

WHY AM I  
A RENAL NURSE?







*A tribute to  
all community renal nurses*

Message from CEO	08	Persevering despite my family's objections	22
Message from Pioneers of Renal Nursing	10	Alisha Leow	
In my 30s, I made the switch because of my daughter	12	I wanted to be a lawyer, but nursing is my calling	24
Janelle Aw		Lucy Lu	
My grandfather's kidney failure made me a better renal nurse	14	Nursing is my identity	26
April Ross Angeles		Nurlydia Abdul Razak	
Being a nurse also means being a friend, a family member and a caregiver	16	"Regret" made me a nurse	28
Angie Chua		Nurul Shafiqah	
When one door closes, another opens	18	I feel responsible for my patients' ability to perform home dialysis	30
Harold Sy Yu		Shadira Binte Zaharum	
I find joy in empowering patients and new nurses	20	Honouring the promise to my late aunt	32
Kavitha Angel		Siti Khadijah Ismail	
		A dialysis patient made me a renal nurse	34
		Vinod S/O Rajandran Muthu	





Giving Life & Hope



*From left:*

Pauline Tan  
Assistant Director of Nursing

Tim Oei  
Chief Executive Officer

Kaldip Kaur  
Assistant Director of Nursing



# Message from CEO

Tim Oei  
Chief Executive Officer

This curated collection of nurse stories, the first in NKF's history, is our tribute to community renal nurses, the unsung heroes in Singapore's healthcare system.

Community renal nurses play an integral role in ensuring smooth care transition from hospitals to community by delivering quality, safe and holistic dialysis treatment and care to kidney failure patients. To achieve this, they journey alongside patients and their families on their road to rehabilitation.

Our nurses strive to meet the diverse care needs of patients who are often afflicted with co-morbidities and psychosocial problems. They work closely with the patients' caregivers and family members to ensure the patients remain well-supported when they are not at the dialysis centre. To be a community renal nurse, one must also be a health educator, a counsellor, a friend and above all, an advocate for the patients' well-being.

We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to our nurses, for your unwavering commitment, compassion and courage in caring for our kidney failure patients. The good work at NKF would not have been possible without your tireless efforts and immense contributions. You are indeed a vital cog in our renal care ecosystem to keep it running and growing.

For our patients, the dialysis centre is a place they would rather not be at. However, through the dedication and care that you provide, patients have come to call the dialysis centre a 'home away from home' because of your warmth, comforting hand and reassuring smile. You are a panacea for all their troubles.

They feel less lonely and are encouraged to continue living with renewed hope and purpose whenever they spend their time at the centre 3 times a week, 4 hours per session. Some of you go the extra mile in becoming a part of our patients' lives: visiting them when they are hospitalised, sharing their joy by attending their children's weddings, and celebrating festive occasions together. You have carried out the Foundation's vision and mission in giving life and hope not just to our patients, but also to their family members.

Throughout my 4 years of journeying with NKF, I witnessed your fighting spirit and dedication, as you shared with me your hopes, aspirations and struggles. Some of you have loved ones objecting your decision to become a nurse. Some of you are unable to return home since the outbreak of the pandemic to see your loved ones. Many of you continue to bear the brunt of angry patients and family members. You have made personal sacrifices, faced numerous challenges and yet you remain a nurse today in these difficult times. That, in itself, is an admirable feat. I hope the endearing stories remind you of your personal journey, and you feel appreciated, understood and valued.

To our readers: you may be an aspiring nurse or a family member of a nurse. You may have been cared for by a nurse at some point in your life. I hope through the e-book, you are inspired by their touching stories and appreciate what brought these nurses to the profession and more importantly, what keeps the light in them burning brightly every day.

# Message from Pioneers of Renal Nursing

Pauline Tan, 16 years in NKF &  
Kaldip Kaur, 30 years in NKF  
Assistant Directors of Nursing

As community renal nurses, we focus on renal rehabilitation and support our patients and their families throughout their rehabilitation journey. The aim is to deliver safe and high-quality patient care, in order to reduce the risk of morbidity and mortality, and achieve quality of life.

