

## **President's Report 2010**

Looking back over the last 12 months, I am pleased to say we finished the year with a sense of fulfillment and achievement. We have maintained our commitment to review our services to meet the specific needs of our members to the best of our capacity. We are very proud to have finally fulfilled the dream of many members who wanted to learn Guolin Qigong, a popular exercise among Chinese cancer sufferers. In May 2010, we invited a Guolin Qigong master from Shanghai to conduct a 2 week course in Melbourne. We were also very fortunate that the Chinese Youth Society of Melbourne had offered their training centre free of charge for us to run this program. It was a great success and the course was well received by the participants. I was very pleased to see the enthusiasm and determination amongst the participants to overcome all sorts of barriers such as ill health to complete the course.

Another milestone we achieved was the establishment of the CCSV Youth Team. Apart from a couple of medical and TAFE students, most of the members are from Monash University Master in Counselling Department. The purpose of

establishing this team is to raise awareness among younger people to care for people around them and provide opportunities for them to gain new skills and knowledge professionally. Since the beginning of this year they have planned a Cancer Awareness Project which is going to be held in October 2010.

In September last year, CCSV formed a partnership with Fernlea House, a day centre that provides respite programs for carers who are caring for people with life threatening illnesses. Interested members were invited to be guests for the day program for three months on a fortnightly basis. Due to the distance involved, only a small group of our members decided to continue as their regular guests on a monthly basis. While a small fee of \$5 is being charged, members can enjoy the peaceful environment, lovely fusion food and complimentary therapies such as spa massages and other natural therapies which the House offers. Members were also taken to outings in the beautiful Dandenong Ranges. More importantly, the staff at Fernlea and our members have built a wonderful relationship.

At the Society's House, vegetables have been planted and bricks were laid alongside the car park to make

it a greener and more enjoyable environment. It is heart-warming to see green fingers planting in seedlings and carefully watering, and even selling chilli to local restaurants to raise money for the Society. Thank you to those who have put a lot of effort in the evergreen vegetable patch.

As always, our priority is to provide quality services to our service users, and this year we have delivered our commitments. More than 240 cancer sufferers and family members received our support in the last financial year. Among them, 54 were recently diagnosed sufferers, an increase of 43% compared with previous financial year (40 new referrals in 2008-2009).

We continue to offer cancer sufferers and their families culturally appropriate psychosocial and practical support. I myself am privileged to have received the trust from many sufferers who shared their anxieties and fear with me. I have been doing this for over 15 years now, but I am still amazed to witness how people cope with the darkest moments of their lives. For many cancer sufferers, especially in the early stages of diagnosis, individual contact is a crucial form of support. By matching a newly

diagnosed sufferer to a survivor who has experienced a similar cancer diagnosis can give hope and confidence. They can share their experiences and discuss coping skills which is essential for the maintenance of mental health.

In the last 12 months, our family support team provided more than 380 telephone/email supports. 278 face to face support contacts were delivered including counseling, information provision, bereavement support, transport and meal assistance.

We continue to offer placement opportunities for students doing Master in Counseling at Monash University. There was an increase in demand for placements last year and we have had to place the students on a waiting list.

Due to insufficient applications, we did not award our Nursing Scholarship this year. However, we have offered a student award of \$1000 at the Australian Society for Medical Research Student Symposium. We will continue to explore opportunities to offer scholarships in medical research.

Stigma associated with cancer among older Chinese people is still one of the key barriers to many

sufferers in seeking help. We are still facing this huge challenge in changing the way people perceive cancer and raise awareness on cancer prevention and early detection. As we have done for many years, we held an information display at the Buddhist Festival this year. We also held a display stall at the Harmony Day in the City of Whitehorse in March and at a Senior Expo in the City of Knox. I myself provided cultural training or advice to health professionals in Box Hill Peter Mac Radiation Oncology Unit, Cancer Imaging Department, Western Radiation Oncology Centre, Migrant Information Centre Eastern Melbourne, Fernlea House, and Maroondah BreastScreen.

All the five support groups have continued to provide support to their group members. A total of more than 1660 group contacts (attendance) were recorded among the five support groups.

Brief reports on all our services and a snapshot of CCSV statistics are recorded elsewhere in this annual report.

I firmly believe that the greatest asset in the Chinese Cancer Society is the team effort of our dedicated

volunteers. Our achievements depend heavily on our volunteers' collective contributions. I sincerely thank all our volunteers for giving this cancer sufferers' safe haven, the CCSV, your compassion and commitment.

Finally, I wish to thank wholeheartedly our Patron, Alice Wong; our landlord, Joe Lai; all our Advisers; major sponsors, Lee Kum Kee and Oriental Merchant Pty Ltd for their \$7000 worth of fund raising goods; and all our generous donors such as JC Connections' donation of \$5,000, and Westpac Bank's matching grant of \$5000 thorough Alice Wong's donation, and for their recognition of our work. We believe our reputation in delivering timely and much needed family support to Chinese cancer affected people has enabled us to attract donations from the community as well as corporate bodies. We shall continue to fulfill our mission in assisting cancer sufferers and their careers in improving their quality of life.

Dorothy Yiu