

8<sup>TH</sup> EDITION

SINGAPORE

**PATIENT**

20  
22

*Action Awards*<sup>®</sup>

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The Singapore Patient Action Awards (SPAA) is jointly organised by Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH)'s Centre for Health Activation in partnership with TTSH Central Health, National Healthcare Group (NHG), National Healthcare Group Polyclinics, Institute of Mental Health and Yishun Health. It is created to acknowledge individuals and groups who have made significant and notable contributions in enhancing the healing journey of our patients - from partnering in their care journeys to give them hope and encouragement to overcoming their illnesses and getting a new lease of life.

In the 8<sup>th</sup> edition of the awards, we honour and celebrate the invisible heroes who have made a positive difference to the community while demonstrating exemplary qualities of care, courage, empathy, tenacity and generosity of spirit. Our recipients continuously inspire us with their life experiences and we hope to empower individuals, communities, health and social care partners to work together towards a healthier and happier community.

This year, we celebrate the achievements of 15 extraordinary individuals and groups who were acknowledged across 5 award categories:

- **Singapore Patient Caregiver Award**
- **Singapore Patient Advocate Award**
- **Singapore Patient Support Group / Volunteer Group Award**
- **Singapore Patient Engagement Initiative Award**
- **Singapore Patient Community Engagement Initiative Award**



# Welcome Message

## by SPC Co-chairs

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Dear Guests,

A warm welcome to the 10<sup>th</sup> edition of the Singapore Patient Conference (SPC).

2022 marks a decade of SPC, a significant milestone in our partnership with the community in Singapore. Through its evolution over the past ten years, SPC has remained true to its ethos of creating a co-learning platform together with our community of patients, advocates, caregivers, volunteers, residents and our health and social care professionals. We are truly humbled for this learning opportunity and to be able to celebrate this milestone together.

Marking SPC's 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary is the theme of **“Building Healthier and Happier Communities”**, which articulates SPC's role and commitment to bridging quality health and social care for the community. Adopting a healthier lifestyle and ageing well in the community is a whole-of-society effort, going beyond individuals and the healthcare system. We are honoured to invite speakers from Be Kind SG, SAA Architects, Yishun Health and a Change Leader from the Sembawang community, to share their efforts in sowing, spreading and sustaining the seeds of change. This dialogue echoes the nationwide Healthier SG initiative by focusing on preventive health through the creation of a supportive community, where residents can actively encourage one another to adopt healthier lifestyles, live well and age gracefully.

We also celebrate the 8<sup>th</sup> edition of the Singapore Patient Action Awards (SPAA), a signature event of SPC. SPAA is an important platform for us to celebrate the everyday heroes in our community and to share their stories of compassion, grit, resilience and love with the wider community.

Over the past eight years, we have received overwhelming support from many health and social care partners, receiving more than 600 nominations and awarding more than 100 individuals. This year, we are very proud to award 15 individuals and groups across five award categories (Patient Caregiver, Patient Advocate, Patient Support Group / Volunteer Group, Patient Engagement Initiative and Community Engagement Initiative), who have exemplified selfless care and gone beyond the call of duty to inspire hope amidst extraordinarily difficult situations.

A big thank you to all our patients, caregivers and volunteers for your strong support over the past decade as we continue to champion an inclusive, resilient and well-supported community.

We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to Ng Teng Fong Healthcare Innovation Programme for the continued support, our award nominators, goody bag sponsors, all healthcare and community partners, and various organisations which readily provided support to this meaningful journey.

For post-conference updates, please visit the official SPC social media platforms (@singaporepatientconference) and websites - [www.sgpc.com.sg](http://www.sgpc.com.sg), [www.spaa.com.sg](http://www.spaa.com.sg). We invite you to share your ideas for future patient conferences via [sgpc@ttsh.com.sg](mailto:sgpc@ttsh.com.sg).

In closing, let us continue to keep the unique objective of SPC alive for decades to come by working together to co-create healthier and happier communities, adding years of healthy life for all.



**Dr Tjan Soon Yin**  
Co-Chairman  
Singapore Patient Conference 2022



**Mr Jasfer Chwa**  
Co-Chairman  
Singapore Patient Conference 2022

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# Award Categories



## **SINGAPORE PATIENT CAREGIVER AWARD**

This award honours the caregiver who has demonstrated strength, resilience and unwavering dedication in caring for another person who requires support in physical, mental and/or social well-being, amidst health and/or social care challenges. The caregiver takes on the role as an active care partner with the health and/or social care team, to overcome these hurdles with a positive and resilient attitude.



## **SINGAPORE PATIENT ADVOCATE AWARD**

This award honours an individual who is very passionate about advocating meaningful causes and has contributed significantly to improving care delivery in partnership with the health and/or social care team/institution. Being personally involved in the care journey as a patient, a volunteer and/or a caregiver, this individual uses his/her personal experience to provide valuable learning for health and/or social care professionals.



## **SINGAPORE PATIENT SUPPORT GROUP / VOLUNTEER GROUP AWARD**

This award honours an outstanding patient support group or volunteer group that has led the way in helping others in need and has contributed significantly to improving health and/or social care delivery.



## **SINGAPORE PATIENT ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE AWARD**

This award recognises an outstanding patient engagement project or initiative that is in collaboration with the health care team, intermediate and long-term care teams (ILTC) and/or social service agency; contributing to the improvement of care for patients and/or caregivers. Only projects or initiatives involving active participation from patients, caregivers and/or volunteers, together with the health and/or social care team may apply.



## **SINGAPORE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE AWARD**

This award honours the work of successful neighbourhood-based initiatives that have contributed significantly to the improvement of care and overall well-being of residents and the local community/neighbourhood.

# Distinguished Panel of Judges

## **DR BENJAMIN KOH**

**Chairperson, SPAA Judging Panel  
Deputy Secretary (Development)  
Ministry of Health**

Dr Benjamin Koh is the Deputy Secretary (Development) in the Singapore Ministry of Health (MOH). He oversees issues relating to infrastructure, manpower development for the healthcare sector in Singapore, as well as matters relating to ageing and eldercare.



