

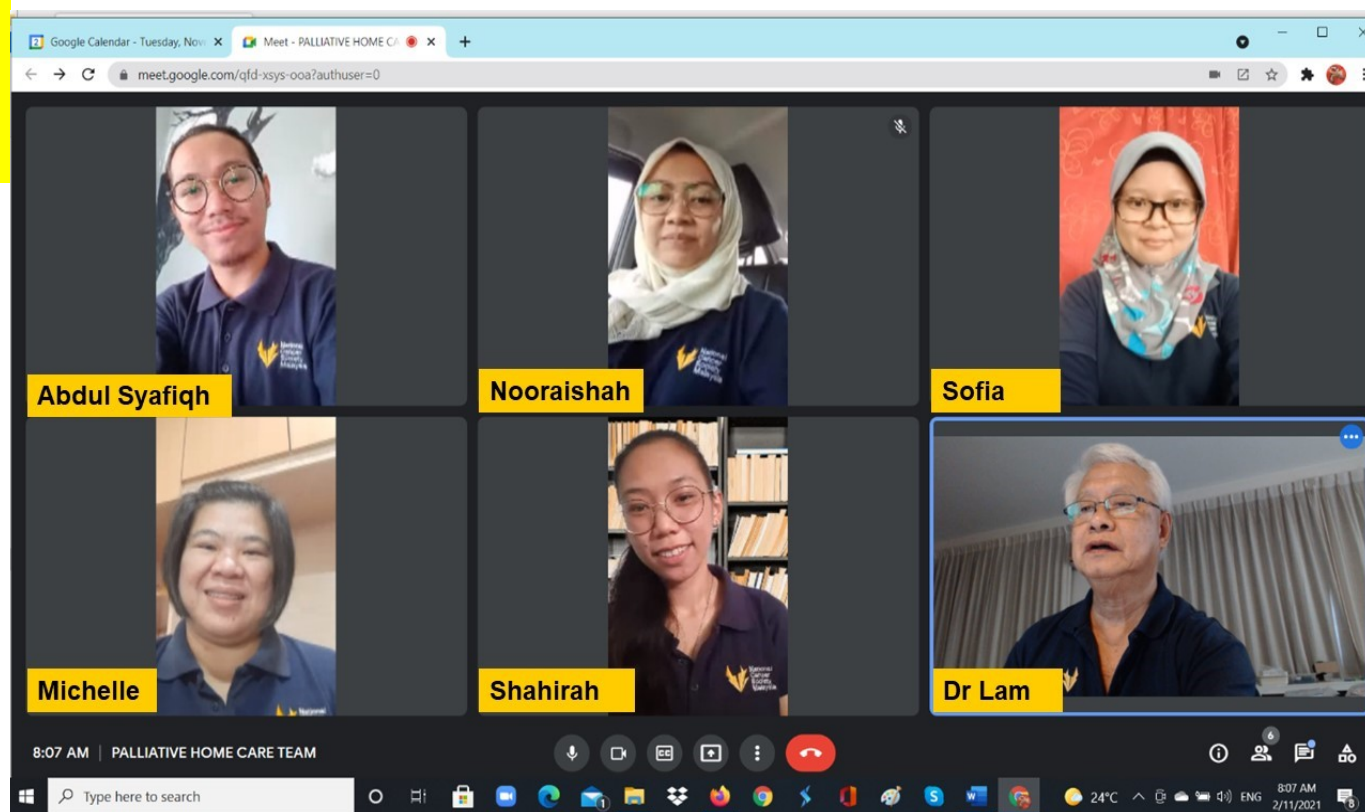
OUR community CARING for our COMMUNITY

Rainbow Over Mulu
Photo Credit: CP LIM

NCSMSB Newsletter



NCSM's Mission "To ensure that no Malaysian fears cancer by creating an understanding of cancer that leads to prevention and early detection, and by providing the best possible care and support for those affected by cancer"



NCSMB'S Nursing Team:

Online daily patient review with Dr Lam Chin Chyou, Chairman of National Cancer Society Malaysia (Sarawak Branch)

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The National Cancer Society of Malaysia Sarawak Branch (NCSMSB) was formed in 1986 as a non-profit organization (NGO). It aims to create awareness on cancer, its prevention and early detection and to provide care and support for those affected by cancer.