Besides administering dialysis treatment to our patients, we identify and reduce any risk of complications that arises from kidney failure including anaemia, bone disease, heart disease, high potassium and fluid build-up. We are also responsible for monitoring our patients throughout their treatment sessions, securing and analysing blood works, and educating patients and their caregivers on how to better manage their condition. Care becomes extremely complex when patients have existing co-morbidities such as diabetes and hypertension. In addition, many face psychosocial issues. Thus, we need to help our patients manage their lives, while effectively managing their multiple chronic conditions and avoiding readmission to the hospital.

With many years of experience under our belts, we have been growing with our patients through thick and thin, not only in the centre but also beyond the centre. We celebrate their birthdays, theirs and their children's weddings, and witness the births of their children and grandchildren. We help them fulfil their goals and ambitions in life.

We had a patient in her late forties, who was advised by her doctor that she only had 5 years to live. "What about my children who are still in school? How can I live long enough to see them get married and have their children?" It was her desperate cry for help. As her nurse and advocate, we helped her achieve her life goals. When she passed on 20 years later in 2019, she was a grandmother to 7 grandchildren. It gives us great joy and satisfaction when we know we are making a difference in our patients' lives.

Our patients' smiles, words of gratitude, viewing us as part of their family are what keep us going. Being a community renal nurse is a choice we will make over and over.

The efforts put in caring for our patients would not be possible without the dedication and hard work of our fellow nurses. All of you stepped up to the plate in supporting and advocating for your patients. Through your stories, you have demonstrated compassion, commitment and a high quality of care. Through your stories, you help shed light on what it means to be a community renal nurse and why it matters. Let us continue our work not just in adding years to the lives of our patients, but also life to years.



# “In my 30s, I made the switch because of my daughter”

Janelle Aw  
Staff Nurse



I am a mid-career switch nurse who previously worked in a business-related field for around 10 years. In 2018, I joined the Professional Conversion Programme (PCP) for Nursing by Workforce Singapore (WSG). My child was 3 months old when she was diagnosed with Idiopathic Thrombocytopenia (ITP) and had to be hospitalised. We were told that she had to undergo Intravenous Immunoglobulin (IVIG) treatment if they were able to cannulate her, otherwise she would have to take oral steroids for months. As a mother, it was heartbreaking and stressful to watch my daughter go through the treatment at such a young age.

The nurses in the ward were very kind, understanding and patient towards us. They took care of my daughter as though she was their family member. Their actions touched my heart greatly. I remembered telling God when my current job ends, I would enrol into nursing because I want to be a nurse that touches people's hearts and lives as well. Thankfully, they were able to cannulate her and she was discharged on Mother's Day. My job also ended after my maternity leave and I applied for the programme.

Following the programme, when I joined NKF in 2020 during the pandemic, I realised we were heavily dependent on foreign nurses to run the dialysis centres. One of my colleagues resigned and returned to her home country as she had not seen her child for more than a year. This pandemic made me realise the importance of community nurses. Without community nurses ensuring that the patients' condition is stable, hospitals would not be able to cope with the influx of COVID patients and chronic patients at the same time.



My nursing journey is full of challenges and there are times I feel like giving up. It was not easy to make the switch as nursing is a physically and mentally demanding job, but it is a rewarding and fulfilling job when we see patients getting better and they appreciate what we have done for them.



“The nurses who took care of my 3-month old daughter were very kind, understanding and patient. They treated her as though she was their family member. Their actions touched my heart greatly and made me want to be a nurse that touches people's hearts and lives as well.”





# “My grandfather’s kidney failure made me a better renal nurse”

April Ross Angeles  
Staff Nurse

Growing up in the Philippines, I have a very close relationship with my extended family, particularly with my grandparents. My grandparents gave me unconditional love and showed me what it means to live a life of fun, to be kind, and to be generous. My grandfather, or “Papa Boy” as his grandchildren fondly calls him, inspired me to work hard and achieve my dreams. His words of wisdom continue to support me in my journey.

When it was time to pick my major in college, my family including my grandparents pushed me to study Nursing. It was not my first choice. Back then, I did not know what being a renal nurse meant.

After college, I started focusing on Nephrology due to family and peer pressure. Little did I know, going into Nephrology would have the greatest impact in my life. In 2018, I received news my grandfather was diagnosed with kidney failure.



From then on, my training as a renal nurse took on a new purpose. Like many patients, my grandfather had difficulties coming to terms with his chronic condition as he felt he had lost control of his life. My family members also sought my help in advising my grandfather’s treatment options; whether he should go for haemodialysis or peritoneal dialysis.

