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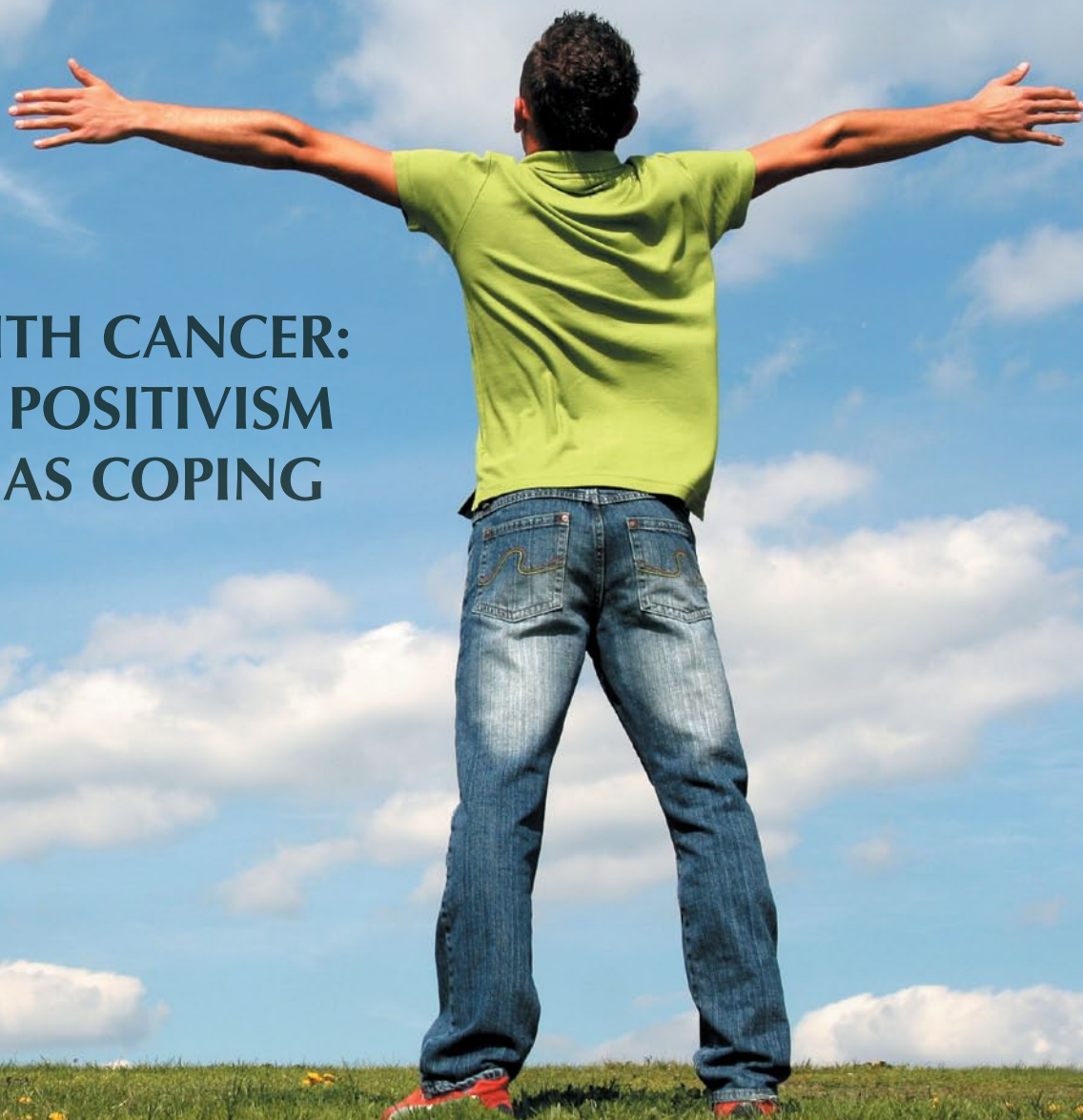
AN NCCS QUARTERLY PUBLICATION
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Salubris

...HELPING READERS TO ACHIEVE GOOD HEALTH
PUBLIC VERSION

Salubris is a Latin word which means healthy, in good condition (body) and wholesome.

**COPING WITH CANCER:
ADOPTING POSITIVISM
AND HOPE AS COPING
STRATEGIES**



COPING WITH CANCER: ADOPTING POSITIVISM AND HOPE AS COPING STRATEGIES

BY CHEN YANNI

Medical Social Worker
Department of Psychosocial Oncology

As a Medical Social Worker working with cancer patients at the National Cancer Centre Singapore (NCCS), I have the privilege of having insights to their worldview and psycho-emotional struggles, which come about as a result of their cancer diagnosis. Many have inspired me with their determination and resilience to press on and to overcome all odds.



