A Glimmer of Hope

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Which father doesn’t want to bring their children out to play and have fun? I wish I could do that but I can’t…” said 41-year-old kidney patient Mr Siew Teck Fong. Mr Siew is on peritoneal dialysis, a home-based treatment.

Mr Siew broke down several times throughout the interview when he shared his desire to be a healthy father to his four children aged between three and 10 years old. Diagnosed with diabetes, hypertension and high cholesterol during his army enlistment, Mr Siew did not control his condition carefully.

Besides his uncontrolled diet, Mr Siew’s family history of diabetes and hypertension and intake of strong antibiotics all played a part in contributing to his eventual kidney failure in 2009.

“Who knew that being diagnosed with diabetes and hypertension was such a serious matter?,” lamented Mr Siew.

When his kidneys failed, Mr Siew opted for peritoneal dialysis treatment, so that he could better control his time and continue to keep his day job to support his four children. However, due to a nasty fall at home in 2011 that caused a leg fracture, Mr Siew could no longer walk long distances nor keep his job as a building maintenance officer.

“I took some Western medicine for a while after being diagnosed with diabetes but switched to Traditional Chinese medications, thinking that everything was under control and did not bother to keep a tight rein on my diet. I would indulge in my favourite durians, sometimes four to five large ones a day for my dinner and even up to 20 durians per week,” said Mr Siew.

NKF provided a lifeline when he needed one

NKF heavily subsidises his dialysis fees and he only pays $50 a month. Without the subsidies, he has to fork out as much as $1,850 a month.

“It would have been very tough for me and my family if NKF didn’t subsidise my dialysis. With my wife working as a part-time maid, the money earned is hardly enough for the whole family,” said Mr Siew.

Amy, an NKF peritoneal dialysis nurse, visits him at his home once every three months to assess his treatment results and provide advice, care and support.

“A nurse’s visit gives me comfort that I am not forgotten and that someone (from NKF) cares for my well-being.”

Amy is part of the team of nurses from NKF’s Peritoneal Dialysis Community Support Programme, who conducts regular visits to boost the confidence of patients in terms of self-care. This, in turn, will help reduce their need for hospitalisation.
NKF Volunteers
Reach Out to The Needy in Celebration of International Volunteer Day

Share your heart, give your time – this was what 250 NKF volunteers did on 2 December 2012 to celebrate International Volunteer Day at the NKF headquarters.

It was meant to be a day to celebrate and recognise the efforts of volunteers throughout the year such as befriending patients, delivering groceries to their homes and escorting them to and from the dialysis centres. But true to their spirit of volunteerism, they went about distributing goodie bags containing dry goods to some 500 needy patients and the elderly in the community at their homes immediately after the celebration. This was the first time NKF volunteers extended a helping hand to those who were not NKF patients - the lonely elderly living in rental flats in Whampoa and Taman Jurong.

Patient volunteers also joined in to do their part for the lonely elderly by delivering groceries to them. NKF patients are given a new lease of life because of the support of a caring community. Thus, this is one way for them to give back to the community by helping other needy people.

‘In this world, it is very, very difficult to find people like you who are prepared to perform a task willingly and without pay!... I salute all of you and I thank you for your time, sacrifices, charity, compassion and love for our patients.’

NKF chairman Mr Koh Poh Tiong addressing volunteers during the celebration.

The event was a good opportunity for NKF volunteers to visit our Kidney Discovery Centre at our headquarters.
In October 2012, NKF received its largest donation from a living individual donor in 13 years. Indonesian-born Chinese businessman Mr Kasmadi Melati, 68, who resides in Singapore, donated $1 million in aid of kidney failure patients.

In 1999, chairman of the SUTL Group, Mr Tay Choon Hye, who has since passed on, donated $5 million to the NKF to set up a dialysis centre. Over the years, NKF has also received large donations of over $1 million from individuals, but as legacy gifts from people who have bequeathed their money and assets.

Celebrating his birthday in October last year, Mr Kasmadi felt it timely to contribute back to the needy in society. Mr Kasmadi believes that when one is successful, one must not forget those who are less fortunate.

NKF received a donation of $1 million from Asia Pacific Breweries (APB) Singapore on 6 December 2012. This donation followed two weeks after HEINEKEN successfully completed the acquisition of APB Limited, of which APB Singapore is a 100% owned subsidiary. During a visit programme to Singapore, HEINEKEN’s chairman and CEO, Mr Jean-François van Boxmeer, met with Mr Koh Poh Tiong, NKF chairman and presented him with a symbolic cheque.

APB Singapore has, over the years, engaged in many projects that have reached out to the needy in the community. Beneficiaries include the elderly at Kreta Ayer, needy residents on public assistance programmes as well as various other charitable organisations. In addition, APB Singapore supports various philanthropic initiatives via the Asia Pacific Breweries Foundation, including causes such as “Groceries with a Heart” and the APB Foundation Scholarship for Persons with Disabilities.

“Our goal is to empower our people and the communities in which we operate. We are pleased to be able to play a positive role in helping to improve the lives of those less fortunate than ourselves. We are particularly proud to support the work of the NKF by helping to provide support to patients who are suffering from kidney failure and are in need of costly dialysis treatment. This is an important part of giving back to society, which is something ingrained in the DNA of our company,” said Mr van Boxmeer.

