COVER STORY
Parkway Pantai honours its nurses

24-hour treadmill challenge raises public awareness of health coverage

Mount Elizabeth Novena officially opens
100% CAPABLE. COMMITTED. ON YOUR SIDE. GLENEAGLES.

In life, you need good health to stay on top of your game. At Gleneagles Hospital, it is our mission to help keep you at 100% in whatever you do.

FIND OUT HOW YOU CAN BE PART OF THE ACTION!
#100PercentOnYourSide | www.gleneagles.com.sg/wta

Our team of experienced medical specialists on-site:

- Dr Kenneth Chan
  Respiratory Physician
- Dr Chong Kean Wai
  Orthopaedic Surgeon
- Dr Roland Chong
  Orthopaedic Surgeon
- Dr Rohit Khurana
  Cardiologist
- Dr Lim Y-jia
  Orthopaedic Surgeon
- Dr Lui Hook Foong
  Gastroenterologist
- Dr Benedict Pang
  Orthopaedic Surgeon
- Dr Daniel Yeo
  Cardiologist

Watch the WTA players give their 100%.

Date: 17-26 October 2014
Venue: Singapore Indoor Stadium, Singapore Sports Hub
Visit www.WTAFinals.com for more details.
It’s all about recognising staff achievements and their hard work in this issue of Mosaic, as Parkway Pantai celebrates Nurses’ Day and Long Service Awards in Singapore.

In the last Mosaic, we saw how our hospitals in Malaysia commemorate Nurses’ Day with a host of activities ranging from carnivals and themed dinners to staff performances and mass exercise. Some hospitals took a step further to mark the occasion with heartwarming community activities.

In Singapore, it was about “Nurses Leading Change” – the theme for this year’s Nurses’ Day. It reflects the level of trust and confidence we have in our nursing workforce, who are at the forefront of our healthcare system.

Nurses today are competent professionals wearing multiple hats as they go about their daily tasks as caregiver, counsellor, patient advocate, decision maker and teacher.

The celebrations are just one way of showing our deep appreciation. Beyond that, we want to empower our nurses and help them achieve their career aspirations. At Parkway Pantai, we have carved out different career tracks for our nurses. We have a dynamic training and preceptor programme to help them acquire the skills and knowledge to excel in the fast-changing healthcare scene. Most of all, we are committed to ensuring our nurses have an enriching and meaningful career with us, just as they are committed to provide the best care for our patients. (See our Nurses’ Special – pages 8 to 15)

At the Long Service and Golden Years Service Awards, we see the company’s efforts at engaging and retaining staff bear fruit. More than 450 staff were recognised for their loyalty and dedication during the heartwarming event. (Read about their career journeys on page 42)

As Parkway Pantai continues to grow, there will be more stories to tell of people who make the organisation a success. You, too, can be one of them.

We want your feedback

Do you have story ideas or comments to share with us?

Write to: grp.corporatecomms@parkway.sg, or Group Corporate Communications, Parkway Pantai Limited, #15-01, TripleOne Somerset, 111 Somerset Road, Singapore 238164.
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Non-invasive method of replacing the aortic valve
no handshakes, please

Scientists at Aberystwyth University in Wales are calling for the use of fist bumps as greetings instead of handshakes. A handshake transfers 10 times as many bacteria as fist bumps. This is likely to be due to the larger surface area and longer duration of contact.

Source: BBC News

healthy fats

Avocado is sometimes used as a substitute for meat in sandwiches and salads because of its high fat content. Three quarters of the calories in avocado goes to fat, but fear not, for most of it is monounsaturated fat. This is considered “good fat” which reduces bad cholesterol in blood and lowers risk of stroke and heart disease.

Compared to other fruits, avocado has lower sugar content and more protein. It is also a rich source of fibre and vitamins. A study published in the Nutrition Journal last year has even found that people who ate more avocados were more likely to have lower body weight and waist circumference.

Source: Medical News Today

warm milk for better sleep

Is it true that having a warm glass of milk before going to bed will help you sleep better?

It certainly is, for tryptophan, an amino acid found in milk, promotes the production of serotonin and melatonin, hormones that ease you into slumber. If you’re not a fan of milk, non-caffeine herbal products such as camomile tea, and a few drops of lavender oil on your pillow are also try-worthy methods for a good night’s sleep!

Experts also suggest having a light healthy snack, such as a small serving of fruit and unsalted nuts or a banana with yogurt, as carbohydrates make it easier for these hormones to reach the brain. On the other hand, a heavy meal, especially if the meal contains spicy or fatty food, can cause discomfort and impair sleep.

Source: The Telegraph
under stress, burn less

Stressed women have higher insulin levels. This increases the rate at which fat is stored. The stored fat is also less likely to be converted into energy for use.

In a study, 58 middle-aged women were asked about the kinds of stress they were facing, before given a meal consisting of turkey sausages, eggs, biscuits and gravy. The meal contained 930 calories and 60 grams of fat, which is comparable to the amount of fat and calories in a double patty hamburger and fries.

Results show that women who were stressed were burning an average of 104 calories fewer than non-stressed women within a seven-hour time frame after a meal. In a year, that could add up to 5kg of excess weight gain.

Source: The Telegraph

neither left nor right

Research by the University of Utah has found that people do not use one side of their brains more than the other. It is the connections among all brain regions that enable humans to engage in both creativity and analytical thinking. This debunks the myth that one who is analytical is left-brained and creativity is confined to the right side.

Brain scans of participants from ages 7 to 29 at rest were examined. The researchers looked at activity in 7,000 brain regions, and scrutinised neural connections within and between these regions. Although there were pockets of heavy neural traffic in certain key regions, both sides of the brain on average reflected equal neural networks and connectivity.

Study researcher Jeff Anderson said, “It’s absolutely true that some brain functions occur in one or the other side of the brain. Language tends to be on the left, attention more on the right. But people don’t tend to have a stronger left or right-sided brain network.”

Source: Live Science
**healthy skin, hair and weight**

Supermodels Miranda Kerr and Gisele Bundchen and Hollywood celebrities Jennifer Aniston, Gwyneth Paltrow and Angelina Jolie have been known to use coconut oil in their body and health care routines.

Coconut oil is believed to promote healthy skin, shiny hair and it even aids weight loss. It also contains antioxidants and being plant-based, vegans, too, can enjoy its benefits!

Coconut oil moisturises the skin naturally and just a tablespoon of it is said to be sufficient for full body application. For hair treatment, use two teaspoons on the entire scalp and hair length; leave it in for an hour or overnight, and shampoo off to healthier, shinier hair.

Virgin coconut oil has been proven to contain fatty acids which are said to increase metabolism and the burning of calories. Experts recommend starting with one teaspoon daily, gradually increasing intake up to four teaspoons a day.

*Source: news.com.au*
**foods to avoid when pregnant**

While eating well is important for the health of both the mum and the baby, there are some usually considered nutritious foods that pregnant mums should avoid.

