



ASSISI PALLIATIVE CARE

*Do Everything for Love,  
Even the Most Ordinary Things*

# ASPAC NEWS

July - December 2017

Volume 5

For Free Distribution

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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

# EDITORIAL

10 September 2017 was a memorable day for the team at ASPAC.

We were presented with brand new premises to operate out of by Mr Arthur Chan and his family. The double storey bungalow was stripped to its shell and painstakingly restored over several months to a magnificent building more than twice the size of our previous office. Staff can now work in comfort and there is a large hall for lectures and training on the first floor. Though storage space is never sufficient, it is adequate with a bit of ingenuity. In addition, there is ample public parking across the road which is certainly a bonus.

We are indeed so very blessed and are deeply grateful to Mr Chan and his family for their generosity in presenting us the premises, rent free, given in loving memory of his late wife, Mdm Tan Eng Looi.

We shall certainly strive to do our best to provide the best care possible for our patients with life threatening illnesses.

Many thanks to our medical and administrative Team at ASPAC and volunteers who are doing a great job providing a selfless service to our patients. We also thank all our benefactors for their donations and continual financial support to enable us to provide services free of charge to all our patients.

Dr. Patricia Por  
Chairperson  
Board of Directors

*Note:*

*Dr Lalitha Jeyasingam was on long sabbatical leave from July to December 2017. She will return to helm the next issue of this publication.*

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# NEW PREMISES & HANDOVER



*ASPAC's New Office*



*Mr Chan & family with members of the ASPAC Board*

We received our new premises from Mr Arthur Chan and family in a simple yet meaningful handover ceremony on 10 September 2017. Amongst Mr Chan's guests were many prominent personalities whom we hope will support our cause. It was a night of fun and laughter with lots of good food and meeting of friends.

A million thanks, Mr Chan and family.

We will try our best to live up to your expectations.



*Top and Bottom: Mr Chan handing over the premises & new name plaque to Dr Por*



*L-R: Mr Anthony Skelchy, Puan Sri Chong Eu Ngoh, Toh Puan Hajjah Dr Aishah Ong*



*Guests tucking into the sumptuous spread!*



*Some of the ASPAC staff*

## **Our New Address!**

49, Jalan Railway 1/2  
46000 Petaling Jaya

# ASIA PACIFIC HOSPICE CONFERENCE

by Dr Teh Ee Von

In July, we had the opportunity to attend the 12th Asia Pacific Hospice Conference 2017 held at the Suntec Singapore Convention and Exhibition Centre. Themed "Greater than the Sum of Its Parts", the conference ran from the 26th to 29th of July 2017. Over 80 international speakers contributed to the event, with attendance by over 1,600 delegates from all around the world.



Jointly organised by the Singapore Hospice Council and the Asia Pacific Hospice Palliative Care Network, the programme included lectures, pre-conference workshops and site visits to local hospices and community hospitals involved in palliative care and care of the aged. Experts spoke on a wide range of

topics from advocacy and sustainability to ethics and self-care, while regional leaders briefed the attendees on updates from around the world. There was also a research poster exhibition, attracting over 200 submissions from around the region.

It was an immensely enriching experience for all in attendance. Listening to the experience of people passionate about patient care shows how far palliative care has come, but also reminds us about how much there is to do still. The opportunity to connect and share ideas with colleagues from around the region was also priceless. The Asia Pacific Hospice Conference, held every 2 years, will be hosted next by Surabaya, Indonesia. See you in 2019!



L-R: SN Kong Kam Yong, Dr Patricia Por, Dr Teh Ee Von & SN Masita Tan



The poster competition & exhibition area.



The massive Convention Hall!

# 'THOUGHTS'

by Florence C Fredericks

I stand, with a heavy heart, by your side and see you just lie there.

Unable to do anything but breathe and occasionally open your eyes.

What do you see? Who do you see? What are you thinking?

You are here, but trapped in a motionless body unable to speak; unable to tell me.

How horrible that must feel.

What do you want to say?

Is that anguish, sadness, sorrow that I see in your eyes?

It brings tears to my eyes every time I see that look and I cannot help

My heart goes out to you.