Mr Koh said, “NKF is indeed grateful to APB Singapore and HEINEKEN for this very generous donation. Our dialysis programme needs to be expanded as many more patients are turning to us for help. Every day, three people in Singapore lose the use of their kidneys. We cannot tell them ‘Sorry, we have no more places’ and turn them away. This donation is indeed a boost to our plan to cater to Singapore's rising kidney patient population. This $1 million donation will help to provide about 7,800 haemodialysis sessions to 50 kidney patients a year.”

Dialysis machines provide a lifeline to kidney patients. Currently, NKF is serving over 2,500 patients at our 25 dialysis centres island-wide. To help these patients and the many more who will turn to us for help, we remain committed to help them by constantly expanding our dialysis services. These include providing new dialysis machines and replacing older ones.

On 16 December 2012, NKF recognised four donors, who donated five dialysis machines, at a plate-mounting ceremony.

Each machine costs $20,000 and has an average lifespan of seven to eight years. One dialysis machine can benefit six patients who are on dialysis for about four hours each time, three times a week. Thus, the five machines will benefit 30 patients. We are grateful to these four generous donors for giving life and hope to kidney patients.

If you or your organisation would like to donate a dialysis machine, please contact us at 6299 0200 or contact_us@nkfs.org.
Mr Gerard Ee stepped down as NKF chairman on 29 October 2012 after seven years.

Taking over the chairmanship is Mr Koh Poh Tiong, who joined NKF as a Board Director on 22 May 2012. Mr Koh retired as CEO of Fraser & Neave Limited (Food & Beverage Division) in October 2011, having previously served as CEO of Asia Pacific Breweries from 1993 to 2008.

Mr Ee systematically went about transforming the NKF by fixing its deficiencies while, at the same time, preserving its strengths.

He took active steps to improve corporate governance, accountability and transparency of the NKF, keeping firmly in sight NKF’s mandate of delivering affordable, cost-effective and professional medical services to needy kidney patients.

Under his leadership, NKF focused on patient care and brought down costs through prudent expenditure and also increased patient subsidies, so that more could benefit. Four new satellite haemodialysis centres were established to meet the increasing demand for dialysis. NKF also served more patients and beneficiaries through its various programmes.

We wish Mr Ee all the best as he continues to serve the community in many other ways.

“Let me put on record my grateful thanks to Gerard for his sterling leadership and tireless work in rebuilding the NKF brand. His efforts in fortifying corporate governance and refocusing NKF on its original mission have laid the ground work for NKF to move on and progress further.”

NKF chairman Mr Koh Poh Tiong

As part of NKF’s public health education programme, we recently created a new mobile app “Tough Choices” to increase awareness about kidney diseases and give users a clearer picture of the financial and emotional struggles patients and their families have to go through.

With enthusiastic support from the public, our app ranked 11th and 62nd in the Apple App Store and Google Play respectively in its debut launch on 5 December 2012.

Thank you for your support and do continue to help us spread the word about our app!
Do you know that three people lose the use of their kidneys in Singapore daily? This means there are over 1,000 cases of kidney failure a year!

The two leading causes of kidney failure in Singapore are diabetes and high blood pressure. With one in every nine adult Singaporeans afflicted with diabetes and one in every four adult Singaporeans having high blood pressure, the incidence is alarming.

7 ways to keep your kidneys healthy

1. Eat food with less salt and fats
2. Keep fit by doing at least 30 minutes of physical activity five or more days a week
3. Take steps to quit smoking if you do
4. Drink plenty of water and minimise consumption of soft and alcoholic drinks
5. Eat lots of fruits, vegetables, grains and lean meat
6. Do things that help you relax and reduce your stress levels
7. Go for regular blood pressure checkups

You can help your kidneys by following these seven tips

Remember, healthy kidneys are not a matter of chance. You can choose to keep them healthy!

Supporters of the NKF were treated to local film director Jack Neo’s latest movie “Ah Boys to Men” which was shown in two parts on 7 November 2012 and 2 February 2013 respectively at Golden Village (Great World City).

Part two of the movie was a charity screening in which over $37,500 was raised, which will provide about 1,250 artificial kidneys to benefit kidney patients. For this sequel, the movie rights were sponsored by Jack himself and the use of the venue was made possible, thanks to a generous donation from Mr David Low, CEO of Futuristic Store Fixtures Pte Ltd.

The NKF is grateful to all those who supported the charity event in aid of needy patients.

Special thanks to Tote Board and Singapore Turf Club for their donation in support of the charity screening.
Are you ready to be on our HOT SEAT?

Sunday, 28 July 2013 • 11am to 8pm • Ngee Ann City Civic Plaza

NKF kidney patients undergo dialysis thrice weekly, each time for four hours. Take part in NKF’s Sit-A-Thon by sitting on a chair for four hours to have a glimpse of the plight kidney patients face. You will engage in different challenges while sitting!

For more information, visit www.nkfs.org or call 6299 0200.

SIGN UP NOW!