



PRESS RELEASE

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Counting our days and making our days count

NUS Medicine students organise palliative care exhibition to encourage conversations about end-of-life

Singapore, 17 October 2017 —What matters most to me? What would I do differently if I could live my life all over again? How do I want to spend my final months and days? Visitors to an upcoming exhibition on palliative care will be led to reflect on these matters as they read and view interviews with Singaporeans in the last stages of their lives.

It is a process that the organisers of The Life Stories Exhibition, who are medical students from the National University of Singapore Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine (NUS Medicine), intend to invoke. “We hope to engage the public and educate them about palliative care, highlighting its purpose and significance while correcting any misconceptions people may hold,” said Mr Tay Kuang Teck. He is a third-year student at NUS Medicine and heads the all-student organising committee behind the exhibition. The event is part of a bigger public education initiative launched by an earlier generation of medical students, called Project Happy Apples.

The interactive showcase on palliative care aims to encourage people to start conversations on end-of-life care and inspire them to live life to the fullest, he added. Themed “Adding Life to Days”, the exhibition will be held at the Toa Payoh Hub Atrium between 21 and 22 October 2017.

“The event will have various components to it, including the Life Stories of Patients, a showcase of the lasting legacies and life experiences of patients receiving palliative care and how they coped. There are also interactive components such as the Telephone Booth, an immersive auditory experience that invites visitors to listen in to a simulated decision-making process people face towards the end of life, Before-I-Die Boards, an Educational Wall Mural, and an exciting series of talks, performances by the interest groups from the community centre and much more,” Mr Tay added.

The inspiration for the students’ initiative came from their encounters with patients they met when they were part of a palliative care befriending programme run in collaboration with HCA Hospice Care and the Motor Neurone Disease (MND) Support Group – National Neuroscience Institute.

One of the featured life stories is that of Ms Jane Tan, a 29-year-old patient who was diagnosed with mitochondrial myopathy, encephalopathy, lactic acidosis, and stroke

syndrome, also known as MELAS Syndrome when she was 17. Jane was close to completing her polytechnic diploma studies when she suffered a stroke. For over a decade, she chose to live life positively and inspired many people around her, including the befrienders from HCA Hospice Care.

Dr Noreen Chan, Head of the Division of Palliative Care at the National University Cancer Institute, Singapore and advisor to the student organisers, said, "Project Happy Apples has always sought to emphasise that palliative care is about living the best that we can, and through the befriending programme, the volunteers come to appreciate how we can support one another as fellow human beings. The Life Stories Exhibition is about having those important conversations about what really matters, which is another way of celebrating our lives, because every person, and every person's story, is unique."

The Life Stories Exhibition will be opened on 21 October 2017 by the Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Transport, Dr Lam Pin Min.

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About the National University of Singapore (NUS)

A leading global university centred in Asia, the National University of Singapore (NUS) is Singapore's flagship university, which offers a global approach to education and research, with a focus on Asian perspectives and expertise.

NUS has 17 faculties and schools across three campuses. Its transformative education includes a broad-based curriculum underscored by multidisciplinary courses and cross-faculty enrichment. Over 38,000 students from 100 countries enrich the community with their diverse social and cultural perspectives. NUS also strives to create a supportive and innovative environment to promote creative enterprise within its community.

NUS takes an integrated and multidisciplinary approach to research, working with partners from industry, government and academia, to address crucial and complex issues relevant to Asia and the world. Researchers in NUS' Schools and Faculties, 30 university-level research institutes and centres, and Research Centres of Excellence cover a wide range of themes including: energy, environmental and urban sustainability; treatment and prevention of diseases common among Asians; active ageing; advanced materials; risk management and resilience of financial systems. The University's latest research focus is to use data science, operations research and cybersecurity to support Singapore's Smart Nation initiative.

For more information on NUS, please visit www.nus.edu.sg.

About the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine (NUS Medicine)

Established in 1905, the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine is the first institution of higher learning in Singapore and the genesis of the National University of Singapore.

The School offers one of the finest undergraduate medical programmes in the Asia Pacific region and enjoys international recognition and respect. The Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2016 by subject and Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings by Subject 2017 list NUS Medicine as a leading medical school in Asia.

It admits 300 students to the MBBS degree programme annually and its principal missions are to educate and train the next generation of healthcare professionals, and foster research that will help to advance the practice of medicine.

The 18 NUS Medicine departments in the basic sciences and clinical specialties work closely with the Centre for Medical Education, the Centre for Biomedical Ethics, the Centre for Healthcare Simulation as well as the restructured public hospitals to ensure that teaching and research are aligned and relevant to Singapore's healthcare needs. The School is a founding institutional member of the National University Health System.

For more information about NUS Medicine, please visit <http://nusmedicine.nus.edu.sg>