

# ASPAC newsletter

Aug 2022-Feb 2023 Volume 14



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### Our VISION

**"DO EVERYTHING FOR LOVE EVEN THE MOST ORDINARY THINGS"**

With support from our community, we will provide the best compassionate, competent and loving care to all those who suffer from life-threatening illnesses.

### Our MISSION

To empower people to live with dignity and hope whilst coping with illness and loss by providing quality medical care, spiritual and psychosocial support to patients and their families.

### Our CORE VALUES

Honour and Respect the wishes of our patients

Excellence of care

To always serve with Compassion and Love

After six years as a member of the Board and going into a year as the Chairperson, I retire from this position in February 2023. I would like to thank my fellow Board members for their support during my tenure. It has been a wonderful journey and I am so very proud of all that ASPAC has achieved and will continue to achieve in the future!

Dorothy Phang will be succeeding me; taking on the role of Chairperson of the Board of Directors. Together, we will, in the coming weeks work on creating a strategic plan to sustain the efforts that go into giving our patients the best care possible.

Given our limited resources, we will be paying close attention to governance concerns as well as methods and techniques on how ASPAC may better serve the palliative care community.

As palliative care professionals, we reject the cliché ‘nothing more can be done’ as we are aware that there is always more that can be done to soothe and assist the patients and their families. In order to continue advancing palliative care integration in all nations and regions of the world, we declare our support for any initiatives that result in a swift and peaceful resolution of conflicts.

Many have, as a token of appreciation, donated to ASPAC in honour of the care given by our team to either their friend or a loved one. We thank you for your kind support, encouragement, and assistance. These contributions are crucial to the organisation because they show the extent of our influence on patients and their families, who are the ones who matter most.

We value the trust that each and every one of our benefactors, members and supporters have shown in us and our work. We will continually endeavour to improve.

Best wishes

*Madam Ho Sook Harn*

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# ATTACHMENT POSTINGS

We had a couple of doctors, namely, Dr Fadzly bin Baharum and Dr Anesh A/L Govindnair who did attachment at ASPAC. Both doctors had kindly agreed to write about their experiences and thoughts in the articles below.

## By DR FADZLY BIN BAHARUM, HKL

Judging solely by its appearance on the outside, I expected it to be a mundane first day of my week-long attachment at ASPAC. On the street where it is situated, few cars pass by and even fewer people are seen moving about. The house does not look that much different from the other houses on the same street but, it is special.

Assisi Palliative Care Bhd or ASPAC as it is more commonly called, is home to a team of dedicated healthcare staff who, during my four-day attachment, showed me how they made the world a little better for end-of-life patients as well as their loved ones. And, best of all, they do it for free.

As I walked into this small tight-knit organization to introduce myself, I could see a few staff receiving referrals online, working on some paperwork and a couple of doctors and a nurse were discussing a particular case in-depth. In the house itself, some oxygen tanks, medication, syringes, etc. were stored. It was very serene; not chaotic like a normal hospital ward. There were a few bulletins and communiques on multiple boards with bullet point memos and reminders. Very organized indeed.

Every morning, the medical team would carry out clinical case discussions. It was during these discussions that I was made aware of how difficult it was for them to decipher every referral received that contained only short notes and messages. Making this worse is the doctor's poor handwriting or smudged printed paper. I was told that this was not something new or unusual for them. Therefore, they make a point to see the case first hand and then follow-up later if the need arises.

Listening to the case discussions, it gave me an idea of



*Dr Fadzly is seated at the extreme left.*

how close the team are to the family member and caregiver. Whilst we in the hospital are more attentive to the physical symptoms and most probably, reluctant to meet up with the family, they did not hesitate to contact the patient's family or caregiver first thing in the morning. Building a rapport with the family is of paramount importance in this particular field.

I also learned that the medical team are kept motivated through experiential teaching and enlightened by constructive ideas from visiting physicians. (In this highly revered profession, it is understandable that the public's views of the profession may be distorted from time to time. In addition to that, needing to find the meaning in one's life could lead to stress and burn out for some of us. Perseverance without wisdom does not add up; therefore prompt and casual gesture by a senior Consultant could relieve that burden and worry.)

Making home visits with the ASPAC team was a new experience for me. Patients have the autonomy to decide to be at home and that should be respected.