To provide support for those affected by cancer and taking note that many terminally ill cancer patients wish to spend the last days of their lives with their loved ones at home, NCSMSB started Palliative Home Care in 1996. The aim was to improve the quality of life of terminally ill cancer patients by providing medical and psychosocial support to patients and their families. This service was initially provided by a Nurse Coordinator, assisted by lay volunteers, together with our member, Dr Tiong Tung Hui.

Driven by passion and compassion to serve the terminally ill in and around Kuching, Dr Tiong Tung Hui took up a course in palliative medicine. He was awarded the Diploma in Palliative Medicine by University of Wales College of Medicine in 1999.

The present Palliative Home Care Team was formed in 2016 with the employment of two full time nurses.

By 2020, the number of patients under the care of the Palliative Home Care Team had increased many times. The Team now consists of five nurses led by Dr Tiong, and they continue to care for cancer patients in our community. The Team is currently only able to accept patients living within a 20km radius from the office of NCSMSB.

The Society also lends out equipment such as hospital beds, wheel chairs and oxygen concentrators, that are needed for the care of terminally ill cancer patients at home.

All services provided by NCSMSB are **FREE OF CHARGE**.

The Team participates in regular training programmes to enhance their professional skills. The Team also conducts frequent reviews to ensure that quality care is provided to their patients.

NCSMSB depends on donations from the public and grants from the government. More funds will be needed to expand the Team to attend to the ever increasing number of patients who need our care, and also to extend our area of coverage.



Here we are with the first instalment of the e-newsletter *“OUR Community CARING for our COMMUNITY”!*

As Anne Frank once said: *“No one has ever become poor by giving”*. Likewise, NCSMSB a non-profit NGO, has been giving unconditionally by providing free palliative home care service and medical equipment on loan for free, as well as conducting community outreach programmes through Awareness/Public Education and Training, with no expectation of being reciprocated for it's services bestowed upon the beneficiaries.

The startup of this newsletter is of no small feat, but made easier by our members, sponsors, partners, volunteers and well-wishers, who provided their individual expertise and knowledge to set this light reading material in motion.

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for supporting and

and believing in NCSMSB's activities, and for walking the journey with us as our partners.

With these thoughts and amidst unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, I urge each one of you to renew your sense of giving with vigour and enthusiasm, as *“Giving is not just about making a donation. It is about making a difference”* – Kathy Calvin

Best Wishes,

Dr Lam Chin Chyou
Chairman
National Cancer Society Malaysia Sarawak Branch

LIVING WELL & LEAVING WITH PEACE

Oleman's 33 months JOURNEY to the "New World"

Nothing is a coincidence!

I happened to be back in Kuching for a design forum when Dad, affectionately nicknamed 'Oleman' had an acute haemorrhage which needed immediate medical attention.



Oleman's musing:

At least in this lifetime, I've experienced a most exciting ambulance ride in the middle of the night.



The Works!

Scan, Pokes, Prods, Scopes, Tests

After 6 days' stay at the hospital, Oleman was discharged and returned to Home Sweet Home. Then, the stressful "wait" for his test results commenced!

Persistence Pays Off



The Medical officer informed us no tumour had shown up in Oleman's Colonoscopy. But a CT scan taken at another Medical Center indicated a tumour. I implored the Medical Officer for a second review with another Colorectal Surgeon who immediately authorized a second colonoscopy.

Diagnosis!

The eventual diagnosis was Colorectal Cancer Stage 3A. Knowing the diagnosis was a big relief for Oleman and us. Our anguished waiting period was over and we could proceed to the next course of action. The surgeon explained the medical condition and outlined the clinical treatment plan. 84 year-old Oleman was given the option whether to proceed with surgery.



