

# Voice Dementia

THE NEWSLETTER OF DEMENTIA SINGAPORE



FEATURE

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# New Horizons in Dementia: Building on Hope

London welcomed the 35th Global Conference of Alzheimer’s Disease International (ADI) with an unexpected bout of sunny blue skies on 9 June 2022. The three-day hybrid event saw more than 1,200 delegates from over 120 countries, who gained insights from a range of international keynote speakers and oral and poster presenters. The Conference’s various talks and presentations all sought to report on the latest advances in each of the seven action areas of the World Health Organization’s (WHO’s) Global action plan on dementia.



## MILESTONE FOR DEMENTIA ADVOCACY IN SINGAPORE

In an ADI Council meeting on 8 June, attended by more than 70 member associations, Emily Ong, a dementia self-advocate from Singapore, impressed voters with her passionate video speech where she spoke about her drive and commitment to dementia advocacy. In a historic moment for Singapore’s efforts towards advocacy, the ADI Council were moved by Emily’s conviction and passed the motion which voted her into the ADI Board.

Proving a huge win for the dementia community all around the world and Dementia Singapore alike, Emily’s new position as a Member of the ADI Board is also a great milestone and the latest achievement for the dementia self-advocate. Congratulations to Emily once again and Dementia Singapore wishes you all the best as you continue to fly the Singapore flag high at ADI!

“If there is one piece of advice that I can give to someone who is starting out on dementia advocacy - it is to believe in yourself and the cause that you are advocating for. The journey can be tough because you can’t expect change to happen as you would wish. If things don’t work out, take a break, and try another way. I have come so far because I found a group of people who believed in me and my advocacy mission - and that is to improve the quality of life of people affected by dementia,” shared Emily.



Emily is also a person living with young onset dementia, who graduated from Dementia Singapore’s Voices for Hope empowerment programme in 2019.

## BEST PRACTICES EXCHANGED

Adding on to the fruitful trip, Dementia Singapore had the opportunity to make three presentations at the Conference.

At an in-person presentation, CARA - Dementia Singapore’s pioneering Dementia Membership Programme - was introduced to a global audience for the first time. Representing Dementia Singapore was Consultant Melissa Chan, who spoke about the team’s development and progress of the mobile application over the past two years.

Despite being created for the Singapore context, we received many encouraging comments and enquiries from the international audience about



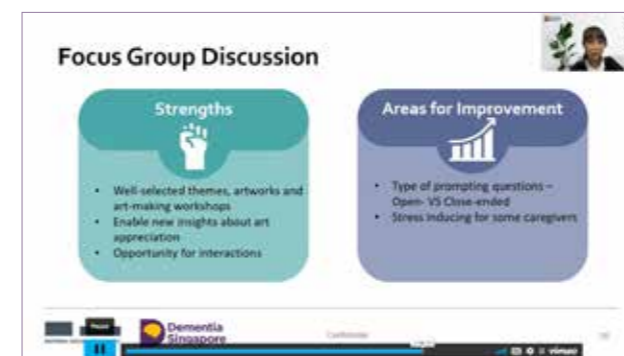
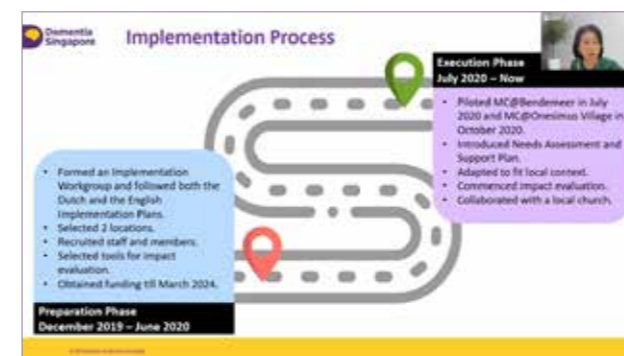
CARA’s functionalities and effective outreach both to Singapore’s dementia community and benefit partners.

Speaking at a virtual presentation, Ivy Ho, Programme Manager, Community Enablement, gave insights on developing Dementia Singapore’s Meeting Centre Support Programme. Since June 2022, two new Meeting Centres have opened in collaboration with other social service agencies, and Dementia Singapore will continue to introduce this programme in other parts of the country.