The continuation of medical care from Hospital to Home can succeed without the need of medical technologies and excessive laboratory investigations. In this scenario, clinical skills and medical history are of utmost importance. In the comfort of home, the patient may express his spiritual and other issues not feasible to discuss during hospital admission. Providing reassurance, a listening ear and comfort care are the pillars of this therapeutic intervention.

On the way back from each visit, we do reflect on the patient and our encounters with the family member(s). Many were grateful and look forward to our visits. I do hope that with every little effort and time shared, I was able to lessen the pain and suffering of a patient. Thank you ASPAC, for your generous and warm compassion.

### **By DR ANESH A/L GOVINDNAIR**

I had the most honoured opportunity to take part in an attachment with the palliative care team of Assisi Palliative Care. It was indeed a very eye-opening experience as I tagged along with Dr Teh to make home visits to a few of the patients that require hospice care.

Hospice care includes palliative care for patients who are at advanced stages of diseases, most commonly due to cancer or severe organ impairment such as heart or kidney failure. Treatment for these patients is more for symptom relief and comfort care rather than curative. Many of the patients are at their final stages in life and it is really crucial to provide them whatever comfort from distressing symptoms such as breathlessness and pain.

We had visited 4 patients during this attachment, all from various races, backgrounds and also medical conditions. One thing they all had in common was that they had terminal diagnoses, and the main aim of care was of relieving symptoms.

Dr Teh was very caring and compassionate with her patients, and also communicated well with the patient's family members and primary carers. It is very vital in palliative care to check on the needs and

condition of the primary carers as well, as it can be a very stressful and difficult role to play. It is not easy to watch your spouse, parent or child slowly wither away from what they once were.

We encountered many issues with the patients, such as pain, fever, indigestion and delirium (episodes of sudden behavioural change), but Dr Teh was very adept in managing the symptoms and also explaining to the patients and their carers regarding the management.

As a General Practitioner, I have to admit that I seldom see palliative patients in my day-to-day practice. After this attachment, it made me realise that this is indeed a huge area of healthcare that needs more attention. After all, medicine is not only about diagnosis and treating specific diseases, but it is about holistic care for the patient and also the family members and providing them comfort.

Truly, Palliative Medicine is such an honourable field and kudos to the Assisi Team for doing so well in caring for their patients!

# ASPAC'S ACTIVITIES

## August

A high-tea function entitled “Sharing Ideas and Strength of Community” was organized by Jabatan Agama Islam Selangor (JAIS) in collaboration with Hidayah Centre Foundation where non-Muslim NGOs were also invited to attend. The function was held to express appreciation to the NGOs that had provided assistance during the Covid-19 pandemic and the major floods in Selangor as well as to strengthen good faith between the Muslim and non-Muslim NGOs.

During the sharing session, representatives from ASPAC elaborated on the purpose of palliative care and the services provided by a palliative care centre. It was a good sharing session and a good platform to introduce ASPAC to many who did not know of its existence.



## September

### Mooncake Madness

ASPAC ran their third mooncake fundraising event this year.



To make sure that those early birds do get the first worm, mooncake sales were launched early July, well ahead of the festival.

Sales were brisk from the get-go, and many boxes of the 4-flavoured mooncakes ie pandan, red bean, lotus paste, and lotus paste with a single egg yolk, were scooped up within the month.

This time around we also increased our premium box orders for those preferring only single egg yolk lotus mooncakes to the standard versions. The premium boxes were sold at a higher price than those containing the four flavours. We were pleasantly surprised to see a quick take up of our stocks, and we sold out just as quickly.

Additionally, some donors requested red bean only mooncakes this year. While it was not on our



standard or premium lists, our suppliers were able to accommodate us, and brisk sales did help greatly in our fundraising efforts.

For those who could not pop by ASPAC for a quick chat and a pick-up of their goodies, we sent them out by courier.

For deliveries within the Klang Valley, we were supported, as always, by our volunteers who lent time, effort and good cheer, as they sent out the delectable goodies.

Our grateful thanks to all of you.

# October



**1<sup>st</sup> October 2022** was **World Hospice & Palliative Care Day** which was celebrated at the national level. This was officiated by the Health Minister, YB Khairy Jamaluddin at Hospital Rembau. ASPAC was given a chance to participate and was offered a booth. Many other Palliative Care Units and NGOs from different states were also there.

The Health Minister made a short stop at ASPAC's booth thereby giving us an opportunity to brief him on our services. He expressed his gratefulness and thanked us for the work that we do. We assured him that ASPAC will continue to serve those in need; to the best of our ability.

