

My Journey

With the Perak Palliative Care Society (PPCS)

I was diagnosed with terminal lung cancer on 4th April 2016. I am quite well-grounded in my Christian faith and yet, when I faced the reality of death, I was challenged to the core of my being without my being conscious of it.



I began to wonder about the relationship between faith and mortality. Why does my faith in God not sustain me from the unstable emotion within? I seem to stand on quick sand. I felt abandoned and sucked in by the reality of my mortality. I was lost and shaken.

Fortunately I had registered with the Perak Palliative Care Society about a week after I was discharged from Hospital. I was aware that it was important for me to register with a hospice because I had once served as a pastoral worker with the Penang Hospice.

A Palliative Care Nurse (PCN) visited me on 12th April. I told her that I was ready for death, but she knew I wasn't.

I was scheduled for my first chemotherapy at a hospital in Ipoh on 20th April. Before I could go for the chemotherapy, I began to have pain and difficulty in breathing. My face had ballooned beyond my own recognition.

I gave up! I stopped taking all medicine and even refused food. Fortunately the PCN came. She sized up my situation. She quickly administered liquid morphine after checking me and I dozed off gratefully.

Later, she re-educated me about the medication I was given and pointed out to me that anxiety could get me nowhere but only worsened my situation. She was knowledgeable and taught me many things. I was assured that I was in the hands of someone who was brilliantly professional and caring. Since then the PCN became my pillar of strength and I had great confidence and trust in her.

Then a Palliative Massage Therapist (PMT) from the PPCS was also assigned to journey with me. Besides massaging she is also a great counselor. She is aware of my mood as she massages. I guess my body signals to her whether I was tense or not. Her care and concern about my state of emotional and spiritual well-being made me open up to her.

The PMT, like the PCN became my support for strength and



encouragement and I look forward to their visits each week. I shared with these two wonderful people all my inner fears and desires. I was gently led to deal with my unfinished business like unforgiveness. My fear of the final days was also put at rest as the PCN assured me of the facilities that are available when the time comes.

When these emotional blocks are removed I was able to cope with physical challenges that appear with the administering of chemo, like mouth ulcers and rashes. As time went on, the chemo took effect and I became more comfortable and cheerful again.

I am now able to get back to normal life. Though my present well-being is much due to the effect of the drug I must say that I would not be feeling as well and normal had it not been for the care of the PPCS.

Though I have many friends who supported me and saw to my needs they could offer me no professional help to deal with my discomfort and pain and to face my unfinished business. The PPCS however put me on firmer ground.

I got back my inner strength that helped me pull myself out of the sinking ground. People need to know that between the medical expertise of doctors and facilities of hospitals, the PPCS enables patients to face their own battle within the inner core of themselves. This ability to face the challenge within is crucial in coping with cancer.

Written by Serena Woon

AFTER I completed my undergraduate studies in July, I was thinking of what I should do while waiting for the application processes and interview sessions before I commence work. As I was looking through the internet for organizations I can volunteer for, the Perak Palliative Care Society website came up. This organization is relevant to what I will be doing when I start work and I thought of giving it a try. On the 18th of August, I had the opportunity to take part in the Sunshine Programme for patients held monthly. This was my first time and I thought it was a great experience.

Games were held and food was served throughout the session. Interacting with patients who had gone through various life experiences brought out the caring side of me. The experience also enabled me to have a deeper understanding of what the Perak Palliative Care Society does to help and support patients.

In conclusion, the experience taught me to always have a positive outlook on life despite any hardships that I may go through. I believe that everyone, especially those in the medical field, should be involved in such activities for a better understanding of what patients go through.

Scarlett Ong



3 years ago, I volunteered at PPCS for 3 months. There were so many memorable moments but the most memorable one for me was the Sunshine Hour. On June 2013, I remember creating papier-mache photo frames with the PPCS clients and bonding with them over an assortment of a meal. By listening to their stories, chatting with them and laughing together over jokes, I got to know the patients, cultivate joy and happiness, and create a special connection that I will always treasure in my heart. This experience opened my eyes to the value of community and caring for others. I realized that being able to be there for others, hearing them out, and helping them in the simplest ways play a very important role in the community and really gives you a sense of satisfaction. When I had to leave for the US to further my studies, leaving PPCS was difficult, especially since I was a mentor to and developed a strong friendship with one of the clients whom I visited every week during my tenure. I promised to visit PPCS whenever I could when I am back in Malaysia.

