

## **Project Title**

Shared Memories: Leaving a Lasting Legacy for Chronic Sick Residents and their Families

## **Project Lead and Members**

**Project members:** Oo Sonia, Lim Boon Shine, Yee Jolene, Poh Shu Ning, Chang Joey, Ng Beng Wee, Das Bridget, Xie Xiao Yun, Yeo Siew Mui, Lim Sze Min

## **Organisation(s) Involved**

Ren Ci Hospital

## **Healthcare Family Group(s) Involved in this Project**

Allied Health

## **Applicable Specialty or Discipline**

Medical Social Work

## **Project Period**

Start date: 2019

Completed date: 2023

## **Aims**

“Shared Memories” aims to preserve memories, facilitate legacy building and strengthen bonds among residents and families.

## **Background**

See poster appended/ below

## **Methods**

See poster appended/ below

## **Results**

See poster appended/ below

## **Conclusion**

See poster appended/ below

## **Project Category**

Care Continuum

Intermediate and Long Term Care & Community Care, Nursing Home Care

Workforce Transformation

Informal Workforce Transformation, Volunteer

## **Keywords**

Lasting legacy; Chronic sick, Families

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2023

Poster  
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# SHARED MEMORIES

## LEAVING A LASTING LEGACY FOR CHRONIC SICK RESIDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

### Psychosocial Services:

Oo Sonia | Lim Boon Shine | Yee Jolene | Poh Shu Ning | Chang Joey | Ng Beng Wee | Das Bridget

### Volunteer Management:

Xie Xiao Yun

### TwinkleHearts Volunteer Group:

Yeo Siew Mui | Lim Sze Min



Ren Ci 仁慈



### Project Synopsis

“*Shared Memories*” aims to preserve memories, facilitate legacy building and strengthen bonds among residents and families. This was spearheaded by Ren Ci Hospital’s Psychosocial Services Department (PSS) together with Twinkle Hearts volunteer group.

The initial programme launched in 2019 consisted of a makeover with family, photo-taking and bonding time to create new memories. It also included facilitation using the strength perspective with families to see beyond residents’ current medical condition, remembering who they were and their significant moments together using old photos and a “significant object” which family were requested to bring.

In 2023, “*Shared Memories*” was reviewed and revamped to include music and art as another channel of communication to further facilitate reminiscence, conserve dignity of care, legacy work and family connection. The programme has reached 89 family members and 26 residents. Feedback gathered from families, residents, staff and volunteers have also showed valuable impact and meaning of the programme.

### Reason

Ren Ci Hospital Chronic Sick Unit (CSU) is a long-term facility for persons with advanced and complicated chronic medical conditions who require frequent medical and skilled nursing care. We noticed many residents experienced a sudden change in their health due



to severe brain injuries or degenerative conditions that resulted in them experiencing limited personal autonomy, communication barriers and separation from their loved ones. With the unexpected turn of events, families often present a narrative of grief and loss. They experience difficulties making meaning of their experiences. This compelled us to explore meaningful ways in conservation of residents' dignity, role preservation and autonomy. Furthermore, in view of anticipatory grief and continuing bonds when residents pass on, there is also a need to reframe families' narratives so as to strengthen their bonds and resources as caregivers. The following programme looks to maintain normalcy for respectful, holistic and person-centred care to fulfil the psychosocial needs of residents and families.

## Project Details

*"Shared Memories"* was inspired by a late resident's last wish to take a family photo before he passes on. His legacy has since continued. In *"Shared Memories"*, the collaborative efforts from a dedicated multi-disciplinary team of social workers, art therapists, music therapists, nurses, doctors, rehabilitation therapists, operations and facility staff, together with the passionate professionals from Twinkle Hearts allowed for the longevity of his legacy.

