentous occasions in our children’s lives – graduating from school, getting married and giving birth, etc. For Mdm Ong to finally get to see her daughter get married provided her good closure before she passed on,” said Sister Lai Kiow.

“I am thankful to Sister Lai Kiow and the Palliative Care team for helping to fulfill my mother’s last wish. Mum and I were very close, so my wedding was a very meaningful and memorable event for both of us. She was truly happy and could even crack jokes on that day. It was a special and important closure for her and for myself. I also wish to thank the KTPH’s nurses and doctors for taking such good care of my mum,” said Jane. “I am deeply indebted to them for easing my mum’s way in her final few days.”

*About the Lily Room
The Lily Room is an initiative by KTPH where a room is set aside in both subsidised and private wards for terminally ill patients to live out their last moments peacefully in the company of loved ones. The room is sound-proofed to provide privacy for loved ones to grieve in. There are 10 such rooms in KTPH.