Despite a hectic schedule after returning for my summer break, I told myself that I had a promise to keep and I had to make some time to visit PPCS once again. Nothing else was better than volunteering at the event that



I enjoyed the most! I decided to help out with the Sunshine Hour on 18th August 2016 before leaving for the States the next week.

It was a great opportunity to meet the PPCS clients, staff and volunteers once again after so long. Stepping into the entrance of PPCS's serene green building, the familiar sounds of laughter and chatter were music to my ears. As I walked into the hall and waved "hello", some familiar clients greeted me by name despite it being such a long time since we've met. Seeing them so happy and healthier made me feel even more glad to see them again. There were new faces, be it patients or volunteers, that I am grateful I have made connections with. I'm sure that they will have a great time at PPCS! For the recent Sunshine Hour, we played pick-up sticks and then had a feast of home-made food together. My friend (mentee) has grown so much and I'm happy that he has been living well. Although we have been keeping in touch through social media, it definitely feels much better to see him in person. At the end of the event, I waved my final goodbyes with a bittersweet feeling. Sadness of having to leave PPCS again but happiness derived from having fulfilled my promise and having a good time at PPCS.

Li Tng Lee



MAY 25-26th 2016 marks a new growth in PPCS. We had the first ELNEC Core Training programme for nurses and paramedics in MALAYSIA. As we know (refer to newsletter Issue 114), the ELNEC project is an US NATIONAL end of life educational programme administered by City of Hope and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing designed to enhance palliative care nursing.

Expert nursing care has the potential to greatly reduce the burden and distress of those facing life's end and the ability to offer support for the many physical, psychological, social and spiritual needs of patients and their families.

However, as for us who have decided to journey with palliative care patients, we always felt that there was something lacking in us while caring for terminal patients in the acute setting. We always felt that there is a need for someone to look into educating hospital nurses with regards to providing holistic end-of-life care.

As small as we are, yet our achievements are great. PPCS always strives to render their best to clients and society. Our eyes, ears, hearts and minds are always geared towards improved care and sharing what we have learnt.

Of course, the base of such consistent progress is definitely CARE and TEAMWORK!

1.

THE PPCS COMMITTEE:

Unanimously, our concern is not to just provide service BUT to always ensure that the service provided is consistent, genuine, beneficial to community and cost effective. The main concern at the back of our minds is how we can work toward achieving OUR MISSION which is:

- (a) To provide comfort and relief of symptoms to people with life threatening illnesses irrespective of age, race or religion.
- (b) To enhance their quality of life
- (c) To support the grieving family appropriately

2.

THE MEDICAL TEAM:

- (a) Consistently maintains CARE as our foundation towards providing holistic care.
- (b) We care till the last moments of life not to just see them die peacefully BUT to help them live to their best till they die.

TEAMWORK

coming together is a beginning
 keeping together is progress
 working together is success
 – Henry Ford



WELL DONE TEAM! WE CAN'T SPELL SUCCESS WITHOUT "U"

THANKS

*Promoting the
 Spirit of Care*

We thank all our donors for their generosity. As PPCS is a non-governmental agency, it relies substantially on the financial support of the general public. If as a reader of this newsletter, you wish to donate something to the Society, or you know of anyone who might be interested in doing so, please direct your personal donation or inform them to contact the Honorary Treasurer at:

**PPCS, 54 Jalan Sultan Azlan Shah,
 31400 Ipoh, Perak.**

Tel/Fax: (605) 546 4732

Email: admin@ppcs.org.my

DONATIONS received during July – September 2016

JULY	RM				
Foo Nyuk Len	200	Jessie Ng	100	imo Chan May Kuen	150
Yayasan Sultan Azlan Shah	20,000	imo Lou Kwee Moy	150	Dr June Yeoh	400
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The Ho Family c/o Pastor Dr Daniel Ho	15,000	Siew Siok Peik	120	Khor Yuat Lee	50
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imo Chan Yeon Hor	1,500	Shum Chee Mooi imo Ma Foo Shun	300	Chong See Mun imo Chong Lik	100
imo Then Joo Yeng	300	imo Lee Ah Chee	1,500	Lim Soon Kong imo Lim See Lin	505
		David Ma Sau Teem	300	Anonymous	

(*imo = in memory of)