

Project Title

Grandfriend Programme 我的老友记

Project Lead and Members

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Organisation(s) Involved

Kwong Wai Shiu Hospital (KWSH)

Aims

Loneliness in nursing homes has been well-documented abroad and in Singapore. According to a local study, 59.6% of residents in nursing home reported that they feel lonely. At the same time, studies conducted in nursing home in the Western countries have found that intergenerational activities can have a positive impact on seniors.

Most volunteers in KWSH come on an ad-hoc basis with each session lasting approximately 3 hours. This makes it challenging to foster strong relationships and to meet the socio-emotional needs of the residents.

The programme comprises a series of planned activities for both the students and residents. These activities provide residents with opportunities for social interaction, thereby improving their social well-being. Through continued interaction, we lay the foundation for a friendship. It is hoped that after the camp, both parties would be motivated to sustain this newfound friendship. Additionally, the students bring with them joy, zest and energy which helps to liven up the atmosphere within the nursing home.

The students also benefit from the hands-on experiences of the camp eg. by having students sleep on hospital beds, we found that students are more empathetic towards the elderly. As a century-old charitable healthcare institution, KWSH can only continue its mission of caring for the needy with the support of the community. We hope to inspire the future generations to uphold the philanthropic spirit of our forefathers via the programme.

Background

See attachment

Methods

See attachment

Results

See attachment

Lessons Learnt

Some of the challenges faced include space constraints within the nursing home. In Singapore, bed spaces in hospitals and nursing homes are extremely valuable. In times of space constraints, organizers must be innovative in the allocation of sleeping space for the camp. This programme provides insight into eldercare for the younger generation. We hope that this would inspire some of the youth to enter the healthcare profession as they ideate to improve the existing system.

Conclusion

See attachment

Project Category

Care Redesign

Keywords

Informal Workforce, Volunteer, Volunteer Engagement, Kwong Wai Shiu Hospital, Nursing Homes, Surveys, After-Action Reviews, Care Redesign

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Grandfriend Programme

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Introduction & problem analysis

Loneliness in nursing homes has been well-documented abroad and in Singapore. According to a local study, 59.6% of residents in nursing home reported that they feel lonely. [1] At the same time, studies conducted in nursing home in the Western countries have found that intergenerational activities can have a positive impact on seniors. [2] Inspired by the successes found abroad, the Grandfriend Programme is an intergenerational programme where post-secondary students would stay in KWSH for 3D2N. During the camp, the residents and students are paired one-to-one. Through a series of planned activities, the students and residents develop greater understanding of one another, and friendships are forged. Students also experience life in the nursing home by sleeping on hospital beds and having meals served in the wards. The programme has three main objectives. First, KWSH hopes that the social interaction with the young can help to alleviate the loneliness experienced by its residents. Next, KWSH hopes to inspire the future generations to uphold the philanthropic spirit of our forefathers via the programme. Finally, students inject life and zest into the nursing home environment, bringing joy to both the residents and staff.

30 Dec 2019 - Day 1 (Tuesday)	
Time	Activity
0900- 1030	Registration & Briefing
1045- 1145	Tips for interacting with elderly Introduction to Grandfriend
1200- 1315	Lunch
1330- 1500	Visit to Senior Care Centre
1500- 1600	Ward observation with Nurse Manager(s) Tube Feeding
1600- 1630	Break
1630- 1830	Steamboat dinner
1830- 2000	Movie under the stars
After 2000	Showers and self-reflection
2200	Lights out

Fig 1: Programme rundown of Day 1 of the Grandfriend Programme



Fig 2: Participants and residents enjoy a steamboat dinner together



Fig 3: Grandfriends all geared up in gloves and ready to bake

Students' outcome

Prior to the camp, nearly all the student participants were not volunteering. After the camp, 94% of participants indicated willingness to volunteer for other elderly-related programmes in the future. Around 40% of the students have since returned to volunteer after the camp. Some of these students are now volunteering regularly. (at least once in two weeks). This has certainly brought much joy to the lonely residents.

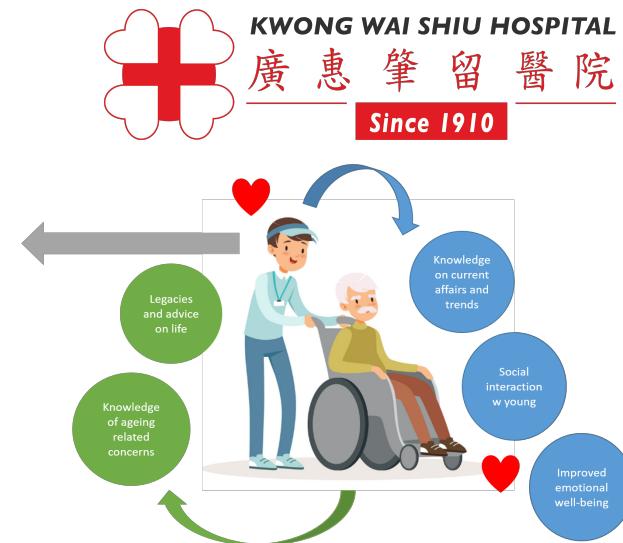
Sustainability

To sustain this programme, KWSH need the help of its student volunteers. Students are encouraged to think about the sustainability of the programme since Day 1 of the camp. During round 2, 3 and 4 of the camp, previous participants have returned to assist with the programme. A SOP has also been written to ensure that staff could reproduce the programme.

References

- [1] Chew SY: MPH Practicum (Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health) - Loneliness among cognitively-intact elderly 65 years and older residing in Nursing Homes. 2018.
- [2] Drageset J, Kirkevold M, Espeseth B. Loneliness and social support among nursing home residents without cognitive impairment: A questionnaire survey. Int J Nurs Stud. 2011;48(5):611-619.

- Slettebø Å. Safe, but Lonely: Living in a Nursing Home. Nord J Nurs Res. 2008;28(1):22-25.



Intervention & residents' outcomes

To date, four runs of the camp have been conducted since Dec' 18. Close to 50 students from 11 educational institutions: Anglo Chinese School (Independent), Eunoia Junior College (JC), Nanyang JC, Nanyang Technological University, National JC, National University of Singapore, Raffles Institution, Singapore Polytechnic, Temasek Polytechnic, Victoria JC and Yishun Innova JC have benefitted from the programme.

During the 3D2N here, residents will participate in various social activities with the students. This includes going for an outing, treasure hunt, baking and interaction time in the wards. 89% of the resident participants surveyed indicated positive responses as well as, willingness to participate in similar programmes in the future. Most enjoyed the time that they spent with the students. In fact, the bond established between the resident and student could result in a long-term friendship beyond the camp.

My Grandfriend lent me this book, she will return in 3 weeks to visit me. I finished the book and re-reading to revise, so when my Grandfriend comes back, I can summarize the story to her.

The programme could be the much-needed solution to improve the psychosocial well-being of residents staying in a nursing home. Importantly, it is discovered that it mattered less who visited, as long there is someone to interact with the seniors.

As long as someone comes, or else every day is just too boring, sleep and eat, eat and sleep, like a dead person.



Fig 4: Student participants return during the mid-autumn festival to have a "reunion" with their Grandfriends