



ARTICLES

NAF NEWSLETTER | ISSUE 4

A PATH OF FULFILMENT

By Serene Ng



Ms Serene Ng joined National Arthritis Foundation as Administration Manager at the beginning of this year. A mother of two special needs children, she shares her motivations on why she has chosen a career in the social service sector, and how her work has enriched her personal life.

Background and Motivation

Q: Can you tell us a little about your background and why you decided to join the National Arthritis Foundation?

A: I am a mother of two teenagers with autism and have over 20 years of experience working across various industries, including service line and people-facing roles. Over time, I realised that I wanted my work to be more meaningful, leading me to seek a professional role where I could contribute to social and community causes. This desire ultimately brought me to National Arthritis Foundation.

Connection between Personal and Professional Life

Q: How has your experience as a mother of children with special needs influenced your approach to your work at the National Arthritis Foundation?

A: Being a mother of children with special needs has given me a broader perspective on the unique challenges families face. It has taught me the importance of empathy in my professional role, allowing me to truly understand and support the needs of the members and patients at the Foundation.

Work Impact and Understanding

Q: In what ways has working with the National Arthritis Foundation impacted your understanding of arthritis and its effects on individuals and families?

A: My job at NAF has significantly deepened my understanding of arthritis and its impact on individuals and families. My older brother has been living with ankylosing spondylitis (AS) from a young age, and through my work, I've gained a better understanding of his condition and environment. This has strengthened our sibling bond and my relationship with his family.

Future Aspirations

Q: What are your hopes and aspirations for the future, both personally and professionally, and do you think they align with the Foundation's vision and goals?

A: I hope to continue spreading awareness to the public and building strong relationships with our members and beneficiaries. This will help me better understand their needs and provide the support they require, which aligns with the Foundation's vision and goals.

Advice for Others

Q: What advice would you give to other parents of children with special needs who are considering a career in non-profit organisations?

A: Pursuing a career in non-profit work can be both rewarding and challenging, but the fulfilment you receive in return will far outweigh the effort you put in.

INDOOR GOLF



60 donors, partners and beneficiaries gathered on 18 April to enjoy a terrific Thursday evening at Swing For Hope, our first fundraiser of the year. Held at The Par Club @ Marina Square, the venue features 6 fully equipped indoor golf simulation bays and a challenging putting green, which set the stage for great conversations and friendly challenges among the guests. Golf coaches were present to take first-time golfers through the basics of the swing, and for those who preferred a more intuitive activity, they could pit their skills in the putting contest.

While their bellies were filled with food and drinks, it was the warmth of their hearts through generous giving that made it a most meaningful night - over \$30,000 was raised for NAF to pursue its programmes to help arthritis sufferers.



JIA DAY



Our first physical event for Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis (JIA) since the Covid-19 pandemic saw parents and children with JIA gather at Happy Fish's flagship outlet in Bedok for a day of fun-filled activities, educational talks and heartwarming moments.

One of the highlights of the day was the hydrotherapy session in a heated pool, where the children had a great time! Apart from the fun they had inside the pool, hydrotherapy is beneficial for JIA kids because the therapy:

- **Eases Pain:** The warm water helps soothe aching joints, making the kids feel better almost instantly.
- **Promotes Better Movement:** Being in water makes it easier for them to move around without putting too much pressure on their joints.
- **Develops Stronger Muscles:** The gentle exercises they did in the pool help build muscle strength, which is important for keeping their joints flexible.



While the kids were having a blast in the pool, there were also engaging educational talks for the parents and caregivers.

Nutritional expert Fiona Chia touched on the importance of healthy lifestyle choices to cope better with the condition, including the benefits of certain foods and how we can adjust our diets to reduce the possibility of joints inflammation. There was also a kombucha brewing workshop by Master brewer Katherine Sng, who highlighted that kombucha - a fermented tea rich in probiotics - could help reduce inflammation and promote gut health, both of which are essential in managing arthritis.

KEPPEL GOLF EXPERIENCE



Keppel Golf Club hosted us to a golf experience morning on 25 June 2024.

Golf provides a perfect balance of physical activity and social interaction, making it a great activity for our members and beneficiaries. The walking, swinging, stretching and socialising on the course makes for a good low-impact workout, which can be beneficial for some who are managing conditions like ankylosing spondylitis or rheumatoid arthritis.

The sun was out blazing, the skies were clear; it set the perfect backdrop for a fantastic experience for participants at the driving range and the putting green amidst the beautiful backdrop of the golf course. There was also respite from the heat when everyone got a chance to do some indoor air-conditioned golf at the golf simulator bay.

The Keppel Golf Experience Day gave us a flavour of how one can improve their wellbeing by staying active and engaged, even when living with arthritis.

If you suffer from joint pains/inflammation, always consult your doctor before engaging in any particular physical activity.



PATIENT SHARING SESSION

Our Patient Sharing Sessions are a cherished part of NAF, where members and beneficiaries gather to share their arthritis journeys. These sessions are invaluable as they help individuals realize they're not alone, fostering a supportive environment where everyone can encourage and uplift each other. The power of community and empathy shines through in these heartfelt moments, making the journey with arthritis a bit easier for everyone involved.