As a renal nurse, I am involved in the care of hundreds of haemodialysis patients. I have seen firsthand how it saved many lives, but I also witnessed its complications. I tried my best to provide a balanced view and support to my grandfather. Eventually, he decided to go for haemodialysis and has been doing well since then. I continue to check back on his progress, making sure that he is compliant with his dialysis medication and maintains a proper diet.

Being a renal nurse for 11 years, I helped countless people. However, to be able to help my grandfather in his journey with kidney failure, made me realise choosing renal nursing was a decision I am forever grateful for.



“Being a renal nurse for 11 years, I helped countless people. However, to be able to help my grandfather in his journey with kidney failure, made me realise choosing renal nursing was a decision I am forever grateful for.”





# “Being a nurse also means being a friend, a family member and a caregiver”

Angie Chua  
Senior Clinical Nurse Manager



If someone had asked my teenage self what I wanted to be when I grow up, I would have replied that I wanted to become either a teacher or a nurse.

Coming from a big family with eight siblings, my father was the sole breadwinner. We were poor and unable to afford a helper, so my mother had difficulty looking after us. Thus, I had to take up the responsibility to assist her in caring for my younger brothers and sisters. That was when I realised I like caring for others.

“I feel a sense of accomplishment when I watch my patients living a quality life in spite of their illness and being able to bounce back from adversity. I also find joy in sharing my knowledge and guide my junior colleagues to become better nurses.”



“Sister Angie helped me to rebuild my confidence and showed me that dialysis patients can live a quality life too. She encouraged me to return to the workforce and expand my skill sets to match current industry demands. Through her, I rebuilt my confidence and learnt to walk tall, to hold my head up high and be proud of myself. Hope has returned to my life once again.”

Catherine Lau  
NKF Patient (2012 - 2021)  
Kidney Transplant Recipient (January 2021)

After completing my GCE O-Level, I enrolled in the nursing school to relieve my father's financial burden. Soon, I began a rigorous training programme to embark on my nursing career. Despite my young age, I knew clearly that I wanted a meaningful career and found my calling in the nursing profession. Nurses play a broad and far-reaching role in the healthcare system. We are the medical frontliners who spend the most time with patients, providing holistic care to nurse them back to health, physically, psychologically and emotionally. We further take on the role of health advocates, playing a crucial part in educating both patients and the public on the prevention of illness and injury.

As renal nurses, besides managing patients on dialysis, we have to handle our patients'

multiple health conditions. Patients with mental health issues can be challenging since they think differently from other patients. Hence, we often need to take on multiple roles at the centre – as a friend, a family member and a caregiver.

Having been a nurse for 25 years, despite the stressful and demanding work environment, I remain driven and steadfast in my purpose in life. I feel a sense of accomplishment when I watch my patients live a quality life in spite of their illness, and being able to bounce back from adversity. At the same time, I always find time to share my knowledge and guide my junior colleagues to become better nurses. I find joy watching them bloom into their roles with confidence and maturity.



# “When one door closes, another opens”

Harold Sy Yu  
Clinical Nurse Manager

“As the Chinese philosopher Confucius once said “Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in life.” This is what nursing means to me.”

When I was in my last year of high school, I recalled being confused and unsure of the course to take in college. My parents run a grocery store business and I would help them after school and during term breaks. Gradually, I became interested in store operations and considered pursuing a business course. However, my mother was not supportive of the idea since running the grocery store requires a lot of time and energy, earning just enough to feed our big family. She encouraged me to be a nurse instead, seeing how some of our relatives could work overseas and lead comfortable lives.



After 4 years in college and passing the Nursing licensure examinations in 1994, there was a low demand for nurses in the Philippines. Life took an unexpected turn. I ended up working in the car industry as a sales executive and got married. As my family was growing, I decided to help and manage my parents’ business instead. For almost 8 years, I was out of the nursing profession.

One day, my best friend’s aunt who is a nurse asked if I wanted to join her and work in the United States. I saw that my mother was so excited at the opportunity of her son being able to work overseas. However it was a long-drawn process applying to the States and getting my credentials in order, given that I had minimal experience as a nurse at that time. After 7 years, I gave up the dream of working overseas as a nurse.

Fortunately, my nursing colleague informed me NKF Singapore was hiring dialysis nurses. My hopes were raised once again and I immediately applied for the position. Singapore is also nearer to my home country. I could go back easily if emergency arises,



and still be able to financially support my parents and siblings.

