

LIEN FOUNDATION'S *LIFE BEFORE DEATH* CAMPAIGN LAUNCHES 'DIE-LOGUES' ON DEATH & DYING WELL

Public invited to share their stories. Local celebrity Dongfang Billy to host documentary on dying well.

30 OCTOBER 2008

1. What does dying well mean to you? If you knew you were dying - who would you thank or forgive, say sorry or I love you to? These are some provocative questions raised as part of the '*DIE-logues*' created by the *Life Before Death* campaign.
2. Conceived and spearheaded by the Lien Foundation, the *Life Before Death* campaign seeks to break the conspiracy of silence surrounding death and dying. "Leaving too much unspoken can undermine the quality of life and relationships of those who are faced with terminal illnesses," said Lien Foundation's Chairman, Mrs Margaret Lien "Crucial decisions on medical care, financial matters or future plans are often complicated by many doubts and fear. A lot of unnecessary burden and pain can be avoided if we can talk about end-of-life matters openly."
3. By providing channels for people to reflect on how they would deal with the spectre of death, the campaign seeks to encourage people to discuss their wishes on end-of-life matters with their loved ones so as to minimise helplessness and confusion. The public will be invited to share their thoughts in two documentaries on end-of-life issues, nominate their loved ones in a legacy album project and participate in online discussions.

4. By forming a catalyst for reflection and discussion, the aim is to get people to talk to their loved ones about the subject of death. This way, better care can be provided at the end of life and more attention can go to making each moment count for the dying and their loved ones.

Dying well

5. "Dying well could mean different things to different people," said Dr Cynthia Goh, Centre Director, Lien Centre for Palliative Care. "For example, it could mean dying without pain, or spending more time at home with loved ones. The aim of hospice and palliative care is to maximise the quality of life for the dying. This not only covers their physical condition, but also their emotional, psychosocial and spiritual needs, as well as those of their families."
6. The awareness campaign comes as Singapore faces a rapidly ageing population and growing demands for healthcare needs and end-of-life care. A post-mortem of the inaugural 2006 *Life Before Death* campaign revealed that more than 65 per cent of respondents are still unaware of hospice care. While a 10 per cent improvement of awareness levels before the 2006 campaign, the finding underscores the need to bring the message to more people.

Spurring 'Die-logues' through Documentaries

7. This time, the campaign will expand its reach to a wider community – in particular, the heartlanders. A documentary that seeks to unlock the notion of dying well amongst this audience will be produced. Drawing out the 'Die-logues' on this topic is someone familiar with death, local celebrity and ex-DJ, Dongfang Billy. The public – those who are grappling with end-of-life experiences or issues – are invited to come alongside him, as he journeys to seek answers on the implications of death and dying.

8. A documentary examining the current attitudes on death will also be produced for an English-speaking audience. Its premise: Death is an inevitable fact of life. While some of us may not know when it's time to go, some will have that knowledge. For these people, there is a choice of how they live those final moments. At times poignant and philosophical, this documentary takes a practical, informative and even humorous look at how people wish to face Life's final chapter.
9. Both documentaries will feature a series of frank, insightful interviews with people like Health Minister Khaw Boon Wan, Mr Gerard Ee and voices from the public, as well as doctors, nurses, hospice patients and caregivers.

Public invited to 'die-logue'

10. Those interested to participate in these first-ever '*DIE-logues*' by being featured on the documentaries about their stories and experiences, can call or SMS **84348762 (English), 90515006 (Chinese)** or email talk@lifebeforedeath.sg from *now till 7 Nov 2008*.

Legacy Album initiative

11. As part of the campaign, the public is invited to nominate a loved one who is terminally or seriously ill to receive a *Legacy Album* of photographs and loving thoughts in celebration of his/her life. "We want to honour the lives of those around us - while they are alive - and not when it is too late. We hope that the *Legacy Albums* initiative will spur others to do likewise, imbuing the subjects of honour with dignity, greater purpose, and sense of a well-lived life." said Mr Lee Poh Wah, Programme Director, Lien Foundation. Four nominees will be selected to receive their personal Legacy Album, all fully sponsored by the Foundation. The public can submit their nomination *from now till 7 Nov 2008* at the campaign website **www.lifebeforedeath.sg** or call **93554984 (English), 90515006 (Chinese)**

Diary of a Caregiver

12. Besides creating Die-logues, the campaign is also focused on giving practical help to caregivers. It has produced a guide for caregivers entitled '**Life Before Death – Diary of a Caregiver**'. Launched today, the booklet is based on the real life experience and blog of Ms Dawn Kor, who lost her father to pancreatic cancer in 2007. The booklet is interspersed with notes from hospice doctor, Dr Tan Yew Seng from Assisi Hospice. He sheds light on some common concerns of caregivers, like feeding at the end-of-life, the need for closure and how to cope with the burden of caring.

13. The Life Before Death campaign will be launched on air and in the streets come March 2009. Besides the documentaries, the campaign will feature advertisements, radio talk shows, blogs and the results of a first-ever street poll on attitudes on death in Singapore. An international documentary for a worldwide audience is also in the pipeline.

