

MEDIA RELEASE

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HEARTENING MINDS – EVOLVING COMMUNITY BASED APPROACH TO PROMOTE WELLNESS

In a night of jubilation, fond memories, and stirred emotions, Institute of Mental Health (IMH) commemorated her 80th Anniversary with an “Ode To Wellness” charity concert. Amidst the renewal of ties between former and current staff and patients, the Institute also launched a commemorative book “*Heartening Minds*” which provides a glimpse of IMH’s vision and role in the nation’s mental health blueprint.

A highlight in IMH’s 80 years anniversary line-up of events, and held in aid of the Woodbridge Hospital Endowment Fund, the charity concert was attended by Health Minister Khaw Boon Wan. The event raised \$310,000 in aid of the long-stay patients and needy out-patients of IMH for medical subsidies and rehabilitation programmes. Dr Lee Seng Gee, Chairman of Lee Foundation, a donor of the Fund said, “*We have a vision of bettering the world through supporting worthy causes like the Woodbridge Hospital Endowment Fund. The fund provides for innovative education, treatment and research programmes which improve the mental wellbeing of children and adults.*” The Fund assists some 1,800 patients and has nurtured talents of rehabilitated psychiatric patients.

The commemorative book traces the transformation of Woodbridge Hospital from her custodial-care days to the current vibrant research atmosphere and modern approach in psychiatry adopted by IMH. On the evolving field of psychiatry in Singapore, A/ Prof Wong Kim Eng, Chairman of Medical Board said: “*Over the years, we have gradually diminished the institutional model of care and built up the community model of mental health education, building mental resilience, early detection and early treatment, timely rehabilitation and*

re-instatement into the community for as normal a life as possible. Family support and adequate community mental health resources, such as the community mental health teams, are crucial.”

As the nation’s only mental health institute, IMH continues her efforts in de-stigmatising mental illness through various approaches. Community psychiatry at IMH actively engages Singaporeans through partnerships with organisations at the community level. Satellite clinics, public outreach through various arts platforms, GP (general practitioners) partnerships, REAP (Regional Eldercare Agencies Partnership Programme) and initiatives under the Workplace Emotional Health Programme create greater accessibility and education on mental health for the public.

Placing research also at the forefront, IMH’s continued efforts in psychiatric research are evidenced in collaborations with local and foreign universities, as well as the recently launched programme SWAP (Support for Wellness Achievement Programme) which seeks to address detection and prevention measures, alongside treatments and cures. Furthermore technology plays an important feature in the enhancement of psychiatric care for community care. The institute has continued to improve efficiency, minimise errors during data exchange, and be able to monitor standards for continual improvement of services. *“Given the multidisciplinary practice of community psychiatric care and the need for extensive up-to-date clinical records at the point of care, the deployment of Digital Psychiatry IT and mobile devices helps the team to make key decisions on the choice of drug and its dosage when we conduct the home visits”* said Dr Lee Cheng, Chief, Community Psychiatry, IMH.

As IMH continues to engage the public through the 80th Anniversary calendar of events aimed at public awareness and education, CEO of IMH Mr Leong Yew Meng in his opening speech for the charity concert summed up the path ahead with a statement, *“We will not rest on our laurels. We will continue to transform our campus and services, increase community outreach efforts*

through education and mental wellness programmes, establish partnerships in research, clinical and voluntary services, and finally, improve mental healthcare by harnessing technological innovations.”

The book also pays tribute to clinicians and allied health workers who have dedicated their lives to providing quality patient-care, and includes interesting snippets and insights into the colourful history of IMH. Dr Tsoi Wing Foo, Woodbridge Hospital’s Medical Superintendent (1971 – 1979) had this to say about cost effective care in the past, *“To stretch the allocated budget and to improve the level of comfort and services, the team at WH displayed a certain degree of ingenuity and improvisation. During the British withdrawal from Singapore, we went to the deserted barracks and offices and collected furniture for our own use. In addition, when the police changed their uniforms, we took over the old ones for our patients’ use. We were into recycling a long time ago!”*

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About IMH

The Institute of Mental Health/Woodbridge Hospital (IMH/WH) is a leading mental health centre in Asia. It offers a multi-faceted and comprehensive range of psychiatric, rehabilitative and counselling services designed to meet the needs of namely (i) children & adolescents, (ii) adults and (iii) the elderly. IMH/WH’s multi-disciplinary approach to patient care is supported by the departments of Nursing, Clinical Psychology, Occupational Therapy, and Medical Social Work. Offering inpatient and outpatient care. It has also established various satellite clinics around Singapore. IMH/WH provides community education and supports corporations in the promotion of mental health and wellness. As a specialist centre, it integrates research in the best interest of patient-care. Equipped with modern facilities, it is the first mental health institution in Asia to receive the Joint Commission International (JCI) accreditation, an award that represents a worldwide consensus on quality patient care and international best practices.