In my first 3 years at NKF, I had the privilege to be one of the recipients for a scholarship to pursue a full time Advanced Diploma at Nanyang Polytechnic (NYP). Compared to the Philippines, the nurses in Singapore are required to go through many courses and seminars to be updated with



the latest practices. This was especially so during the pandemic with evolving instructions and precautionary measures in line with the situation. During the pandemic, my dialysis centre was designated by the Ministry of Health (MOH) as the National Centre to manage acute respiratory infection and Persons Under Quarantine (PUQ) for all haemodialysis patients. I worked very closely with my supervisors to prepare, set up and manage the centre, as well as decant the existing patients from my centre to the other centres within a short time frame. During this period, the demands and the situation got overwhelming. However, I took the oath to practise my profession faithfully and do whatever it takes to help those who are in need. I am grateful to be awarded the Hero Award at the Singapore Health Quality Services Awards (SHQSA) 2021.

Nursing to me is more than a profession. I do not need to drag myself to go to work and I love what I do especially when I am with my patients. As the Chinese philosopher Confucius once said “Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in life.” This is what nursing means to me.







# “I find joy in empowering patients and new nurses”

Kavitha Angel  
Staff Nurse

Being a nurse was my childhood ambition. When I was young, I saw how my aunt, who is a nurse, cared for her patients and I decided to follow in her footsteps. When I was 14, my grandmother suffered from a heart attack and there was nothing I could do to save her or alleviate her pain. By the time the ambulance arrived, it was too late. I resolved to not

let this happen again. My grandmother’s death solidified my decision to be a nurse. Upon graduating from secondary school, I enrolled at Institute of Technical Education (ITE) to study Nitec in Nursing. During my second year, I was attached to a hospital where I had the opportunity to work on an assignment related to kidney failure patients. The assignment sparked my interest to know more about renal nursing. At my school’s job fair, I also got to know of NKF and decided to apply for the role of an enrolled nurse.

Gradually, I found joy in empowering and educating my patients and their families on kidney health and dialysis care. I am pursuing a field I love and want to keep on improving. NKF sponsored me to study for a Diploma in Nursing at Nanyang Polytechnic in 2012 and subsequently, a Specialist Diploma in Renal Dialysis Management in 2020. It was challenging especially being a mother of two. However, with the strong support from my family and NKF, I strove on so that I could develop my skills to benefit my patients. Throughout the course of my career, I was given several opportunities to

hone my skill sets and mentor new nurses. I was heartened to find my juniors taking my advice and incorporating them into their day-to-day operations. They encouraged me to continue my passion in educating new staff.



Being a renal nurse for the past 12 years, I am proud to say I grew up at NKF. My journey was never easy as there were times I wanted to give up. Yet, I am reminded why I continue on this path when my patients thank me and appreciate me for what I do for them. The support from NKF, my colleagues and my family has shaped me into a more responsible and mature individual who advocates for my patients’ well-being.



“NKF sponsored me to study for a Diploma in Nursing at Nanyang Polytechnic in 2012 and subsequently, a Specialist Diploma in Renal Dialysis Management in 2020. It was challenging especially being a mother of two. However, with the strong support from my family and NKF, I strove on so that I could develop my skills to benefit my patients. Throughout the course of my career, I was given several opportunities to hone my skill sets and mentor new nurses.”





## “Persevering despite my family’s objections”

Alisha Leow  
Staff Nurse

I pursued a Diploma in Nursing back in 2016 despite my family’s disapproval. None of my family members were in the healthcare industry. I was told “this job is too dirty and tough for you” and “you will never make it to graduation”. Yet I was intrigued by the local and Korean nursing dramas shown on TV and wanted to experience it for myself.

During my internship as a student nurse, I had trouble communicating effectively with my patients and staff nurses as I was soft spoken and had no confidence in myself. At the same time, my family was so adamant that I would not succeed and made me promise not to take any bonds from the hospitals. Gradually, I told myself nursing might not be suitable for me as no one would hire a nurse who cannot communicate clearly.



However, during my second year of nursing school, my grandparents were hospitalised frequently. Whenever I visited my grandfather in the ward, he would call out to me excitedly and show off to the other nurses that I would become a nurse. My grandmother also consulted me on her medical condition and lifestyle choices to avoid re-hospitalisation. During her stay, I assisted her in using the toilet, as she was afraid to bother the nurses. Eventually, my grandmother admitted she was not worried about me becoming a nurse anymore since she saw how I took care of them and that she would support my decision.