Oleman's Motto:

Take the Bull by the Horns. After weighing the pros & cons, Oleman decided to proceed with Laparoscopic Surgery.

Getting House-in-Order: IMPORTANT



A frantic race to sort out all personal documentation such as wills, transfer of assets, banking plus the listing out of things that had to be done now and in the future in his absence. Advance Care Directives and End of Life Preferences were discussed and documented prior to Oleman's surgery.

Post-Surgery & Adjuvant Chemotherapy: Informed Decision

After reading up on chemotherapy and weighing the benefits versus side-effects, Oleman opted out of adjuvant chemotherapy. Six weeks into post-surgery, Oleman was living his life independently and going on dates with his wife.



Oleman's Goal:

Quality of Life; Living Life to the Fullest

Death is

NOT A



Prior to Oleman's diagnosis, our family had always discussed death openly. It was important to know his exact wishes so that we could honour and execute them accordingly. After his diagnosis, and based on his understanding of reading literature on death & dying, we put together an action plan for his FAREWELL in accordance with his Wishes. In his final months, he penned his Advanced Care Directives and End of Life Preferences.

Acceptance & No Secrets



Oleman read numerous materials on cancer but it was the book by Elisabeth Kubler-Ross M.D. that resonated with him the most. Dr Kubler-Ross talks about the 5 stages of Death & Dying, namely Denial & Isolation, Anger, Bargaining, Depression and Acceptance and Oleman found he had skipped stages 1-4 and gone immediately into experiencing the 5th stage, i.e. Acceptance. His only fear was prolonged discomfort but ultimately, he was bothered most by malaise and lethargy.

Being a philosophical person who believed in the concept of 'nothing is permanent nor lasts forever', Oleman embraced his journey with gusto and lived every moment to the 'fullest', right up till the last week when he finally got his Boarding Pass to board the flight to his 'New World' with peace of mind.

Oleman was open to sharing his medical condition and his End of Life Journey with the support of NCSM (Sarawak Branch) in the hope that it would benefit others in the future.

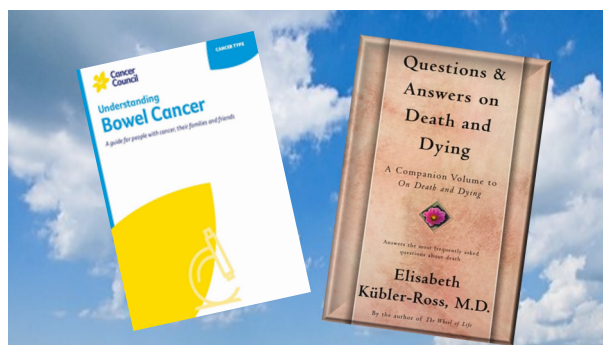
Recommending Reading

cancer.org.au

- . Living with Cancer
- . Colorectal Cancer
- . Palliative Care

Elisabeth Kubler-Ross M.D.

- . On Death and Dying
- . Questions and Answers on Death & Dying



OLEMAN'S JOURNEY WITH NCSM (Sarawak Branch)

NCSMSB'S Home Care Programme

24 months after Oleman's diagnosis, symptoms started appearing that indicated his medical condition had advanced. Due to COVID-19 and experiences of prolonged waiting time, I was reluctant to take him for more follow-up medical consultations at the hospital. At our wit's end, we reached out



and much gratitude goes to Ms Helena Wee-Kearsley for connecting us with Dr Lam Chin Chyou who kindly accepted our Oleman into the NCSMSB's Home Care Programme. Our heartfelt appreciation goes out to Dr Lam and NCSM (Sarawak Branch).

NCSMSB's Home Care Programme came as heaven-sent as it meant that we no longer had to queue long hours for medical consultation. Moreover, it is a complimentary palliative service with holistic, professional patient-centred care which gives patients the opportunity to live the final leg of their Journey with Peace of Mind, Dignity and Grace in the comfort of their own homes.