Raw or undercooked food can harbour a bacteria called toxoplasma, which could endanger the baby. That means undercooked steaks, sushi and anything with raw fish or shellfish are off the list. Raw vegetables and fruits can harbour toxoplasma too, so it is advised to thoroughly wash them with a vegetable brush.

Listeria, a bacteria that can multiply at temperatures inside a fridge, can be found in unpasteurized milk, soft cheeses, meat spreads, deli meats and even smoked seafood. You can still have ham, bacon or smoked salmon, but make sure they have been thoroughly heated.

Dressings and desserts made with raw eggs are out too, because they can be contaminated by salmonella. Freshly squeezed juices may also contain E. coli.

*Source: WebMD*

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**junk food to motivate elderly patients**

Doctors in the UK are saying that junk food could be good for elderly patients. It was reported that hospitals throw away as much as 30 million uneaten meals annually.

It is common for patients in poor health to lose their appetites, but not eating at all is worse than eating junk food. Malnourishment causes elderly people to get weak, and it takes more effort and time for them to recover from illnesses. Doctors suggest that unhealthy snacks such as chips, ice cream and doughnuts could be used to encourage and motivate patients to eat.

*Source: Mail Online*
The scope of nursing has evolved tremendously, with exciting pathways that can lead to a promising career and immense job satisfaction. An experienced nurse can choose to go into specialised clinical care, preceptorship, or even management and administration. Now, nurses are respected as qualified healthcare professionals in their own right, a far cry from the perceived hand-maiden role of yesterday to doctors. In recognition of this, Parkway Pantai’s Nurses’ Day celebration is aptly themed ‘Nurses Leading Change’. The Guest-of-Honour for the occasion was Dr Lim Suet Wun, Chief Executive Officer of Parkway Operations Division.

The key highlight of the celebrations was the launch of the organisation’s very own nurses’ handbook. Curated by Group Director of Nursing, Elaine Ng and her able team of nurse educators and managers whose institutional knowledge and rich hands-on experience have led to its successful development, the book is intended to be a useful guide, reference as well as refresher for all nurses to strengthen nursing foundation and grow competencies.

In a separate heartfelt message of appreciation, Group Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director of Parkway Pantai, Dr Tan See Leng, declared, “On behalf of the management, I thank you – nurses – our trusted partners in care. Most importantly, I thank you for being such warm hospital ambassadors 24/7 because you create the experience and impression that patients and visitors will have. We will continue to support your aspirations, develop your capabilities and recognise your contributions. Your time has come to shine and make a real difference!”

Nurses attending the central celebrations enjoyed the food, the games and sponsors’ booths, and had a most wonderful time catching up with one another before returning to their respective hospitals for more celebrations.
We look to role models for inspiration when the going gets tough. During the Nurses’ Day central celebrations in Singapore, Parkway Pantai gave out four awards to outstanding nurses in recognition of their excellent work and the commitment to care, teach, mentor and precept.

In her address to the nurses, Group Director of Nursing Elaine Ng reminded that the nurses must continually challenge themselves and embrace a culture of reflection and learning as well as respect and understanding. She urged, “We need to have a ‘voice’ of advocate for our patients and profession. Be ready to challenge and train yourselves to your fullest potential.”

Parkway Pantai honours its best nurses of 2014 who have led the way and set the pace in achieving continuing excellence.
Promising Young Nurse Award Recipients
From left
• Zhan Jian, PEH
• Zhang Lan Mei, GEH
• Su Nandar Aung, MNH
• Htet Htet Aung, MEH

Outstanding Nurse Preceptor Award Recipients
From left
• Beatrice Wong Man Ling, PEH
• Minette Carangihan Opulencia, MNH
• Esguerra Rodaline Dela Cruz, MEH
• Shamini D Sambathan, GEH

Nurse I Admire Most Award Recipients
From left
• Rita Tan Poh Beng, GEH
• Manpreet Kaur Gill, MEH
• Manisah Binte Mansoor, PEH
• Ei Wai Phyo, MNH

Inspiring Nurse Leader Award Recipients
(Highest nursing award in Parkway)
From left
• Tan Lai Poh, GEH
• Audrey Brampy, MEH
Three nurses from Parkway Pantai’s Singapore hospitals are recognised by the Ministry of Health for their dedication to their jobs.

Nurses, the people who are at the frontline of patient care, have the ability to make a patient’s stay in the hospital as pleasant as possible and are the ones patients often turn to when they are feeling discomfort or worried.

Each year, the Ministry of Health acknowledges the important and hard work of these dedicated individuals to the nursing profession by awarding nurses across public sector hospitals, private hospitals, and in the intermediate and long-term care sector with the Nurses’ Merit Award. And this year, three nurses from Gleneagles Hospital, Mount Elizabeth Hospital and Mount Elizabeth Novena Hospital garnered awards for their outstanding performance in the workplace.
Sister Gao Jun is remarkably adaptable and dedicated. She shoulders her clinical and leadership responsibilities with competence and gravitas. Her knowledge and professionalism are reassuring to her nurses, patients and doctors.

Josephine Ong, Director of Nursing, Gleneagles Hospital

Gao Jun  
Nurse Manager  
Gleneagles Hospital (GEH)

"From my earliest memory, all I've ever wanted to do was be a nurse, to be that 'angel in white' who would help people when they were in pain,” Sister Gao Jun smiles as she recalls her childhood.

After graduating from nursing school, she worked for five years in China before moving to Singapore to work in GEH. “I was looking for a chance to broaden my horizons, to learn more about what nursing was like in other countries, so when the opportunity came for me to work in Gleneagles Hospital in 1996, I grabbed it.”

Over the last 18 years, she has poured her heart and energy into her career, with outstanding results. Currently, she leads a team of nurses and staff to provide care to patients in a 30-bed multi-disciplinary ward.

Her patients are at the heart of everything she does. “We have patients with a variety of ailments – cancer patients, those recovering from surgery, and even patients with neurological problems. So it can be a challenge making sure that you are able to meet their needs,” she admits.

“When patients are in pain and uncomfortable, or when family members are worried about their loved ones, their fuses can be very short,” she shares. “But I believe that if you put your heart into taking care of your patients, they will be moved by your sincerity.”

One thing she always tries to instil in her team is that a little concern goes a long way. “Showing patients that you care isn’t difficult,” she insists. “All you have to do is take time to chat with your patient, to ask their family members how they are doing, or just put your arm around them if you see that they’re feeling down. And when you see the smile return to their faces, or when they take the time to thank you when they are discharged, all that hard work is worth it.”

Currently pursuing her degree in Nursing, Sister Gao also believes that there is more that she can do for her patients. “There’s always something new to learn on the job, and I will continue to work hard to become a better nurse!”
Sister Khoo Mee Oon has dedicated over 40 years of her life to caring for patients. As a young girl growing up in Malaysia, Sister Khoo imagined herself as a nurse, offering comfort and help to those in need. “My parents were strongly against the idea of me becoming a nurse because they knew that the nature of the job is very challenging,” she remembers. “But I wanted a career that would give me the opportunity to make a difference in people’s lives and the freedom to work in other countries, so I was determined to become a nurse.”