WHEN HOPE IS NOT ALL LOST...

Hope is ever pervasive in each and every one of us and not just limited to patients battling with cancer. Many a time, the intrinsic motivation that drives the consumer behaviour in us is also hope. When we buy Christmas gifts for our loved ones, our hope is that he/she will be happy receiving it; when we step into a hair salon, our hope is that we will look better than when we first stepped in. For patients with cancer, each session at NCCS, be it consultation with the doctor, chemotherapy or radiation therapy, bring with it the hope that the cancer will be cured or under control.

Mdm Chitra hopes that there will be a treatment option available, Mdm Keng hopes that there will not be a relapse while Lim Yoon-taek hopes that he can continue to perform with his utmost effort for as long as he can. Hope is what strings them on.

Mdm Chitra passed away a month ago after a long drawn battle with cancer. Mdm Keng is continuing her yearly medical appointment and Lim Yoon-taek was in Singapore recently to perform at the 'Mnet' Asian Music Award.

As nothing is absolutely determined, being diagnosed with and fighting cancer is not only a reason to fear, but also a reason to hope. Perhaps it is time to re-think about our hopes and what is important in life. As Dr Gilbert Fan, Head of Psychosocial Oncology, often says to his patients, "Hope for the best, plan for the worst."

I have also realised that the common trait among these patients is embracing a positive outlook and hope in their cancer journey. This feeling that something desired may happen or looking forward to something with desire and reasonable confidence gives them the strength and motivation to push on in the face of cancer regardless of how dire the circumstances might be.

FINDING CONTENTMENT IN LIFE FOSTERS POSITIVE ATTITUDE AMIDST IMPENDING DEATH...

Mdm Chitra was diagnosed with colon cancer six years ago. She has been a very active member of the support group and an avid cook who often shares her recipes with other patients and cooks for special occasions. It was of late that her doctor informed her that her disease has progressed. When I asked Mdm Chitra how she felt upon hearing the news, she did not break into tears but instead said, "Life has been very fair to me, I have lived well these six years and I am glad to be able to see my children grow up." Her husband nodded his head in agreement when she said this. She continued, "I will not give up, there will always be other options." Mdm Chitra's positivity has very much encouraged other patients. She continued with her activities of driving and doing yoga despite being on chemotherapy and nasogastric tube feeding. "Aren't you afraid for your own safety?" I asked. Mdm Chitra responded with a smile.

GOOD SOCIAL SUPPORT MOTIVATES ONE TO LIVE HER VERY BEST...

Mdm Keng, a single lady discovered that she had breast cancer three years ago. She once shared with me, "I am very grateful for the help from my friends, they provided for me when I could not work. Although my cancer is already under control, I am never sure when it will come back, but I will be optimistic and live my life to the fullest."

HAVING AN INTRINSIC GOAL IN LIFE ENHANCES ONE'S SENSE OF MEANING IN LIFE...

Those who are familiar with Korean Pop would have heard of this pop group 'Ulala Session'. The quartet proceeded to win the top prize on 'Superstar K' even though the lead singer Lim Yoon-taek was in his 4th stage of stomach cancer. He delivered a solo dance during the competition. Lim Yoon-taek told the reporters, "There's only one thing – being positive. You don't know how or when life ends, it's better to live as if every day is your last".

应付癌症：怀抱希望和持有积极乐观的态度为对抗癌症的策略

陈雁妮

新加坡国立癌症中心
心理肿瘤科医疗社工

身为新加坡国立癌症中心的医疗社工，我经常同癌症患者接触，因此我得以洞悉他们在得知癌症诊断后所面对的心理与情绪挣扎。令我振奋鼓舞的是见识到当中许多患者凭着坚强的毅力同病魔搏斗，克服一切困难。



保有一线希望

希望不仅存在于同病魔搏斗的癌症患者心中，它也存在于每一个人。很多时候，希望也是影响我们消费行为的内在动机。当我们为心爱的人购买圣诞礼物时，我们希望对方收到礼物后会很开心；当我们走进理发院时，我们希望自己走出去时会更好看。对癌症患者来说，每次到新加坡国立癌症中心（无论是看诊、接受化疗或放射治疗），都带着癌症能够治愈，或者病情受到控制的希望。