Upon graduation, instead of continuing with nursing, I tried working in the office and got a job at a contact centre. I did not enjoy my job at all as it was meaningless and I missed interacting with people face-to-face. I yearned to do something more with my career.

I resigned after six months and applied to NKF. A few months later, my grandfather passed away due to pneumonia. Without my grandfather as my pillar of support, I questioned myself if I could go through this alone. I decided to persevere knowing that if my grandfather was still alive, he would be proud of me. I remembered when I started working, I was taken aback as most of my patients were twice or thrice my age. I was afraid I was unable to communicate well with

“I was told  
‘this job is too dirty  
and tough for you’  
and ‘you will never  
make it to graduation’.  
However, never doubt  
our abilities to grow  
and learn.  
Have faith in yourself  
and never give up.”

them, but my seniors encouraged me and taught me to always greet them with a smile and be respectful all the time. Gradually, I found confidence and love for my job, thanks to my supportive seniors. I can now speak Malay fluently and even picked up the Hokkien dialect, so as to communicate effectively with my patients.

To anyone who has doubts in themselves, your feelings are valid. There are times when we question our passion. However, never doubt our ability to grow and learn. Have faith in yourself and never give up.



“I wanted to be a lawyer,  
but **nursing**  
is my calling”



Lucy Lu  
Clinical Nurse Manager

My childhood dream was to become a lawyer. However when my high school results were released, I was shocked to find I missed the high school of my choice by 0.5 points! I was devastated that I fell ill and took nearly three weeks to recover. When I returned to school, my form teacher asked if I wish to consider nursing. “Fine” was what I answered without much thought, as I was very upset with myself.

“At NKF, all patients suffer from the same condition – kidney failure. Everything was new to me but the environment gave new meaning and hope in the nursing profession. I enjoy helping my patients and making them laugh in the dialysis centre. This is where I found the true meaning of nursing.”



The 4-year full time nursing diploma course started in September 1990. As time went by, I found healthcare fascinating. Just like the ‘angel in white’, my teacher, a retired nurse, was soft-spoken,

motherly, disciplined and caring. I remembered I was excited to don the same white uniform my teacher wore. I felt like I was already a nurse – young, beautiful and confident. However, throughout the years of studying my diploma and working at a tertiary teaching hospital, I saw what nursing was really about and especially the ugly side of the job: dirty sheets, smelly wards, patients suffering, and a hectic work environment. I was physically and mentally exhausted every day. Being a nurse at that time was nothing more than a job that paid the bills.



In July 1999, I learnt from the local gazette that NKF Singapore came to recruit nurses. I was excited at the overseas opportunity and was successfully selected to work as a Health Care Assistant (HCA). At NKF, all patients

suffer from the same condition – kidney failure. Everything was new to me but the environment gave new meaning and hope in the nursing profession. I became eager to learn well and to do well. I steadily progressed from HCA to Enrolled Nurse, Registered Nurse and am now a Clinical Nurse Manager.

As I become more competent and confident in my job, my passion grew. I enjoy helping my patients and making them laugh in the dialysis centre. This is where I found the true meaning of nursing. I am proud to say nursing is my calling.





# “Nursing is my identity”



Nurlydia Abdul Razak  
Enrolled Nurse

I knew I wanted to become a nurse as I have always had the passion to help people.

Prior to working at NKF, I was an operating theatre (OT) nurse. Working in the OT was tough and challenging as I had to pick things up quickly in a fast-paced environment. I was constantly running on pure adrenaline, dealing with different situations and cases every day. As a community renal nurse at NKF, I get to interact more with my patients, be there for them through their struggles and pain, and get to know their life stories. I feel most rewarded when patients trust me and allow me to needle them for dialysis. In one



“As nurses, we took an oath to help others and not to turn our backs when we see someone in need. I did not hesitate or regret the actions I took that day. I will continue to help to the best of my ability if I see someone injured or in need.”



instance, when a patient was admitted to the hospital for heart complications, my colleagues and I called and comforted him to allay his fears. It is these little things we can do that make a world of difference to our patients' well-being.

