

Launch of SG50 Healthcare Commemorative Book and MOH Long Service Awards

by Dr Goh Lay Hoon, Council Member, College of Family Physicians Singapore

About 250 health care workers and volunteers from healthcare institutions in Singapore gathered at the Suntec Convention Centre on the afternoon of 8 Oct 2015, to commemorate the launch of the SG50 book "Caring for our People Celebrating 50 Years of Healthcare in Singapore". The event was organized by the Ministry of Health (MOH) and graced by Mr Gan Kim Yong as the guest of honour.



The Guest of Honour for the event, Mr Gan Kim Yong, Minister for Health

The 241-page hard copy coffee table book was filled with a rich tapestry of pictures, photographs, short stories of healthcare workers and patients, interesting facts and figures and collectibles. It tells inspiring stories of dedicated healthcare workers working in the various healthcare sectors in Singapore, in a 50-year health care journey. The 7 Chapters start at "The long dawn - From Colony to Independence", and end at "Looking ahead - Transforming for the future". These are stories about the first General Hospital in 1821 near the junction of Bras Basah Road and Stamford Road, the "Stop at two" family planning program in 1978 and the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) epidemic in 2003. There are over 50 insightful interviews with Singaporeans from all walks of life, 14 interactive inserts ranging from a 1946 midwife birth report to the Great Singapore Workout pamphlet in 1992, as part of the National Healthy Lifestyle Programme. 297 black-and-white and coloured photographs were obtained from the National Archives of Singapore and Singapore Press Holdings.

Alongside are also heart-felt stories illustrating the sterling and steadfast work the healthcare workers from our hospitals and clinics do every day like the nurse at the Institute of Mental Health's Sunshine Wing, the Health Promotion Board ambassador and the Medical Technologist from the Department of Pathology, Singapore General Hospital. There were also pages devoted to Mr Wong Ngiap Leng, from Ah Leng's canteen at Singapore General Hospital enticingly entitled "Counsellor, banker, provider of food and drink..."

Work on the book was started in June 2014 by an editorial team from MOH. The fruits of labor are 11,000 limited copies, while an e-book is available on the MOH website:

https://www.moh.gov.sg/content/moh_web/home/pressRoom/pressRoomItemRelease/2015/launch-of-sg50-healthcare-commemorative-book-and-the-ministry-of.html

The Prime Minister, Mr Lee Hsien Loong, gave a message in the book. Mr Gan, the Health Minister, penned a foreword and did a calligraphy which is shown in the book, expressing his wishes for Singapore, quoting a Chinese saying 养生之道, which means nurturing the habits of maintaining good health and leading good lives.

This event also celebrates an MOH Long Service Awards to 187 individuals who have served in various capabilities in more than 90 MOH-appointed boards, councils and committees over the years, e.g. committees advising on professional standards, ethics and Medifund. The years of service for the award recipients are 5, 10 and 20 years, the last of which there were 2 recipients

Amongst the recipients are Family Physicians, Dr Arthur Tan Chin Lock, Dr Lew Yii Jen, Dr Tang Wern Ee, Dr Tham Tat Yean, Dr Leong Choon Kit and Dr Uma Rajan, all of whom received 5-year Long Service Awards. Other recipients are a porter assistant, an ambulance driver, nurses, doctors, the volunteer "Caring Clowns" at Kendang Kerbau Hospital and frequent blood donors who organized the annual blood donation drives. We congratulate all of them!

The event ended with photo taking and a hearty tea session to catch up with friends and colleagues. Truly, a memorable and meaningful afternoon to remember and celebrate the lives of healthcare workers past and present, for their unerring commitment and accomplished work, in caring for patients and society, for promoting healthy living, keeping pace keeping pace with medical progress and transforming the healthcare landscape, for the past 5 decades.



Family Physicians who received the MOH Long Service Awards, (from left) Dr Leong Choon Kit, Dr Tang Wern Ee and Dr Lew Yii Jen.

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