Young Paul does not know what his future holds...

"Where There is a Will, There is a Way"

First Ever 24 Dialysis Centre Open House

Encouraging Active Lifestyle for Patients
As the main caregiver bringing up two boys, with one needing special medical attention all the time, and without any help from her extended family, Mdm Khee Moi Sin often feels like throwing in the towel. But when she thinks about her boys being left with no one to look after them, she tells herself that she has to grit her teeth and find that inner strength to carry on for another day.

Congenital Nephrotic Syndrome

When Mdm Khee gave birth to her second son, Paul, six years ago, she never expected that it would cost her lifelong worries for his well-being. Born a normal baby with no apparent health problems, Paul started to have fluid retention and would throw up milk when he was one month old. After a whirlwind of blood tests, transfers of doctors and hospitals later, Paul was diagnosed with Congenital Nephrotic Syndrome. This is a disorder which is passed down through families in which a baby develops protein in the urine and swelling of the body. Children with this disorder have an abnormal form of a protein called nephrin, which is found in the kidney. Having this condition means that Paul’s immune system is very weak compared to other children. In fact, Mdm Khee said that going to the playground for Paul is considered a treat and not a norm. And if he has any minor illnesses like fever and cough, it would usually mean a trip to the hospital and not to the General Practitioner. Paul’s diet too, unlike other children’s, is void of sugar, chocolates and cold drinks. With this medical condition, Paul would have a tendency to develop tooth decay if he is allowed to take sugary food indiscriminately. Unfortunately, Paul may have to go for dialysis in the long run due to his Congenital Nephrotic Syndrome.

A huge relief

When Paul was eventually referred to the Shaw-NKF Children’s Kidney Centre (CKC) at the National University Hospital, to monitor his medical condition, Mdm Khee felt a big burden had been lifted from her. “As a Permanent Resident, the amount of subsidies for medical services is lower and Paul’s bi-monthly medical and dental bills can add up to a hefty sum for a single parent like me. That is why I’m so ever grateful to NKF for subsiding Paul’s bills”, said Mdm Khee. Paul is not a dialysis patient but as a child patient in CKC, he receives subsidies for his bi-monthly medical check-ups, medications, immunisations, as well as, A&E services. In fact, Paul’s subsidies have recently increased from $230 to $300 per month, with the addition of another $200 for dental check-ups.

“It’s really a huge relief for me when the majority of Paul’s medical bills are all taken care of by NKF. Otherwise, I wouldn’t know where I would be able to cough up so much for his regular medical bills”, said Mdm Khee.

The 40 year-old Mdm Khee, a coffeeshop assistant who works from 8am to 9.30pm, always puts her kids’ welfare before her own and would rush home during a two and a half hours’ break so that she can check on her sons.

“When I think about my boys not having anyone but me to turn to, I just tell myself to hang on”, said a teary Mdm Khee.

When asked about her wishes in life, Mdm Khee remarked that hers is a simple one.

“I just wish that my boys will be healthy and that I can continue to keep my job”, said Mdm Khee.
Talking to 44-year-old Jackson Toh on the phone, one can sense, from the hurried tone in his voice, he is a busy man. Then what makes him find the time to escort not just one, but four patients to the dialysis centre, three times a week for the past one year, making a total of more than 500 trips a year?

Growing up in an unusually big family, Jackson was the youngest of 11 older siblings. Since he was the youngest child, he was always close to his mother and would often follow her around for all sorts of activities. It was through his observation of how the older folks needed physical help that gave him the determination to help them when he had the opportunity.

“Back in my childhood kampong days, my mother and I would have to walk some distance to the nearest bus stop to take a bus. Since my mother was already fairly old when she gave birth to me, many good-hearted strangers would always assume that I was her grandchild and would give us a lift to the bus stop”, recalled Jackson.

It was what he received from many strangers that gave him the idea that he should one day return this same act of kindness to those who need it most.

“Since I have a car now, I wanted to just focus on making full use of it to help ferry old patients back to their homes so that they may be able to rest in the comfort of their homes as all the waiting around can be very tiring for old folks”, said Jackson.

Jackson went on to share that it is not always possible for relatives of kidney patients to take time off work to accompany their loved ones to and from the dialysis centre as they need to earn a living.

In fact, talking to Jackson, it may come as a shock that he is an extremely busy businessman who runs three tea retail shops, a catering company, as well as, a second-hand car company. When asked how he ever finds the time to escort these patients, his answers were straightforward and simple.

“Of course everyone is busy in Singapore. But if I make it my top priority to escort these patients knowing that they need my help, then when the time comes for me to fetch them, I will make all efforts to drop everything and go.”

“Some of my friends remarked to me that it is silly of me to run around and fetch these patients when I should be taking care of my businesses first. But to me, one doesn’t have to be rich or have ample time in order to volunteer. When there’s a will, there will always be a way”.

Not only can one sense Jackson’s passion and commitment, he is also one who goes around trying to influence his friends to take up volunteer work. In fact, Jackson has been keen to rally people living in the Ang Mo Kio or Yishun area to do patient escort services en route to work.

“The volunteers can wake up slightly earlier to pick up the patients and send them to the dialysis centre on their way to work. Imagine you can go to work and yet, do a good deed at the same time!” said Jackson excitedly.

For more information on patient escorts, please email to:
VMteam@nkfs.org
You can also call 6299 0200 or visit our website: www.nkfs.org
To raise awareness on kidney failure and kidney disease prevention, NKF will be organising its first ever Open House event where all its 24 dialysis centres (DCs) will be opened to the public on the same day.

**Date:** Sunday, 13 November 2011

**Time:** 8 am - 12 noon

**An exciting programme awaits you!**

- **FREE Health Screening**
  - (Body Mass index, Blood Pressure and Blood Glucose Test)
  - Must be 18 years old and above.
  - Limited to 100 participants per dialysis centre on a first-come-first-serve basis.
  - No pre-registration required.

- **Health Quizzes**

- **Children’s Colouring Contest**
  - Children must be 4 to 9 years old.
  - Prizes will be given away to the contest winners.

**Health talk on “10 Tips for a Healthier You!”**
(9 am & 10.30 am)

**Health talk on “Diabetes and Kidney Failure”**
(9 am & 10.30 am)

**Health talk on “Look Good, Feel Good through Exercise”**
(9 am & 10.30 am)

For more information and location of our 24 dialysis centres, please visit our website at

**www.nkfs.org**

or call (65) 6299 0200

**Sponsored by:**
As part of NKF's efforts for patients to lead a healthy and active lifestyle to improve their overall well-being, its Patients’ Active Day (PAD) was held at Marina Barrage (MB) on 31 July 2011.

This thrice yearly event provides a platform for patients, family members, staff and volunteers to interact in an informal setting. The theme of this event was “Optimal Team Spirit = Optimal Results”.

The event started with a warm-up workout named “Y.M.C.A”. NKF’s exercise specialists also introduced and showcased another warm-up workout named “Stand-Up, Sisters” which was well received by participants for its stretching movements executed in a humorous and fun way.

Patients from all 24 dialysis centres were encouraged to adopt the theme when competing in the main event, “Key Word Hunt @ MB”, which was flagged off by NKF’s CEO, Mrs Eunice Tay. The winner for this event was Ang Mo Kio 2 dialysis centre, the 1st runner-up was Bedok dialysis centre and in third place was Bukit Panjang dialysis centre.

The overall winner for the Inter Zone Challenge was the East Zone. Over 400 participants attended the event.