

MEDIA RELEASE

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NEW ARTS INITIATIVES RESHAPE DEMENTIA CARE EXPERIENCE AT JURONG COMMUNITY HOSPITAL

Ward transformation project and online resource developed with Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, University of the Arts Singapore explore new ways to engage patients living with dementia

SINGAPORE – Jurong Community Hospital (JCH) is introducing a series of arts-led initiatives for patients living with dementia as part of this year's Arts&Health Festival, bringing together healthcare and the arts to create more engaging care environments and support person-centred care. The annual festival brings together community partners and local artists to transform hospital spaces through art and creative experiences.

The initiatives are part of JCH's ongoing partnership with the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA), University of the Arts Singapore (UAS), following a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed last year to explore how the arts can be integrated into healing environments to enhance well-being and patient care. The collaboration also forms part of NAFA's wider work in arts and health, now anchored by its Centre for Creative Health, established this year.

Transforming a dementia ward through art and shared experiences

One of the initiatives, **Shared Spaces, Shared Futures: An Intergenerational Arts-Led Transformation of a Dementia Ward**, is a Healing Arts Singapore Artist Commission led by Ms Xin Xiaochang, Head, Special Projects Unit and Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Art and Design, NAFA.

The project explores how art can contribute to a more welcoming and person-centred care environment. Developed over six months through conversations and creative exchanges with patients, healthcare workers, caregivers and family members, it introduces artistic interventions designed to encourage social interaction and create opportunities for connection within the ward.

At the heart of the project is **The Play Trolley**, a mobile collection of interactive artworks that can be brought directly to patients by nurses and volunteers. The trolley features three artworks – *A Little Pot of Shared Warmth*, *A Little Bonsai of Conversation* and *A Little Brew of Bubbling Memories*.

The artworks draw on principles of neuroaesthetics, with the aim of stimulating curiosity, participation and a sense of belonging. Inspired by familiar rituals of gathering, sharing and remembering, each artwork is accompanied by its own musical movement.

The multisensory experience uses sight, sound and touch as prompts for conversation and participation, providing nurses and volunteers with another way to engage patients during their interactions with them.

The project also includes **murals and historical photographs integrated into the ward's communal spaces**, with the design of these spaces guided by principles of dementia-friendly environments. Drawing on scenes from Singapore's past and everyday life, the photographs provide familiar visual cues and prompts for storytelling and reminiscence, encouraging patients, family members and healthcare workers to exchange memories and experiences across generations.

Ms Xin shared: *"I hope that the project, developed through a participatory co-creation process, brings moments of colour, familiarity and cheer to patients during their recovery journey. The different aspects of the project are intended to create meaningful opportunities for engagement, choice and shared experiences."*

Helping caregivers and healthcare providers see the person behind the patient

Alongside the ward transformation, JCH and NAFA also jointly developed the **Life Storybook**, a free online resource for caregivers and healthcare providers caring for patients living with dementia.

The Life Storybook was piloted in JCH's dementia ward with 28 patients over four months. It captures significant life events, family relationships, favourite hobbies and sources of joy through guided conversations, drawings and written reflections.

By documenting the experiences and identities that make each patient unique, the resource can help caregivers and healthcare providers gain a deeper understanding of the person behind the diagnosis. For care teams supporting patients living with dementia, knowing a patient's background, preferences and interests can provide meaningful context for conversations and interactions.

The Life Storybook can also be used as a starting point for reminiscence and engagement, giving patients opportunities to share familiar memories while helping caregivers learn more about their lives.

The resource is designed to support person-centred care beyond the hospital setting. Families can continue adding to the Life Storybook together, creating a lasting keepsake that can be revisited and shared across generations.

The **Life Storybook is available free online**, making it accessible to healthcare providers and caregivers who care for people living with dementia.