Nurses have a duty to uphold the standards of our profession. I recalled an incident that happened at Clarke Quay in December 2020. I heard a scream and saw blood on the walkway as my friends, my husband and I were leaving Clarke Quay Central. I did

not read too much into the situation at that time nor pay attention to my surroundings. All I saw was an injured woman who was bleeding from a wound on her right arm. The only thought I had was I must help her. I am a nurse and it was the only right thing to do.

As nurses, we took an oath to help others and not to turn our backs when we see someone in need. I did not hesitate or regret the actions I took that day. I will continue to help to the best of my ability if I see someone injured or in need.





# “Regret made me a nurse”

Nurul Shafiqah  
Staff Nurse

My nursing journey did not begin with the cliché of “I love nursing” and “helping people”. It never began with it, but it continued with that.

My dream was to become a psychologist as understanding a person’s mental state and their behaviour interest me.

The eventful day came when my late grandmother fainted in front of my mother and I. The only thing we could do was to shout for help and call 995. At that point in time, I wanted to do more for my late grandmother just so she could regain her consciousness.

However, my mind was blank. If only I had some medical knowledge, things would have turned out differently. My late grandmother would have been able to witness my wedding day.

“Regret” was the only word I could describe at that given moment.

Since then, I enrolled myself into nursing school to learn more about health, medicine and caring for people. Then, I graduated to become a full-fledged registered nurse.

My career was never smooth-sailing. One memorable incident was when a patient under my care collapsed before I could even hand over to the nurse on the next shift. After the incident, I felt if I had paid close attention to his well-being, things might have turned out differently.

Since then, I take care of all my patients with tender loving care and do not see my work as merely carrying out doctor’s orders. Even giving a simple ten minutes of my time to feed them during their mealtimes was worthwhile.



Up till today, a simple “thank you” coming from my patients warms the cockles of my heart. Believe it or not, nursing is more than just wiping after our patients; its definition goes beyond words.

“If only I had some medical knowledge, things would have turned out differently. My late grandmother would have been able to witness my wedding day.



Since then, I enrolled myself into nursing school to learn more about health, medicine and caring for people. Up till today, a simple ‘thank you’ coming from my patients warms the cockles of my heart.”





# “I feel responsible for my patients’ ability to perform home dialysis”

Shadirah Binte Zaharum  
Staff Nurse

I realised that I wanted to be a nurse when I was taking care of my elderly grandfather who was frequently hospitalised. I admired how the nurses patiently cared and treated my grandfather. I found that it was a noble job and from then on, I decided to fulfil my career in nursing. I was keen in community nursing and wanted to focus on a discipline that I could specialise in.

As a peritoneal dialysis (PD) nurse, I provide PD training for patients and their caregivers so as to ensure they are competent and confident to perform their dialysis at home independently and safely. As I conduct home visits alone, I have to make critical decisions on my own when there is an issue. It is important to have experience and apply the knowledge I have gained in any given situation at the patient’s house.

The biggest takeaway for me in this career is that it brings me a sense of satisfaction when my patients recover from the care

“There are times when patients and caregivers speak rudely to me even though I am helping them manage their therapy better. However, I continue to be optimistic and try to empathise with them. I understand that they are going through a difficult time. I will continuously reassure them that help is always available for them if needed.”



that I have provided for them. I learned that the patients’ health problems can arise from their living conditions and they need the support of PD nurses to advise them accordingly in order to avoid re-admission to the hospital. This drives me to learn and be a better advocate for the patients when they seek help from me.

There are times when patients and caregivers speak rudely to me even though I am helping them manage their therapy better. They sometimes make me feel unwelcome when I go to their houses and are not appreciative of the help given. At times like these, I feel like giving up. However, I continue to be optimistic and try to empathise with them. I understand that they are going through



a difficult time while trying to cope with the illness. I will continuously reassure them that help is always available for them if needed.

I aspire to promote PD awareness to the community and share my experiences with new nurses to get them interested in community nursing.





# “Honouring the promise to my late aunt”

Siti Khadijah Ismail  
Staff Nurse

My journey of becoming a nurse started as an intention to honour a promise I made to my dear late aunt, whom I lost to breast cancer in 2003. During the last few months of her illness, I offered to keep her company while she was hospitalised in National University Hospital (NUH) as her chemotherapy had not gone so well that week. She was running a fever and vomited the entire night, falling in and out of consciousness. I tried my hardest to comfort her and at one point



during the night, she became delirious from fever, so much so that when I was replacing the cold compress on her forehead, she smacked my hand away and told me to get out. Despite this, I did not leave her side.

