

Chit Chat

Dover Park Hospice Volunteer Newsletter
July - September 2023 Issue

Namaste Care at Dover Park Hospice

“Namaste” is a Sanskrit greeting which means “to honour the spirit within”. Namaste Care is a programme originally developed in 2003 by Ms Joyce Simard, the founder and honorary chair of Namaste Care International (USA), to provide care and comfort to patients through sensory stimulation and touch, and aims to enhance their quality of life. The programme is suitable for patients with moderate to advanced dementia or end-stage cancer. It engages patients with simple and gentle hand massages, stimulates blood circulation, warms their hands and helps to calm the mind and body. It helps the patient to feel cared for, nurtured and loved. In this issue of Chit Chat, let us hear from Volunteers who have conducted Namaste Care sessions with our patients while volunteering here.



Kelly Tong conducting Namaste Care for a Day Care client.

1. Can you share with us how you include Namaste Care in your volunteering work and why did you choose to include this as part of your volunteering journey here?

Kelly Tong

I assist with Namaste Care sessions for Dover Park Day Care patients. Besides having conversations with patients, I find that touch is an alternative yet powerful non-verbal communication method that can help enhance psychological and physical comfort. Touch is a universal language that many can understand regardless of cultural backgrounds and language differences. I find that gentle touch creates a connection between the patients and

myself, and helps me to convey my empathy and compassion to them which I sometimes find difficult to express with words. I love seeing patients fall asleep and even snore during Namaste Care sessions, which to me, is a sign that their body and mind are relaxed. I also love seeing their visibly rested and refreshed looks after Namaste Care sessions!

Activity	Volunteer/ Group	Schedule
On Piano	Ms Yuko Arai	Monthly, 1st Tuesday, 10am-11am
	Ms Teo Suey Sung	Thrice-monthly, Tuesday, 10.30am – 11.30am
	Ms Shannon Choo	Weekly, Wednesday, 11am – 12pm
	Ms Ng Bie Tin	Weekly, Wednesday, 4.30pm - 5.30pm
	Dr Bonnie Jane Smart	Weekly, Thursday, 10.30am – 11.30am
	Mr Patrick Foo	Weekly, Friday, 4.30pm – 5.30pm
	Mr Lin Xuzheng	Bi Monthly, Saturday, 3pm – 4pm
	Dr Lai Kok Fung	Bi Monthly, Saturday, 5pm – 6pm
Happy Hour	DPH Volunteers	Weekly, Monday, 4pm – 5pm
Hair-Cutting	Sunstone	Weekly, Tuesday, 8.30am – 10.30am
Soup for Patients	Pearl	Monthly, 3rd Wednesday, 11.30am
Patients' Outing	Emerald	Weekly, Thursday, 8.30am – 12pm
Lim Kopi for Patients	DPH Volunteers	Weekly, Friday, 9.30am – 10.30am
Gardening	Topaz	Weekly, Saturday, 10am -11am
Massaging Patients	Opal	Weekly, Saturday, 3.30pm - 5.30pm
Virtual Pet Befriending	Ruby	Monthly, Saturday, 9.45am – 10.45am
Pet Befriending	Ruby	Monthly, Saturday, 10am – 11am
Arts & Craft	Crystal	Monthly, Saturday, 2pm - 4pm
Sale of Merchandise	DPH Volunteers	Monthly, 1st Saturday, 10am - 12pm
Birthday Celebrations	Diamond	Monthly, 1st Saturday, 3pm
Popular evergreen songs for patients	Charis Amethyst	Bi Monthly, 2nd & 4th Saturday, 11am – 12pm
Kopi and Roti Session	Soka	Bi Monthly, 2nd & 3rd Sunday, 10am - 12pm

For more information on Dover Park Hospice programmes, please contact:
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Linda Hart

I have to admit, I do not often get the opportunity to do Namaste Care as much as I would like to. In fact, I have only done Namaste Care a few times. I would conduct Namaste Care when I bring a patient out in a wheelchair to the garden when the sun is shining, the sky is blue and while we are surrounded by the beauty of nature. The patient feels more relaxed and open to receiving the benefits of the holistic approach to relaxation. I believe in the concept of “mind, body and soul”, and if all is aligned, we will experience inner peace. As the person giving Namaste Care massages, I can sense when a patient is relaxed. I give Namaste Care with love, empathy, and wish and hope that the person receiving it will feel relaxed, comforted and at peace.



Linda Hart attending a Namaste Care training workshop at Dover Park Hospice.

2. Have you had any memorable encounters/ experiences when engaging our patients with Namaste Care?

Kelly Tong

It's always heartening to hear patients share with me how Namaste Care has helped them. One patient shared how the face massage has helped him to breathe better and he didn't cough for a few hours afterwards

Another patient actually asked if I provide Namaste Care in homes, as he hoped for his wife to enjoy the same relaxing experience he did at Dover Park Day Care. There was also a patient who evaluated and rated my skills! I really appreciate all the honest feedback I received from the patients so that I can further improve my Namaste Care skills to benefit them!

Linda Hart

I find that ladies are more open to receiving Namaste Care. One told me she felt very relaxed and good after experiencing Namaste Care and asked if we could do it again. We had one more session afterwards.



A Calling to Help Others

We are proud of our Nurse Manager (Home Care), Mr Mirza Abdul Halim who was one of the Nurses' Merit Award 2023 recipients. The award was launched in 1976 by the Ministry of Health, and is a testament to nurses who have performed exceptionally, embody continuous learning and dedicated time to advancing the nursing profession in Singapore. In this interview, he shares his nursing journey and what the Nurses' Merit Award means to him.

1. Why did you decide to become a nurse?

I was motivated to become a nurse because of my mother, a primary care nurse who worked at a polyclinic for over 20 years. In my youth, I would go to my mother's workplace to watch her while she worked and was able to see how she cared for and supported her patients with compassion. Witnessing how she helped others through her work as a nurse inspired me to become a nurse too.

2. Why did you choose to pursue palliative care nursing?

At the beginning of my nursing career, I had the chance to work part-time with a private nursing agency. I was given the chance to try various roles in several healthcare settings and institutions. During that stint, I found my calling in palliative care. In palliative care, I am able to provide holistic care which goes beyond supporting patients with their physical needs but also their emotional, psychosocial and spiritual ones. This spurred me to join Dover Park Hospice as a full-time nurse in 2014.

3. What is a challenge you face at work?

A challenge I face is to have difficult conversations with patients and families on the state of their health and what to expect as time goes on and they deteriorate. Pacing with and being present for them on this journey is meaningful but can be challenging.

4. Can you share a memorable experience at work?

Lunch time with my Home Care colleagues is always nice. While our role can be challenging



Mr Mirza Abdul Halim, Nurse Manager (Home Care), at the Nurses' Merit Award 2023 ceremony.

at times and require us to spend most of our workday visiting patients at their homes, we always find respite in seeking out good food on our visits! Cooking food to share with each other is also something I treasure.

5. What does the Nurses' Merit Award mean to you?

I see it as a reflection that the faith my team has in me to uphold high standards of patient care is not misplaced.

6. As a nurse with more than 10 years of experience, what would you say to those who wish to join nursing?

Come in with an open mind and understand it may take a while before you find the right specialty or environment that suits your work style or interests. Not everyone has a clear idea of what their career in nursing will look like from the get go.