## **DR WONG LOONG MUN**

**Chief, Care Integration & Operations Division & Customer Experience Department  
Agency for Integrated Care**

Dr Wong Loong Mun is the Chief, Care Integration and Operations Division & Customer Experience Department at Agency for Integrated Care. He holds a doctorate in social psychology. Under his portfolio, he oversees the referral management team, case management team and customer experience team. He has been in aged care field for more than 20 years, having set up a national referral management programme in 2001, previously known as the Integrated Care Services.



# Distinguished Panel of Judges

## MR TIMOTHY LIU

Chief Executive Officer  
Dover Park Hospice

Mr Timothy Liu joined Dover Park Hospice as the Chief Executive Officer in March 2016. He helms the operations and corporate services, while concurrently heading the hospice's major move to the new Integrated Care Hub in 2023. Under his leadership, Dover Park Hospice was awarded the President's Volunteerism & Philanthropy Award for the Non-Profit Category in 2017. In 2019, the Hospice was awarded the Charity Transparency Awards by the Charity Council and SkillsFuture Employer Award.



Mr Liu graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. He also holds a Master of Business Administration from Arcadia University and was awarded the Harvard Foundation Scholarship to attend the Strategic Non-Profit Management Programme at Harvard University in 2018. Timothy was awarded the Community Care Manpower Development Award and completed his Master of Public Health at the Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health, National University of Singapore in 2021.



# Distinguished Panel of Judges

## ADJUNCT ASSISTANT PROFESSOR TAN KOK LEONG

Family Physician, Senior Consultant, Head  
Department of Continuing and Community Care  
Tan Tock Seng Hospital

Dr Tan Kok Leong's interests are in the areas of post-discharge care and working alongside with community partners in the holistic management of the patients in the community. He is also involved in the Post-Graduate trainings and teachings in Family Medicine.



As the Clinical Lead for the Transitional & Community Care work-stream for Community Health, he assists in planning and implementation works to improve the physical, mental, and social well-being of the residents in the Central Zone.

## MR LIM HOCK LENG

Director, Operation Support Services  
Yishun Health

Mr Lim Hock Leng oversees Operation Support Services in Yishun Health (YH). He facilitates the development and implementation of YH strategies, programmes and operations to achieve YH's mission.



Mr Lim has over 10 years of experience in managing hospital functions and operations at the Institute of Mental Health (IMH). Prior to joining healthcare, Mr Lim drove the strategic intent of transformation and simplification for Business Partner Organisations in Growth Market Units around the world and the ease of doing business with IBM for Business Partners.



# Singapore Patient Action Awards

16 NOVEMBER | 3.00PM – 5.30PM

AUDITORIUM, CENTRE FOR HEALTHCARE INNOVATION (CHI)

## TIME PROGRAMME

- 3.00pm Commencement of SPAA Ceremony 2022
- 3.10pm “10 Years of Transforming Communities – a SPC 10-year Journey Video Showcase
- 3.15pm Opening Performance
- 3.25pm Congratulatory Speech by **Dr Benjamin Koh** | Deputy Secretary (Development), Ministry of Health and Chairperson for SPAA 2022 Judging Panel
- 3.30pm Presentation of Appreciation Gifts to SPAA 2022 Judging Panel

## Individual Award Categories | Singapore Patient Caregiver and Advocate Awards

- 3.35pm Compilation Video and Award Ceremony
- 4.05pm **Award Recipient Sharing 1: The Importance of a Support Network**  
 • **Ms Daeng Nadia Binte Zaini** | Singapore Patient Caregiver Award Recipient, Caregiver Alliance Limited
- 4.20pm **Award Recipient Sharing 2: Mental Healthcare- General Practitioner (MH-GP) Programme in the Community**  
 • **Dr Alvin Lum** | Singapore Patient Advocate Award Recipient, Institute of Mental Health  
 • **Adj Asst Prof Goh Yen-li** | Singapore Patient Advocate Award Recipient, Nominator of Dr Alvin Lum and Senior Consultant, Department of Psychosis, Institute of Mental Health

## Group and Team-based Award Categories | Singapore Patient Support Group / Volunteer Group Award, Singapore Patient Engagement Initiative Award and Singapore Community Engagement Initiative Award

- 4.35pm Compilation Video and Award Ceremony
- 4.50pm **Award Recipient Sharing 3: Serving to Empower the Visually Impaired**  
 • **Dr Benjie Ng** | Singapore Patient Engagement Initiative Award Recipient, Executive Director, Singapore Association of the Visually Handicapped
- 5.05pm **Award Recipient Sharing 4: ItsRainingRaincoats**  
 • **Ms Dipa Swaminathan** | Singapore Community Engagement Initiative Award Recipient, Founder of ItsRainingRaincoats (IRR) Covid-19 Response for Migrant Workers
- 5.20pm Group Photo Taking and Distribution of Goodie Bags
- 5.30pm End of SPAA 2022 Ceremony

# Opening Performance

## MS RIMA RASIF

**SPAA 2021 Patient Caregiver Award Recipient**

Ms Rima Rasif is a veteran singer with 30 years of experience as a performer and 8 years of experience as a vocal coach. She rose to prominence in 1988 when she was first runner-up on the nationally televised singing competition, Talentime. Her love and passion for singing began much earlier, when she was taught vocal techniques by a soprano singer and the rest is history.

Just as she was inspired by her coach, she now hopes to inspire others. Rima had little hesitation in taking up the role of a primary caregiver to her childhood best friend, Amina, who was diagnosed with early-onset dementia in 2015. Albeit challenging, Rima strives to normalise Amina's life as much as possible by engaging her through music that she loves.

Music has the ability to bring us joy and comfort and even motivate us at times. Rima also organises weekly sing along sessions at Apex Harmony Lodge for persons with dementia and their caregivers under Club MemorABLE.

When she sees the members happy and singing along with her, it truly makes her day.



# Speakers for Award Recipients' Sharing

## *Synopsis*

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF A SUPPORT NETWORK**

Nadia grew up in a household where her mother was primary caregiver to her sister with intellectual disability and comorbidity of depression and anxiety. Upon adulthood, her family lost their father to sudden illness and alongside her brothers, had to navigate a balancing act to provide for their mother and sister. In 2019, their mother suffered a stroke which led to vascular dementia. Nadia and her brothers rearranged their lives to team up for the needs of their loved ones. Through Caregivers Alliance Limited's (CAL) caregiver training, learning to take mental breaks in between, adopting self-care and delegating resources for respite – Nadia and her siblings were able to arm themselves with a strong support network to get through an extremely difficult time.

