

## **HOSPICE BULLETIN**

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### **Front page**

### **RELAY FOR LIFE PENANG – FIGHTING CANCER TOGETHER OVER THE YEARS**

#### **- REFLECTIONS**

**By Mui Siew Koon, Chairman of Survivors**

RELAY FOR LIFE was initiated in 1985 by a volunteer of the American Cancer Society, Dr Gordon Klatt. This activity was then adopted by the ACS to spread cancer awareness and to raise funds for the fight against cancer. Now this event is organized in practically every big city in the US, and in more than 30 countries in the world.

We in Penang have been privileged to have been the first cancer society in the country to be accorded the franchise. We organized the first relay in 2005 and we would be organizing the 13th relay later this year. The relay has become our annual signature fun and fund activity.

We have been fortunate to have had very dedicated and inspiring chairmen all this while. Dato' Seri Dr T. Devaraj was excellent and so were Mr James Lochhead, Dr Prema Devaraj and Ms Poh Lerk Shih. We had very devoted volunteers and staff members to attend to the details, especially in areas of team recruitment, donations, food, logistics, security, etc

Taman Perbandaran Pulau Pinang (formerly known as Youth Park) has been our venue all this while. We thank MPPP for this favour enabling the relay to be held amidst fresh air and beautiful greenery, with no shortage of parking spaces.

For the past 12 years, we have treated our cancer survivors who registered and checked-in very well. Registration was free. Every survivor has been given a special T-shirt (different from the participants' standard purple T-shirts), a certificate of participation, a welcome drink, cake, vouchers enabling them to various privileges. We even gave out cash vouchers until last year when our funds ran low. Among the privileges given in the past were neck and shoulder massages, hand massages, henna painting, make-up, photo shoot, hawker food, bulletins, fans, bookmarks.

Cancer survivors have the privilege of walking the first lap under their own banner accompanied by the VIP of the day, like TYT Yang Dipertua Negeri Pulau Pinang, or the Chief Minister or an ADUN, cheered by thousands of participants lining the outside of the 400meter track.

The special treatment to survivors is because we fully understand the plight they have gone through. We are happy that they have come out would help to dispel the social stigma associated with the disease.

In the first year, in 2005, we had 40 cancer survivors with us. In 2016 we had 278, local as well as from outstation. We are indeed very grateful that we have succeeded in drawing more survivors out to the open. We have succeeded to a certain extent to help more to come out and be an inspiration to others. After all cancer is a disease, just like heart disease or diabetes.

Another feature we have practiced all his while is the luminaria ceremony - a quiet, solemn half-hour candle-light event with a minute's silence as a mark of solidarity to those who are battling cancer and as a mark of respect to those who lost the battle, followed by soft music, sharing and relevant poetry appreciation and finally a candle-light lap, before lights are turned on again.

Yet another feature we have been practicing is giving survivors the platform to share their cancer journey with all present either at the launch or at the relay itself. We also encourage survivors to show their talent in dancing, singing, in performing catwalks. The aim is twofold: encouraging survivors to live the normal life they were used to and to give inspiration to others who might be in the state of depression.

All these years, the relay has been family-based, with activities for the old and young. There are quizzes, medical-related exhibitions / check -ups, lucky draws / dips, various types of friendly competitions, tug -of – war, entertainment by clowns, and, of course, plenty of food .

We have to confess that at the first few relays, our net income reached our target. In recent years our collections have dwindled drastically. Amongst the problems we are facing are the challenging economy of the country, resulting in rising operational costs, some political issues, implications brought about by GST, the competitive presence of myriads of NGOs all vying for funds for their respective projects and the waning enthusiasm of the public.

This year, we are heeding the suggestion to have a change of venue to add freshness to the event. We thank Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) for allowing us the use of their green and tranquil grounds for the two days. We sincerely hope that we would be able to attract more participation from the community, more sponsors and donors, more volunteers, more survivors, making the relay another occasion to be remembered.

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**HAPPENINGS**

**CARERS' MEETINGS – Penang Island**

Venue : Rumah Hospis Pulau Pinang  
Day : Every Friday  
Time : 0900 – 1100

**MONTHLY MEETING/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

A monthly meeting with doctors and nurses of Penang Hospice Society is held on the first Friday of the month from 9am to 1pm. Palliative care nurses present a new medical topic at every meeting. The topics covered in July and August were: "Motor Neuron Disease" and "Marfan syndrome".

**Visit by Department of Nursing, Tzu Chi College of Technology, Taiwan**

**20 July 2017**

5 students from Tzu Chi College of Technology, Taiwan spent a day with our Palliative Care Nurses to improve their knowledge of palliative care and patient management in a home set up. Before they set off to the homes of our home programme patients, they were briefed by Dr Oo Khaik Cheang - Hon. Secretary and Madam Mui Siew Koon – executive of Penang Hospice Society about it's free community service "Hospice-at-Home-Programme".