Key Partners

14. Key partners of the Life Before Death campaign include hospice care professionals: Assisi Hospice, Singapore Cancer Society, St Joseph's Home and Hospice, and The Lien Centre for Palliative Care. Driving the campaign's creative direction and online presence are Ogilvy and Mather Advertising and OgilvyOne. Respected filmmakers, Oak3 Films will produce the documentaries while the Centre for Seniors, an organisation for the elderly has helped to garner voices for the Die-logues.

15. Integral to the campaign are the students and lecturers from Ngee Ann Polytechnic's School of Film and Media Studies. They have lent their passion and skills to capturing subjects for the *Die-logues*, as well as conducting street polls and designing the legacy albums.

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**About Lien Foundation**

**[www.lienfoundation.org](http://www.lienfoundation.org)**

The Lien Foundation was founded by Dr. Lien Ying Chow, an eminent business leader, banker and hotelier. His influence extended beyond the private sector and Singapore, as a community leader, diplomat and philanthropist.

Today the Lien Foundation continues Dr Lien Ying Chow's legacy of good work in helping the needy and deprived in our society. The Foundation drives institutional capacity building to address crucial community needs, and empowers individuals to reach their full potential. It is pioneering new ground for organized philanthropy in Singapore by convening strategic partnerships and catalyzing action on social and environmental challenges.

Besides championing excellence in eldercare, the Foundation also seeks to enhance educational opportunities for the disadvantaged and the development of nascent fields of studies; and promoting environmental sustainability in water and sanitation.

The Foundation has long championed the cause to improve care for the dying. In 2006, it launched the first scholarships and fellowships in palliative care for doctors and nurses. It also created the inaugural "*Life Before Death*" campaign to increase public awareness of hospice palliative care. This year, it started Asia's first centre for research and training in palliative care, *The Lien Centre for Palliative Care*.

## ANNEX

### ABOUT HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE CARE

Hospice and palliative care is a holistic concept of care – and not just a specific place – that addresses the physical, emotional, psychosocial and spiritual needs of those with end-stage illnesses. The goal is to alleviate and prevent pain, improving the quality of life for patients and their loved ones.

Hospice care services in Singapore are divided into three models: Hospice home care, day care and in-patient care, most of which are run by Voluntary Welfare Organisations (VWOs). Seven hospitals in Singapore provide palliative care, either within their wards or outpatient clinics.

### MORE ABOUT THE LEGACY ALBUMS

What are the moments that define your life? And when you die, what are the moments you want your loved ones to remember you by?

The legacy album project is a special photo book that seeks to capture the precious moments of those who are seriously or terminally ill to celebrate and commemorate the life they have lived.

For Mr Ng Wai Mun and his wife Madam Wan Tok Hai, their 34-year marriage that first blossomed over cups of kopi has been rich in laughter and contentment. Today their lives may be defined by the hospital visits and the round-the-clock care for Mr Ng, who is suffering from nose cancer.

But in a poignant series of photographs, Mr Ng's legacy album also tells of a life together defined – even in sickness --by happiness, love and tenderness. Each album -- shot by photographer, **Deanna Ng** and captioned by a professional writer – will be designed and produced by Film and Media Studies students from Ngee Ann Polytechnic. The online version has been created by OgilvyOne on [www.lifebefordeath.sg](http://www.lifebefordeath.sg).

### **ABOUT DEANNA NG**

Deanna Ng is a freelance photographer specializing in documentary, portraits and off beat travel photos. She believes that photography breaks boundaries and allows us a unique way of looking into others' life. Her portfolio can be found online at [www.deannang.com](http://www.deannang.com)

### **ABOUT DAWN KOR**

Dawn is married and a business development manager at a non-profit organisation. She started blogging in 2006, about the same time her father was diagnosed with pancreas cancer and undergoing treatment. During that difficult period, she searched for glimpses of other caregivers' experiences, but could not find any. After her father's passing, she reviewed her blog again and realised that it could help other caregivers who were like her before, lost, troubled and disheartened. That's when she offered Lien Foundation the opportunity to publish her blog.

### **MORE ABOUT SOME OF THE CAMPAIGN PARTNERS**

#### **Assisi Hospice**

Assisi Hospice is located in the vicinity of Mount Alvernia Hospital. Its range of services, including a 33-bed inpatient hospice, Hospice Day Care for adults and children, and Hospice Home Care, aims to provide comprehensive palliative care to patients with any terminal or life-threatening illnesses, and care to their families. It is run by Franciscan Missionaries of the Divine Motherhood.

#### **St Joseph's Home & Hospice**

St Joseph's Home & Hospice was established by the Catholic Welfare Services and is run by the Canossian sisters. It is a 22-bed Hospice within the premises of St Joseph's Nursing Home and provides a holistic approach to care of the aged and the progressively ill. Special attention is given to the spiritual well being of residents.

**Singapore Cancer Society**

The Singapore Cancer Society plays a pivotal role in all stages of cancer management from prevention to terminal care. The Hospice Care Team provides medical and nursing support at home on a 24-hour basis for those with advanced disease. Welfare and financial assistance is also extended to those who are in need.

**The Centre for Seniors (CFS)**

CFS is a VWO promoting the total well being of seniors and helping them to take their rightful place as respected members in the family, community and country. CFS is a member of the National Council of Social Service and is an approved charity.

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