WHEN LIFE GIVES YOU LEMONS, MAKE LEMONADE!

Read all about NKF’s oldest patient, known as Uncle Chua at NKF’s dialysis centre in Hougang, on page 2.
Becoming a kidney patient only after you have lived passed the age of 90 seemed like an uphill task for Mr Chua Kang, but he can continue to count his blessings with NKF’s help.

A road less travelled

For a man who has been fiercely independent for the last few decades, NKF’s oldest patient, 94-year-old Uncle Chua was not only in great physical pain and discomfort when he was first diagnosed with kidney failure, but the emotional turmoil also caused him to have suicidal tendencies.

The initial physical irritation and soreness was like a terrible nightmare as he was unable to adapt to the new lifestyle of a kidney patient. Besides watching their diet, one of the most drastic changes in the lifestyle of kidney patients is that they can only drink between 500-1000ml per day (roughly around 4 cups of water), depending on their urine output. Uncle Chua had to be hospitalised frequently due to fluid overload. One night he decided to end it all.

Fortunately, Uncle Chua’s fourth daughter, Lian Tee, heard the sound of the windows opening in the middle of the night and got up to find out what was going on. She managed to stop Uncle Chua from taking his life.

NKF’s Medical Social Workers moved in swiftly to offer counseling and emotional support. Coupled with the help from Uncle Chua’s closely-knitted family, he is now happy and doing well with his dialysis. He will turn 95 in September this year.

Problems of hypertension

Born in 1915, Uncle Chua was the eldest child of the family. Having lost both of his parents at a young age, he took up labour intensive jobs so as to support his siblings.

Uncle Chua was diagnosed with hypertension at the age of 74 and later developed End-stage Renal Failure in late 2007. He was admitted into NKF’s dialysis programme in January 2008. Having dialysed for the first few months in a private dialysis centre where he was charged over $2,000 per month, Uncle Chua’s daughter, Lian Tee said she was very glad and grateful when her father was accepted into NKF’s highly subsidised dialysis programme.

“The dialysis fees at the private centre would have put a financial strain on all of us”, said Lian Tee. Lian Tee is a clerk at a clothing company and is one of the two children currently living with Uncle Chua.

An avid cook

For Uncle Chua, life was not always easy as the eldest child in the family. He had to work tirelessly to provide for the rest of his siblings and even learnt to cook for the family. But it is also this culinary skill that has kept Uncle Chua active up to now. In fact, Lian Tee attests that her father still loves to cook all kinds of dishes. On days when Uncle Chua does not have dialysis, he will whip up different dishes for the family.

“I am so proud that my father is one of those fathers who can cook. In fact, he would often improvise on his dishes to make them unique!”, said Lian Tee.

Father of 10

Described by Lian Tee as a strict father, Uncle Chua, who has five boys and five girls, did not allow the girls in the family to go out while they were young. But as the patriarch of the family, Uncle Chua is a caring father who would go to the wet market to buy groceries and cook for his children. These days, Lian Tee will do the groceries instead as Uncle Chua tends to get physically tired after dialysis. But on good days, Lian Tee said her father will still do some of the cooking.

Growing number of elderly patients in NKF

As of 31 January 2010, there are 2,325 haemodialysis patients, out of which, 51% are elderly above 60 years old.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Number</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60-70 years old</td>
<td>752</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71-80 years old</td>
<td>374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81 years old &amp; above</td>
<td>50</td>
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Uncle Chua is also a man who upholds strong family values. It was his diligence and perseverance in taking care of the family that earned him the strong support he enjoys today. In fact, Uncle Chua’s daughters would take turns to bring him to and from the NKF dialysis centre at Hougang.

Today, Uncle Chua is a proud grandfather of 17 grandchildren and a great grandfather of 7 great grandchildren.

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Encouraging Volunteerism

Despite the economic gloom last year, heartwarming stories of those who donated their time and money to the less fortunate were still aplenty. NKF volunteer, Tony Tan was one of those who donated his resources and time to help the children of NKF patients.