西特拉女士希望还有其他的治疗方法，景女士希望病情不会复发，林允泽则希望自己能够在舞台上毫无保留地表演。希望，是支持他们活下去的动力。

西特拉女士同病魔长期奋战后，在一个月前逝世了。景女士持续每年复诊一次，而林允泽最近在新加坡举办的“韩国MNET亚洲音乐盛典”上表演。

所谓“世事无绝对”，被诊断患上癌症和对抗癌症病魔，不仅是让人害怕的理由，也是让人怀抱希望的理由。也许，我们是时候重新思考自己的期望和什么是人生中最重要的事。我记得心理肿瘤科主任范锦棠博士经常对病人说的一句话：“抱最好的希望，做最坏的打算。”

我也发现这些患者的共同点，即他们在抗癌路上都抱着希望和积极乐观的态度。不管情况多么艰难，有了这种奇迹可能降临的感觉，或怀着希望和一定程度的信心期待奇迹出现，给了他们同癌症病魔战斗的力量和动力。

在濒临死亡之际，寻找人生的满足感可促进积极乐观的态度

六年前，西特拉女士被诊断患上大肠癌。她在病患互助小组中非常活跃，也热爱烹饪，不但经常同其他患者分享食谱，而且会在特别的日子下厨。最近，医生告诉她，她的病情恶化了。当我问她得知消息后的心情时，她并没有哭，反而说：“上天对我算是很公平了。我这六年过得很好，还可以看着孩子们长大。”她的丈夫也点头表示赞同。她继续说：“我是不会放弃的，我相信一定还有其他的治疗方法。”西特拉女士积极乐观的态度大大鼓舞了其他患者。尽管还在接受化疗和插鼻胃管进食，但她依旧照常开车和做瑜伽。我问她：“你不担心自己的安危吗？”她以微笑回应。

良好的社会支援，激励患者活出充实人生

单身的景女士在三年前被诊断患上乳腺癌。她曾经告诉我：“我很感激朋友们的帮忙。当我无法工作时，他们都乐意照顾我。虽然我的病情已经受到控制，可是我不知道它什么时候会复发，但我会保持乐观，活出精彩。”

设定人生目标，提升自己生命的意义

如果你熟悉韩国流行乐坛，就应该听过ULALA SESSION这个乐团。尽管队长林允泽患有第四期胃癌，但这个四人组合还是在选秀节目《超级明星K》中夺得冠军。林允泽还在比赛中呈献了一段独舞。他受访时说：“你唯一能做的是保持乐观。因为生命不知会在何时，以什么方式结束，最好将每天都当成最后一天来活。”

OUTREACH – PUBLIC FORUMS & CANCERWISE WORKSHOPS

Event	Date, Time, Venue	Registration
Bilingual Public Forum – Reducing Cancer Risk Through Diet & Lifestyle TOPICS: a. How food affects cancer risks for healthy individuals and cancer survivors b. How lifestyle practices affect cancer risks c. Physical exercise	18 February 2012, Saturday MANDARIN SESSION Time: 9.30am to 11.30am (Registration: 9am to 9.30am) ENGLISH SESSION Time: 1.30pm to 3.30pm (Registration: 1pm to 1.30pm)	FREE ADMISSION Strictly no admission for children below 12 years old. Registration is a MUST as seats are limited. REGISTRATION IS BY PHONE ONLY Please call: 6225 5655 / 6236 9432 / 6236 9447 Monday to Friday: 9am to 5pm
Bilingual Public Forum – Colorectal Cancer TOPICS: a. Anatomy & functions of the colon and rectum b. Common bowel problems c. What is Colorectal Cancer? d. Risk factors & Signs and Symptoms of colorectal cancer e. Early detection & prevention f. Screening & diagnostic procedures g. Treatment options h. New development in Colorectal Cancer	10 March 2012, Saturday MANDARIN SESSION Time: 9.15am to 10.30am (Registration: 9am to 9.15am) ENGLISH SESSION Time: 11.15am to 12.30pm (Registration: 11am to 11.15am)	FREE ADMISSION Strictly no admission for children below 12 years old. Registration is a MUST as seats are limited. REGISTRATION IS BY PHONE ONLY Please call: 6225 5655 / 6236 9432 / 6236 9447 Monday to Friday: 9am to 5pm
CancerWise Workshop – Basics of Cancer Part 1 TOPICS: a. What is cancer? b. How does cancer spread? c. What causes cancer? d. Risk, Signs & Symptoms e. Prevention & Screening f. What are Cancer Tumour Makers? g. Common Types of Tumour Makers h. Questions & Answers	17 March 2012, Saturday Session will be conducted in English. 1pm – Registration 1.30pm to 4pm – Workshop starts Function Room, Level 4 National Cancer Centre Singapore 11 Hospital Drive, Singapore 169610	ADMISSION FEE: \$5 To register, please call: 6225 5655 or register online: www.nccs.com.sg (click events)
CancerWise Workshop – Basics of Cancer Part 2 TOPICS: a. Diagnosing cancer b. What is cancer staging & grouping? c. The common elements of staging systems d. Cancer treatments options e. New development in cancer treatments f. Questions & Answers	24 March 2012, Saturday Session will be conducted in English. 1pm – Registration 1.30pm to 4pm – Workshop starts Function Room, Level 4 National Cancer Centre Singapore 11 Hospital Drive, Singapore 169610	ADMISSION FEE: \$5 To register, please call: 6225 5655 or register online: www.nccs.com.sg (click events)

