

Chit Chat

Dover Park Hospice Volunteer Newsletter
July - September 2021 Issue

The **New Norms** of Volunteering in This Current Pandemic Situation

In this edition of Chit Chat, let us take a look at how activities are conducted differently at Dover Park Hospice, since the COVID-19 pandemic started more than a year ago.



Engaging Potential Volunteers

It has been more than a year since we had to halt the recruitment and training of new volunteers here at Dover Park Hospice. In 2021, we conducted two sessions of 'Introduction to Volunteering at Dover Park Hospice', using Zoom, to share more about what we do with the volunteer applicants.

Let us hear from two volunteer ambassadors who assisted in conducting these sessions - Mr Edwin Seow and Ms Linda Hart.

Q1: Could you share with us your role at the sharing sessions and what you hope to achieve by participating in them?

Edwin: My role of being a volunteer speaker in the "Introduction to Volunteering at Dover Park Hospice" session is to share and impart specific portions of the talk from the experience and viewpoint of a volunteer at Dover Park Hospice. At the same time, I help to deliver Dover Park Hospice's programme and corporate posture, guidelines of engagement with patients and staff that we learnt during our training. I particularly like the way that Dover Park Hospice chose to conduct these sessions through a volunteer as it conveys ownership where my aim is to inform and educate the audience about their holistic volunteer programme sensitively and respectfully, which I hope I managed to achieve through my sharing.



Volunteer Edwin Seow performing at Dover Park Hospice (photo taken before COVID-19)

Weekly	Activity	Time	Group
Monday	On Piano - Ms Ng Bie Tin	4:00pm - 5:00pm	Sapphire (Musicians)
Tuesday	Hair-cutting	8:30am - 10:30 am	Sunstone
Thursday	Patients' Outing	8:30am - 12:00pm	Emerald
Friday	Happy Hour On Piano - Mr Patrick Foo	4:15pm - 5:15pm 12:30pm - 1:30pm	Sapphire Sapphire (Musicians)
Saturday	Gardening On Piano - Mr Lin Xu Zheng - Dr Lai Kok Fung Massaging Patients	10:00 am - 1:00 pm 3:00 pm - 4:00 pm 4:00 pm - 5:30 pm 3.30pm - 5.30pm	Topaz Sunshine Sapphire (Musicians) Opal

Weekly	Activity	Time	Group
Monday 12 July 2021 9 August 2021 13 September 2021	Pet-Assisted Therapy (2nd Monday of the month)	3:00 pm - 4:00pm	Ruby
Wednesday 21 July 2021 18 August 2021 15 September 2021	Soup for Patients (3rd Wednesday of the month)	12:00pm - 1:30pm	Pearlie's Angel's
14 July 2021 11 August 2021 8 September 2021	On Piano - Ms Yuko Arai	10:30am-11:30am	Sapphire (Musicians)
Saturday 3 July 2021 7 August 2021 4 September 2021	Birthdays	3:00 pm - 5:00pm	Diamond
3 July 2021 7 August 2021 4 September 2021	Ukulele performance for patients by Moulmein Cairnhill Ukulele Interest Group	3:00pm - 4:00pm	Aquamarine
10 & 24 July 2021 14 & 28 August 2021 11 & 25 September 2021	Popular evergreen songs for patients	11:00am - 12:00pm	Charis Amethyst
10 & 24 July 2021 14 & 28 August 2021 11 & 25 September 2021	Saturday Afternoon Sing-Along	3:00pm - 5:00pm	Blue Sapphire
24 July 2021 28 August 2021 25 September 2021	Pet-Assisted Therapy	10:00 am - 11:00 am	Ruby
3 & 17 July 2021 7 & 21 August 2021 14 & 18 September 2021	Arts & Craft	2:00pm - 5:00pm	Crystal
Saturday 11 & 13 July 2021 8 & 15 August 2021 12 & 19 September 2021	Kopi & Roti Session	10:00 am - 12:00pm	Soka

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Q2: What are the main differences between conducting this session remotely and physically? Did you face challenges in either of them?

