

WHEN THE SUN SETS...

---

WHAT DO  
people with  
sundowning  
GET UP TO?

St Joseph's Home Dusk-to-Dawn Walkathon  
21 September 2018



*The YCH folks who were among the first batch of participants to complete the walkathon*

Our first charity fundraiser *Dusk-to-Dawn* saw some 200 participants clock 12 kilometres to raise funds for our new programmes and to create greater awareness of persons with dementia (PwDs) and the challenges they and their caregivers face.

Named after one of our new services that offers caregivers overnight respite from caring for PwDs, *Dusk-to-Dawn* raised some \$55,000 which will support not only this programme, but our intergenerational activities, art and music therapy services and community engagements.



**(Left picture: Participants arriving.  
Right picture: Warming up with the help of Fitness First instructor Christine)**

Prior to the walkathon, participants – including our neighbours YCH and the Singapore Boys' Home - learnt about how *Dusk-to-Dawn* gave caregivers of PwDs a good night's rest from having to look after their loved ones with sundowning or sundown syndrome. This is when PwDs experience symptoms such as confusion, anxiety, mood swings and agitation come sunset and which may last through the night.

## HEAR FROM THE CAREGIVERS

### STEADFAST LOVE

If there is one word to describe the Tay siblings (right picture: younger brother Patrick Tay in grey-green shirt and sister Mdm Tay Ngee Cher), it would be 'stoic'.

For the past 10 years, they have been their mother Mdm Khoo's main caregivers, seeing to her every need as her dementia progressed, from her being just forgetful to now getting agitated if she doesn't get her way and staying up all night to talk. About what? They can't quite make out. But it frustrates full-time caregiver Mr Tay resulting in many sleepless nights.

As for Mdm Tay, at one point, she had to work, care for her mum and look after her mother-in-law who also has dementia. Her cancer diagnosis in 2015 forced her to cut back on caregiving, but ever the supportive daughter, she visits her brother and mum every weekend without fail to buy them food and grocery shop.

\*Thanks to organisations like TOUCH and St Joseph's Home's Dusk-to-Dawn programme, my brother can breathe easier and get a good night's sleep at least twice a week.\*



**(Left to right: Mr Patrick Tay, Mdm Khoo (seated), Mdm Tay's husband and Mdm Tay)**

The Tay siblings are one of the caregivers benefitting from this programme. Their mum Mdm Khoo visits *Dusk-to-Dawn* twice a week and during this time, her main and full-time caregiver Mr Patrick Tay gets some well-deserved shut-eye. With community programmes like *Dusk-to-Dawn* and home help services, Mr Tay and his sister get regular breaks while continuing to care for their mum in the comfort of familiar surroundings.

Sr Gillian, Assistant Director of Nursing also shared practical tips that participants could put to use immediately in support of friends or family experiencing dementia in one way or other. For instance, instead of saying 'Let me know if you need help', offer to run an errand or cook and share a meal and do so according to the caregiver's schedule, not yours. Often, day-to-day routines can weigh on caregivers especially when their care recipients do not respond in usual

ways e.g. when they cannot eat their usual food portions, but prefer to snack throughout the day.



*(Left picture: Little ones were among the participants as was a 'bunny'. Can you spot him?  
Right picture: Here's one for the books before heading out into the night)*

This walkathon would not have been possible without our generous sponsors who supported us in many ways, from the snacks and drinks to goodie bag items and lucky draw prizes. Thank you too to our Guest-of-Honour Mr Gerard Ee, Chairman of AIC (Agency of Integrated Care) as well as Mr Tan Kwang Cheak, Deputy CEO of AIC who took the time to grace the event.



*(Left picture: Muffins and cakes awaited those who completed the walkathon  
Right picture: Happy winners with their lucky draw prizes)*

*Dusk-to-Dawn* was our first ever charity fundraiser and we were glad you came and supported us. And we hear you, those who felt the 12 kilometres was too long and the route a tad crowded. We've also noted your suggestion to include a shorter kid's version. Look out for an

improved version of *Dusk-to-Dawn – St Joseph’s Home Charity Walkathon* coming your way soon!

Until we meet again, let us support the families experiencing dementia. Alone, we can only do so much, but with everyone chipping in, the burden is that much lighter!