PATIENT SUPPORT PROGRAMMES

SUPPORT GROUP – NPC (NASOPHARYNGEAL / NOSE CANCER)

Programme: Traditional Chinese Medicine
Speaker / Facilitator: Physician Sun Hui Li
Date: 2 March 2012, Friday
Time: 7pm to 9pm
Venue: NCCS Function Room (Level 4)

LUNG SUPPORTIVE CARE PROGRAMME

Programme: Exercising Right (in English)
Speaker / Facilitator: Ms Hozaidah Hosain
Date: 9 March 2012, Friday
Time: 2.30pm to 4.30pm
Venue: NCCS Function Room (Level 4)

MALAY SUPPORT GROUP – SINAR HARAPAN

Programme: Rediscovering Resources Within
Speaker / Facilitator: Mr Amran Jamail, Ms Ernalisah Md Subhi & Ms Candace Ong
Date: 10 March 2012, Saturday
Time: 2.30pm to 4pm
Venue: NCCS Function Room (Level 4)

PATIENT AMBASSADOR TRAINING

Programme: Patient Communications Skills
Speaker / Facilitator: Dr Gilbert Fan
Date: 17 March 2012, Saturday
Time: 9am to 12pm
Venue: NCCS Function Room (Level 4)

LOOK GOOD FEEL BETTER (FOR LADIES ONLY)

Programme: Look Good Feel Better
Speaker / Facilitator: Ms Lillian Lee / Ms Cindy Wee
Date: 30 March 2012, Friday
Time: 2pm to 5pm
Venue: NCCS Function Room (Level 4)

MANDARIN SUPORT GROUP

Programme: When Caring Doesn't Help Anymore
Speaker / Facilitator: Ms Jamie Woon / Ms Chen Yanni
Date: 30 March 2012, Friday
Time: 6pm to 8pm
Venue: NCCS Function Room (Level 4)

SUPPORT GROUP – GRIEF IN RECOVERY (FOR SURVIVING SPOUSES)

Programme: Lesson of Loss for Society
Speaker / Facilitator: Mr Ivan Woo
Date: 30 March 2012, Friday
Time: 7pm to 9pm
Venue: NCCS Function Room (Level 4)

NCCS PATIENT SUPPORT PROGRAMMES ARE OPEN TO ALL CANCER PATIENTS IN SINGAPORE.

A CHRISTMAS WISH CAME TRUE

BY TINA HAN

Executive, Volunteer Management
Division of Community Outreach & Philanthropy, NCCS

AND

FLORA YONG

Manager, Community Partnership
Division of Community Outreach & Philanthropy, NCCS

It all started with a Christmas Wish in 2010 from a cancer survivor to start a Companionship Programme for patients undergoing treatment at the Ambulatory Treatment Unit, NCCS. Ms Elizabeth Poey, a retired school principal from the National Junior College, underwent an eight-hour operation for rectal cancer in 2010. Post-operatively, she was very weak but today, Elizabeth is a bundle of energy. After recovering from her cancer treatments, she channeled her strength to helping others like her, who are affected by cancer.



ATU Christmas Decorators. Elizabeth Poey (in pink) with other volunteers.



ATU Christmas Tree, courtesy of Elizabeth Poey.