Advance Care Management Plan

Prior to being enrolled in NCSM's Home Care Programme, I had to research and read lots of medical literature on cancer and caring for patients. I also spent hours in discussion with friends in the medical profession as I sought informed advice and opinions on Oleman's condition.

Being in NCSMSB's complimentary Home Care Programme brought indescribable benefits! All queries were only a WhatsApp message away! A huge load was taken off my shoulders as I now had palliative care professionals well-versed in palliative care specific to cancer care to consult about arising symptomatic issues encountered and how to manage them. Our queries and concerns were unfailingly addressed and promptly answered by the attending palliative care nurse, Nooraishah Shahmat even at an unearthly hour, for which we are deeply appreciative, grateful and thankful.

Visits were tailored according to patient's needs as they arose, and in view of the COVID-19 situation, we communicated mainly via WhatsApp messages and video calls.

Last, but not least, we are also grateful to Nurse Abdul Syafiqh for his invaluable assistance during Oleman's final week of life.

Medication



NCSMSB's assistance to facilitate the collection of prescriptive medication from Sarawak General Hospital was a major plus. Being able to pick up the medication at any time from the Palliative Care Ward was a big help in terms of time management given that for the most part, I was the sole caregiver.

Medical Equipment



The short term loan of Oxygen concentrator, medical bed and wheelchair were an extra bonus as it saved us much time and effort sourcing for such medical equipment.

Our NCSMSB's Hero: Dr Tiong Tung Hui



Addressing and assuaging Oleman's concerns about symptomatic conditions arising brings much comfort and peace of mind to Oleman

Home Visit by NCSMSB's Palliative Care Team



Noble & dedicated professional nursing care tempered with good bedside manners, kindness, love & compassion

Home Visit by Palliative Care Unit, SGH



NCSMSB's organising of home visits by doctors from the Palliative Care Ward of Sarawak General Hospital was yet another big bonus!

Dr Angel Wong's visit and discussion on the 'End of Life' in physiological, psychological, emotional and spiritual aspects provided much comfort to Oleman, enabling a meaningful 'end of days' journey that allowed him to live well and leave with peace of mind.

CELEBRATION OF LIFE!!!

Living Well & Leaving with Peace.....



Wish Fulfilled
21.01.2021

Ultimately, our goal was accomplished. Our dearest Oleman passed on peacefully at home, surrounded by loved ones at his bedside with birds chirping in his garden.

A big Shout Out to NCSM (Sarawak Branch) for helping us fulfil our goal!

THE CAREGIVER'S JOURNEY

Journeying Together



Upon Oleman's diagnosis, I decided to walk the journey with him and set my aspiration to be with him at every medical appointment until the FINALE, to ensure that his Wish list was fulfilled. This involved commuting via flight for a good part of the journey as I was not residing in Kuching at the time.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic kept me grounded in Kuching, hence creating the opportunity for us to create a year of treasured joyful memories of long country drives, chats, in-depth discussions, disagreements, banters and jokes.

Unconditional Love



33 days after celebrating Oleman's 86th birthday, I was thankful to see Oleman transit quickly at the End of Life.

He spent only 6 days non-independent. Thankfully, my sister arrived in time to care for him during the last leg of his journey, bringing them much joy and closure.

Pre-planned standby medication for symptom management was on hand to ease the associated discomfort, providing for a smooth transition to the end.

For me, only his physical self has departed. Memories of our times together are etched fondly in my heart. To me, he's one with universe and his spirit lives on infinitely in the trees, the oceans, the sky, the stars and the galaxies...



Celebrating Oleman's 86th Birthday

Reach Out!



One does not have to 'Journey Alone' as there are many companions along the way to ease the journey.

Coming from a small family with my only sibling not residing here, I reached out to my bosom buddies who gave immeasurable support and were at my beck and call at all times, be it for groceries, medication, rides or other errands. A big Thank You to my bosom buddies & family!