At Dementia Singapore’s third and final virtual presentation, Jiang Weiting, Senior Research

Executive, Community Enablement, and Alicia Teng, Assistant Director of Community and Access at National Gallery Singapore, also shared about the findings of a pilot programme, “Art with You: An Exploratory Impact Study on Art Museum-Based Programme for Families Living with Dementia in Singapore”.

Findings have demonstrated the positive impact of the programme on families living with dementia, and the attitudes of members of the public towards dementia. Dementia Singapore and National Gallery Singapore have recently wrapped up the pilot phase of the Art with You programme and are now preparing for its official launch by the end of 2022.



During the ADI Asia-Pacific Regional Office (APRO) meeting, Stanley Ho, Director of Advocacy and Communications at Dementia Singapore, took the opportunity to catch up with regional counterparts and share the milestone events and launches helmed by Dementia Singapore over the past year. He also received requests for resources for best practices from new associations in the Maldives and Jordan.

“Dementia Singapore’s role as a sector enabler is not restricted to just our country. We are always delighted to share our vast knowledge and experiences in dementia care with our regional counterparts,” said Stanley.

By the end of the ADI 2022 Conference in London, the Dementia Singapore team gained new connections, grew its global presence, and most importantly, gave a louder voice to the dementia space. With this positive experience, we cannot wait to make a greater impact at the ADI APRO Conference, which will be held in Taipei, Taiwan in December 2022.

# A Successful Safe Return with CARA

Author and activist, Coretta Scott King, once said, "The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members." Indeed, the team at CARA can vouch for the greatness within our own community as we share a recent notable event involving the successful safe return of a lost senior to his home, facilitated by a member of the public who demonstrated immense empathy and civic-mindedness.

## NOTICING SOMETHING AMISS

Leon Thong, a 29-year-old working in the healthcare sector, was heading to a shop in his neighbourhood one day when he spotted an elderly man looking troubled and lost. Leon decided to approach him, asked him for his block, and pointed him to it.

A while later, he noticed the senior standing at the lift lobby of the block, still looking lost. Leon then asked for his unit number and accompanied him to the flat. However, it turned out that the unit the man stated was not his own, but someone else's. It was at that point that Leon suspected that the man is a person living with dementia.



When Leon found the CARA membership card on the senior, he scanned the QR code to contact the caregiver tagged to the senior's CARA account.

## CHANCING UPON THE CARA CARD

Following that, Leon brought him around the area, trying to help him find his house, but to no avail. After some time of futile searching, he happened to notice that the man was wearing a lanyard that contained a CARA membership card. Leon



When Leon Thong spotted an elderly man near his block looking lost and anxious, he decided to approach the senior and lend a hand.

proceeded to scan the QR code on the card, which connected him with the senior's caregiver via a phone call. He subsequently arranged to book a Grab ride for the senior and made sure to check with the caregiver that he managed to reach home safely.

## HOPE FOR THE COMMUNITY

In a conversation with the CARA team about his experience, Leon shared that it was truly gratifying to help reunite the lost elderly man with dementia with his family. He credited the CARA card for making it easy for members of the public like him to facilitate the senior's safe return home.

Leon hopes that people can keep a lookout for lost persons with dementia and do their best to guide them to their desired destination.

"I urge the community to be kind and lend a helping hand. Spend some time to talk to them and find out how you can help - there is no need to trouble the authorities if all of us can do our part," he emphasised.



Scan for the full story

# #CranesforDementia

In the months leading up to September every year, Dementia Singapore gears up for World Alzheimer's Month - a global campaign featuring a month-long calendar of events and activities dedicated to raising awareness and challenging the stigma of dementia.

This year, we are excited to introduce '1000 Cranes', our 2022 campaign to bring the nation together for a conversation about dementia, inspire solidarity with the dementia community, and hope for the future.

## ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN

According to the ancient Japanese legend of *senbazuru*, anyone who folds 1000 paper cranes will be given a chance to make their most desired wishes come true. The legend has been associated with hope, happiness, longevity, and recovery from illnesses.