Despite her family's grief, Nadia perseveres in advocating for caregivers so other families continue to have access to the support they need.



## **MS DAENG NADIA BINTE ZAINI**

**Volunteer Trainer  
Caregivers Alliance Limited (CAL)**

Nadia Daeng started attending Caregiver Training Programmes at Caregivers Alliance Limited (CAL) in 2016 to cope with caregiver burnout. She grew up with an older sibling who started receiving treatment from IMH since 1995. Alongside an eighteen-year career in Creative Communications and Corporate Development in the private sector, Nadia continues to advocate for caregivers and mental health literacy as a volunteer.

Motivated by her own family's lived experiences, she has been an active participant of peer support groups as well as volunteer programmes in organisations such as CAL and Resilience Collective. Nadia believes in taking a holistic approach to educate different sectors of our society on the importance of mental health; aimed at elevating awareness for the continued support that caregivers need within our communities.



# Speakers for Award Recipients' Sharing

## *Synopsis*

### **MENTAL HEALTHCARE - GENERAL PRACTITIONER (MH-GP) PROGRAMME IN THE COMMUNITY**

The Mental Health-General Practitioners (MH-GP) Partnership Programme at Institute of Mental Health (IMH) began nearly two decades ago with the aim of right-siting stabilised patients from the hospital to a network of GP partners. From the Programme's humble beginnings of 4 GP partners, it has grown from strength to strength and now has seen around 3,500 patients referred to a network of 113 GPs. Hear from the Programme Director Dr Goh Yen-li and the Deputy Director Dr Alvin Lum who will share on their team's journey through the years. The talk will also showcase Dr Lum's journey as an advocate for community-based mental healthcare.



#### **DR ALVIN LUM**

**Deputy Director  
MH-GP Partnership Programme**

Dr Alvin Lum is the Deputy Director of the MH-GP Partnership Programme at IMH. Concurrently, he also heads the hospital's Medical Care Services department. Dr Lum is a family physician and holds a Graduate Diploma in Mental Health. He has research interests in the area of primary care health systems and has published his work in various international journals. Dr Lum is also involved in various national workgroups and committees aimed at promoting community mental health. Together with Dr Goh Yen-li, he has co-authored a book, 'My GP, My Mental Healthcare Provider', which details a unique tertiary-primary mental healthcare collaboration in Singapore.



#### **ADJ ASST PROF DR GOH YEN-LI**

**Director  
MH-GP Partnership Programme**

Dr Goh Yen-li is a Senior Consultant psychiatrist at the Central Region and Department of Psychosis at IMH. She is also the Director of the hospital's MH-GP Partnership Programme. Dr Goh completed her specialist training in 2007 and has worked in IMH since. Her interests include general and community psychiatry and women's mental health. Dr Goh has been awarded the Health Manpower Development Plan award for her work in post-partum mood disorders.

# Speakers for Award Recipients' Sharing

## *Synopsis*

### **SERVING TO EMPOWER THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED**

With a vision to promote the needs, interests and aspirations of the visually impaired, the Singapore Association of the Visually Handicapped (SAVH) explores creative ways to equip many with new skills, confidence and independence to integrate into society.

Through programmes such as Dining in the Dark (DITD) and Mobile Massage Team (MMT), SAVH gives the visually impaired a new lease of life. In addition to serving food to diners, DITD brings to the plate an immerseful experience for the public to understand the challenges that the visually impaired face in their daily activities such as dining. The Mobile Massage Team (MMT), on the other hand, relies heavily on the sense of touch to empower the visually impaired. By training them to become qualified massage therapists, MMT provides a platform for these therapists to contribute to society in a meaningful way.

In this sharing, Dr Benjie Ng will provide insights on DITD and MMT and how these programmes help to encourage social integration and equal treatment of the visually impaired. Ultimately, making the community a more inclusive and condusive place for all.



## **DR BENJIE NG**

**Executive Director  
Singapore Association of the  
Visually Handicapped**

Dr Benjie Ng serves as the Executive Director of SAVH. (SAVH). He oversees the client services and social enterprises in SAVH, including the Mobile Massage Team (MMT), Dining In The Dark (DITD) and Touch Art shop as well as the Lighthouse School (for children with vision impairment and hearing loss).

He has been serving actively in many non-profits and charitable organisations in the social service sector for the past 40 years. Additionally, he has served passionately in Sree Narayana Mission Home, Ren Ci Hospital, Singapore Red Cross, World Toilet organisation, Sian Chay Medical Institution and Mendaki SENSE.



# Speakers for Award Recipients' Sharing

## *Synopsis* **ITSRAININGRAINCOATS**

Ms Dipa Swaminathan took up the cause of migrant workers in Singapore at a time when it was not glamorous, recognising that they are largely invisible heroes toiling hard to build Singapore's skyscrapers, dig underground tunnels, and even work to keep the city clean, for low wages while often enduring difficult living conditions.

It all began in 2014 when she was driving home and encountered 2 migrant workers caught in a thunderstorm without rain cover in the street where she lived. The story of Dipa taking them home in her car to give them shelter and saving one of them a few months later from a suicide charge went viral.

This led to the birth of ItsRainingRaincoats (IRR) in 2015. It has grown from 2 volunteers to more than 1,000 volunteers. Join in for this sharing to learn how IRR has galvanised the community towards their bigger cause for a community that is lesser known.



## **MS DIPA SWAMINATHAN**

**Founder**  
**ItsRainingRaincoats (IRR)**

Ms Dipa Swaminathan is a Harvard educated lawyer, a wife and mother of 2 teenagers and owns a rescue dog. She has substantial background in project and corporate finance, engaging with top management and leading teams.

Aside from that, she might be best known as the founder of ItsRainingRaincoats, an award winning social welfare organisation that is recognised by Tatler Magazine as one of Asia's 100 most influential in the impact space.