My aunt did not have an easy life. She was a single mother of 2 children, one of whom has cerebral palsy. She supported

my grandparents. She loved celebrating our birthdays and took me on trips when she travelled. As I was her eldest niece, she confided in me a lot towards the end. When I mentioned that I could care for her when I am older, she joked that I should follow in her footsteps and become a nurse since I took such good care of her. Without hesitation, I acquiesced in her request as I just wanted her to smile.

After her passing, not long before I took the GCE O-Level, it was time to choose my tertiary education pathway. The courses I was qualified for were not limited but my aunt's face came to mind as I recalled the day I made the promise to follow in her footsteps. I was reminded of her courage to hold on till the very end, to pursue the

things she loved doing. I loved the tenacity at which she lived her life – standing on her own two feet, raising her children single-handedly yet having the resilience to plan the future, despite her illness.

I figured, if I wanted to be half the woman I admired so much, then I should walk in her shoes as promised. Thus, my nursing journey began at Nanyang Polytechnic (NYP) and then at Singapore General Hospital (SGH) and a geriatric retirement facility in Auckland, New Zealand. There was not a day I regretted my decision. I met people from different walks of life. I was able to see the world in an extraordinary light and from different perspectives. These experiences changed me as a person.

Little by little, I have come to acknowledge that nursing is more than a job to me. It has become my way of life. It is not just about healing the disease, it is about living with it, accepting it and not facing things alone. I want to keep our patients safe and provide a safe environment for those under our charge. During the time my patients spend with me, I want them to feel like they have a place to go to if things get bad. If they need a place to belong, to have someone on their side, I want them to know that they have that with me. At the end of the day, it's not about us, nurses; it's about our patients.



“I figured, if I wanted to be half the woman my aunt was, then I should walk in her shoes. Nursing is more than a job to me. It has become my way of life. I want my patients to feel like they have a place to go to if things get bad. If they need a place to belong, to have someone on their side, I want them to know that they have that with me.”





# “A dialysis patient made me a renal nurse”



Vinod S/O Rajandran Muthu  
Staff Nurse

I did not have many choices after completing my GCE O-Level. I pursued a Diploma in Nursing so that I could secure a stable career as a combat medic in the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF). At that time, I thought nursing was primarily a ‘woman’s job’, where they assist patients with personal hygiene and medication.

As a nursing student, I assisted in patient admission to the ward. There was a particular patient who was on dialysis and ADL (Activities of Daily Living) dependent. When she first arrived, I saw she was gloomy and not

receptive to fellow patients and staff. Being assigned to her, I decided to interact with her while helping her with her daily needs such as eating and preparing her for dialysis sessions. As the days went by, she became more interactive and I gradually saw a positive change in her outlook as compared to when she first arrived. She also shared with me her positive experience at NKF where the nurses were friendly and cared for her.

This was when I realised being a nurse is not simply carrying out orders, but also understanding our patients’ concerns and actively engaging with them. Seeing the change in her made me realise that I could do more for other patients. Her positive experience at NKF was why I decided to join renal nursing.

When I first started at NKF, interacting with dialysis patients and managing their care plans was a challenging process because different patients require different care plans. The way we interact with each patient differs due to their backgrounds and psychosocial factors. With the support of my fellow nursing colleagues, nurse manager and colleagues from other departments, I was able to overcome these challenges and learned different techniques in managing the patients. I told myself never to feel discouraged when things did not go as planned. Every mistake was a lesson learnt and a guide towards improving my next step.

The sense of joy I get when caring for my patients and the trust that develops from the relationships are what keep me going as a nurse. Receiving the Community Care Manpower Development Awards (CCMDA) further spurs me on to continue contributing to the society as a community renal nurse.



“When I first started at NKF, interacting with dialysis patients and managing their care plans was a challenging process because different patients require different care plans. With the support of my fellow nursing colleagues, nurse manager and colleagues from other departments, I was able to overcome these challenges.”





We would like to express our heartfelt thanks to the following groups in making this e-book possible.