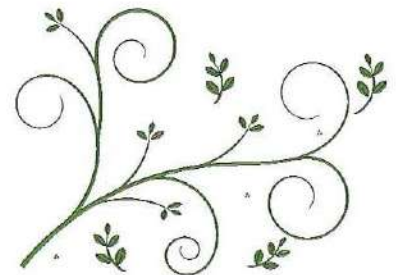
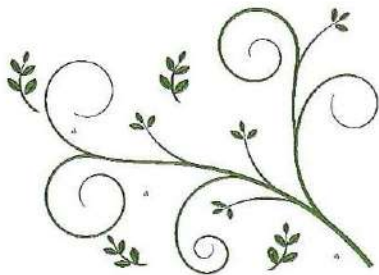
All kinds of emotions, thoughts, go through my head;

Sadness, regret, helplessness, sorrow.

I want it all to end - for your sake and mine.

But, all I can do is hold your hand and stroke your brow, talk and pray,

In the hope that you can hear me and that we both find comfort in that.



*Taking care of my sister, Lucille Ceceilia Fredericks*

# CERTIFICATE COURSE IN INDIA

by Roohini Appanan

Pallium India is a national registered charitable trust formed in 2003 aimed at providing quality palliative care and effective pain relief for patients in India. Dr M R Rajagopal is the Founder and Chairman of Pallium India.

Pallium India works in collaboration with several national and international organisations to improve the accessibility and affordability of pain relief drugs (opioids) and other low cost medicines, to ensure the availability of palliative care services in India and to improve the quality of palliative care services provided by the healthcare and allied health care professionals. In February 2016, Pallium India was accredited by the Social Justice Department of the Government of Kerala.

Facilitators of the training are Dr M R Rajagopal (Founder and Chairman of Pallium India), Dr Biju Raghavan (Consultant Pain & Palliative Medicine, KIMS Cancer Centre,



Trivandrum), Dr C Baburaj (MBBS, DNB Anesth, DA, BCCPM Additional Professor of Anesthesiology Pain & Palliative Physician, Government Medical College, Kollam National Faculty,

Indian Association of Palliative Care) and doctors and staff from Pallium India.

The training included lectures, discussions, role playing and 'hands-on' Basic Skills training, reflective learning, assignments, topic presentation, model exam, case study, clinical posting include inpatient posting, exam, viva and practical tests. The video presentation and library sessions were held at the Pallium India library room. In addition, practical skills training by facilitators were conducted, using a video link and training tools. All the materials for the training were in English as well as all the discussions and lectures.



*Skills Training*



The topics covered in lectures and discussions included introduction to palliative care, types of pain and management, WHO ladder, gastrointestinal symptoms, oral care, communication, wound management, lymphedema management, home care management, care of bedbound, nursing care plan, bowel management (constipation), end of life care, adjuvants, subcutaneous injection and fluids, psychosocial assessment, interaction with volunteers, grief and bereavement, colostomy care, spirituality, anger management, collusion, delirium and team responsibility and organization of health care facilities, record keeping, monitoring and evaluation on quality of care.

The participants were divided into groups for case discussions and case presentation as well as develop action plans. Recommendations were made by the participants on the next steps after training. An evaluation done at the end of the training each day, scored the participants opinion of the training tools, and evaluation for the speakers.



*Presentation*

My attendance at the training at Pallium India from 6 September - 17 October 2017 was a wonderful experience. I learned a lot from other members from various parts of India regarding their workplace's setup and management. Clinical posting was the most memorable experience. Travel time to reach the place for home visits takes about 1 to 1 ½ hours. The roads were the challenging part and the houses were deep in the forest. To reach the patient's house we needed to walk by foot and that took us 5 to 10 minutes.



*Clinical Posting*



Overall, the training was a great experience as I learned about a different culture, management and learning points.



*Receiving the certificate from Pallium India upon successfully completing the training.*



*Outing day to Kanyakumari which was included in the training schedule. Organized by Pallium India. All expenses were borne by the participants.*



*World Palliative Care Day Celebrations on 14 October 2017*

“ THOSE WHO HAVE THE STRENGTH AND THE LOVE TO SIT WITH A DYING PATIENT IN THE SILENCE THAT GOES BEYOND WORDS WILL KNOW THAT THIS MOMENT IS NEITHER FRIGHTENING NOR PAINFUL, BUT A PEACEFUL CESSATION OF THE FUNCTIONING OF THE BODY. ”

ELISABETH KUBLER-ROSS

# MEMORIAL DAY 2017

[In conjunction with World Hospice & Palliative Care Day on 14 October 2017]

## 'The Work of ASPAC' by Lena Khaw

My family and I were invited to a Memorial Service (2017) by ASPAC (Assisi Palliative Care) in PJ recently for all whom they had cared for in the last 12 months and who had passed on. It was to celebrate the lives lived by our loved ones. ASPAC had cared for my mother for about 4 months before she passed on 21 December 2016.