**Coping with Loss and Grief**

**16 August 2017**

The annual one day workshop was facilitated by Dr Lai Fong Hwa – Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist & Cognitive Behavioural Therapist and Ms Priscilla Ho – Creative Arts & Play Therapist on 16 August at Rumah Hospis Pulau Pinang. This workshop provided participants with an understanding about the different theories and models relating to grief and loss. It included an overview of reactions to bereavement. 20 participants from hospice organisations as well as public and private hospitals attended this workshop.



## **46<sup>th</sup> Joint Clinical Meeting of Hospice Groups**

**22 August 2017**

The quarterly joint clinical meeting of hospice groups was hosted by the Charis Hospis at 3pm, on Tuesday 22 August 2017. The sharing session was well attended by hospice health care providers from Penang Hospice Society, Pure Lotus Hospice of Compassion, Palliative Care Unit of Hospital Bukit Mertajam, Mount Miriam Cancer Hospital and Palliative Care Unit of Hospital Pulau Pinang. The topic of discussion was "Challenges in providing holistic care for patient with an advanced disease". The presentation of two cases was done by Charis Hospice's Palliative Care Nurse Leong Poh Mun and Palliative Care Nurse Choke Ann Ann of Penang Hospice Society.



## **Caring Skills for Nurses**

**16 October 2017**

Care in the home of patients by health professionals such as nurses require multiple skills and often multi-tasking during home visits. Patient centred care like this will also require good communication with the patient and family along with an understanding of cultural issues that may arise and impart management. Thus the participants will be given the opportunity of seeing how good care can be given in a home setting. As places are limited to 25 for effective learning and sharing, please apply soon. This halfday workshop will be facilitated by Dato' Seri Dr T Devaraj – CEO/Medical Director of Penang Hospice Society, Dr Regina – Palliative Care Physician, Ms Gan Mee Fuan – Retired Nurse Tutor and Ms Doreen Teh - Psychologist & Secretary of Penang Association of Counselling & Psychology

## **Announcement**

We are happy to announce that Palliative Care Nurse Subaahsini Selvarajan has successfully completed the one year "Advanced Diploma in Palliative Care 2016-2017" course with the Ministry of Health at Kolej Sains Kesihatan Bersekutu Sultan Azlan Shah.

### LAUNCH OF RELAY FOR LIFE PENANG 2017 – FIGHTING CANCER TOGETHER

The launch was held on Wednesday 26 July 2017 at 12.30 pm in Rumah Tetamu, USM in the presence of 60 sponsors and guests.

First to speak at the launch was the Chairman of National Cancer Society of Malaysia, Penang Branch Dato' Seri Dr T. Devaraj, who is also the Chairman of this year's relay.

Pn Sukhveer Kaur spoke briefly on the event and the "GO GREEN" campaign, followed by the presentation of a skit on the importance of protection of the environment by our young volunteers.

The launch was officiated by Professor Dr Abdul Rahman Mohamed, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Industry and Community Network, representing the Vice Chancellor Professor Datuk Dr Asma Ismail, followed by cake cutting.



The guests present



Dato' Seri Dr T. Devaraj addressing the gathering



Pn Sukhveer speaking



Deputy VC launching the relay



Cake cutting ceremony



Group photo



The annual Novemberjazz charity dinner & show fundraiser organised by Penang Hospice Society is back again this year, 7.30pm Thursday 9 November 2017 at the Grandballroom of E&O Hotel Penang. Do come and have a good time and for a good cause.



# NOVEMBER JAZZ

## Charity Dinner Show

*In Aid of Penang Hospice Society*

### Grandballroom

### Eastern & Oriental Hotel Penang

10, Lebuhr Farquhar, 10200 Penang

7.30pm Thursday | 9 November 2017 | (pre dinner cocktail - 7:00pm)

Performance by :

**Dr. Carlvn Lee,**  
*a classical musician skilled at vocals and piano*

and

**Mr. Daniel Chan,** *a talented Saxophonist*

For enquiries and reservations, please contact:  
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The Penang Diocese Catholic Church organised a one day volunteering programme for young adults (campus ministry - undergraduates from Malaysian Universities) on the 24<sup>th</sup> of June at Penag Hospice Society. Over 40 1500 students and teachers participated in the programme. They spent the entire day cleaning up the office and its surrounding.



The Methodist Boys School has been always very supportive towards Penang Hospice Society. The students often come by to help clean up. On 6 July, 30 students came over after school and spent two hours sweeping and cleaning the compound.



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Mrs Chu, can you advise if we can put in some worthwhile articles. I don't have anything else up my sleeves...