

February  
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# Yong-en News

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## Chinese New Year mood at Dementia Day Care



The volunteers paired up with our seniors and guided them throughout the walk. Soaking in the festive atmosphere, some held the seniors' hands and some chatted along the way. Care was taken such that the seniors would not feel anxious due to the unfamiliar and crowded environment.

Thanks to the lovely volunteers who were generous to sponsor the activity, each senior was given a token shopping amount to purchase some goodies for themselves or their loved ones. The aim is to give the seniors an opportunity to participate in this festivity of this season.

Quite a few seniors were able to relate to the activity when we got back to the centre. One of commented, "I don't want to buy too much cookies, there is already a lot at home which my daughter bought." Another bought a pair of puppy plush toys for the year of dog (according to the Chinese calendar).

The event ended at our Oasis hall where the volunteers shared additional bonding time with the seniors over delicious chicken rice specially prepared for this day.

Thank you volunteers for joining and sponsoring this meaningful activity for our seniors!

Festive seasons are a time of cheer - Without celebrations, the light of life dims. Sometimes people might have the misconception that there is no point including someone with dementia in celebrations because they would not remember the event anyway. However, observations have shown that although the seniors tend to be forgetful, as they experience joy during the celebrations, they remember the emotions and usually stay in a joyous mood even after the celebrations.

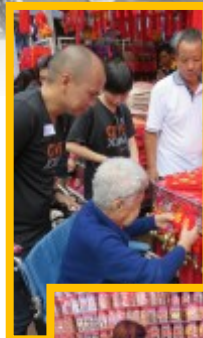
At Yong-en, we make the effort to bring festive cheer to our seniors as such.

### CNY craftwork

Celebrations present the opportunity for our seniors to get hands-on; and craftwork is surely a meaningful and engaging cognitive activity that gives them a sense of accomplishment. Together with Yong-en's staff, they completed some pretty Chinese New Year decorations which peppered Yong-en's premises. Even though it was a couple of days before Chinese New Year, the festive mood was already seen and felt.

### A walk through Chinatown

8 February 2018 – Volunteers from Thomson Reuters took a break from their busy working schedules to bring our seniors at Dementia Day Care for a walk around Chinatown's CNY street bazaar.





# Guide on festive celebrations with your loved ones having Dementia.

Celebrations are great bonding time for family and friends. However, as festive period often affects routine and familiarity which may aggravate the behaviors of our family members with Dementia, it can be a challenging time for a caregiver.

Here are some helpful tips on celebrating holidays with your loved ones having Dementia.

**Follow familiar family tradition** – Such as playing familiar tunes in the morning, which helps to stir up pleasant emotions and also assist in understanding of the time of year.

**Reminisce** – Family photos help to encourage conversations about their childhood and family.

**Include them** – Don't assume a person with dementia will not be able to help. If they are able, give them the chance to be involved. Even if it is a very small task, it allows them to feel valued and that they are contributing to the family.

**Adjust your schedule** – Try to arrange your family parties or gatherings at an earlier time of the day if your loved one with dementia experiences Sundown Syndrome (evening confusion).

**Stick to the routine** – Keeping to the usual routine as much as possible will reduce the chances of the festive season being too disruptive and confusing for them. A routine will help them focus and improve comfort and familiarity.

**Orientate and simplify** – An unfamiliar environment and large groups can be uncomfortable for them. Try to stay with them to orientate as much as possible or limit the number of family

members around them. If they seem uncomfortable, move to a quieter location. You may get family and friends to spend a little one-on-one time with them instead.

**Gift of company** – More likely, they will value the company more than material goods. Plan some activities which can be done with them, such as puzzles or familiar games. This can be equally entertaining for them as well.

**Bring them to the washroom more frequently** – It is likely that they will be drinking and eating more than the usual. Remember to do frequent toilet breaks especially if the environment is unfamiliar, as they may be confused where the washroom is.

**Avoid using negative voice** – Be conscious about your tone of voice and avoid arguing. Negative emotions can be contagious. If your loved ones with dementia get irritated or upset, try refocusing their energy on something else to reduce the stress. Remind yourself that it is the disease talking when they behave negatively instead of getting upset.

**Take a Break!** – Remember that you need a break too. Get help if necessary to allow yourself respite so that you can enjoy too.

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*If you wish to make a donation, please visit [www.yong-en.org.sg](http://www.yong-en.org.sg) for more information for non-cheque donations. For cheque donations please issue to "Yong-en Care Centre" and mail it to "335A Smith Street, #03-57, Singapore 051335", and indicate: • Organisation Name (for corporate donation) and contact person; • Name as in NRIC and NRIC number (for tax deduction for individual donors) • Mailing address (for us to send you the receipt) • Email address.*

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