From the depths of our hearts, we extend a big **THANK YOU** to NCSM (Sarawak Branch) for providing such priceless and immeasurable support, thus enabling a smooth transition and fulfilling Oleman's wish to end his days in the comfort of home surrounded by his loved ones.

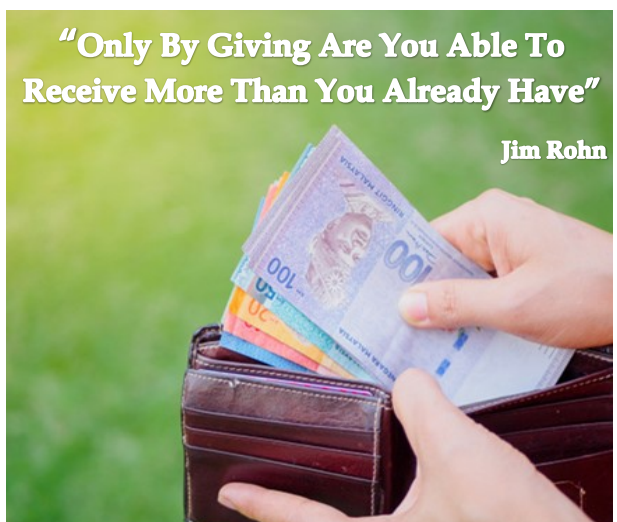
Postscript



Oleman was a very private man but he agreed to have his journey published after his demise in order to raise **AWARENESS** about the Palliative Home Care services provided by NCSM (Sarawak Branch) and to appeal to Donors to come forward and support NCSM (Sarawak Branch).

Donate generously to this voluntary homecare service so that NCSM (Sarawak Branch) may continue to help others live their last moments in comfort and dignity.

Make Your Donation Now



With gratitude
Ai Lin Tay & Family



Jacinto Bonilla is redefining what it means to be physically fit. For an hour, he keeps up with the repetitious CrossFit routine - jumping on a 24-inch box, doing handstand, push-ups and climbing a 15-foot rope, all alongside gym members more than half his age.

Jacinto is the oldest man to complete in the CrossFit Games, going up against men a decade younger.



In 2008, Jacinto Bonilla stopped training for two months to take on his biggest challenge yet; He was fighting prostate cancer. As per Jacinto, "I get a little

emotional at this", he said. "I always been in healthy shape, I always watched what I ate and I came down with prostate cancer. Jacinto healed up and competed in the July 2008 CrossFit Games only 3 months after defeating cancer and a hernia. He hasn't looked back since.

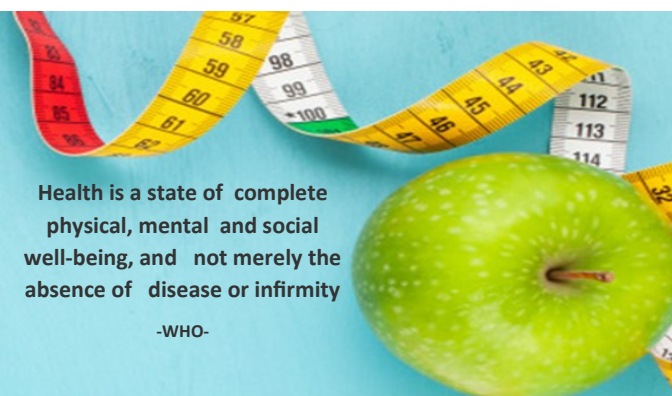
Now cancer-free, Jacinto has challenged CrossFitters around the world. For the last 13 years, Jacinto has taken on the challenge of matching the reps from his self-created workout, named the "Jacinto Storm", work-out-of-the day (WOD); with every year he's been alive.



Jacinto Bonilla who turned 80 years old on 3rd July in 2020; will be doing 8 exercises like push-ups, squats and the kettle bell swing; 80 reps of each exercises to mark his milestone.

Jacinto doesn't plan to stop any time soon and he offered words of wisdom to other older folks interested in working out.