Elizabeth told The Straits Times about her Christmas Wish in an interview two years ago of how she would like to “lift the spirits of patients undergoing chemotherapy”. Having had similar treatments for her rectal cancer, she understood how lonely and frightening it can be for a cancer patient to face the cancer journey alone. Luckily for Elizabeth, she had a good friend who accompanied her for her treatments, making the hospital visits more bearable.

In October 2011, Elizabeth’s wish finally came through. She pioneered the Ambulatory Treatment Unit (ATU) Companionship Programme together with some of her friends and a group of other volunteers who had read about Elizabeth’s story in the newspapers. They too would like to do their part to give back to the community. Some of these volunteers are themselves cancer survivors. They received training on simple patient care, service quality and infection control so that they are better equipped to attend to the patients at the ATU.

The duties of a Companion included chatting and talking with patients, carrying out basic nursing duties like keeping patients comfortable by providing blankets, serving drinks, assisting patients on wheelchairs and helping the ATU Patient Relation Officer (PRO) with simple administrative duties.

Ms Ng Suan Eng, one of the pioneers, shared that she was happy doing simple things for the patients like bringing them a cup of water. She said, “When they smiled or said thank you, the joy within me was priceless”. Another volunteer, Ms Dao Thi Bich Hong was so touched by the stories of strength and enthusiasm of two patients and other volunteers that she continued volunteering at NCCS because she had “gained peace and happiness after each volunteering session”.

The nurses and patients at ATU were delighted with the programme. Some companions even became friends with the patients. A patient shared that this programme is a good idea as she can have someone to talk to while waiting for chemotherapy treatment. Ms Diana Chan, PRO ATU, found the companions to be of great help to her. The companions were so inspiring that several other patients have expressed their desire to be volunteers.

Last Christmas, Elizabeth and a group of volunteers transformed ATU to a mini Christmas Wonderland. Elizabeth donated her own Christmas tree to ATU and with the help of other volunteers, the Christmas mood was created. In the words of Nurse Manager Mag Tan, “it has been some time that ATU experienced this type of ambience”.

One is never too old to start volunteer work. Many of us like Elizabeth, never found time to volunteer while we were working. The cancer experience taught some of us the importance of giving and making a difference to another individual in need. Elizabeth understood the stress and anxiety patients felt. Now, that she is well, she wanted to make good use of her recovery to make a difference.

Volunteers play important roles at NCCS. There are many ways in which volunteers can serve and they are not limited to companionship at ATU. Volunteers can also serve as ushers and greeters at various NCCS events, put up performances for patients, help NCCS staff with simple administrative duties, etc. We are constantly looking out for people who can help. If you would like to volunteer at NCCS or have ideas for an interesting activity, do email Tina Han at Tina.Han.M.T@nccs.com.sg.

CANCER IS NOT THE END BECAUSE YOU KEEP MAKING THE DIFFERENCE

Cancer is not the end. Yet when one is diagnosed with it, due to the severity of the cancer with late diagnosis, the outlook in life turns bleak with apprehension. The diagnosis affects not just the sufferers, but also their loved ones as anxiety, uncertainty and fear of treatment set in for most, and grief or depression for some. Questions like “Can I be cured? How much time is there? Will there be a lot of pain?” come to mind.

It is through many years of NCCS research efforts that new vistas have opened and more depth added to our knowledge. Hence, doctors could answer some of these difficult questions with confidence and positivity. They could prescribe new treatment protocols that meet patients’ needs, achieving better outcome and quality of life, saving more lives and minimising side effects of treatment.

It is through research that we have seen improvements in the survival rates of some cancers such as childhood leukaemia, breast, nasopharyngeal and cervical cancers. It is from the continued support of kind donors, sponsors, event partners and the public, who gave time and money generously, that enables NCCS cancer research to advance our knowledge and ability to fight cancer, and provide needy patients access to treatment. Thanks to many of you out there, who have helped to make the difference!

Year 2011 marked a very eventful year for the NCCS, its staff and supporters of cancer research and causes. We saw favourable responses and donations to the NCCS staff donation programme called the G.R.E.A.T. campaign, a Prudential Golf Charity, a Rays of Hope Concert and the Run For Hope. Last but not least, the year wrapped up on a wonderful note with \$2.6 million raised from table sales, donations and auction of paintings for cancer research at the NCCS gala ‘Colours of Hope’ on 1 Dec 2011.

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and Health Minister Gan Kim Yong, both accompanied by their spouses, graced the occasion. With them at the Ritz Carlton, were some 800 guests that comprised top businessmen, corporate leaders, corporate and individual donors, doctors and cancer survivors, celebrating life and survivorship because of advances in cancer research. “Like colours, cancer can change and the patient can be restored,” said Prof Soo Khee Chee, Director of NCCS.