The service was one of multi-faith where prayers were said by a representative of the Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist and Christian faiths. What struck me was that there was a common sharing of grief and memories of our loved ones which knew no barriers of the different faiths practised or the varied backgrounds we came from. We had all suffered the same pain, helplessness and frustration of caring for a loved one. But on this day, all of us came together and lit candles for our loved ones who had just passed on, put



flowers against the framed photographs we were told to bring, and laid plucked flowers in a big dish of water in the middle of a long table. Then video clips of the deceased were flashed onto the screen. It was a ceremony to say goodbye and to help us to let go, to help us move on with our lives.

Next, children and spouses came up to share the memories of what their loved ones went through, and what they themselves as caregivers went through. A Muslim doctor lost

both his 2 parents to cancer, and thanked AsPaC for the palliative care that was provided. A Hindu spoke of the care given to his brother in the final stages of colon cancer. Another man gave his testimony in Malay, recalling the beautiful loving memories of his late wife in an emotionally-choked voice, and spoke of the gratitude he had for AsPaC in giving care to his wife faithfully. Yet another got up spontaneously to thank the ASPAC staff for the gentle loving care they unfailingly devoted to her mother.

The memorial service climaxed in family members writing farewell messages to the ones they lost on cards and then tying them onto helium-filled balloons that were released together at an empty lot in front of the ASPAC building. A bountiful lunch then awaited the guests.



Thank you so very much ASPAC for being there when we needed you, for being so understanding in our suffering, and for showing so much love and mercy to our loved ones in their last days, for giving them dignity in dying with such good quality care. As stated in the invitation card to the Memorial Service:

*Death leaves a heartache no one can heal,  
Love leaves a memory no one can steal.*

Thank you ASPAC for taking the trouble to organise this memorial service for all of us, irrespective of race, creed, faith or colour. It was truly a moving service.

# UTAR MEDICAL STUDENTS' ATTACHMENT



*Second group of UTAR 4th year medical students with our team  
on 14 December 2017*

In December 2017, we had the opportunity to host eight 4th year medical students from UTAR who were doing their family medicine posting. The posting involved a segment on palliative care, and they were interested to have a 1-day attachment with ASPAC to be exposed to what community palliative care was all about.

We hosted four students each day for the two days, and each student was assigned to a palliative nurse. They joined our case discussions, and followed us on home visits to experience first-hand how community palliative care can help the patients. The students were well received by the patients, and the students themselves enjoyed the experience tremendously.

We hope that they will continue developing the knowledge that they have gained with us, and be able to give good quality palliative care in their future work.

by Dr Teh Ee Von

“ WHEN SOMEONE IS GOING  
THROUGH A STORM,  
YOUR SILENT PRESENCE  
IS MORE POWERFUL  
THAN A MILLION EMPTY WORDS. ”

THEMA DAVIS

# APPRECIATION

A Christmas/end-of-year party was held for all the staff and volunteers of ASPAC in appreciation of their hardwork. For the third year running, our benefactor, Mr Ho Kong Fatt, generously sponsored the party.

Thank you, Mr Ho, for your support. The staff and volunteers greatly appreciate your kindness.



*Staff and volunteers enjoying*

*themselves at the party.*



*Some of the Board members*



# NEW STAFF



## Patricia Nilsson

Patricia joined us as Administrative Clerk on 2 October 2017. She had previously worked in the Reservation and Inventory Management departments of Malaysia Airlines for 34 years.

She feels very touched to be working in ASPAC as she is able to meet many caring people especially the doctors, nurses and volunteers as well as many others.

She is currently learning basic sign language taught by volunteers of Catholic Ministry for the deaf.

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## DONATIONS ARE APPRECIATED!

### *Be A Friend of ASPAC*

*We depend entirely on the generous hearts of benefactors to sustain us financially.  
Please help us help others. Be a Friend of ASPAC.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please accept my contribution of: RM \_\_\_\_\_

A. By cheque attached (No. \_\_\_\_\_)

*Please make cheque payable to ASSISI PALLIATIVE CARE BHD  
Cheque to be posted to 49, Jalan Railway 1/2, 46000 Petaling Jaya, Selangor.*

B. Via direct remittance to ASSISI PALLIATIVE CARE BHD  
(Public Bank A/C No: 3-1968057-28)

*To receive an Official Receipt, please fax or scan the bank-in slip or IBG transaction receipt to  
Fax No. 03-77838899 or Email: info@aspac.my  
with details such as name of donor and mailing address.*