For the over 100,000 people living with dementia in Singapore, every day represents a new fight - against their cognitive decline, the struggle to fully accept their diagnosis, and society's negative stigma on dementia.

Thus, this World Alzheimer's Month, the Crane is our symbol of hope, as well as our one true wish for the dementia community - a dementia-inclusive society.

## SENBAZURU IN ACTION!

As part of the campaign, we engaged persons with dementia and caregivers across various Dementia Singapore programmes in an origami crane folding activity. Look at how enthusiastic they were to complete them!



## VIRTUAL CRANES

To encourage participation and engagement with our wider community and allies, Dementia Singapore also digitalised the *senbazuru* concept. Instead of folding an origami crane, members of the public can submit a Virtual Crane on the 1000 Cranes campaign page; each Virtual Crane represents one's well wishes and a pledge of support for the dementia community.

Turn your well wishes into a Virtual Crane today!



## '1000 PAPER CRANES': PREMIERING 21 SEPTEMBER

'1000 Paper Cranes' is a short film that Dementia Singapore embarked on with veteran executive producer, Daniel Yun, to spotlight dementia and the profound impact it can have on families. The film follows Hannah and her grandfather who is living with dementia. Through the lenses of social media and the anecdotes of family and friends, Hannah and Gramps bravely face the challenges of dementia - be it doctors' appointments, meals, outings at the beach, or their shared goal of folding 1000 origami cranes.

The 1000 Cranes campaign will culminate on 21 September, also known as World Alzheimer's Day, with the premiere of the '1000 Paper Cranes' short film. Held as a hybrid event, the film premiere also includes a panel discussion - featuring a person with dementia and their caregiver - on the themes of the film and exclusive insights from the film's creators.

Stay tuned to Dementia Singapore's social media platforms to catch more updates on the Film Livestream Event!



#DespiteDementia our New Horizon Centre clients still have the skills and ability to create beautiful origami cranes!

# A Celebration of a Lifetime



In this issue, we spend the day getting to know Richard Ashworth and his father, John. To Richard, this wasn't just another ordinary day. It represented one of the final celebrations of his father's life. Marked by a flurry of planning and coordination, here's how four organisations came together to create one very special day to remember for the Ashworth household.

**T**ucked away in the vibrant heartlands of Singapore along Jurong East is the home of the Ashworths. Stepping through the front door, one is immediately greeted by the charming blend of art pieces, Buddha statues, and family photographs adorning the tables and walls. The quaint home does not, however, distract from the infectious smile and welcoming disposition of the man of the house – Richard Ashworth.

As a team from Lianhe Zaobao and more staff from Ambulance Wish Singapore (AWS) and HCA Hospice (HCA) pour into his home, Richard takes us on a mini tour of the house, finally arriving at his father, John's room. Inside, we are greeted by Richard's helpers, Maung Maung and Alex, both of whom are sitting with John at his bedside.

## EARLY BEGINNINGS

Hailing from Sheffield, England, John is a former sea captain and oil rig surveyor who made the move to Singapore in 1965. Almost a decade later, he adopted Richard who was 21 years old at the time.



Before John adopted him, Richard, who was Mandarin-educated and small-built, said that he suffered from low self-esteem and was constantly picked on by his peers. It was only with John's guidance and words of wisdom that he blossomed into the well-spoken, self-assured man he is today.

"Not only did my father teach me how to speak English, but he had also imparted to me a valuable



life lesson I hold close to my heart to this day: 'Sticks and stones may break your bones, but names will never hurt you – unless you believe them. Then, they can destroy you,'" he muses.

## A NEW JOURNEY

In 1999, John was diagnosed with colon cancer. At 45 years of age, Richard found that he had a new role to play: that of a caregiver. Just a decade later, another blow struck: John's dementia diagnosis.

Yet throughout his 23-year journey as a caregiver, the roadblocks, while grueling at times, have done little to dampen Richard's devotion to his duties. "After all the years he has showered me with love and support, not taking care of my father when he needs me the most simply wouldn't sit right with me," he asserts.

## THE WISH

Late last year, John's condition had taken a turn for the worse. With the support of HCA, John has been receiving home-based palliative care. Richard has also had to take the difficult step of coming to terms with the impending loss of his father.