# *Congratulations!*

## TO ALL SINGAPORE PATIENT ACTION AWARDS AWARD RECIPIENTS

The Singapore Patient Action Awards recognises exceptional individuals, groups and community initiatives across all health and social care institutions in Singapore.

These invisible heroes embody exceptional qualities of grit, resilience, compassion and love towards their loved ones and those around them. Each story is an inspiration to our community as we strive to build a healthier and happier one.







## SINGAPORE PATIENT CAREGIVER AWARD

### MS DAENG NADIA BINTE ZAINI 39 YEARS OLD



**“What we forget is that as caregivers who focus so greatly on our loved ones’ wellbeing, we need support as well.”**



#### The Caregiver Who Puts Her Whole Life on Hold

Once flying to glitzy events all over the world for her job as a public relations professional, Ms Daeng Nadia Binte Zaini now spends her days as a full-time caregiver, previously to her late mum, and now to her elder sister with mental health conditions. Walking the road of the primary caregiver to her mum had been a lonely one, she admits. The days went by in a blur of feeding her mum meals, accompanying her on doctor’s visits and cleaning her up. Hiring help was not an option Nadia was willing to consider. Just as how her mother cared for her in her younger years, Nadia saw it as a daughter’s duty to do the same for her mum with her own two hands.

The road to caring for her elder sister has been fraught with challenges. She bears the brunt of her sister’s emotional meltdowns, which may even turn physical at times. Nevertheless, Nadia has been shouldering this as a secondary caregiver for 18 years now. Naturally, taking on the mantle of a full-time caregiver to both her late mum and elder sister has taken a toll on her mental health, as Nadia was diagnosed with depression in 2016.

It all came to a head in 2019, when she put her entire life on hold to care for her ailing mother. On top of the increasing burden of caregiving duties since her mother’s condition deteriorated after a stroke, Nadia had to also postpone her marriage. This inevitably put a huge strain on their relationship. She found herself increasingly frustrated and depressed, even contemplating ending it all at some point.

Her turning point came when she came across Caregivers Alliance Limited (CAL), a non-profit organisation that offers support to caregivers of patients with mental health conditions. Finding support in CAL has also helped Nadia reframe her role as a caregiver. From focusing solely on tending to her mum’s needs to also prioritising her own well-being, Nadia has come a long way and is grateful for the help she has received.

Her caregiving journey has taken on a more positive note since, as she actively volunteers at CAL to give back to the caregiver community. She draws strength and hope from knowing that other caregivers have walked the same path as her or are going through a similar experience — which makes all the difference in perspective.



## SINGAPORE PATIENT CAREGIVER AWARD

### MS RATNASARI YAWIERIIN 48 Years Old



**“The motivation to continue caregiving comes mainly from my sister. When she smiles and acknowledges me, that is what keeps me going.”**

#### She Ain't Heavy, She's My Sister

For close to two decades, Ms Ratnasari Yawieriin has been a devoted caregiver to her younger sister Rodziawati who suffered from a brain infection that led to a stroke. Ratnasari was just 29 years old when the heavy responsibilities of being the sole caregiver to Rodziawati, then 25 years old, fell on her shoulders. To compound matters, Ratnasari had to also care for their elderly mother while her older sister pursued a career abroad.

Caregiving grew more challenging for Ratnasari as life threw another curveball. Her sister became even more dependent on her for daily activities after undergoing a second major surgery that affected her bowel movements. There were no half-measures when it came to what Ratnasari had to do — or give up — along the way to adapt to her role at home. Her number one priority was (and still is) ensuring that Rodziawati's needs are all met.

For one, she made a career switch, from doing administrative work to nursing so she could be a better caregiver for her sister. Instead of long and leisurely outings, Ratnasari has gotten used to shorter get-togethers and is thankful for her friends who have been supportive and accommodating to her circumstances.

The devoted sister has been steadfast in her care, love and compassion, even in the moments when Rodziawati would get agitated and hostile. Amidst the difficulties, the happy times between the pair outweigh the challenges.

On days, there would be glimmers of Rodziawati's vibrant personality as Ratnasari makes an effort to pour over fashion magazines with her sister. Before her stroke, she was a stylish young woman who dressed to the nines and buried her head in fashion magazines.

A smile, a nod, a playful glint in the eye, these fuel Ratnasari, motivating her to continue engaging her sister with her favourite conversation topics and overseas holidays together. While Ratnasari has sacrificed much of her personal life for Rodzaiwati's care, what she has built in place is an unbreakable sisterly bond that will undoubtedly stand the test of time.



## SINGAPORE PATIENT CAREGIVER AWARD

### MDM TAN SNG MUAY 83 Years Old



**“It is not tiring to look after Kia Ling as she will sing and smile and this makes me very happy. I will do anything for my daughter.”**

#### A Pillar of Strength for Her Daughter

At 83 years old, Mdm Tan Sng Muay could have been enjoying her retirement and leading a carefree lifestyle. Instead, a turn of events over 30 years ago saw her shouldering the responsibility of being a caregiver to her adult daughter.

Mdm Tan’s daughter, Kia Ling, met with a car accident in university when she was 19 years old. The fateful incident resulted in cognitive deficits that took away her ability to perform daily activities independently.

Devasted as she was, Mdm Tan rose to be a pillar of strength for her daughter. She gave up her career as a Chemistry laboratory staff and the pension payout she would have received in a few years, to take care of her daughter full-time.

Each day, she toils tirelessly. Her days start at 6am when she wakes up to attend to her daughter’s needs, such as showering and feeding her. She would diligently accompany Kia Ling to the rehabilitation sessions at the Handicaps Welfare Association (HWA) once a week, never missing an appointment for the past 14 years.

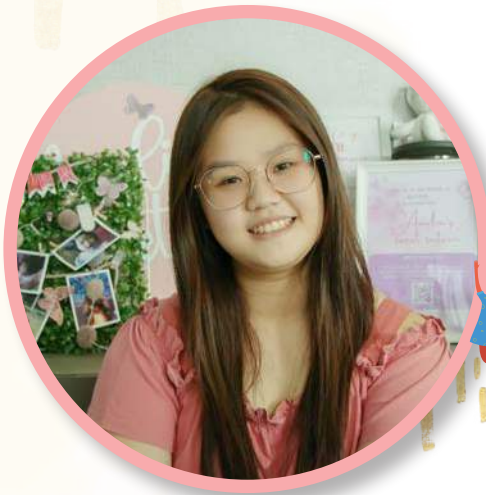
Though Kia Ling is unable to speak clearly, Mdm Tan patiently tries to communicate with her and understand what she tries to convey. She never regards her daughter as a burden but is happy so long as she can care for her. Life dealt Mdm Tan another blow when her husband passed away. Amid her grief, she shouldered on to care for Kia Ling, powered by her resilience and love for her daughter.