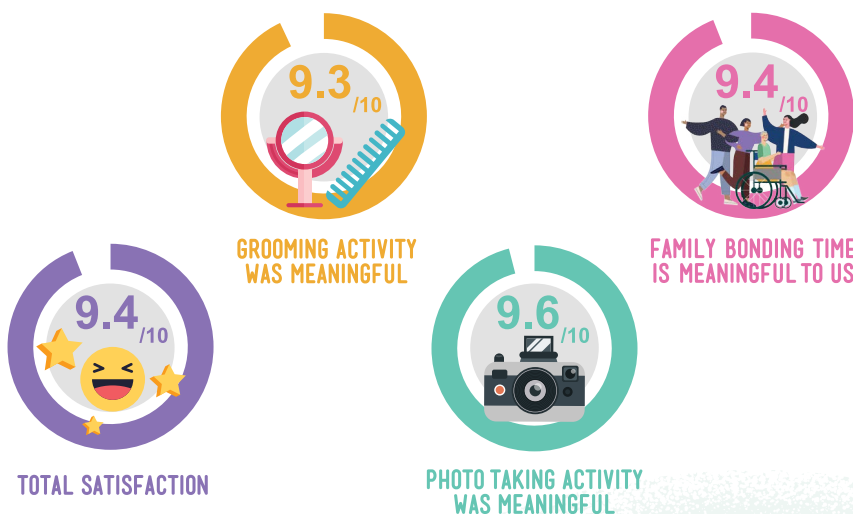
- 1 Family photo-taking: Makeover for residents and families and family photo taking by professional volunteers - hairdressers, make-up artists and photographer.
- 2 Family bonding time: PSS Team facilitated reminiscence and forging of new memories with old photos, familiar music and significant objects for life review (Erickson,1982). This led to the gaining of new perspectives (Whitbourne, 1985) with the aim of strengthening relationships and reframing narratives to continue bonds. A strength-perspective is used to empower families to reflect on similar strengths that they had learnt from their loved ones, and to help family members remember their past fond memories with the resident and to continue forming new ones as a family. Through this therapeutic component, family members can find strength to persevere in their journey with the residents.

Non-verbally communicative patients with capacities for yes/no responses and non-verbal communication, are also invited to prepare a message or gift for their family prior to the programme. These individual sessions are done before the programme to offer residents an opportunity to be heard and to convey important sentiments and messages for their loved ones. New memories are forged as a family and normalcy is maintained. The family portrait and family bonding time contributes to the dignity of residents and builds upon their legacy for which families can continue to hold on to when their loved one passes on.



## Project Outcomes

Across the 3 runs since 2019, a total of 26 residents and 89 family members were supported by 20 staff and average of 24 volunteers. Quantitative and qualitative feedback was requested from all who participated in the programme. Results were collected at the end of every session and collated as shown below. Using a 10-point likert scale (0 being the least and 10 being the most), participants were invited to rate their satisfaction levels and how meaningful they connected with each segment of the programme.



Qualitative content analysis was used to retrospectively study the feedback received from 32 family members and 47 volunteers.

### Feedback from families and residents

- Recognition of the importance of coming together as a family
- Gratitude to have the space to recollect fond memories while forging new memories
- Feeling empowered and strengthened after the programme

### Feedback from volunteers

- Appreciated connecting with fellow volunteers, residents and families
- Deep meaning in the volunteering work and bridging service gap
- Ideas to improve future programmes

## Conclusion

The programme is ongoing and has the potential to extend beyond the CSU, to other long-term residents in the nursing homes as well. Following the recent extension of the programme to residents with contact precautions on 21 October 2023, the team continues to explore how to further enhance the programme to be meaningfully relevant to families and residents. Despite residents being institutionalised and living apart, the hope is for families to continue bonds by finding creative and new ways to communicate with their loved ones and continue to create forever memories together. Not only has this programme enhanced the quality of life and well-being of residents and families, it has also sparked conversations among residents, staff and families on what other kinds of programmes they would like to experience together with their loved ones.



*It was a good opportunity to have a meaningful time with my grandparents as we hardly have chance to see them (resident and wife who has dementia). We never had a chance to take a family picture together. Residents will be happy to see all their loved ones come together.*

*Thank you so much for putting this meaningful event for the residents and their family.*



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MEANS  
FAMILY

FAMILY MEANS NOBODY  
GETS LEFT BEHIND OR FORGOTTEN



*One thing I like about this programme is the collaboration between staff and volunteers for residents and their family members. Very meaningful event and should continue for other residents to have opportunity for family photo and therapy session.*