**11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> October 2022** - ASPAC was invited to set up a booth at Pusat Perubatan Universiti Malaya (PPUM) in conjunction with their celebration of **International Day of Older Persons (IDOP)**. The theme for this year is *“Resilience and Contributions of Older Women”*. It was a productive two days where we had many hospital patients and their families dropping by the booth. The booth was manned by our volunteers.



On **15<sup>th</sup> October 2022**, ASPAC was invited to the Petaling Jaya Old Town Association’s dinner gathering at the Gold Dragon Seafood Restaurant where we were presented with a cheque of RM20,000.



It is indeed heart-warming that we are recognized for our services to the community and above all, we are truly grateful to the Association for their generous support.

## November



We had a small get-together for all our volunteers. The first after a very long time; thanks to Covid. It was a good opportunity for the old and the new volunteers to get to know each other better. At the same time, it turned into a brainstorming session of sorts as they explored fresh new ideas on how to bring ASPAC to the next level. Our supporters and benefactors can look forward to more events coming up in the future.



# December



## A Christmas – New Year Effort

Buoyed by the success of the mooncake fundraising, we focused our energies into ASPAC's very own YES (Year End Sales) for fundraising.

Since Christmas 2022 and Chinese New Year 2023 were barely a month apart, it was decided that we should sell goodies for both festivities, simultaneously – a first for us. That being decided, we set our sights to sourcing for the goodies. We managed to snag La

Manila for our Christmas cakes and those sold off like hot cakes, literally.

Other goodies had to pass muster against a plethora of taste buds, and in time, and with patience, we managed to finalise the other goodies slated for sale. These included pineapple tarts, pork and chicken bakkwa, among others.

Sales started early November and we were happy to note that with all your great support, our Christmas sales sold out early December. By early January, all our Chinese New Year goodies were also sold out, and we were done!

Assisted by well-proven courier services, much of the logistics were handled effectively, and efficiently, by them. Our steadfast and ever ready volunteers also pitched in to help in our deliveries.

With that done and dusted, we turned our sights to the next fundraising project, ASPAC's Fun Fair which was to be held on January 8, 2023. But, that is a story for another day.

**10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> December 2022 –** St Ignatius Church Petaling Jaya had invited ASPAC to set up a booth at their fundraiser.

There, we sold orchids, Christmas cake, pineapple tarts, handmade jute bags with handmade decoupage design, carrying bags and many other items. It was a very encouraging effort and the support from the churchgoers was fantastic.



# January

**8<sup>th</sup> January 2023** - Our charity fair was a welcomed effort to gain exposure for our mission and brought hundreds of well-wishers to our venue. Although the weather forecast predicted rain we were fortunate to have cloud cover throughout the day with no rain.



On that day, we were honoured to have YB Rajiv Rishyakaran, the ADUN for Bukit Gasing tour the fair and ASPAC's premises. YB Rajiv showed much interest regarding our work and assured us of his support.

We sold a variety of food and CNY essentials such as pineapple tarts, many types of cookies, dried Shiitake mushrooms, mandarin oranges, bakkwa and red dates. There were stalls selling popiah, cakes, local delicacies and drinks as well. Other than food, we had a section selling plants, like the lucky bamboo that is considered auspicious for the Chinese New Year. A games stall was also set up for entertainment & fun. All these raised some much needed funds.

Although we did not manage to sell all of the items on the day of the fair, we were fortunate to have kind supporters who came by to the office to buy whatever balance that we had. As such, we were able to clear the unsold stock in the following days after the fair.



## February



**1<sup>st</sup> February 2023** – The Selangor and Federal Territory Gardening Society (SFTGS) organized a Plant Sale event whereby, proceeds from the sales were given to ASPAC. We are deeply grateful to the members of SFTGS and its gardening fraternity for their invaluable support.



## DIGI TEAMBUILDING ACTIVITY

By **ADELINE WOK LI ANNE**, Senior Associate Sustainability

As part of Digi's teambuilding activity in December 2022, Digi employees came together to assemble wheelchairs which were then donated to various non-profit organisations nationwide. One of the beneficiaries was ASPAC.

We were very encouraged and humbled to hear of ASPAC's noble work in providing hospice and palliative care to terminally ill patients at no cost. We hope that the wheelchair donation will benefit the centre and their hard work will benefit many more Malaysians who are in need of this specialized care. Keep inspiring, ASPAC.