Despite her heavy caregiving responsibilities, Mdm Tan made the effort to reach out to others in need, such as lending her support to various fundraising events at HWA. When Kia Ling was warded, she found time to visit other patients and their caregivers to encourage them and share her experiences. As a beacon of hope for her daughter, Mdm Tan’s strength and support bring comfort and optimism to others in her path.



## SINGAPORE PATIENT CAREGIVER AWARD

### MISS AMANDA NG 19 YEARS OLD



**“I will not be able to have my sister for the rest of my life so the time I have with her is really important and precious to me.”**

#### A Teenager’s Extraordinary Love for her Sister

Miss Amanda Ng’s younger sister, Amelia, has a rare neurological condition, Infantile Neuroaxonal Dystrophy, that causes her bodily functions to deteriorate over time. Now 16 years old, she is dependent on life-sustaining aids and her supportive family for all activities of daily living, including breathing and eating.

This did not stop Amanda from loving her sister dearly. From the tender age of eight, Amanda learnt to feed Amelia through a tube inserted into her stomach. She picked up lifesaving medical procedures such as suctioning, ventilation and even Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR). This is to allow her to administer emergency measures to increase her sister’s chances of survival. It was when Amelia encountered a near-death experience that jolted Amanda into a big decision. She convinced her parents to allow her to home-school when she turned 14 years old. Her mind was set — nothing was more important than spending time with her sister.

While teens her age spend time with friends in school, Amanda and her parents care for Amelia together round the clock, providing support for each other. She does not see herself missing out on a normal teenage life. Rather, she enjoys journeying through life’s adventures with Amelia, in her usual cheerful disposition. The family even makes the effort to go on vacations, making special arrangements to bring along Amelia’s bed and wheelchair.

In between juggling caregiving with her studies, Amanda is also determined to engage Amelia cognitively and meaningfully despite her physical limitations. They did what other sisters do together—reading, baking, listening to music and swimming. Every day, Amanda accompanies Amelia to the Rainbow Centre for lessons and acts as a bridge between her sister and the teachers. To help Amelia express herself independently, she researched for non-verbal communication solutions. Her efforts paid off when she found an eye-gaze communication system that allows Amelia to communicate her thoughts in simple words and even sentences, letting her have her own voice back.

As a companion, advocate and guardian for her sister, Amanda is keenly aware of how siblings can support and engage patients with special needs. She volunteers at various organisations to share her journey with others, bringing enthusiasm and hope to families in similar situations.



## SINGAPORE PATIENT CAREGIVER AWARD

### MDM TONIA CHAN OI CHOO 52 YEARS OLD



**You do not look at what you have lost, instead, focus on what you have. Treasure every moment of your life.**

#### Drawing Strength from Community to Overcome All Odds

Mdm Tonia Chan Oi Choo is a full-time caregiver to her daughter with special needs, Gloria. For the last 21 years, Tonia has faced insurmountable odds and she continues to stand today with a proud smile on her face for her beloved daughter.

Now 22 years old, Gloria was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) when she was a young child, and only has the mental capacity of a 5 to 6 year old child. This has since changed the course of Tonia's life in many ways, which she has accepted with grace.

Tonia decided to make a career switch so that she could be more available for Gloria: making the leap from working as an early childhood educator to a canteen stallholder at Rainbow Centre.

By this time, Tonia and Gloria were also actively involved in Project YoungStar, a community project started by a group of parents to children with special needs. This project aims to provide development opportunities for people with autism through home-based work like craft.

Things seemed to be looking up until her health took a devastating turn for the worst in 2020 when she suffered a debilitating stroke. The stroke was undeniably difficult for Tonia especially when she found out she had Moyamoya disease, a rare chronic brain disease—understandably, she sank into depression.

The turning point for Tonia came when CaringSG, a non-profit organisation for special needs caregivers, connected her with a social worker who taught her to turn to self-care activities like exercise and art to help her manage her stress.

It was through the strong support received from her close knitted family, friends, and peers at Movement for the Intellectually Disabled of Singapore (MINDS) and Rainbow Centre that helped her overcome her darkest moments in life.



## SINGAPORE PATIENT CAREGIVER AWARD

### MDM TAHIRAH BINTE MOHAMED 45 YEARS OLD



**“Caregiving is not easy for me and my love for my family is what motivates me the most.”**

#### Finding Strength Through Advocacy

Being a mother to nine children is not for the faint-hearted—and when seven of them are diagnosed to have special needs, parenting becomes a completely different ballgame. Just ask Mdm Tahirah Binte Mohamed who has spent the past 15 years being the caregiver (and at times, teacher) to her boisterous clan, many of whom have been found to learn differently. Over the years, Tahirah has become familiar with the signs of conditions like Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Global Developmental Delay (GDD), Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

It has been a parenting journey like no other. When her first son was diagnosed with OCD, Tahirah worked closely with his school to better support him during relapses. She also took it upon herself to homeschool her fifth son who has ASD after he was removed from kindergarten. She taught him reading, writing and even physical skills like running and climbing. He is now thriving in a special education school. Meanwhile, her eight-year-old twin boys with GDD have been taught to perform simple chores such as folding laundry so they are equipped with essential life skills.

The demands of daily life may feel unsurmountable at times. Hence, the full-time mother found her avenue for healing by sharing her challenges online and setting up the Facebook page “Understanding OCD SG”. Through the platform, she advocates for better awareness, respect and understanding towards OCD. Tahirah has also been vocal about ADHD, participating as a panel speaker for webinars organised by the support community “Unlocking ADHD”. Motivated to help her community, she took on the role of a team lead for the group that built Singapore’s first Malay-language microsite for ADHD.