Linda: I was initially unsure if this role was for me, but after thinking it through, I realised, nothing ventured nothing gained.

I have participated in quite a few of these sessions when it was conducted in-person, and enjoyed doing so with my fellow volunteers in a room with people sitting in front of us. There is nothing more uplifting than to meet potential new volunteers and taking them through the birth of palliative care—its history, what palliative care entails—the philosophy of palliative care, how it has evolved over the years to how Dover Park Hospice was started. I got to share about their care philosophy for both patients and their families and the holistic care of the health of the mind, body and spirit as a way to promote wellbeing of an individual's life, volunteers included. However, when we had to conduct the sessions virtually, I personally felt that the sessions did not bring about the same effects as the in-person sessions.



When you are speaking to a group of 20 or more individuals in-person, you are able to immediately see their reactions to what you are saying, and in some way, read their body language to what I have said. To me, that is very satisfying, whether the response is a positive or negative one. However, when the sessions are conducted virtually, you may not be able to see the facial expressions of the participants and get a sense of how they are feeling.



Volunteer Linda Hart at an Outreach event (photo taken before COVID-19)

If I remember correctly, there were two participants who actually asked questions at the end of the talk. One of them in particular shared that she personally felt that Edwin and I were very committed with what we were doing and that was really encouraging. All in all, it was a challenging experience for me and I hope that the participants who attended had gained insights to palliative care and volunteering at Dover Park Hospice.

Edwin: I personally also prefer sharing with live audiences as I usually want to engage the participants in a more personal way through eye contact, voice and body language. Conducting the talk in-person also facilitates genuine and spontaneous interactions between the speaker and the audiences. Sometimes I can feel some of their emotions in their response to our questions. I understand that need for remote sessions in view of the pandemic and do not have a problem at all with that as we just need to adapt. I always try to make every session unique and engaging, but it can be challenging when the topic may be quite dry to some audiences. In the end, I think a balance must be struck to make the session factual, meaningful, interesting, comfortable and respectful as volunteering in activities involving end-of-life issues is certainly not easy.

Bringing Cheer to Patients at the Hospice

Due to the pandemic, celebrations like birthdays and festivities cannot be held. However, volunteers of the Dover Park Hospice Diamond Group continue to do what they can to bring cheer to our patients and staff at the Hospice. We invite our volunteers; Mr Muhammad Agus bin Othman and Ms Siti Zainah Bte Sapari to share with us how they go about doing this.

Q1: Could you share with us how the Group continue to bring cheers to the patients and everyone at Dover Park Hospice during this pandemic?

Agus: Like what we have done before, we collect the monthly birthday cakes and deliver them to the Hospice so that patients and staff can at least continue to have birthday celebrations. We also brought some Hari Raya cookies during the last Hari Raya Celebration, even though we were unable to celebrate it together like before due to the pandemic.

Siti: During the recent Hari Raya celebration, some of the Diamond Group members came to Dover Park Hospice to put up the Hari Raya decorations at the lobby area and the ward corridors. With these decorations, we hope to bring the Hari Raya mood to the patients, caregivers, and staff of Dover Park Hospice.

Q2: Were there any challenges faced and how were they overcome?



Our volunteer Muhammad Agus bin Othman with Hari Raya goodies

Agus: Yes, there were great challenges. We are unable to carry out our normal activities at Dover Park Hospice. We had to adapt to the changes, keep ourselves safe and abide by the SOPs and pandemic measures. While we were unable to meet to carry out activities at the Hospice, we still remained in contact with our volunteer group members and kept ourselves updated.

Siti: Yes, there are challenges currently during the pandemic period. One of them is that we have to strictly follow the protocols and pandemic measures when we are out of our homes. To overcome this before we carried out the decorating activity at Dover Park Hospice, we underwent a refresher on hand hygiene and the do's and don'ts while working together with our fellow volunteers as a precaution.



Volunteers hanging up Hari Raya decorations