"You're never too old to get into fitness," he said. "I'm gonna keep working out until the end of my life - until I am no more. I don't think I could ever stop. If you love doing something ... you won't stop."



Source: Michelle Miller Cbs News - 2017 Cbs Interactive Inc. / Yahoo!Life - Kelsey Weekman
Celia Balf - BarBend / The Oldest CrossFit Games Athlete: Jacinto Bonilla - by WOD Fever

Reflection Of A Volunteer's Experience



My earliest introduction to community involvement was during my school days. To instil the meaning of helping out in a community for a common good, I remembered vividly each class had to set aside an hour per week to help with the general cleaning of the school, which we undertook zealously, as we viewed it as "play time".

These were followed by fund raising activities via the "dreaded card" with lots of empty columns to be filled with the pledged amount and sale of charity raffle tickets. Fuelled by the "stressful mantra" of a higher being (teacher), who mandated..."I do not want to see empty columns" "I do not want to see unsold tickets", spurred me to approach everyone and even strangers to accomplish my "mission".

I started reminiscing about the past "mission" of my school days while volunteering at a Care Home. Even though it was to fulfil a prerequisite of 400 hours of community service for an assignment but honestly I felt as if it was helping me more than I could have imagined.

During my stint at the Care Home, whereby I was exposed to an environment that is dependent on effective communication skills, I strengthened these skillset and developed a greater sense of empathy towards others, through interacting with the Residents and the Staff. It also made me ponder as well on the challenges of aging in terms of social and psychological changes and how we should be more tolerant and mindful.

I was given the opportunity to be involved in its' Senior Outreach and Engagement programme; as well as helping out in charity auction to raise donation and participated in talent shows to entertain the audience at the fundraiser.

What impresses me the most, is the matriarch of a group of silver-hair volunteers who exemplify volunteering as a vocation and go the extra miles to provide many extra services that supplement the essential functions of the staff at the Care Home; thus reminding me of a quote "*Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on Earth*" – Muhammad Ali

The experiences and comradeship garnered serve me well as it keep me grounded and remain me to always extend a helping hand, in times of need.



DISCOVERCORPS.COM



We welcome people from all walks of life to join us as volunteers and be a part of our volunteer community.



What skills do I need to have?

The most valuable skills you can bring to any volunteer effort are compassion, an open mind, a willingness to do whatever is needed and a positive attitude.



Browse through our areas of interest to find volunteer opportunities that may be right for you.

DONATIONS ARE APPRECIATED!

We depend on the generous hearts of benefactors to sustain us financially.

OUR community CARING for our COMMUNITY!

DONOR INFORMATION

*Name of donor (as in IC/Passport) _____

*NRIC No. / Passport No. / Business registration / No. (for organisations) _____

*Complete Address _____

*Contact No. _____ *Email _____

Note: The information is required by Lembaga Hasil Dalam Negeri Malaysia (Inland Revenue Board of Malaysia) in order to obtain an official receipt or tax-exemption receipt from our organisation

DONATION OPTIONS

Please mark [X] where applicable ☐ One Time Donation ☐ Monthly Donation ☐ Others

Amount: RM _____

DONATION METHOD

☐ By Cheque ☐ Bank Transfer ☐ Sarawak Pay
*Please scan QR Code



Payable To : **The National Cancer Society of Malaysia Sarawak Branch**

Account No : **211 212 5006 1883**

Bank Name : **RHB Bank, Kulas Branch**

Swift Code : **RHBBMYKL**

Address : **No. 186, First Floor, Jalan Nyiur, Off Jalan Tabuan, 93200 Kuching, Sarawak**

Note: The National Cancer Society of Malaysia Sarawak Branch respects the privacy of individuals with regards to personal data. It does not share data with a third party without consent. Tax exemption receipts will be issued for donations of RM50.00 and above.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Email / WhatsApp the completed form to us or contact us for further enquiries at:
Tel: +6082 235 809 | Mobile: +6010 951 1932 | Email: admin@sarawakcancer.org.my

<https://sarawakcancer.org.my//>

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