The gala was the fruit of labour by a committee involving not only NCCS personnel but also members of the expatriate community. Ms Viviana Bernard, who has been actively engaged in social service work here and desires to help more people benefit from cancer research, chaired the very hands-on team.

Prof Soo, commenting on Viviana’s effort to chair 2011’s gala, said, “NCCS is indeed fortunate to have someone from the expatriate community who is willing to spend so much time to help local cancer patients. Cancer is a disease that transcends all races and culture. Viviana’s work exemplifies the essence of helping others in order to help ourselves. My wish is that there will be more like her who can do their part in this universal cause.”

The NCCS is also very grateful to individuals like Viviana and her expatriate friends, as well as various long-term corporate sponsors, such as the Lee Foundation, Ritz-Carlton Millenia Singapore, Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts, Singapore Totalisator Board and Singapore Turf Club, and not forgetting many other donors who have come forward to help.



CONTRIBUTORS THROUGH THEIR ART (from left): Delphine Bernard demonstrating her work of art; and Mdm Lee Lee Soo Chee with her paintings

Spreading the message of hope for cancer patients, the evening kicked off with a short video that conveyed the significance of research via cancer survivors, caregiver and cancer professionals. Ginajane Grey, who survived stage-3 breast cancer and pursued her passion for dance despite rigorous treatments, then captivated the audience with her exotic belly-dance performance. This was followed by a charming flamenco dance by Los Tarantos, to the tunes of ‘Bolero Ravel’, accompanied by a 70-strong children’s choir from the Singapore Symphony Orchestra. An auction of paintings by local and international artists rounded up the night’s climax, contributing a \$47,000 boost to the total sum raised. At the event, Prime Minister Lee also presented tokens of appreciation to seven guests, who had generously made significant contributions to cancer research.

Looking back at 2011, we should give ourselves a good pat on the back for our charitable acts big or small. Let us remember never to take good health for granted and that the fight against cancer persists. While the NCCS team races on to usher more medical developments and breakthroughs towards new cures, the centre’s research will need at least S\$8 million in the new year. We need your constant support to keep making the difference and advancing in this battle. Watch our space for new updates and events you can support.

Well-meaning individuals who wish to help can also play a part by donating to the “NCC Research Fund” for cancer research, or the “Community Cancer Fund” to help needy patients. For more details, please call: 6236 9440 or log on to www.nccs.com.sg.

More photos featured on page 12.



COLOURFUL PERFORMANCES (from right to far right): Ginajane Grey belly-dancing; Los Tarantos; and SSO Children’s Choir.

Continued from page 11.

PRESENTING TOKENS OF APPRECIATION

The NCCS is very grateful to individuals as well as various long-term corporate sponsors, and not forgetting many other donors who have come forward to help.



DR LEE SENG TEE
(Deputy Chairman of Lee Foundation): receiving on behalf of Lee Foundation for their generous donation towards the Deep Gene Sequencer machine resulting in plethora of high impact research papers.



MR ALEX PORTEOUS
(Hotel Manager, Four Seasons): receiving on behalf of Four Seasons Hotel Singapore / The Regent Hotel Singapore for co-organising with NCCS the Run for Hope in aid of cancer research since 2004.



DR DELLA LEE
(spouse of Mr Lee Seng Gee, Chairman of Lee Foundation): receiving on behalf of Lee Foundation for their generous donation to kick-start an NCCS young cancer patient care fund and their support for the palliative nursing programme.



MR KWEE LIONG SEEN
(Executive Chairman, Pontiac Land): receiving on behalf of Pontiac Land Pte Ltd for underwriting the dinner cost for three consecutive NCCS Charity Gala Dinners.



MR KEVIN HOLMGREN
(CEO, Prudential): receiving on behalf of Prudential Assurance Singapore Pte Ltd for the Prudential Golf Charity in September in aid of cancer research.



DR JUANITA FU
(Director, Kuo International Pte Ltd): receiving on behalf of PB Tankers Limited for their generous donation to this year's NCCS Charity Gala.



MR ANDY WONG
(CEO, Celton): receiving on behalf of Celton Group Holdings Limited for their pledge to host and underwrite the cost of next year's charity gala.



Prof Soo Khee Chee, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, Mdm Ho Ching, Ms Viviana Bernard, Dr Charles Toh and Health Minister Gan Kim Yong.

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