You have given me Life for 25 years...

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A man of indomitable spirit despite difficult times

I am one of the kidney patients you are helping and I want to share my 25 years’ dialysis experience with you.

It was during my reservist medical check-up in 1983 that I first learnt I had blood in my urine and was advised to go for a thorough medical examination at the hospital. Over there, I was told I needed to be hospitalised to check my kidneys. Eventually, I did not go ahead with the check-up as the hospitalisation fees would have cost me $300, which was exorbitant in those days.

For three years, I simply brushed off the matter, thinking that it was just something minor as I was in my prime and so active. I assured myself that nothing would happen to me.

Shocked to be struck down with kidney failure

However, life took a turn for the worse when I was diagnosed with kidney failure in 1986. In the beginning, I was shocked and devastated because I did not have a family history of the condition, hypertension or even diabetes, which are the main causes of kidney failure. Later, I had to accept reality and started dialysis at a private dialysis centre at the age of 27 for two years. This put a tremendous financial strain on me. I could not afford the expensive treatment cost as high as $3,000 a month as I was only a painter then. So, I only went for treatment once a week instead of three times a week.

NKF saved me

In 1988, I applied to NKF and was extremely fortunate to get a place in their dialysis programme as they had only one dialysis centre then. I was overjoyed. My dialysis fees were heavily subsidised, which lifted the huge financial and emotional burden off me. Today, I only have to pay about $70 a month.

Since then, I have been undergoing dialysis three times a week at NKF for 25 years and have seen how NKF has grown to give patients like me quality treatment and the best possible care at their 25 dialysis centres. In the past, after our dialysis, we had to wash our catheters and keep our stations clean ourselves or seek help when we felt exhausted. Now, we have dedicated and professional clinical staff to help us with our dialysis.

I have long regarded NKF as my second home. Over the years, I have built strong rapport among the nurses, whom I affectionately call my brothers and sisters. In addition, I was able to cope and raise my son, a lively young man who is now serving National Service and looking forward to a university education.

Looking back, I could have avoided this illness if I had made efforts to watch my diet and go for that hospital check-up. But what’s past is past.

Don’t take your health for granted

My advice to everyone now is to keep a positive mindset, take heed of any kidney problems and control diabetes and hypertension if you have any. It is very important to maintain a healthy lifestyle and eat healthily as I have seen patients who did not control their diabetes, ending up having their limbs amputated.

As for me, I am 54 now and leading a fulfilling life. I eat small food portions, avoid foods that are bad for my heart and maintain potassium levels in my body as too much potassium prevents me from undergoing dialysis.

Thank you for giving me life and hope

I want to thank all of you for making this possible. Without caring people like you, there will be no NKF and without NKF, I will not be alive today.

Many more patients are poor and need your help. Please help as much as you can.

Translated from an interview in Mandarin.
Sit-A-Thon
Raised Awareness on Kidney Disease

More than 1,200 people of all ages and from all walks of life joined our first ever Sit-A-Thon at Ngee Ann City Civic Plaza on 28 July 2013. The event was organised to create public awareness on kidney disease in light of the rapid rise in kidney failure cases in Singapore.

Participants sat on stools for four hours while engaging in different challenges with one arm immobilised to represent the four hours of dialysis that kidney patients need to undergo thrice weekly. Participants had a glimpse of the plight faced by kidney patients and hopefully, were encouraged to take proactive steps to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Guest-of-Honour Mr Chan Chun Sing, Acting Minister for Social and Family Development (now full minister), NKF Chairman, Mr Koh Poh Tiong and NKF Chief Executive Officer, Mrs Eunice Tay launched the event by activating three dialysis machines simultaneously to emphasise the fact that every day three people lose the use of their kidneys in Singapore. Since then, the number has increased to four people a day.

The event included special performances by the cast of Jack Neo’s movie, “Ah Boys to Men” – Maxi Lim, Noah Yap, Wang Wei Liang and Tosh Zhang. There were also song and dance performances, exercises and cooking demonstrations as well as health educational skits and booths. To create a carnival atmosphere, there were food and game stalls and handmade handicrafts by kidney patients with all proceeds going in aid of patients.
Entering into the Singapore Book of Records for “Largest Shakers Ensemble”

Sit-A-Thon participants, including Minister Chan and NKF staff, were each given a shaker — prepared together by Mayflower Primary School, NKF staff and volunteers using 500ml plastic water bottles — to do a three-minute mass percussion. The 500ml represents the daily water intake that patients are restricted to as their kidneys are no longer functioning. This health message is part of NKF’s public education. Guided by Temasek Polytechnic Fusion Percussion, participants shook their way into the Singapore Book of Records for the “Largest Shakers Ensemble”.

In Support of Sit-A-Thon

**Donating Her Earnings to Help Kidney Patients**

Kwan Inn Vegetarian Food owner, Madam Choo Hong Eng, 59, who is affectionately called “Ping-Jie” by others, donated her entire earnings totalling $5,395.80 from the sale of food at her stall in Geylang East on 23 June 2013 in support of NKF’s Sit-A-Thon 2013. Her signature dish is her vegetarian laksa.

On the actual day of the Sit-A-Thon, Ping-Jie, together with a group of volunteers, set up vegetarian food stalls to raise funds for kidney patients.

“I manage my shop and do charity at the same time. During my free time, I’ll help those in need. I hope all retirees will spend some time to volunteer at charitable organisations.”

