



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Inaugural dementia symposium led by persons living with dementia, co-organised by AIC and Dementia & Co**

***The symposium aims to foster greater understanding of the condition among care professionals, persons living with dementia, and caregivers***

The #DementiaFriendlySG campaign aims to raise awareness about dementia, create a deeper understanding about the persons behind the condition and rally support from care professionals. As part of the campaign's ongoing efforts, persons living with dementia took centre stage in a first-of-its-kind symposium in Singapore to change mindsets and redefine what it means to live with dementia. They led panel discussions exploring the essential role that care professionals play in empowering persons living with dementia and their caregivers.

2. Co-organised by the Agency for Integrated Care (AIC) and Dementia & Co, the symposium, titled 'Fostering Connection in Dementia Care', took place today at the Tzu Chi Humanistic Youth Centre. Over 250 care professionals, persons living with dementia and caregivers gathered to witness the efforts and achievements of the dementia community and discuss the importance of person-centred care and building rapport between client and care professional.

#### **Highlights of the symposium**

3. The symposium opened with a Tea Dance and "Walk of FAME" segment led by Ms Alison Lim, co-founder of Dementia & Co and its members, which comprises over 10 pairs of persons living with dementia and caregivers. Through exercises and music, the Tea Dance helps persons living with dementia and their caregivers socialise with others, stay physically and mentally active, and build up their confidence. The "Walk of FAME" featured 13 persons living with dementia walking on stage to showcase the many faces of dementia and how the condition affects every individual differently.



*Opening dialogue at the dementia symposium with (L-R) Dr Philip Yap, Senior Consultant for Geriatric Medicine at Khoo Teck Puat Hospital; Mr Dinesh Vasu Dash, CEO for AIC; Ms Alison Lim, co-founder of Dementia & Co.)*

4. Serene Toh, 53, is the wife and caregiver of Lee Kim Han, 56, who lives with young-onset dementia. “I think when many people, including healthcare professionals, speak to Kim Han, they assume that because he has difficulty speaking and expressing himself, therefore he is no longer able to engage with others and enjoy life. This is far from the truth. Since joining Dementia & Co’s Tea Dances, I have watched my husband dance, sing, laugh and engage with others, in his own way. This is why we are proud to be part of this symposium led by persons living with dementia and their caregivers, to show others that despite the challenges, we are able to live life to the fullest and hopefully change mindsets about what persons living with dementia *can* do, not *can’t* do,” she said.

5. The symposium also featured two panel discussions. ‘Enjoying Life with Dementia’ featured a panel of three pairs of persons living with dementia and their caregivers, who shared how they were able to stay active, continue doing the things they enjoy and support each other, despite their diagnosis. Caregivers on the panel also shared their approach for supporting persons living with dementia to live well and independently. ‘Communication to Build Trust and Rapport’ was moderated by a caregiver, where the panel of care professionals, a person living with dementia and a caregiver, shared their perspective on how trust and rapport can be built during consultations. Panellists also discussed the importance of person-centred care in dementia care and how it contributes to the well-being of persons living with dementia.

6. To showcase the talents of persons living with dementia, the symposium included a choir and band performance. The symposium closed with an interactive session, where six pairs of persons living with dementia and their caregivers hosted a table each, and attendees were invited to sit down and have personal conversations with the pairs. The sessions sought to illustrate the importance of having real conversations

and help the attendees see persons living with dementia as individuals with unique needs and strengths.

7. “Building a more caring and Dementia-Friendly Singapore for persons living with dementia and their caregivers requires everyone to play a part. As someone who lives with dementia, I understand firsthand what it feels like to receive a diagnosis. The relationship between us and our healthcare professionals is so important right from the get-go of our journey with dementia. Therefore, I’m glad to see this symposium come to fruition, thanks to the support of AIC, because it is important for everyone to see what life with dementia can look like, and understand us in our care journey”, said **Ms Alison Lim, co-founder of Dementia & Co.**

8. **Mr Dinesh Vasu Dash, Chief Executive Officer for AIC**, said, “With more than 150,000 Singaporeans expected to be diagnosed with dementia by 2030, our role in supporting persons living with dementia and their caregivers will continue to grow. AIC has been working with ground-up partners including Dementia & Co to provide a platform for persons living with dementia to share their views and aspirations. Through this symposium, we hope that care professionals, persons living with dementia, and their caregivers find the exchange of perspectives helpful and create a positive ripple effect across healthcare settings in Singapore.”

9. More details on the symposium are available in the Annex appended.

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**For media queries, please contact:**

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## **About the Agency for Integrated Care**

The Agency for Integrated Care (AIC) aims to create a vibrant care community for people to live well and age gracefully. AIC coordinates and supports efforts in integrating care to achieve the best care outcomes for our clients. We reach out to caregivers and seniors with information on staying active and ageing well, and connect people to services they need. We support stakeholders in their efforts to raise the quality of care, and also work with health and social care partners to provide services for the ageing population. Our work in the community brings care services and information closer to those in need. For more about us, please visit <https://www.aic.sg>.

## **About Dementia & Co**

Dementia & Co is an organisation bringing members of the community together, engaging persons living with dementia, care partners, seniors and youths together in fun activities led by persons living with dementia and their caregivers. Alison Lim and daughter, Jamie Buitelaar founded Dementia & Co in 2016 to increase peer support network for persons living with young-onset dementia, as well as raise dementia awareness and help families navigate similar challenge. Through specially curated forums, neuro exercises and tea dances, they have supported over 150 families affected by the condition, to date. For more about us, please visit [www.instagram.com/dementianco](https://www.instagram.com/dementianco).

## Annex

### About Dementia-Friendly Singapore

Dementia-Friendly Singapore (DFSG) is a national initiative announced by the Ministry of Health (MOH) in 2016 to cater to the growing needs of persons impacted by dementia in Singapore. DFSG aims to raise awareness on dementia and mental wellness and empower individuals and businesses to better support persons living with dementia and their caregivers in the community. The goal is to enable communities to build supportive networks for persons living with dementia and mental health needs in where they live in.

Spearheaded by AIC, in collaboration with community partners, DFSG strives to build Dementia-Friendly Communities (DFCs) and a Dementia-Friendly nation to support persons living with dementia through the 3Es strategy – Engage, Empower and Enable. The desired outcomes of DFSG are the promotion of preventive activities, encouraging early identification, and the provision of care and support.

On 20 November 2022, AIC launched the #DementiaFriendlySG social movement to rally the nation to build Singapore into a more dementia-friendly place. In line with the campaign tagline '*Lend a Helping Hand, Be a Dementia Friend*', the #DementiaFriendlySG movement advocates support for people living with dementia and their caregivers in various capacities; as individuals, organisations, or within a community.

For more information, please visit [www.dementiahub.sg/DFSG-initiative](http://www.dementiahub.sg/DFSG-initiative).

Resource	Description
Dementia Symposium Montage Video <a href="http://www.for.sg/dfsg-montagevideo">www.for.sg/dfsg-montagevideo</a> 	This video showcases efforts on the ground by persons living with dementia who are working hard to spread awareness through their various initiatives (big and small ways) in the community. The profiles featured are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) Alison Lim</li><li>2) Emily Ong</li><li>3) Anjang Rosli</li><li>4) Peter Estrop</li><li>5) Thomas Ong</li></ol>