The young Mee Oon headed to the UK for nurse training in 1969 and returned to Malaysia in 1976, before coming to Singapore to begin what has become a 34-year career in MEH. Over the years, Sister Khoo’s responsibilities have changed immensely. “In the past, my job was quite simple and I only had to worry about taking care of the patient,” she explains. “These days, patients are much more knowledgeable and have higher expectations, so we have to keep ourselves abreast of medical knowledge and new technology. As a nurse manager, I also have to manage my team of nurses and mentor them,” she continues.

Having said that, one thing remains constant – patients always come first. “No matter what happens at work, my patients are the most important part of the job. And this is something I keep reminding my junior nurses, that they have to treat their patients as their top priority. And the patients know when you make them your focus,” she insists.

“Nursing is not just a job, it is a calling. For anyone who is thinking of becoming a nurse, I would say that it is a very rewarding career. But you must love the job to excel at it.” And that is precisely what Sister Khoo feels for nursing – she truly loves her job.

For over 30 years, Nurse Manager Khoo Mee Oon has worked selflessly, freely giving her time, leadership and compassion. With exemplary professionalism, she has led her team in contributing to the hospital’s continued success.

Mona Soh, Director of Nursing, Mount Elizabeth Hospital
Nurse Manager Suzanna Tay is adaptable and resilient to changes and challenges. She demonstrates enthusiasm in her work. She has the capability to engage and motivate her team to deliver excellent patient care.

Elaine Ng, Group Director of Nursing, Parkway Pantai

Suzanna Tay
Nurse Manager
Mount Elizabeth Novena Hospital (MNH)

At first look, you would not think that Sister Suzanna Tay could have 10 years of nursing experience under her belt. But she is not one to let her youthful appearance get in the way of making her patients feel comfortable during their stay at MNH.

Having experienced how it was like on the receiving end of healthcare when her grandfather took ill, Sister Suzanna saw for herself what a difference dedicated medical professionals could make in the life of a patient and their family. This strengthened her resolve to become a nurse.

After completing her nursing education in 2003, she joined the nursing team at Gleneagles Hospital before moving to MNH in 2012.

“I was part of the pioneer group of nurses to join Mount Elizabeth Novena. As the hospital was brand new, we had to do everything from scratch,” she recalls. But she rose to the challenge, and now heads a 32-bed ward.

Backing her up is a wonderful team, for whom Sister Suzanna is grateful. “One of the most useful pieces of advice that I’ve been given is from the Group Director of Nursing, Ms Elaine Ng, who said, ‘Don’t give up working as a team. Without your soldiers, you can’t win the war.’ And this is something I keep in mind every single day.”

Sister Suzanna also names Siti Hosier, Assistant Director of Nursing at MNH, as instrumental in helping her fulfil her potential. “She inspires me to do my best always. I wouldn’t be where I am today without her guidance.”

At the end of the day, Sister Suzanna is clear about her role as an advocate for her patients. “They are often in pain and afraid. As one of the people who spend the most time with them, it’s up to us nurses to encourage them and lift their spirits during their hospitalisation. They want someone to be there for them and lend a listening ear. And that is what I try to do.”
The biggest threat to retirement plan is not inflation or even market performance. It is the unexpected medical expenses. People often overlook or underestimate the need to insure themselves against healthcare costs which will increase with age.

It was with this in mind that Mount Elizabeth Hospital (MEH) held its ‘Run For Cover’ campaign – Singapore’s first 24-hour treadmill challenge – to raise public awareness of the benefits of health insurance coverage.

After two qualifying rounds, the running event culminated in a finale at Ngee Ann Civic Plaza on 21 and 22 June 2014. A total of 80 runners from 10 teams, ranging from ultra-marathoners to weekend joggers, took turns to run non-stop on the treadmill for 24 hours to win 10 years’ worth of free healthcare insurance coverage. Their clocked mileage also contributed to free cataract surgery for the needy elderly.
Team DTCC claimed top spot with a total distance of 318.79 km. Each champion team member ran away with S$5,000 worth of free healthcare insurance coverage, which will insure them up to S$700,000 per year for the next 10 years.

Changing attitudes to healthcare insurance
During the campaign, runners and the public were reminded about the importance of medical insurance and encouraged to pro-actively start planning for their healthcare coverage.

“Having sufficient health insurance is important, easy to obtain, yet often neglected. We hope the ‘Run For Cover’ campaign will get everyone to review their own medical coverage now, so that they are well-prepared for the future,” said Dr Kelvin Loh, Chief Executive Officer of MEH.

“We believe now is the best time to start the public conversation on being adequately covered for healthcare. With the right medical insurance coverage, anyone can come to Mount Elizabeth, where they can see top specialists within 48 hours.”

Changing lives of needy elderly
For every 30 km clocked in the finals, MEH will perform free cataract surgery for a needy elderly on its premises. This is part of Parkway Pantai’s ‘Life Renewed’ corporate social responsibility programme that is fully sponsored by the Khazanah IHH Healthcare Fund.

In all, the competitors clocked a total distance of 2,763.26 km, which translated to 93 cataract surgeries. Coupled with another 24 surgeries contributed by over 200 members of the public pounding the treadmill, a total of 117 free cataract operations for the needy elderly were “earned” in that meaningful span of 24 hours.

We hope the ‘Run For Cover’ campaign will get everyone to review their own medical coverage now, so that they are well-prepared for the future.

Dr Kelvin Loh, Chief Executive Officer, Mount Elizabeth Hospital
From 23 to 25 May 2014, as part of an organisation-wide corporate social responsibility initiative, Pantai Ampang Sports Club (PASC) rallied 61 participants from Pantai Holdings to participate in a special coral propagation programme at Pulau Redang.

The three-day programme was conducted by PASC, with the support of Ocean Quest, who oversees the coral propagation at Pulau Redang.

**Learning theory**

Despite a gruelling 8-hour bus ride to Terengganu from Pantai Hospital Ampang (PHA), followed by a ferry ride to Pulau Redang, the participants were in high spirits.

After a good night’s sleep, the staff congregated at Mutiara Beach where warm-up activities were conducted by PASC and Seamonkey who runs the diving centre in Mutiara Beach. They were briefed about coral and its propagation, and trained to attach coral fragments onto natural live rocks using ordinary glue.

From saving patients to coral propagation, Parkway Pantai makes this world a better place through a caring workforce.
Putting into practice
Chairman of Pantai Holdings, Datuk Khairil Anuar Abdullah, officially launched the coral propagation programme, accompanied by Chong Yee Mun, Chief Executive Officer of PHA.