With time running out, he wanted to make one final memory with John – to tour one of their favourite retreats, Gardens by the Bay, together, and possibly for the last time.

To achieve this trip would be no easy feat as John is not mobile and Richard would need extra pairs of hands to support him. Hence, Dementia Singapore decided to work together with HCA and AWS to help fulfil Richard's wish. In preparation for the day, we also reached out to Gardens by the Bay to make special arrangements for the Ashworths to tour the Flower Dome comfortably and safely.

From getting John cleared by his doctor for the trip, to planning the route, safety guidelines and transport, Dementia Singapore, HCA, AWS, and Gardens by the Bay worked closely together to outline the day carefully so that the Ashworths' special day would go without a hitch.

## A CELEBRATION TO REMEMBER

Back at the Ashworth residence, the ambulance crew soon shows up to carefully transport John and Richard to Gardens by the Bay. The rest of the group bundles into chartered buses to make our way there.

We arrive to the warm welcome of the team at Gardens by the Bay and are ushered into the beautiful Flower Dome.

Watching Richard interact with John in the dome, one can understand how cathartic of an experience this must be for him. Getting the chance to be with his father in his final stages surrounded by their shared love of nature must be an experience like no other.

The icing on the cake of our momentous visit? A surprise birthday and Father's Day celebration for John.



As we end off the visit and gather in a room specially prepared by Gardens by the Bay, Richard shares how truly moved he is to have everyone come together to bring this special day to life for him and John.

"I feel very heartened that there are organisations like Dementia Singapore, HCA Hospice, Ambulance Wish Singapore, and Gardens by the Bay that go the extra mile. I'd also like to thank Lianhe Zaobao for spending time with us over the last few months and documenting our story. To all of you, I am touched by your love, compassion and initiative. It is truly a wonderful thing to see," he says.

As Richard shares a private moment with his father, we witness John's eyes well up. Richard says that John might not be completely conscious of what is going on, but he is certain that he can sense our spirit and the unconditional love we have for him. And in that moment, our hearts are full.

*On 30 June 2022, John Ashworth passed away peacefully in his home, surrounded by loved ones.*

# Fostering the Dementia Care Family Spirit



**M**ention Dementia Singapore's Family of Wisdom programme and one would immediately follow up with a mention of Ms Eunice Tan. Working in the eldercare sector for a total of 26 years, out of which 17 years were spent managing a Social Day Centre for the Elderly, Eunice has been with Dementia Singapore for the past 9 years now.

A trained social worker and gerontologist, Eunice credits her keen passion for dementia care and eldercare to her grandmother whom she grew up with. Throughout her social service journey, she has also worked on various projects, such as being a venue and programme consultant to PCF SparkleCare's first centre at Simei; a consultant and dementia care trainer for volunteers at St Ignatius

Church, Barker Road Methodist Church, and Calvary Baptist Church; and a dementia care trainer for staff at Geylang East Home for the Elderly.

At Dementia Singapore, Eunice helped to pioneer the Family of Wisdom programme, establishing our first centre at Bendemeer in 2013. She also proved her mantle by being a key player for IDeAL@115 – our recently launched assisted living project within an existing block of HDB flats in Kebun Baru – as well as bringing the idea of personalised, one-to-one virtual sessions to FOW during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Let's hear more from Eunice as she takes us through her busy day at FOW (Bendemeer) and what fuels her to continue to provide innovation and dedicated care to her clients with dementia.

“ ”

## DESCRIBE A REGULAR WORKDAY FOR YOURSELF AT FOW BENDEMEER.

Upon arriving at FOW (Bendemeer), I check and reply to all my emails and WhatsApp messages, as well as respond to caregivers' queries and requests for advice. If I have received a new referral from our hospital or geriatrician partners, I also contact the new caregiver, explain to them about the FOW programme, and arrange for them to bring their loved one with dementia to the centre for an assessment. I also take the time to prepare PowerPoint slides for the one-to-one FOW sessions that I conduct twice a week.