Benefiting children of NKF patients

Many of NKF’s patients have children who need the necessary tuition to cope with their studies. However, these needy patients find it financially challenging to pay for their children’s tuition fees. Mr Tan provides free tuition to these needy children, through his tuition agency, SmartLab®.

It all started when he read an article in TODAY newspaper about another NKF volunteer, who broached the idea of getting students to volunteer as tutors for the children of NKF patients.

Overwhelming response

29 students from primary four to secondary four signed up for SmartLab®’s tuition programme. Although the pilot programme ran for only three months, many of the children have expressed their wishes to be enrolled again for this year’s tuition programme.

With the support from SmartLab®, our patients can focus on their rehabilitation and lead productive lives knowing that their children’s academic needs are also taken care of.

“lt was rewarding to learn that some of the students in this programme called at the end of 2009 asking when classes will resume this year. This was subsequently reinforced by positive feedback from the parents”, said Mr Tan.

Commemorating International Volunteers’ Day

The 5th of December every year has been designated as International Volunteer Day (IVD) by the United Nations since 1985. Its aim is to thank volunteers for their efforts and increase public awareness on their contributions to society.

NKF’s Volunteer Management team met up with their volunteers on a one-to-one or group basis. The volunteers were all given certificates of appreciation for their continuous commitment to NKF’s cause and the corporate volunteers were presented with plaques for their organisations’ commitment and support.

The Team also took the opportunity to gather feedback from the volunteers to continuously improve NKF’s volunteer programme.

Chairman of NKF Volunteer Committee, Mr Yatiman Yusof presented the Outstanding Service Awards for 2009 to the following organisations and individuals for their relentless effort in making a difference in the lives of NKF patients:

Corporate Volunteers
1. Aljunied-Hougang CCC
2. B Braun Singapore Pte Ltd
3. Bedok Methodist Church
4. Boscombe Life Church
5. Changi Simei A.C.E Alumni
6. Church of Our Saviour
7. Janssen-Cilag
   (a division of Johnson & Johnson Pte Ltd)
8. Network for Electronic Transfers (Singapore) Pte Ltd
9. School of Human Development and Social Services SIM University
10. Singapore Buddhist Youth Mission
11. SmartLab® Educational Centre
12. The Art of Living Foundation
13. Westside Anglican Church

Individual Volunteers
1. Chong Kue Wah
2. Jack Ng Lik Hong
3. Meda Garcia Laureta
4. Alain Low
5. Low Si Yam Luan
6. Rose Ong Mui Kui
7. Tan Jui Ming
8. Yap Lay Khim

If you would like to volunteer in NKF’s “Circle of Hearts” programme, please call 6299 0200 or email us at contact_us@nkfs.org
Involving The Community

Knowledge Sharing on Kidney Disease Prevention

World Kidney Day

History of World Kidney Day
Ever since World Kidney Day was launched world-wide in 2006, it has not stopped its campaign in educating the public on preventing kidney diseases. A joint initiative of the International Society of Nephrology (ISN) and the International Federation of Kidney Foundations (IFKF), the campaign is essentially to raise greater awareness among the global community on kidney diseases as well as to reduce the frequency and impact of these growing diseases.

Early Detection
Early detection is always the key to better treatment results as well as reducing the growing number of kidney diseases, both globally and also in Singapore. In 2007, there were 3,963 kidney patients in Singapore (Statistics: Health Promotion Board) and this trend continues to grow at an alarming rate. One of the solutions in tackling this problem is to educate the public as well as the primary care medical staff on the causes and prevention of renal diseases. These would include the primary care physicians, nurses and the general public. Thus, the NKF co-organises symposiums on kidney diseases and the management of it so that healthcare providers can detect early and better manage the condition of their patients.

“Diabetes and Your Kidneys”
As part of this year’s World Kidney Day, NKF, Singapore Society of Nephrology, and Singapore Nurses Association are co-organising symposiums on the topic, “Diabetes and Your Kidneys”.