The process of planting corals was eagerly attempted by the healthcare workers turned coral rescuers. Through sheer concern, determination and an eye for details – qualities honed by years of patient care – the team set the ground for creating a rehabilitated coral reef stretch over the next five to 10 years.
Encouraged by raving reviews of its annual wellness camps to promote a healthy lifestyle, Astro Uruthunai organised its fifth series of free wellness camps for the community. The Astro Uruthunai Wellness Camps were conducted in four schools located in the Klang Valley between 28 June and 20 July 2014, in collaboration with Pantai Hospital Ipoh (PHI), Pantai Hospital Kuala Lumpur (PHKL) and Jabatan Kesihatan Cameron Highlands.

The aim was to reach out to as many people as possible to increase awareness of health-related issues, and at the same time, to detect illnesses early and focus on preventive measures.

The health screening activities included blood pressure check, body mass index, glucose and cholesterol test, hearing assessment, step test for heart, bone density scan, and spine and joint assessment.

In addition, free clinical breast examinations and dietary consultations were provided. Free mammogram vouchers were given to women of 40 years and above while free spectacles were distributed to underprivileged students.

There were also health stations giving information on how to quit smoking, substance abuse (alcohol) as well as cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first aid demonstrations.

As part of our corporate social responsibility, we remain committed to reaching out to our immediate communities.

Anwar Anis, Chief Executive Officer, Pantai Hospital Kuala Lumpur
Anwar Anis, Chief Executive Officer, PHKL added, “This year marks the 40th anniversary of PHKL. With four decades of established track record and community healthcare excellence in Malaysia, we are happy to commemorate this milestone with the launch of today’s Community Wellness Camp in partnership with Astro. As part of our corporate social responsibility programme, we remain committed to reaching out to our immediate communities.”

“This Wellness Camp is reflective of our hope and aspirations to play a vital role in the health of the community and individuals. PHI hopes that with better awareness and earlier detection, we would be able to deter, delay or reverse any health related diseases as prevention is better than cure. Through collaborative efforts, we have greater resources to make our community a safer and healthier place” said Kelen Leong, Chief Operating Officer of PHI.
hospital in MANJUNG OPENS

Parkway Pantai’s 12th hospital in Malaysia – Pantai Hospital Manjung (PHM) – had its soft launch opening on 19 May 2014, all ready to serve the local community! As a multi-disciplinary community hospital with a 108-bed capacity, PHM began operations with 60 beds.

At its soft launch, PHM marked the celebrations by inviting the public to participate in activities such as health screening, children colouring contest, cooking demonstration and health talks. Hospital tours were also conducted by staff nurses and the trail covered the emergency room, imaging room, maternity and general wards as well as clinics for the public to know more about the hospital.

The hospital offers services in Anaesthesia, General Medicine, Internal Medicine, Ophthalmology, General Surgery, Ear Nose Throat Surgery, Orthopaedics as well as Obstetrics and Gynaecology.
On 10 May 2014, mothers from all walks of life, including patients, guests and Gleneagles Kuala Lumpur’s (GKL) own staff were feted in a special Mother’s Day celebration organised by the hospital themed “Mother’s Day, Pamper Day!”.

The day kicked off with GKL presenting its own working mothers with a specially designed t-shirt that said “Happy Mothers’ Day to the Best Mom in the World” which they wore while handing out roses, t-shirts, cupcakes and well-wishes to both patients and guests.

Mothers in GKL were treated to pampering manicure-pedicure sessions as well as comforting back and shoulder massages.

Regional Chief Executive Officer of Gleneagles Hospitals and Chief Executive Officer of GKL Datuk Amir Firdaus Abdullah said, “It is in a hospital where you can truly see the sacrifices of a mother; the way she tends to her sick child and at the same time, she shoulders the responsibilities of work and home. Mothers are truly super humans. For us, this is our small way to appreciate their sacrifices and honour these super moms on this special day.”

Pantai Hospital Kuala Lumpur’s (PHKL) Sunshine Junior Club members – children born at PHKL – and their parents were taken on an outdoor excursion to Farm In The City on 31 May 2014. They experienced what an open farm is, with hands-on activities during which children get close and personal with different animals, experience a village ambience and see tropical trees and plants.
Favourite classic characters from Spiderman, Minion, Snow White, Wonder Woman, Darth Vader to even Iron Man were spotted roaming in Singapore Expo Hall on 16 August 2014. Within the same premises, apart from the numerous game stalls, people were queuing to take part in activities such as rock climbing, a 30-metre flying fox, laser tag, bubble-bumping Zorbe soccer and gladiator challenge. Elsewhere, inflatable bouncy castles, kids electric cars and makeover booths provided child-friendly entertainment for the young ones. Throw in a movie booth screening the latest blockbusters with free flow candy and popcorn, two lucky draws and you have “It’s Showtime!” – Parkway’s Movie World 2014. This is a specially designed and built from ground original attraction for Parkway Pantai’s Family Day! A 2,500 strong crowd comprising staff and their families thronged the venue, enjoying the diverse activities and the opportunity to bond.

Dr Tan See Leng, Group Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director of the organisation, together with Dr Lim Suet Wun, Chief Executive Officer of Parkway Operations, and Phua Tien Beng, Chairman of the Family Day Committee gamely role-played Star Wars iconic characters – the Emperor Palpatine, Obi-Wan Kenobi and Anakin Skywalker respectively – for the opening, much to the delight of the audience.
Practice makes perfect. In healthcare, there is zero room for errors when lives are at stake. That’s why Parkway Pantai’s four Singapore hospitals – Gleneagles Hospital, Mount Elizabeth Hospital, Mount Elizabeth Novena Hospital and Parkway East Hospital – run regular drills to make sure they are fully prepared for emergencies and disasters. From establishing a sound command and control structure to clearly laid out roles and responsibilities for departments and team members, each hospital shows that it is both an art and a science that they have mastered when it comes to pandemic exercises, and that they will not be complacent.
Parkway Operations Division’s Chief Executive Officer Dr Lim Suet Wun recently hosted his tea session for staff to know them better and understand their concerns, to improve the workplace, on 22 July 2014. The next one is scheduled for 28 October 2014.

**teh tarik or TEA?**

Hareeff bin Muhammed, Chief Executive Officer of Pantai Premier Pathology also started having his ‘Teh Tarik’ sessions in his office on 6 and 7 July 2014 to engage staff.

These ‘Teh Tarik’ sessions give employees, especially the new and younger staff, from Klang Valley branches a chance to share their thoughts with Hareeff. A custom-made mug printed with ‘Teh Tarik Session with CEO’ was given to each participant as a souvenir to make the event more memorable. At each session, each staff was invited to share about how they feel working in Pantai as well as their expectations and wish list.

**WORLD HEALTH DAY carnival**

On 12 April 2014, over 500 people crowded Tapak Dahlia at Taman Titiwangsa, where Gleneagles Kuala Lumpur held its World Health Day Carnival 2014 to join in the fun activities from mass dancing to cooking.

“Keeping fit and healthy should be part of everyone’s daily lifestyle, and raising health awareness is our responsibility as a healthcare provider. This is a wonderful event from which we can see the community starting their Saturday healthily.” said Claire Sondaz, the hospital’s Marketing Communications Director.
DOCTOR of the HEART

Renowned cardiologist Dato Dr Leslie Lam shares about his love for cardiology, his patients, and the honour of receiving a Honorary Medical Degree from his alma mater, University College, Dublin.