On top of all these, the tireless Tahirah also carves out time to speak about her causes in the media. She actively contributes tips on raising children with special needs at public sector-led events. She even volunteers fervently at Rainbow Centre, a social service organisation that empowers persons with disabilities with education and training programmes. Amidst the multi-tasking, Tahira finds relief in the cohesiveness and organised structure she has inculcated at home, thanks to a buddy system among the siblings. Even in the face of challenges, her love for her family has given her the motivation she needs to keep going.



## SINGAPORE PATIENT CAREGIVER AWARD



### MDM PHAT YOCK CHAN @ PHAT YOCK CHAY 81 YEARS OLD

**“I remain strong to provide the best care for my daughter, one day at a time.”**

#### Will You Remember Me?

Mdm Phat Yock Chan has been taking care of her daughter, Yuen Khuan, who has Down's Syndrome, for 46 years. Yuen Khuan was shortly diagnosed with early-onset dementia and her condition deteriorated quickly.

Being the sole caregiver and with limited financial means, Mdm Phat's care journey for her daughter was not an easy one. The mother-daughter duo live in a 1-room rental flat. Up to recently, her daughter was able to hold simple jobs and could take care of her daily activities, till their life took a turn with a change in Yuen Khuan's condition.

At first, Mdm Phat discovered that her daughter gradually lost her ability to handle daily tasks such as showering. Shortly after, she could no longer manage her job as she was diagnosed with early-onset dementia and her condition deteriorated quickly. Now, she is bedbound and fully relies on Mdm Phat for assistance.

At the age of 81 when most seniors are enjoying their golden age, caring physically for her daughter is not an easy feat. This is especially so when Mdm Phat's legs are weak. She worries that there is no one to look after Yuen Khuan when she is no longer around. What saddens her more is that one day, her daughter might even forget who she is, as her memory starts to fail.

Despite the adversity, Mdm Phat's boundless love for Yuen Khuan sees her through the challenges. She remains cheerful and resourceful, calling upon neighbours and community agencies to help her should the need arises. Mdm Phat stays determined to provide the best care for Yuen Khuan as she never fails to bring a smile to Mdm Phat.





## SINGAPORE PATIENT CAREGIVER AWARD



**MDM DOH TONG KIOK  
@ DOH QIU CHEN  
77 YEARS OLD**

**“Even though it might be tiring at times, I am happy to visit and look after Ah Phong. We have become each other’s companion.”**

### Caring for a Neighbour Who Became Family

Mdm Doh Tong Kiok became a befriender to her neighbour, Mdm Ah Phong, more than 20 years ago. Initially, she was resistant to Mdm Doh’s help with the passing of her husband. However, Mdm Doh persisted and checked on her neighbour frequently. Their friendship blossomed and soon Mdm Ah Phong allowed her into her life.

When Mdm Ah Phong started showing signs of physical and cognitive decline, Mdm Doh did not hesitate to step up and take care of her daily needs. Each morning, Mdm Doh goes to Mdm Ah Phong’s flat to wake her and administer her medication. Then, she showers Mdm Ah Phong before serving her breakfast. On days when Mdm Ah Phong does not go to the Hua Mei Centre for Successful Ageing, Mdm Doh visits her home multiple times to bring her meals and help with her housekeeping.

Mdm Doh’s selfless dedication to Mdm Ah Phong never wavered even through challenging circumstances. In recent years, Mdm Doh’s late husband contracted cancer and needed her care.

Hua Mei Centre’s closure during the pandemic also left Mdm Ah Phong homebound and in need of supervision. Mdm Doh tried to make the best out of the situation and continued to visit her neighbour daily in between her husband’s care routine. On days when her husband required her full attention, Mdm Doh made it a point to only call upon other volunteers who Mdm Ah Phong recognised, to ensure she was comfortable in the care of others.

With Mdm Doh’s husband’s passing, the bond and companionship she shares with Mdm Ah Phong has become more precious. As she advances in age, being a caregiver can be challenging. Still, Mdm Doh is not deterred and continues to do what she feels is right for her ailing neighbour. “It is tiring, but I feel happy caring for her,” she says.







## SINGAPORE PATIENT ADVOCATE AWARD

### MR ASHER LOW ERN SER 35 YEARS OLD



**“The biggest satisfaction comes when you are helping these youths build a better future.”**



#### Breaking All Limits Through Limitless

As a teenager, Mr Asher Low struggled with severe body dysmorphia, obsessing over perceived flaws in his appearance. He never felt good enough. Little did he know that his struggles with mental health all those years back would bloom into Limitless. This is a charity he founded in 2016 to specifically reach out to troubled young people between the ages of 12 to 25 and make mental healthcare more widely accessible to them.

Knowing first-hand what mental health troubles feel like for youths, Asher has been a staunch mental health advocate for the past 11 years. A social worker by training, he is now the Executive Director and a Senior Social Worker at Limitless. At the start, Asher did not know how he could reach the youths he yearned to help. He need not have worried as 30 young people who were struggling with mental health serendipitously reached out to him on their own accord. With a strong desire to help more young people in mental distress and empower them to take the first step to seek help, Asher grew creative with his methods of outreach.

Asher and his team were unafraid to step into new and unfamiliar online spaces to support youths at risk as they recognised that this generation of youths has grown up, found comfort and forged friendships in the digital world. A normal day's work includes setting up a server on the instant messaging platform Discord, sharing articles on Instagram and creating authentic videos on TikTok.

The main channel where youths can get help is through Limitless's helpline, which provides initial support over online chats or WhatsApp for three weeks. If closer intervention is needed, the team from Limitless will follow up on the case with the youth, working with relevant parties involved to help resolve the issues.

Limitless also runs workshops with other agencies and community partners. The workshops cover a range of topics from stigma and common mental health issues, to providing much-needed resources for youths to find support. The response to the workshops has been tremendous: more than 40,000 youths have participated in the 'It's Okay Not to Be Okay' workshop thus far.

Asher says with a decisive nod, “Realising that mental health is the challenge of this generation, we want to help as many youths as we can.”