To be held on 13 March 2010, the symposium for primary care physicians will be focusing on topics such as:
- Strategies for lowering glycated hemoglobin in patients with diabetic kidney disease
- Achieving treatment targets for retarding diabetic kidney disease
- Can you prevent kidney disease in diabetic patients?

Another symposium organised specially for non-renal nurses, will be held on 14 March 2010 covering topics such as:
- Diabetes & the kidney -- how big is the problem?
- Pathophysiology of diabetes
- What’s new in diabetic medications?
- Management of diabetic nephropathy
- Role of diabetes nurse educator
- Renal replacement therapy in diabetes
- Eating right with diabetes
- A better means to an end-advance care planning

Kidney Discovery Centre

Education is Key
Prevention is the key to reduce incidences of kidney failure. As such, NKF has embarked on a project to set up a Kidney Discovery Centre (KDC), a highly interactive centre which will engage visitors with tours, exhibits, videos and activities to fit all ages. In line with NKF’s Community Education Programme, KDC will showcase how our kidneys function, the causes of kidney failure, treatments, the lifestyle of a kidney patient, and the future development of kidney dialysis treatments (pictured below).

Students from primary, secondary, and tertiary levels will have the opportunity to walk through these exhibits and understand better what causes kidney failure and how to prevent it. They can then share this knowledge with their family and friends.

Many generous sponsors have already pledged their donations to build the KDC. Costing around $1.5 million to set up, it is slated to be opened in 2011.

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I wish to make a One-Time Donation to the National Kidney Foundation

☐ $200 ☐ $100 ☐ $50 ☐ Others $____

Mr / Mrs / Ms / Mdm / Dr: ________________________________
NRIC/FIN No.: ________________________________

Address: ____________________________________________
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Tel. No.: (HP) ________________________________ (O) ________________________________ (H) ________________________________
E-mail: __________________________________________

☐ I enclose a cheque/money order no. ________________________________ made payable to “NKF”.

☐ Please debit my VISA/ Master Card/ American Express/ Diners/ JCB card*

Name on the Card: __________________________________________
Card No.: __________________________________________
Expiry Date: ________________________________
Last three numbers on signature panel. (For Amex card, please provide the 4-digit number above the card number)
Signature & Date: __________________________________________

☐ I wish to upgrade my LifeDrops monthly donation. Please send me an upgrading form.

☐ I wish to join LifeDrops Monthly Donation scheme. Please send me a Direct Debit Authorisation (GIRO) form.

$200 $100 $50 Others $____

Mr / Mrs / Ms / Mdm / Dr: ________________________________
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Address: ____________________________________________
Postal Code: ________________________________
Tel. No.: (HP) ________________________________ (O) ________________________________ (H) ________________________________
E-mail: __________________________________________

☐ I enclose a cheque/money order no. ________________________________ made payable to “NKF”.

☐ Please debit my VISA/ Master Card/ American Express/ Diners/ JCB card*

Name on the Card: __________________________________________
Card No.: __________________________________________
Expiry Date: ________________________________
Last three numbers on signature panel. (For Amex card, please provide the 4-digit number above the card number)
Signature & Date: __________________________________________

☐ I wish to upgrade my LifeDrops monthly donation. Please send me an upgrading form.

☐ I wish to join LifeDrops Monthly Donation scheme. Please send me a Direct Debit Authorisation (GIRO) form.

Switch to e-mail & “donate” the mailing cost saved!
Do you know that you actually “donate” to NKF every time you receive an e-mail from us? Yes, you donate as much as the mailing cost saved by opting for e-mail communication. Please provide us with your e-mail address if you have not done so!
☐ Yes, I prefer to receive e-mails from NKF.
Please e-mail me at: ________________________________

You can make a difference in the lives of needy kidney patients!

ONLINE DONATIONS FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE!
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www.nkfs.org/donation
www.sggives.org

Enjoy 2.5 times income tax-deduction for the year 2010!

All donations will be automatically included in your tax assessment if you have provided us with your NRIC/FIN number.
To help us save costs, please give this form away if you do not need it.