CONEY ISLAND WALK



A walk to Coney Island was a delightful experience for the dozen support group members who participated in this therapeutic sunset activity on 13 July. The hike provided a perfect mix of light exercise, fresh air, and scenic views, not to mention the numerous advantages derived from walking, particularly for those with arthritis:

- **Low-Impact Exercise:** Walking is gentle on the joints, making it an ideal form of exercise for people with arthritis.
- **Improves Flexibility and Strength:** Regular walking helps maintain joint flexibility and strengthens the muscles around the joints, reducing pain and stiffness.
- **Boosts Mental Health:** Being outdoors and engaging in physical activity can enhance mood and reduce stress.
- **Enhances Social Connections:** Group walks foster a sense of community and provide opportunities for social interaction, which is important for emotional well-being.

Support group programmes like this Coney Island walk are a refreshing reminder of the joy and health benefits that come from staying active and connected as participants bond over shared experiences and uplifting conversations. We ended the walk with dinner together.



PUBLIC HEALTH SCREENING



On 17-18 August, NAF participated in the free Public Health Screening, organised by Public Health Service and The Frontier Community Club.

We set up a booth to spread awareness about arthritis, including its impact on children. This event was an excellent opportunity to engage with the community and educate them about the importance of early diagnosis and management of arthritis.

Thanks to our generous sponsors, AOX, Locker, Sunsweet, Himalaya Vajomba and St Dalfour, we were also able to bless the attendees with tidbits, making for a delightful engagement experience.

Events like these are crucial in raising awareness and encouraging regular health check-ups, which play a vital role in maintaining overall well-being and detecting early symptoms of arthritis.



THE STRAITS TIMES: OLIVIA & JENSEN

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life

'I didn't know young kids could get arthritis'

When Olivia was diagnosed with arthritis at just two years old, her mother, Mrs. Chua, was shocked. "I didn't know young kids could get arthritis," she says. "I didn't know young kids could get arthritis." Olivia, now 10, has grown up with the pain of inflamed joints. Despite these difficulties, Olivia's spirit remains strong as she navigates her daily challenges with the support of her family.

A condition called juvenile idiopathic arthritis can affect children as young as six months old

Olivia Chua was two years old when she was diagnosed with arthritis. Her mother, Mrs. Chua, was shocked. "I didn't know young kids could get arthritis," she says. "I didn't know young kids could get arthritis." Olivia, now 10, has grown up with the pain of inflamed joints. Despite these difficulties, Olivia's spirit remains strong as she navigates her daily challenges with the support of her family.

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THE STRAITS TIMES WEDNESDAY, JUNE 12, 2024

Club offers support to caregivers of children with arthritis

The Junior Arthritis Club provides support to caregivers of children with arthritis. The club offers a range of services, including support groups, educational programs, and resources for caregivers. The club is a valuable resource for caregivers who are looking for support and information.

When inflamed joints make it too painful to move

For Olivia, the pain of arthritis is a constant challenge. "When inflamed joints make it too painful to move," she says, "it's a real struggle." Olivia's mother, Mrs. Chua, shares her experience of supporting her daughter through her condition. "It's been a journey, but we've learned a lot about living with arthritis." Olivia's story is a testament to the power of resilience and the importance of family support.

MY JIA STORY

Olivia shares her story of living with juvenile idiopathic arthritis. "I remember feeling scared and confused. I wondered if this would be a long-term issue and if I would still be able to play and run around with friends in school." Olivia's story is a powerful message of hope and resilience. "Despite the challenges, I've learned to embrace my condition and live a full life." Olivia's story is a testament to the power of resilience and the importance of family support.

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While arthritis is often seen as a condition affecting older adults, children can have it too. Juvenile arthritis affects many young lives, bringing unique challenges that require understanding and support. Raising awareness is key to recognising the impact on children and ensuring they receive the care they need.

Olivia was diagnosed with arthritis at just two years old and has grown up with the pain of inflamed joints. Simple activities like walking or playing can be painful, and she often has to sit out while her friends run around. Despite these difficulties, Olivia's spirit remains strong as she navigates her daily challenges with the support of her family.

Jensen, another child with arthritis, faces the challenge of managing his condition with regular medications, including injections to reduce inflammation. The thought of frequent injections can be daunting, but Jensen understands that these treatments help him stay active and reduce pain. His courage and resilience are a source of inspiration for everyone around him.

Scan to read more about Jensen's story

Written by Jensen Si | Illustrated by Keendra Ho

MY JIA STORY




CHARITY GALA DINNER



NAF
Charity
Gala Dinner
2024

Friday, 4 October 2024
@ Conrad Orchard

Guest of Honour:
President Tharman Shanmugaratnam

Stand-up entertainment by Hossan Leong

Dinner by award-winning kitchen Basilico

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 National Arthritis Foundation 

WORLD ARTHRITIS DAY WALK



World Arthritis Day Walk
Date: 12 October 2024
Venue: MacRitchie Reservoir
Time: 9am-12pm

Organised in partnership with **Smith+Nephew**



 National Arthritis Foundation 

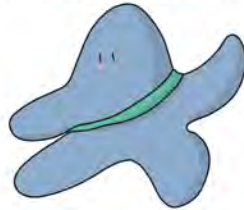
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