For most families, a child who aspires to be a doctor would be lauded and encouraged. But that was not the case for renowned cardiac surgeon, Dr Leslie Lam. Coming from a lineage of bankers, he was expected to toe the family line.

"My family wanted me to become a banker too, and had everything planned out for me. But I wanted to do something more exciting. And I thought that medicine would be a good choice.

"My family thought I was mad because there were no doctors in the family!" he laughs, "They didn’t understand my choice."

Dr Lam’s medical studies brought him to Ireland, where he was enrolled in University College, Dublin (UCD). And it was there that he developed a special fondness for cardiology. "Cardiology was one of the most exciting fields in medicine at that point in time because there were a lot of advances being made, like coronary bypass and intervention cardiology," he explains. Once the decision was made, Dr Lam took up training in treating congenital heart failure for four and a half years, before going into paediatric cardiology. From Dublin, he then moved to London, where he spent a year as a Cardiac Fellow at the Royal Brompton Hospital.

It was after his time in London that Dr Lam faced another crossroad – whether to stay in London or Ireland, or to return to Singapore to further his career. “I spoke to my mentor, who was very honest and told me, ‘You may become my right-hand man, but you will never take over my job, because there are 10 other Irish guys in waiting’. So he told me to go home, and that was the most important move in my life,” he recalls.

Home is where the heart belongs
The decision to return home to Singapore not only affected Dr Lam, but also his wife, a general practitioner whom he had met during medical school in Dublin, and his two daughters. “The first year was tough – we couldn’t even afford an apartment then! But things improved quickly.”
Meanwhile, he continued his research on the latest technological advances in cardiology. This led to his exposure to a brand new procedure – the percutaneous transluminal coronary angioplasty, or balloon angioplasty. “When I first heard about this procedure, I thought it would be a wonderful alternative to a coronary bypass and I wanted to be trained in this. The head of my department was against my decision, thinking that such a procedure would never take off. But I insisted on it,” he shares.

In 1988, he became the first cardiologist to perform a balloon angioplasty in Singapore and his medical career took off from there. "Since the introduction of balloon angioplasty, the number of patients going for bypass surgeries has plummeted. Angioplasty is a first choice procedure for most patients; bypass surgery is considered only when it is not possible to do angioplasty."

Over the years, Dr Lam has become one of the most respected cardiologists in Singapore, even being appointed as the personal physician to royalty, and an honorary consultant to government officials. He has also built a successful practice at The Cardiac Centre in Mount Elizabeth Hospital.

He may have been conferred the title of Dato, but Dr Lam remains a humble man whose first priority is his patients. “I strongly believe that my job is to make sure that everything I do must benefit my patient,” Dr Lam shares. “If you don’t keep to that principle, you start doing procedures that benefit your practice or to earn more money, then it is wrong.”

Pay it forward
Dr Lam also believes that giving back to society is a very important part of being a doctor, something that he began doing as a volunteer taking care of Vietnamese refugees back during his time in Dublin. “I think being successful and not giving back to society would be very wrong,” he insists. And one of his biggest charity projects was doing volunteer work in Myanmar, making regular trips there with a team of doctors to treat underprivileged patients in the country, and helping to train doctors in more updated treatment methods.

“Doing surgeries in Myanmar in the 90s was quite risky because the electricity supply could be a little unstable. There were times when the power would go out in the middle of a surgery, and my team had to crank the heart-lung machine by hand until the electricity came back on!” he recalls. “But even then, my colleague, Dr Joseph Sheares, and I carried out a live course where he would do open heart surgery and I would carry out a balloon angioplasty, and it would be televised live to over 300 doctors so they could learn the procedures.”

“I get a lot of satisfaction from treating underprivileged patients. You know that you are truly changing their life, and I always feel like I’ve accomplished something more meaningful with them,” he smiles.
I don’t think you will ever tire of your job if you enjoy it. Even now, when I successfully complete a difficult case of balloon angioplasty, it feels so good and it makes my day.

Recognised for his achievements

With over 30 years of medicine, thousands of successful surgeries and healthy patients, a loving wife and two daughters successful in their own rights, it’s no wonder that Dr Lam is a very contented man. These days, he splits his time between work, leisurely games of golf, and his treasured wine collection. He also continues to contribute to his alma mater in Ireland, offering a number of scholarships and fellowships to promising students at UCD, and encouraging them to further their studies at the school.

Dr Lam also made a special contribution to Irish literature with the formation of the O’Brien-Lam collection, a selection of priceless items belonging to the Irish novelist, playwright and Nobel Laureate, Samuel Beckett. The collection, which included historical documents, artworks, photographs and correspondence about Irish literature, history, and history of Irish art, was donated to UCD in December 2012.

In recognition of his achievements in clinical cardiology, along with his contribution to medical education, research, and his support of UCD over the years, the school conferred an Honorary Doctor of Medicine (honoris causa) degree upon him in June this year. Only six individuals have received this in the university’s 160-year history, making it an exceptional honour. “I was very honoured and humbled to receive this honour,” he beams.

Even with the recognition that he has gained and numerous patients he has worked with, Dr Lam still finds passion in his work. “I don’t think you will ever tire of your job if you enjoy it. Even now, when I successfully complete a difficult case of balloon angioplasty, it feels so good and it makes my day. I will only call it a day when my work becomes a chore,” he promises.
Neurosurgeon Dato Dr Jagdeep Singh Nanra shares how the brain won his heart.

With a father who was a cardiologist at the state hospital in Terengganu, young Jagdeep Singh Nanra was no stranger to hospital life. However, his father did not want him to follow in his footsteps.

“Being a doctor meant long working hours, high stress levels and responsibilities. My father told me to be anything except a doctor. He wanted me to be an engineer or lawyer!” recalls the 48-year-old neurosurgeon and spine surgeon who has since carved a name for himself at Gleneagles Kuala Lumpur (GKL).

His father eventually packed him off to Australia at the age of 15, for secondary school education.

“I wanted to be a pilot then because I loved flying and travelling,” he recalls. “But to make my parents happy, I took computer engineering instead in university. After two years of trying, I decided enough was enough and I still preferred medicine!”

For the love of the brain
Dr Jagdeep went on to Dublin, Ireland, to pursue his medical degree and specialist training as well as settle down and start a family. He chose to specialise in neurosurgery in his final year of university under the tutelage of neurosurgeon Mr Danial Rawluk, someone he describes as a “surgical genius”.

“He has such excellent techniques. I learnt a lot from him and we still keep in touch today, exchanging notes and case studies,” says Dr Jagdeep.

He found neurosurgery fascinating because the brain is the ultimate organ that the body can’t live without. “Even the heart’s function is specifically to keep the brain alive. In brain-dead patients, the heart will automatically stop pumping after a while when it realises that it is no longer needed,” he explains.