As the day starts and the FOW sessions begin, I observe our clients, as well as talk and engage with the caregivers. When each session is done, I discuss with the centre staff tweaks or improvements that we can implement to further suit a particular client. It's always important for us to explore new ideas across our different sessions and look for more ways to beautify our centre and make it more homely. Even during my weekends, I like to go shopping and I always keep an eye out for more ideas, props and decor items that are suitable for the centre, such as baking items or games.



## WHAT OR WHO INSPIRED YOU TO GET INTO THIS LINE OF WORK?

My interest in eldercare, dementia care and social service started many years ago, as I stayed with my maternal grandmother during the first six years of my life. I guess because of this, I developed a natural bond with the elderly and by extension, persons with dementia.



## WHAT MAKES YOU SMILE OR KEEPS YOU GOING?

What keeps me going are the smiles I see on my clients' and caregivers' faces. I am happy when I see that the programme can help the caregivers feel that their loved ones are meaningfully engaged. For our clients with dementia, it also makes me happy that FOW is able to help them use their remaining abilities, bring out the best in them, or help them discover new talents. FOW helps people see that even with dementia, not all is lost. I love to simply lend a listening ear or give advice to my caregivers when needed.

## WHAT ARE PEOPLE'S USUAL REACTIONS WHEN YOU TELL THEM WHAT YOUR JOB IS?

People's usual reactions to me would be: "Oh, it must be a tough job," or "Handling people with dementia must be very tough!" But actually, this job is not as tough as people think. It is a very rewarding job to meet and serve people with dementia and their caregivers.

## CAN YOU SHARE MORE ABOUT ANY EXCITING THINGS THAT WE CAN LOOK FORWARD TO FOR FOW?

I'm happy to share that currently, FOW Bendemeer is working closely with our IT team and an external vendor to develop a digital app (called the FOW Operations Management System). With support and funding from National Council of Social Service (NCSS) as well as Dementia Singapore's fundraising efforts, the digital project aims to eliminate the paperwork and manual processes which we do daily.

The app will allow us to connect with FOW caregivers in a seamless manner, as caregivers will be able to check in on their loved ones' progress, e.g. access to their six-monthly NeuroFIT brain training report, or view photographs taken of their loved ones in action during FOW sessions. The app will also allow caregivers to access their latest invoices and billing information.

# Rajah & Tann Donates \$225,000 to the Dementia Cause



The spirit of caring and giving back to society is part of R&T's DNA, which we inherited from our founders T. T. Rajah and Tann Wee Tiong. We are delighted to support The Straits Times School Pocket Money Fund and Dementia Singapore, which have helped thousands of people over the years.

- PATRICK ANG, R&T MANAGING PARTNER

"Dementia Singapore's work to build a dementia-inclusive society requires a whole-of-community effort to ensure its success, and we are very privileged to have Rajah & Tann's support towards the dementia cause."

- JASON FOO, CEO OF DEMENTIA SINGAPORE

Dementia Singapore is honoured to be one of the beneficiaries to receive a generous donation of \$225,000 from Singapore's leading law firm, Rajah & Tann. This is in celebration of the firm's 45th-anniversary celebration on 5 May 2022, held at the Ritz-Carlton, Millenia Singapore.

Another \$225,000 was also contributed to The Straits Times School Pocket Money Fund (STSPMF). Mr Zakir Hussain, a board trustee of STSPMF and The Straits Times' Singapore editor, and Dementia Singapore CEO Mr Jason Foo, jointly received a cheque from Rajah & Tann Singapore's Managing Partner, Mr Patrick Ang, and Rajah & Tann Foundation's Chairperson, Ms Rebecca Chew.

# An Outing Two Years in the Making

On 19 May 2022, our long-time corporate partner, Edrington, and charity organisation, Cycling Without Age (CWA), jointly organised a day trip to Gardens by the Bay's Active Garden for 30 of our Voices for Hope graduates. Our participants engaged in various activities such as colouring and decorating trishaw illustrations, going on a scavenger hunt, and playing games such as Jenga and table hockey.

The highlight of the day, however, was the trishaw ride around the Gardens. Our Edrington volunteers assumed the role of trishaw 'pilots' for the day and engaged in hearty conversations with our persons with dementia and caregivers, who basked in the sun and admired the scenic views. After two long years of tight restrictions, this first-of-its-kind outing was certainly a breath of fresh air for everyone!