## SINGAPORE PATIENT ADVOCATE AWARD

### DR ALVIN LUM WAI MUN 51 YEARS OLD



**“The rapport that GPs build with their patients over time can influence patients to start treatment early, which is an important factor for a good recovery.”**

#### Joining Hands to Boost Mental Health a GP at a Time

For patients with mental health conditions, the stigma surrounding a visit to a psychiatrist at a hospital is a familiar woe. Thanks to Dr Alvin Lum, Deputy Head of Medical Care Services at the Institute of Mental Health (IMH)), many patients with stabilised conditions have since traded specialist appointments for visits at General Practitioner (GP) clinics. When Dr Lum was still a GP in private practice and a visiting research fellow at IMH in 2003, inspiration struck him during his interactions with colleagues and patients at the Hospital. He saw the potential and benefits of a programme where patients whose conditions have stabilised could continue to receive psychiatric care in the community.

It was not enough just thinking about it. In the same year, Dr Lum started a pilot with three GPs for patients under IMH’s Early Psychosis Intervention Programme (EPIP). This eventually led to a hospital-wide rollout of the Mental Health-General Practitioners (MH-GP) Partnership Programme in 2005. This programme benefits patients in several ways. These patients would spend less time on commute, enjoy flexibility with appointments—some clinics are open at night—and can see the same doctor for other medical conditions all in the same session. Dr Lum knew that this was not an easy feat for GPs who are new to psychiatric care. He ensured that partnering GPs would have easy access to IMH’s psychiatrists for clinical advice while designing the programme. The affable doctor also offered his personal contact details should partners wish to discuss patients’ mental health needs.

The programme is not all that Dr Lum has done to increase GPs’ awareness of mental illnesses. Committed to imparting knowledge, Dr Lum has been part of the teaching faculty of the Graduate Diploma in Mental Health (GDMH) since 2012. The structured training programme aims to equip GPs with the skills and knowledge to manage and treat patients with mild to moderate mental health conditions. During the Covid-19 pandemic, Dr Lum went a step further and developed a virtual interactive teaching module to build GPs’ capabilities to be first-line professionals for mental health patients.

At the heart of it all lies the health outcomes of those who come through the door. Dr Lum understands far too well the influence of GPs in getting patients with mental health conditions to start and keep to treatment, a crucial factor in recovery. When Dr Lum sees patients who remain well and stable over time, it is a testament to the positive impact that his team, the hospital and their partners have made for the community.



## SINGAPORE PATIENT SUPPORT GROUP / VOLUNTEER GROUP AWARD

### ASPIRATION

#### Ren Ci Community Hospital

**“When we do haircuts for the residents and they feel happy, we feel happy too.”**

– Mdm Loke Wan Hing and  
Mdm Yong Soo Yoo



#### Helping Residents Look Fresh and Feel Good

For long-term residents in Ren Ci Hospital’s Chronic Sick Unit and Nursing Home, a visit to the hairdresser could well be the last thing on their minds. Many of them have health conditions which render them bed-bound or wheelchair-bound. Getting a haircut in the community can thus be tricky.

Thanks to Aspiration, these residents have hair grooming services brought to their bedside instead. Three times a month, Aspiration’s volunteers visit the hospital to run a “Look Good, Feel Fresh” programme that offers haircuts to residents in need of a trim.

The programme has been running for 28 years and has attracted a loyal group of volunteers. The oldest is 79 years old. Most of the volunteers have served for more than 10 years, including six who have contributed for more than 25 years!

Mdm Loke Wan Hing and Mdm Yong Soo Yoo are two of the volunteers who found their calling to serve Ren Ci’s residents with their skills. Knowing that some feel uncomfortable when their hair grows too long, these senior volunteers with a heart of gold readily step up to provide them with a much-needed service. The volunteers are filled with great satisfaction when they see how happy the residents are after their hair grooming sessions.

Looking forward, the team has exciting plans to do more. Aspiration is looking to improve its volunteers’ haircutting skills and the range of services they bring to the hospital. For example, the volunteers aim to closely emulate Ren Ci’s person-centred care model by offering customised hairstyles requested by the residents.

In addition, they will be assisting Ren Ci in setting up a working salon onsite at the new Ren Ci @ Woodlands Nursing Home. In time to come, residents can look forward to a real salon experience complete with diffusing essential oils and soothing music. They may even be able to opt for hair colouring services or get a soothing scalp massage done.

For Aspiration’s volunteers, the gratification they derived from helping residents look and feel good is priceless. It serves as a bond that keeps many of them returning, year after year.



## SINGAPORE PATIENT SUPPORT GROUP / VOLUNTEER GROUP AWARD

### TWINKLEHEARTS

**“Sometimes, when we interact with the residents, we feel that there is a connection or a song that brings us together. That is when we feel that we do make a difference to them.”**

— Mr Andy Tan and Ms Pan Wen



#### Bringing a Twinkle into the Lives of Patients

For many chronically ill patients who reside in community hospitals and homes, a simple event can go a long way in brightening up their days. Twinklehearts is a group that plans meaningful programmes for the long-term residents in the Chronic Sick Unit (CSU) of Ren Ci Community Hospital.

The 22 volunteers who come together to form Twinklehearts share a common desire to make a difference to the lives of these residents. Whether it is a birthday party, story-telling session, or a festival celebration, these volunteers derive great joy from doing what they can to put a smile on the residents' faces.

The volunteers, who have always worked closely with the staff of Ren Ci, have remained dedicated to making these sparks of magic happen for the past 25 years and counting.

Mr Andy Tan and Ms Pan Wen are two volunteers who have been involved in the group's long-running Happy Birthday Project. Understanding that birthdays are significant events for everyone, the group goes all out to ensure that every resident in CSU gets to celebrate their birthday among people who care for them, even if they no longer have kin around.

Twinklehearts also runs the Happy Hour programme for all residents of Ren Ci. All the activities strive to engage the residents meaningfully and keep their spirits up. These range from huge Mid-Autumn Celebrations and Mass Games, to smaller-scale craft and story-telling sessions. Even the Covid-19 pandemic and the heightened restrictions that came with it did not dampen the volunteers' commitment to spreading joy among the residents. They turned to Zoom to continue their birthday celebrations and Happy Hour sessions with the residents.

What keeps volunteers like Andy and Pan Wen going is the belief that the heartfelt music they play for the residents makes a positive difference to their lives and encourages interactions.