“Neuroscience is the fastest moving medical specialty,” he reveals. “Historically, all of medicine’s advancements such as image-guided systems, CT scans, MRI machines were invented for the purpose of brain research.”

The best part is seeing the big difference to a patient’s life after a surgery or procedure to remove tumours in the brain such as aneurysm. “Patients can be suffering and in intense pain when they are admitted, but after surgery, they will leave happy and smiling. That’s so gratifying,” he beams.
**The knife that doesn’t cut**

Dr Jagdeep’s eyes light up when he talks about Gamma Knife, GKL’s latest radiosurgical device for the treatment of brain tumours and lesions (Find out more about the Gamma Knife on page 46). He praises the functions of the revolutionary tool, touted to be a game-changer in neurosurgery for deep-seated and small lesions that are difficult to reach with conventional surgery without risking brain damage.

Despite its name, there is no cutting involved in the Gamma Knife. This translates into faster recovery time, less bleeding and fewer surgical complications.

“Brain surgery is a complex procedure and I don’t blame patients and family members of patients for being scared when told they need to have surgery on the head. If anything goes wrong during surgery, the patient could end up with other problems such as impaired speech, balance, coordination, vision loss or blood clots that could potentially cause a stroke,” he explains.

With the Gamma Knife, procedures can be done on an outpatient basis, so patients can choose to either go home or to the hotel after treatment, or stay for one night for observation.

“Compare this to conventional brain surgery, where patients need to be in ICU for at least two days and hospitalised for a week, following surgery. There is more mental anguish, loss of productivity for caregivers who need to take longer leave, and anxiety about the outcome,” says Dr Jagdeep.
Never take things personally and never take problems home.

An advocate of the adoption of new technologies, he also works closely with close friend and comrade, Datuk Amir Firdaus Abdullah, Chief Executive Officer of GKL, to push the hospital forward in medical advancements, especially in neurosurgery.

Making Malaysia home
Today, Dr Jagdeep, fondly known as Dr Jack among colleagues and patients, enjoys a fast-paced daily routine.

Having been away from Malaysia for 22 years, coming home to serve on home ground in 2003 was a bitter-sweet experience. The first thing he struggled with was the language, as his entire family spoke little, if any, Bahasa Malaysia when they first returned.

However, they loved the friendly people, year-round warm weather, 24-hour street food and tranquil beaches of his hometown in Terengganu, resulting in him staying for good.

Having to face life and death issues daily has given the father of three a balanced perspective of life. Dealing with little children is the hardest. His youngest patients are a mere few days old. Having to tell parents that their little ones might not make it through the night, or live a normal life after severe brain infections is heartbreaking, even for the seasoned surgeon.

He often advises, “Life is unpredictable – enjoy yourself!” Surgery is stressful especially with highly complex and intense cases, but he strikes a balance with two key life philosophies: “Never take things personally and never take problems home.”

Spending time on golf, hockey, cricket or a pint with his businessmen or lawyer friends helps him to relax and avoid job burnout.

Like his father, Dr Jagdeep also does not want his children to be doctors because of the hard work and high stress levels. Whether they rebel against his decision, like what he did two decades ago, remains to be seen!
On 13 September 2014, Parkway Pantai commemorated the official opening of its crown jewel, Mount Elizabeth Novena Hospital (MNH), Singapore’s first hospital to be built from the ground up in more than 30 years. Minister for Health, Mr Gan Kim Yong, graced the ceremony as its Guest-of-Honour, joined by more than 150 guests from Singapore and various parts of the world.

In his speech, Minister Gan highlighted the MNH and Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH) collaboration, a pilot programme to help ease the ongoing bed crunch at TTSH’s Accident & Emergency Department. “Through such public-private collaborations, we are finding creative ways to make healthcare more accessible to Singaporeans. I applaud Parkway Pantai for stepping forward to be part of the solution,” said Minister Gan.

Chairman of Parkway Pantai Dato’ Mohammed Azlan Bin Hashim said, “Mount Elizabeth Novena Hospital is testament to Parkway Pantai’s foresight, focus and diligence. When we first decided to embark on this ambitious project, many had thought it would not be viable. But what others saw as impossible, we saw as an opportunity – hence the hospital’s tagline ‘It’s possible.’”

Since MNH opened its doors in July 2012, it has treated more than 20,000 patients, most of whom are Singapore residents.
The hospital has achieved many ‘firsts’ in the industry, including being the first to introduce MAKOplasty® Partial Knee Resurfacing surgery using RIO® Robotic Arm Interactive Orthopaedic System in Singapore, having Singapore’s first hybrid operating theatre in a private hospital and the first biograph molecular magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) system in Asia.

“More than 200 specialists are actively admitting patients into Mount Elizabeth Novena today, a testament to the hospital’s clinical capability and a strong reflection of the strong demand for quality healthcare services in Singapore and the region,” said Dr Kelvin Loh, Chief Executive Officer of MNH.

The hospital has been on a strong growth trajectory since commencing operations in July 2012. It hit operating break-even within a year of opening, and saw a more than 60% surge in patient volume in the past one year.

Buoyed by the strong demand, the hospital launched its new maternity ward – a first in Singapore in the last 16 years – in March this year, together with new paediatric, obstetrics and gynaecology services. The hospital plans to open more wards by the end of this year. It will start to offer radiation oncology services by the first quarter of 2015.

“Mount Elizabeth Novena Hospital is committed to make quality private healthcare accessible to as many Singaporeans as possible. We aim to minimise delays and most patients are able to receive diagnosis and treatment within 48 hours”, said Dr Loh.

Mount Elizabeth Novena Hospital is testament to Parkway Pantai’s foresight, focus and diligence.

Dato’ Mohammed Azlan Bin Hashim, Chairman of Parkway Pantai
Since late July this year, local celebrity Fann Wong was all packed and ready to be at the hospital at a moment’s notice. But little did she expect her precious little bundle of joy to arrive on the nation’s 49th birthday.

“I guess the baby loves the country and the fireworks so much that he decided to choose National Day!”
Magical moment

When baby Zed was born amidst the country’s celebratory mood, everything else became secondary to Fann. Only his first cries mattered. Clearly overwhelmed with joy, she could not control her tears when she heard him for the first time.

Describing it as a “dream come true”, both she and husband, local actor Christopher Lee, are enjoying every minute with their son, and are looking forward to spending more time with him. The experience has also given Fann a new-found respect for mothers, especially those who have had two or three kids.

“We asked for our baby to room in with us and my brother said, ‘Good luck!’ We didn’t understand him at that time, but after the first night I realised why,” she quipped.

Nevertheless, both Fann and Christopher have no regrets with the choice they made because they now feel they understand Zed a bit better. Despite the lack of sleep, Fann is “totally enjoying the transition” and is glad that she didn’t wait to go home to start the bonding.

“From the moment Zed was born, carrying him in my arms and breast-feeding him for the first time were all special moments. And each time it happens, I feel closer to my son. It’s simply beautiful.”