Ms Norizan Binti Mohd Said's father was one of the patients involved in the pilot. Reflecting on her experience, she shared how the process of documenting his life stories brought out memories and details that the family had not heard before: *"When the artist spoke with my father about his younger days, his life in Pulau Brani and his passion for making kueh, I could see the sparks in his eyes and how he became more lively. He started sharing details we had not heard before."*

The memories helped him reconnect and reminded us of the person he has always been, and this brought our family a lot of smiles."

Bringing arts into everyday dementia care

The initiatives reflect JCH's approach to exploring how the arts can complement clinical care and contribute to a more welcoming care environment for patients living with dementia. Rather than being separate from care, the artworks and resources are designed to be incorporated into everyday interactions.

Through its collaboration with NAFA, JCH continues to explore how creative practices can support communication, connection and engagement as part of the care experience for patients and their families.

Dr Roxanne Lim, Consultant, Post-Acute and Continuing Care, JCH, noted: *"For patients with living with dementia, care extends beyond medical treatment to creating comforting and supportive environments. By integrating art with evidence-based principles of dementia care, we have incorporated designs in our dementia ward spaces, such as the use of calming colours, cool tones, high visual contrast and nature-themed motifs that are familiar to our dementia patients.*

These improve mood, behaviour and help our patients navigate safely. These thoughtful interventions also stimulate meaningful interactions, evoke positive memories and support emotional well-being, enabling us to see and care for the person behind the diagnosis."

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About the National University Health System (NUHS)

The National University Health System (NUHS) aims to transform how illness is prevented and managed by discovering causes of disease, development of more effective treatments through collaborative multidisciplinary research and clinical trials, and creation of better technologies and care delivery systems in partnership with others who share the same values and vision.

Institutions in the NUHS Group include the National University Hospital, Ng Teng Fong General Hospital, Jurong Community Hospital, Alexandra Hospital and the upcoming Tengah General and Community Hospital; three National Specialty Centres – National University Cancer Institute, Singapore (NCIS), National University Heart Centre, Singapore (NUHCS) and National University Centre for Oral Health, Singapore (NUCOHS); the National University Polyclinics (NUP); Jurong Medical Centre; and three NUS health sciences schools – NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine (including the Alice Lee Centre for Nursing Studies), NUS Faculty of Dentistry and NUS Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health.

With member institutions under a common governance structure, NUHS creates synergies for the advancement of health by integrating patient care, health science education and biomedical research. As a Regional Health System, NUHS works closely with health and social care partners across Singapore to develop and implement programmes that contribute to a healthy and engaged population in the Western part of Singapore.

For more information, please visit www.nuhs.edu.sg.

About the Jurong Community Hospital

JurongHealth Campus is a part of the National University Health System (NUHS) group, serving the community in the western region. JurongHealth Campus comprises Ng Teng Fong General Hospital (NTFGH) and Jurong Community Hospital (JCH) which were designed and built together as an integrated healthcare hub, with more than 1,000 beds, to complement each other for better patient care, greater efficiency and convenience.

NTFGH and JCH were envisioned to transform the way healthcare is provided, and together with the National University Hospital, National University Polyclinics, Jurong Medical Centre, family clinics and community partners, to better integrate healthcare services and care processes for the community in the west.

For more information, please visit www.jch.com.sg.

About the Arts&Health Festival

The Festival is an annual celebration of Ng Teng Fong General Hospital and Jurong Community Hospital's creative collaborations with community partners and local artists to transform hospital spaces into a soothing and healing environment for our patients, visitors and staff. In its 10th edition, this year's Festival themed "Songs & Stories" brings patients' stories to life through meaningful art exhibitions, heartfelt songs and uplifting performances - honouring personal journeys, shared memories, identity and hope.

For more information, please visit: www.for.sg/artsandhealthfestival

About Healing Arts Singapore

Healing Arts Singapore is part of Healing Arts, a global initiative by the Jameel Arts & Health Lab in collaboration with the World Health Organization. Artist educator Xin Xiaochang's **Shared Spaces, Shared Futures: An Intergenerational Arts-Led Transformation of a Dementia Ward** is supported by the ECCA Family Foundation.