# A Social Club Party in Full Swing!

To commemorate its recent revamp, our Dementia Social Club at Tiong Bahru hosted a 'New Look Party' from 6 June to 10 June 2022. It was an exciting week packed with a variety of games and activities for our Social Club members, which includes both persons with dementia and their caregivers. On the final day of celebrations, we also welcomed our talented volunteers from Mediacorp who put on a special song-and-dance performance for the Young Onset Dementia Club members.

Our clients and caregivers could not resist singing and dancing along to the English, Mandarin, and Hokkien songs belted out by the volunteers. Much to everyone's delight, Dementia Singapore CEO, Jason Foo, also joined in on the sing-along, adding to the joyous atmosphere for all.

Having previously hosted our Mediacorp volunteers at a virtual Memories Cafe performance for our clients and caregivers in 2021, it was wonderful to finally watch them perform in person.

We would like to thank all our corporate partners for all they have done thus far to bring joy to our clients with dementia and caregivers. As Singapore continues to open up and ease COVID-19 restrictions, we hope to be able to explore more volunteer opportunities for meaningful, in-person collaboration.



No one can resist a good tune, and that includes our CEO Jason Foo, and the enthusiastic volunteers from Mediacorp!

# Join us in supporting the dementia cause today!

## DONATE

 [dementia.org.sg/donate](https://dementia.org.sg/donate)  [giving.sg/dementia-singapore-ltd](https://giving.sg/dementia-singapore-ltd)

## VOLUNTEER

 [dementia.org.sg/volunteer](https://dementia.org.sg/volunteer)

## SIGN UP FOR VOICE OF DEMENTIA (ONLINE)

 [dementia.org.sg/vod](https://dementia.org.sg/vod)

## SCAN TO DONATE




## Dementia Singapore

Dementia Singapore was formed in 1990 as the 'Alzheimer's Disease Association' to better serve Singapore's growing dementia community, increase awareness about dementia, and reduce the stigma surrounding the condition.

As Singapore's leading Social Service Agency (SSA) in specialised dementia care, Dementia Singapore aims to advocate for the needs of people living with dementia and their families; empower the community through capability-building, knowledge and consultancy; and deliver quality, person-centred care innovations.

### Dementia Helpline

 6377 0700


 Monday - Friday: 9.00am - 6.00pm  
Saturday: 9.00am - 1.00pm


### Headquarters

#### Caregiver Support Services


#### Dementia Singapore Academy


#### Family of Wisdom (Bendemeer)

 20 Bendemeer Road, #01-02,  
BS Bendemeer Centre,  
Singapore 339914


 Monday - Friday: 9.00am - 6.00pm


### Dementia Social Club

 298 Tiong Bahru Road, #10-05,  
Central Plaza,  
Singapore 168730


 Monday: 2.00pm - 4.30pm  
Tuesday - Friday: 9.30am - 12.00pm,  
2.00pm - 4.30pm


### New Horizon Centre (Bukit Batok)

 Blk 511 Bukit Batok Street 52, #01-211,  
Singapore 650511


 Monday - Friday: 7.30am - 6.30pm


### New Horizon Centre (Jurong Point)

 1 Jurong West Central 2, #04-04,  
Jurong Point Shopping Centre,  
Singapore 648886


 Monday - Friday: 7.30am - 6.30pm


### New Horizon Centre (Tampines)

 Blk 362 Tampines Street 34, #01-377,  
Singapore 520362

 Monday - Friday: 7.30am - 6.30pm

### New Horizon Centre (Toa Payoh)

 Blk 157 Toa Payoh Lorong 1, #01-1195,  
Singapore 310157

 Monday - Friday: 7.30am - 6.30pm

## DEMENTIA IN NUMBERS

The economic burden  
of dementia is

**US\$1.3  
trillion**

every year.



**Almost 80%**  
of the general public  
are concerned about  
developing dementia  
at some point.



**2 in 3**

people wrongly believe  
that dementia is a  
normal part of the  
ageing process.



Source: Alzheimer's Disease International

## Editorial Team

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