For now, both agree that the most challenging thing is to understand the baby’s different cries. Figuring out whether he is hungry, or needs a diaper change, or just wants to be carried has not been easy, but they believe they’re making progress.

“Last night was especially hard and we were a little lost. We had a little party with some of our close friends – which by the way was thoughtfully organised by the hospital – and Zed may have had a little too much stimulus. So he became quite cranky through the night, and we really didn’t know what to do. But in the end he settled down close to dawn. So, yes it’s tiring but we wouldn’t have it any other way,” let on Christopher.

Fann Wong
From twosome to threesome
Married for five years, the couple had been receiving quite a bit of pressure about starting a family. Being in the limelight all the time didn’t help either but they both took it in stride.

And when the couple eventually found out that Fann was pregnant, there were no jumps for joy or big parties.

“We both remained very quiet. It took us a while to take in the moment and allow it to sink in. We didn’t go out to celebrate or anything like that. Instead, we became very careful because we didn’t want to hurt the baby,” said Fann.

The months that followed were particularly tough on Fann. The nausea and vomiting stressed her up, and it didn’t help that Christopher was away on filming.

“I was not having an easy time like some of my girlfriends. I was literally a Merlion. The dining table, room and corridor were all not spared!”

But once she went past the first trimester, things became more manageable. Fann began to really enjoy her pregnancy and even did a Demi Moore-esque photoshoot for a series of advertisements.

A labour of love
When her contractions started on the eve of National Day, she and Christopher checked themselves into Mount Elizabeth Novena, all ready to welcome the new addition to their family. Strangely enough she couldn’t feel much, although the sensors indicated strong contractions that were one-minute apart.

“Actually, even in the labour ward she wasn’t sure if she was having contractions. She didn’t need the epidural at all!” said Christopher.

As she was close to full-term in her pregnancy, they opted to go natural. But more than 10 hours later, doctors became quite concerned.

“Both the doctor and Chris didn’t want the baby to go into distress. I thought I could still do it, but taking everything into consideration, we decided to go for a Caesarean,” shared Fann.
In good hands

Once that decision was made, Fann was pleasantly surprised with the speed and efficiency of the doctors and nurses. The move from the labour ward to the operating theatre went on like clockwork.

“The next thing I knew, the doctor was calling for Chris and I heard the baby cry!”

Although it had only been two days since baby Zed was born when this interview was conducted, Fann was already recovering well. In fact she surprised some of her friends by being up and about at the party the previous night.

“There is still some pain, so I’m on pain killers but I don’t expect it to go on for too long because the doctors told me everything seems to be in order. I know I’m in good hands so I’m not worried,” she shared.

While they had initially picked the two-year-old hospital for its proximity to their home, the care and reassurance they received as jittery first-time parents more than convinced them that they had made the right choice. Even Chris, who had been impressed with the hospital when he first came here for the filming of a local drama about two years ago, felt their stay here had exceeded their initial expectations.

“It felt we were at a hotel or resort instead of a hospital. I almost went looking for the bar fridge!” laughed Fann.

The staff too, made an impression.

“I love the nurses. They shower so much love on my boy. They are very proactive and are able to anticipate my needs,” said Fann.

Proud father Christopher agreed, “From Day 1 till delivery, the hospital took excellent care of us. The doctors and nurses were all very observant, efficient, attentive and meticulous. We feel really lucky to be here. There’s so much warmth and support.”

And baby makes three

While they will miss the staff at the hospital, the couple can’t wait to bring little Zed home. If Christopher had his way, he would spend every second with little Zed, at least till the end of the year.

“He’s been waking up with me at night and Zed simply loves his voice. Every time Chris carries him, Zed will become very calm and quiet. It’s really amazing!” revealed Fann.

Fann hopes to have another baby but for now, she just wants to take it one step at a time.

“I’d like to continue breast-feeding and taking care of Zed full-time for at least three months. I think these few months are crucial to develop a bond with the baby. And I really want to thank the hospital and staff for giving me head start in that aspect, and for taking such wonderful care of me and Zed. Without them, I wouldn’t be so relaxed!”
Parkway Pantai’s Singapore Operations celebrates committed colleagues for chalking up another career milestone and give credit where it is due at its annual Long Service and Golden Years Service Award ceremony.

Parkway Pantai held its annual Long Service and Golden Years Service Award ceremony on 29 May 2014 to honour its Singapore employees. There were 427 Long Service Award recipients, a 15% increase from 2013, of which 407 staff have worked between five and 30 years. 24 other remarkable individuals were awarded the Golden Years Award which is given to staff in recognition of every three-year period of service, for staying with the organisation beyond the official retirement age.

But being a preferred employer is more than rewarding staff loyalty with money. At Parkway Pantai, to attract and keep talent, corporate leadership, human resource policies, career pathways, quality work life are part of a larger cycle that keeps staff engaged and motivated. The management also tries to create opportunities to develop staff and fulfil their career aspirations while encouraging work life balance.

Dr Lim Suet Wun, Chief Executive Officer of Parkway Operations, in his opening speech to the recipients, expressed his appreciation, “Your contribution to this organisation is invaluable and we are proud of how your achievements have mirrored ours. Stay with us and let’s continue to grow on this exciting healthcare journey together! Thank you!”
HONOURING their SERVICE

Mosaic meets three inspiring recipients of Parkway Pantai’s Long Service Awards from the Singapore operations. They have risen through the ranks with the opportunities and nurturing environment provided by the organisation, and propelled by their positive attitudes, dedication and hard work.

Lim Fung Leng, 56
Senior Principal Radiographer,
ParkwayHealth Radiology

Imagine working in a department right from its birth, watching with pride as it grows from a one-man show with minimal facilities to a successful radiology department serving patients from all over the world.

Ms Lim Fung Leng, a Senior Principal Radiographer at Gleneagles Hospital (GEH) is part of such a legacy.

Fung Leng was drawn to a radiographer’s career by an advertisement and took up a course upon completing her ‘A’ Levels.

After graduation and two years in a restructured hospital, Ms Lim spent eight years at Mount Elizabeth Hospital – “I was there before it was a Parkway Pantai hospital!” – before moving to Gleneagles Hospital in 1988. “I was the first radiographer that Parkway hired!” she beams.

Being a pioneer, Fung Leng had the opportunity to learn the use of all the imaging equipments like CT, MRI and ultrasound. “The chance to keep up with the latest technology and be trained in different equipment was one of the reasons why I chose to work in a hospital, even though I was offered opportunities to move to smaller clinics where work would be easier.”

Over the years, Fung Leng has transitioned into a more managerial role, taking care of the daily manpower allocation of a team of 24 radiographers in her department.

“My work can be challenging because the needs change daily,” she shares. “However, because of the years I’ve spent hands-on as a radiographer, I am able to suggest practical ways of solving any problems they face.”