It is the strong connections built between the volunteers and residents that lie at the heart of Twinkleheart's ongoing mission to spread a twinkle to the lives of the residents of Ren Ci.



## SINGAPORE PATIENT ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE AWARD (TEAM-BASED)



### DINING IN THE DARK Singapore Association of the Visually Handicapped

**“People always think that blind people cannot do many things. In truth, we can do plenty, even working in a challenging setting like the Food & Beverage industry.”**

— Ms Nurul Natasha

#### A Special Dining Experience Through the Eyes of the Visually Impaired

Living life without your sense of sight is challenging. Dining in the Dark (DITD), an initiative by the Singapore Association of the Visually Handicapped (SAVH), makes it possible for everyone to walk in the shoes of the visually impaired for a moment in time, albeit only for the duration of a meal.

From fumbling in the dark for their utensils to not being able to see the meals set before them, sighted diners experience what it is like to get through a simple activity that we often take for granted—a meal—without the privilege of seeing.

Since 2012, the staff and volunteers of DITD have served an impressive 34,396 customers. This also means that more people are aware that it is possible for the visually impaired to work in a restaurant, just like everyone else. Preparing and serving meals without being able to see seems like a herculean task. Still, DITD has made the impossible possible with their capable crew of visually impaired serving staff and kitchen helpers.

Ms Nurul Natasha is a server in DITD and she is blind. In her time with DITD, Nurul has learnt how to adeptly serve up to 20 diners per session, which can get tricky when she has multiple tables to wait on simultaneously. Other than making sure that the right meals are served, Nurul also must take great care when carrying hot dishes like soup, which she has learnt to balance perfectly.

These skills will go a long way in the Food & Beverage (F&B) industry, where Nurul hopes to continue pursuing in the long run as she enjoys meeting new people and being kept on her toes. Nurul is certainly not alone. Many of the visually impaired community want to prove that they too can be productive and contributing members of society, gainfully employed in jobs that they enjoy.

With every diner served in the pitch-darkness of DITD, the visually impaired community's hope to better integrate into society becomes more visible by the day.



## SINGAPORE PATIENT ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE AWARD (TEAM-BASED)

### MOBILE MASSAGE TEAM



**“Being part of the Mobile Massage Team helps us learn skills to be independent and to live with dignity.”**

– Ms Daisy Keh

#### Empowerment Through the Sense of Touch

Started three decades ago, the Mobile Massage Team (MMT) initiated by the Singapore Association of the Visually Handicapped (SAVH) facilitates the provision of massage services by qualified and certified visually impaired therapists.

The initiative gave Ms Daisy Keh a fresh start when she lost her job years ago. It greatly improves the lives of therapists through training and job opportunities. It is also a safe and supportive space for them and their families.

MMT improves the lives of therapists through training and job opportunities. It is also a safe and supportive space for them and their families. By empowering those with visual impairment to be part of the workforce and promoting interactions with members of the public, MMT contributes to a more inclusive society. It also aims to raise the public’s awareness of the capabilities of this community.

Through providing professional massage services, therapists like Daisy have been able to earn a living independently. She is well-equipped with a wide range of techniques such as foot reflexology and head and shoulder massage.

Daisy and her colleagues have set up their workstations at multiple locales for the past 17 years. This ranges from offices and hospitals to schools and large-scale event venues, reaching countless corporate groups and close to 500 walk-in customers at the SAVH.

Due to the growing awareness and popularity of the MMT, an increasing number of walk-in clients have had to be turned away at times. More than being a source of income, being with the MMT allows massage therapists to meet people from all walks of life who appreciate a good rub to relieve stress, aches and pains.

While Daisy was not expecting to stay for this long, she has come to love the sense of accomplishment that comes with the job, one that allows her to live life on her terms with pride and dignity.



## SINGAPORE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE AWARD



### ITSRAININGRAINCOATS (IRR) COVID-19 RESPONSE FOR MIGRANT WORKERS



**“As a society, we can  
always aspire to do more for  
our migrant workers.”**

– Ms Dipa Swaminathan

#### A Shining Beacon for Migrant Workers

Ms Dipa Swaminathan is the founder of charitable organisation, ItsRainingRaincoats (IRR) Covid-19 Response for Migrant Workers. Since 2015, IRR has been striving to improve the lives of migrant workers and build bridges of interaction with Singaporeans. It was during the Covid-19 pandemic that IRR’s impact on the migrant worker community truly made the nation sit up and pay attention. During the extended lockdown period, workers were unable to leave their dormitories for essentials like food, sanitisers and face masks. The workers’ mental and physical health hung by a thread as they were confined to their tiny quarters while saddled with worries over their job security. Furthermore, the risk of catching the little-understood virus then and concerns over the well-being of their families back at home only aggravated the situation.

IRR knew it had to act swiftly. Its team of volunteers started coordinating deliveries of meals and care packs. To help workers connect with loved ones overseas and empower them to navigate Singapore’s public safe distancing measures with ease, Dipa and the team also provided those in need with mobile phones, data cards and data top-ups, and taught workers how to install and use the TraceTogether app.

It was a hectic period—there was no playbook or precedent to guide IRR’s action plan—and the ground-up organisation took challenges in stride. Each migrant worker who approached IRR was given the help he needed, no matter how big or small, at any time of the day. Dipa estimates that IRR’s efforts reached up to 300,000 migrant workers during the pandemic. Nevertheless, with close to a million migrant workers in Singapore, Dipa stresses the work is never finished. The group continually supports beneficiaries’ need for essential goods and organises excursions, learning programmes and more.

This year, IRR hit a major milestone. The group secured a doubled-storied space called inspIRRe, comprising a shop for migrant workers to pick up any item for free and a lounge where they can enjoy a quiet moment. Most people see migrant workers as the ones who build Singapore’s comfortable homes, modern offices and tar the well-kept roads, but there is more to them. These hardworking men are also fellow humans, with hobbies and unique personalities, says Dipa. By encouraging everyone to invest a little time in getting to know a migrant worker in their neighbourhood, residents can build a more cohesive Singapore.

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Thank you for embarking on a purposeful journey in co-creating a better healthcare and social care system.

On behalf of the Singapore Patient Conference 2022 Organising Committee, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to all partners for their support and generosity.



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