To our nurses for sharing their stories, and their friends and family for being a part of their journeys

**Janelle Aw**

Dewi Amaleena  
Faith Lau  
Jeff Lau  
Rosalind Lee  
Stephanie Lee  
Caslyn Loh  
Noorhaini  
Nursyila  
Uma Rani  
Revathi  
Samsuri  
Allison Tan  
Tommy Tan  
Shane Wong

**April Ross Angeles**

Josepito Valencia

**Angie Chua**

Winnie Lim  
Allister Ng  
Amelia Ng  
Ng Khay Wee  
The late Ng Peng Hian  
Cherie Ong  
Yeo Jiawei

**Harold Sy Yu**

Farhana Begum  
Gabriel Mangalili  
Grace  
Kumaryi Dhakal  
Li Hegang  
Lourdes Sy Yu  
Nellie Saab  
Noor Hasanah Hasnan  
Nur Fazliana  
Puvaneswary  
Rashida Rashid  
Ronald Corpuz  
Sai Awng Kyaw  
Shyla Jaijo  
Syuhaidah Salleh  
Cynthia Wong  
Zarinah Abdul Rahman

**Kavitha Angel**

Raja Mogan S/O Thayalan  
Rafael Keeon S/O Raja  
Mogan  
Rishon Kavin S/O Raja  
Mogan

**Alisha Leow**

Mabel Tan  
Ong Siew Ling  
The late Leow Thye Kwang

**Lucy Lu**

Cheong Lay Tin  
Amanda Han  
Li Rihuan  
Molly Tan  
Pauline Tan

**Nurlydia Abdul Razak**

Andrea  
Carol  
Cheng Wei  
Fang Fang  
Fritzie  
Gautham  
Jerin  
Joy  
Mygail  
Nefer  
Yu Jun

**Nurul Shafiqah**

Lucyamma Thomas  
Nooriah Binte Suro  
Nurul Ashidah Binte Ismail  
The late Rafiah Binte Muda  
The late Suro Bin Kromojoh  
Yoro Jim Rae Pedrola

**Shadirah Binte Zaharum**

Amrita Kaur  
Azizah Rais  
Get Sun Pang  
Harvinder Kaur  
Amy Lim  
Mohammed Shabrie Ismail  
Michelle See  
Woon Hoe Tang  
Lingjuan Yin  
Zalinah Rozali

**Siti Khadijah Ismail**

Abigail Tagum  
Adzhari Boimin  
Anthony Yutoc  
Cheong Lay Tin  
Gilbrey Bacud  
Gloria Ilagan  
Ismail Mohamed Noor  
Jayson Adoc  
Jessie Arellano  
Jhimbo Feliciano  
Joemarie Clavel  
Khairunnisa Nordin  
Keith  
Loong Sai Wah  
Marichelle Arenas  
Mary Claire Angeles

Michael Suyko  
Pierre Bienaime  
Reginald  
Rozita Baharom  
Siti Fatimah Masri  
The late Laila Binte Baharom  
Valerie

**Tan Qiu Lin**

**Vinod S/O Rajandran Muthu**

Aguilar Alma  
Bibin Thomas  
Elizarde Ruby  
Janardana  
Jeny Joy  
Joylin  
Miro Karlo  
Neil Clyde  
Nur Adawiyah  
Nuri Heajjear  
Philip Amer  
Smitha James  
Judy Zhang

To our nurses who contributed their stories

Astrid Asis Ancheta  
Asyiqin Zaffre  
Balasubramaniam Balasaraswathy  
Charlyn Legiralde  
Christabelle Rea Villon  
Dharshini P R  
Gurpreet Kaur  
Ivy Mendoza  
Jacqueline Camarillo Nuez  
Jeweldine Ometer Cabahug  
Lucyamma Thomas  
Mathew Thayil Augusty  
Nor Azian Ismail  
Olive Joy Aguada  
Qi Linyu  
Siti Wahidah D/O Mohamed Igbal  
Lily Tan  
Tan Bee Lei  
Aloysius Wee  
Xie Jieru  
Zhou Yabei  
Zarah May Narte Muana

To our patients who are featured in the e-book

Apandi Ali  
Jessie Chan  
Catherine Lau  
Mah Kow Kan @ Mah Chew Kurn  
Ow Yoke Chan  
Quek Eng Jee  
Suriah Dakir  
Tan Ah Soy  
Tan Kok Hwa  
Tan Wan Heng  
Umar Hariani  
Woo Boon Long





“Not all of us can  
do great things.  
But we can  
do small things  
with great love.”

Mother Teresa