All these years, Fung Leng has never lost interest in her field. “Medical technology has grown by leaps and bounds, and there will always be new equipments and procedures,” she says. “Radiology now plays an important role in the medical field, helping doctors to diagnose their patients correctly. And this makes it even more important for me to do a good job, so that doctors have clear images to work with.”

To Fung Leng, empathy and patience are important qualities for anyone considering radiology as a career. “We are dealing with people who are scared or in pain every day. So being able to put ourselves in the patient’s shoes, and feel compassion for them is an essential personality trait on the job.”

With an impressive 25 years at GEH under her belt, Fung Leng is proud to say she has grown with the department.

“This is my family,” she declares proudly.
Sally Tang, 60  
Nurse Clinician,  
Mount Elizabeth Hospital (MEH)

A lively, ball of energy who brings joy and comfort to her patients – that is a perfect description of Sister Sally Tang. For the last 25 years, she has brought this energy into the wards at MEH.

After a seven-year hiatus taking care of her two children, Sister Tang re-joined the workforce as an agency nurse at MEH, before coming on board full-time as a staff nurse in the surgical ward. “I was attracted by the high energy and dynamics of the department, and thought it would be a very exciting place to work in.”

In addition to looking after patients’ medication and nursing care, her new job requires her to guide the nurses in her department in the clinical aspects of patient care, making sure medications are correct and everything is documented properly by the doctors.

One of her biggest challenges is dealing with concerned family members who are scared and want to find out what is going on. “They ask us questions that we are not in a position to answer,” she says. “I feel for the family members when I see them going through emotional and psychological pressure. So aside from taking care of the patients, being able to sympathise with and support the caregivers is also key to becoming a good nurse,” she strongly believes.

What keeps the smile on her face every day is having a cohesive team who is selfless in caring for the patients, and knowing that she is making a difference in someone else’s life.

“I once had a patient who was in a semi-comatose state and could not respond, but I would talk to her whenever I was in her room. And when she woke up, she immediately recognised me as ‘Sister Sally’. And when I asked her how she knew me, she said she recognised my voice!”

The working environment at MEH is something else that is her motivation for work. “I feel cared for in this organisation. There was a time when I needed to take urgent leave because my husband was not well, and though we were short of staff, my bosses still granted me the leave to take care of him until he recovered.”

It is a combination of heartwarming moments, a meaningful career, and great working environment that continues to fuel her love for nursing.
As a general practitioner (GP), Dr Chan feels that good communication skills are extremely important. “It’s important to have patience and a good listening ear, because you need to pick out the issues or most important things that need to be looked into when a patient comes to you.”

Another challenge that is unique to GPs is the wide variety of patients that they see. “When you’re in family practice, you see patients of all ages. So you have to be knowledgeable about everything from paediatrics to geriatrics,” Dr Chan continues.

While she thoroughly enjoys her job, there are times that Dr Chan needs an escape. “Exercise is my go-to form of stress relief, so I go for long walks in parks, where there is loads of fresh air, sunshine, flowers and trees. A favourite spot for me is the Botanic Gardens. I also tend to choose places that have great scenery when I travel, like when I went to Tasmania last year – it was absolutely gorgeous there!”

Even after so many years of treating patients at SPH, Dr Chan doesn’t see herself retiring anytime soon. “It’s nice to be able to take care of my patients over many years… and I will only stop if I find that I am physically or mentally unable to cope with the work!” she declares.
Now, brain cancer patients in Malaysia can undergo a non-invasive form of surgery, with the introduction of gamma knife at Gleneagles Kuala Lumpur (GKL).

The gamma knife technology – a first for Malaysia – and GKL’s Gamma Knife Centre was launched by YAM Tengku Puteri Lela Wangsa Pahang, Tengku Tan Sri Hajjah Meriam binti Sultan Ahmad Shah and YB Datuk Seri Dr S Subramaniam, Minister of Health Malaysia, on 19 June 2014.

With this new technology, complex procedures can be performed with extreme precision to shrink tumours and kill cancer cells, while sparing healthy tissues surrounding the targeted treatment area. It also has the ability to treat hard-to-reach tumors, or tumors in critical areas within the brain.

Despite its name, there is no knife or scalpel involved. Instead, 192 precise beams of radiation are directed to the treatment area in the brain.

“The procedure gives better clinical outcome than conventional brain surgery because it does not require surgical incision. It offers new hope for older patients or individuals in poor medical condition who might be considered to be at high risk for anesthesia and conventional surgery,” said Regional Chief Executive Officer of Gleneagles Hospitals and Chief Executive Officer of GKL, Datuk Amir Firdaus Abdullah.

During the procedure, the patient would wear a specialised head frame that is surgically fixed to the skull, so that the brain tumor remains stationary at the target point of the gamma rays. Unlike conventional brain surgery, patients are not required to shave their heads. Hospitalisation is also rarely required as the whole procedure usually takes only half a day and recovery time is minimal.

“We are pleased to be the first hospital in the country to offer this Gamma Knife surgery at one of the lowest prices in the region. It not only reflects our commitment to provide cancer patients with up-to-date and better care options but also highlights the ability of our skilled, multi-disciplinary oncology team to handle the most complex patients,” he added.

To further boost its capabilities, GKL recently invested RM50 million to develop a top-notch Neurosurgery Centre. With these developments, patients can now seek affordable, high-end neurosurgery in Malaysia.
The incidence of aortic valve stenosis – narrowing of the opening of the aortic valve – rises with age. When the valve narrowing becomes severe, patients develop breathlessness, fainting spells and chest discomfort. Left untreated, up to 50 per cent of patients may die from the condition within two years.

The conventional treatment for this disease is open heart surgery to replace the aortic valve. However, the surgical risk is high for many elderly patients and patients with debilitating diseases such as poor heart condition, severe lung disease and end stage renal failure. Some may even be inoperable.

Dr Paul TL Chiam
Senior Consultant Cardiologist
Mount Elizabeth Hospital

Taking the RIB CRACKING out of HEART SURGERY

First in Asia to perform transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVR), Dr Paul Chiam shares about this new minimally invasive procedure.

Introducing TAVR / TAVI
Now there is a non-invasive method of replacing the aortic valve. Known as transcatheter aortic valve replacement or implantation (TAVR/ TAVI), this technique is commonly performed via a small puncture in the groin, where a new valve is delivered via a catheter (tube) into the heart and implanted within the patient’s native aortic valve.

This method was first performed in 2002 for a patient who was too sick to undergo an open heart operation.

For some patients, other access sites may be required, for example via the subclavian artery in the chest, the aorta or a 5-6 cm incision in the left chest wall.

Unlike an open heart surgery, TAVR does not require cracking open the patient’s chest, stopping the heart, and removing the native aortic valve. In fact, the procedure can be performed under local anesthesia with the groin approach.

Several large randomised studies have shown the promise of this technology. TAVR is now the treatment of choice for inoperable patients and may be a safer treatment option for patients with high surgical risk.

With the development of modified and new generation transcatheter heart valves and delivery systems, patients with severe aortic valve stenosis can look forward to reduced procedural complications and improved outcomes.
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