# DONATION FORM

NAME

NRIC / PASSPORT NO.

MOBILE NO. / HOME TELEPHONE NO.

EMAIL

ADDRESS

POSTCODE

Please accept my contribution of

RM30  RM60  RM90

Other amount: RM

I would like to contribute regularly as follows

Monthly  Quarterly

Half-yearly  Yearly

Starting from: \_\_\_\_\_ to: \_\_\_\_\_

Month Year Month Year

RM (in numbers):

RM (in words):

## MODE OF PAYMENT

By cheque (Only for single donations.)  
Cheque No: \_\_\_\_\_  
Issuing Bank: \_\_\_\_\_

Bank Transfer (Only for single donations.)

Payee Details:

**ASSISI PALLIATIVE CARE BERHAD**  
**PUBLIC BANK A/C No: 31968057-28**

By Credit Card (Visa/Mastercard)

Credit Card No:

Expiry Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Issuing Bank: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

## DONOR SIGNATURE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I understand that by signing this Direct Debit Authorisation Form, I have read and understood the Terms and Conditions governing this Authorisation as reflected in the next section.

I also agree that my personal data provided is accurate and true, and consent to the collections, disclosure and use of this personal data by Assisi Palliative Care Bhd and its fundraising partners, the purpose of administration of this donation, in accordance with the Personal Data Protection Act 2010.

I consent to be acknowledged in publicity materials such as the annual reports, online platforms and event materials.

## TERMS AND CONDITIONS

### Direct Debit Donor Programme

Processing of the donations and the management of the database and donor communications is outsourced to <company name>. Your full donation will be 100% received by ASPAC. Each year, Assisi Palliative Care Bhd will allocate budget for various fundraising programme which includes Direct Debit Donor Programme, including the administration of this programme

### Donation made by Debit or Credit Card

The first deduction will be made within 7 to 10 working days upon your signed acknowledgement of the Direct Debit Authorisation Form. Assisi Palliative Care Bhd will continue to charge the amount indicated above or the amount authorised by you to be deducted (which may differ from the amount indicated above) to your debit/credit card, so long as there is no change in the name of the cardholder and the debit/credit card number, unless and until the authorisation is terminated by you.

### Cash Donation

This programme DOES NOT allow us to accept cash donations.

### Personal Data

All personal data collected, used and disclosed under this Direct Debit Donor Programme is managed by Assisi Palliative Care Bhd and its fundraising partners, in accordance to the Personal Data Protection Act 2010.

We will use this information in order to:

- > administer your account with us;
- > process donations made by you and orders or applications submitted by you;
- > send you information and call you with regards to our events, programmes, services and fundraising;
- > verify your identity;
- > carry out donor profile analysis and make improvements to our organization's operations;
- > obtain your view or comments about our programmes and services; and
- > help us plan fundraising and/or other activities.

This authorisation will remain in force until terminated by written notice sent to Assisi Palliative Care Bhd, and upon receipt of your revocation in writing to Assisi Palliative Care Bhd or by phone call to Assisi Palliative Care Bhd and acknowledgement of the same.

Upon request, we will provide you access and will correct any error or omission in your personal data. No information, in whole or in part, in its paper or electronic format, will be disclosed, used, modified or reproduced for any other person or organisation, except in connection with these purposes stated.

*Make a pledge today.*

## Be a Friend of ASPAC

**RM30** is the minimum cost borne by us for visiting and treating ONE patient per day.



*Left to Right: ASPAC Counsellor visiting a patient. | Touch Therapy for patient by ASPAC team members. | ASPAC Pet Therapy dog (Arthur) visiting a young patient at home.*

Your kind contribution  
will enable us to continue providing  
quality hospice home care to our patients.

### *About us...*

**Assisi Palliative Care Berhad (ASPAC)** is a charitable, not-for-profit organization that provides hospice-at-home palliative care services covering areas up to 40 km in distance from our centre in Petaling Jaya, Selangor.

The home care team comprises of doctors, nurses, a counsellor and Volunteers and is supported by administrative staff.

We provide FREE care for patients with advanced cancer and for those with progressive non-cancer illnesses e.g end-stage organ failure, etc. Patients are accepted via referrals by the attending doctor.

Our mission is to empower people to live with dignity & hope whilst coping with illness & loss by providing quality medical care, spiritual and psychosocial support.