**Largest Participating Groups**

Contributing to the success of the event was the four largest participating groups — Wu Dang Sheng Hong Health Preservation Centre, ITE College East, Great Eastern Life and Savills Singapore.

In addition, Great Eastern Life pledged to donate three new dialysis machines amounting to $60,000 to NKF at our Sit-A-Thon. Savills’ staff also helped raise over $10,000 through pledge cards to benefit patients.
More than 260 patients, volunteers and donors enjoyed the screening of Jack Neo’s movie, “We Not Naughty” during NKF’s inaugural Parents’ Day Celebration on 23 June 2013. Through such an engaging and interactive event, our patients were given the chance to relax, be entertained, bond with one another and share their experiences.

“I’m elated to watch a movie with my daughter and grandson. This is a great way to celebrate Parents’ Day at NKF.”

Kong Yok Hiong
Toa Payoh dialysis centre

“Realised living an active life is very important. I encourage all to join us.”

Rosnah Matakim
Kim Keat dialysis centre
EDUCATING THE COMMUNITY

Students Shine at Helping the Community

Since its pilot run in February 2012, numerous primary and secondary schools have participated in the Little / Young Champs programme, where students were presented with the ‘3Es’ challenges (Education, Empathy and Enterprise). Two such schools that rose to the challenges were CHIJ St. Nicholas Girls’ School and Bukit Merah Secondary School. Primary 3 students from CHIJ St. Nicholas Girls’ School demonstrated their creative flair by making 42 stools out of plastic bottles and painting them with vibrant colours and artistic designs. The completed stools were then put up for auction to raise funds. The girls enjoyed this programme immensely and felt that it was a very meaningful way to raise funds for the community, while doing their part to keep the Earth green.

Bukit Merah Secondary 1 students showed their compassionate and entrepreneurial sides, penning down heartfelt messages and selling bread to raise funds for our patients. Their Vice-Principal, Ms Apolline Induchooan felt that the programme fitted in strongly with their school values, while connecting the students with real life and touching the lives of the community.

Fats and Your Body

Why do we need fats?
Fats are an essential nutrient for normal body functioning such as sources of energy and transportation of fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E and K. They also protect vital organs such as the kidneys, liver and heart.

Different types of fats

**TRANS** - It raises LDL and lowers HDL in your blood, thus increasing the risk of heart disease and stroke.
- Sources: Pastries, cookies, deep-fried food and cakes

**SATURATED** - It raises the LDL and total cholesterol in your blood, thus increasing the risk of heart disease and stroke.
- Sources: Animal fats e.g. fatty meat and poultry skins and products containing coconut milk and blended vegetable oil

**POLYUNSATURATED** - It helps to lower your blood cholesterol. There are 2 main types: Omega-3 and Omega-6 that help to reduce blood clotting in arteries and improve heart health.
- Sources: Fish e.g. salmon, sardine and Spanish mackerel, walnuts, and vegetable oil e.g. sunflower, canola and soybean

**MONOUNSATURATED** - It lowers LDL and increases HDL in your blood, lowering the risk of heart disease and stroke.
- Sources: Most nuts e.g. almond and cashew, avocado and vegetable oil e.g. canola and peanut

Tips & Reminders

**Cooking at Home**
- Adopt healthier cooking methods e.g. steam, bake or grill more often
- Use healthier cooking oils such as olive, canola, soybean or sunflower oil
- Limit deep-frying to twice a week
- Remove visible fat and skin from meat and poultry

**Grocery Shopping**
- Choose products with Healthier Choice symbols
- Read food labels to compare the amount of fat in similar food products
- Ask for less oil and gravy in foods
- Select foods which show Healthier Choice symbols in menus
"To me, nursing is a calling, a trusted and noble profession that is fuelled by the desire to serve others. It has challenges and setbacks, but I motivate and remind myself that it is better to serve than to be served."

Wong Kin Nen
Senior Clinical Nurse Manager

At NKF, we have more than 400 nurses serving over 2,500 haemodialysis patients at our 25 dialysis centres. Nurses are indeed the driving force behind our Foundation because it is only with their compassion and dedication that we are able to provide our patients quality treatment and the best possible care. A big thank you to all our nurses!

One of our nurses, Senior Clinical Nurse Manager, Ms Wong Kin Nen, recently won a Nurses’ Merit Award, a Ministry of Health accolade to recognise outstanding and consistent performance and dedication to the nursing profession.

Our heartfelt congratulations to Sister Wong!

Our devoted and selfless shining star

As a child, I was fascinated by the adults in white uniforms as they are symbols of strength and hope to patients. That was what inspired me to become a nurse.

To me, nursing is a calling, a trusted and noble profession that is fuelled by the desire to serve others. It has challenges and setbacks, but I motivate and remind myself that it is better to serve than to be served.

Nursing requires vital attributes like empathy, patience, compassion and concern. Without them, it is simply impossible to stay committed and render genuine care to patients.

I always do my best to help my patients. Simple acts such as keeping calm and composed during difficult situations help to alleviate patients’ pain and stress levels. When I witness my patients’ health improving, I feel a sense of achievement and really admire how their family members demonstrate tenacity and courage in coping with their illness.

Through constant interaction with patients, I have learnt to appreciate the simple things in life such as relationships and good health.

I feel honoured to be recognised with this award. It encourages me to excel in my work and mentor younger nurses to uphold this highly rewarding and emotionally fulfilling career with pride and compassion.