



Society for the Promotion of Hospice Care

Press Release

For Immediate Release

Announcing the “Top Ten Perfect Wishes” of People in Hong Kong

The Society for the Promotion of Hospice kicks off the “Perfect Wish” program to spread positive words of life

(Hong Kong · 2010, January 26) If there were only three months left of your life, what would your very last wish be?

People in Hong Kong people could be too busy to be aware of the fleeting away of time, and the fact that life could come to a sudden end without any sign at all. Even if some are conscious about the capricious nature of life, they may not raise it with their family for fear of breaching the traditional taboo against mentioning of death or sickness. The reluctance to talk and face death results in endless regrets, which literally, follow some of the unfortunate ones into their graves. The Society for the Promotion of Hospice Care (SPHC), a local charitable organisation promoting hospice care, has conducted an initial public survey last week through random telephone interviews. The survey had successfully reached 350 people of the general public, asking what their most important last wish would be if they had only three months left of their lives. The results are to be announced today at the press conference, where SPHC will also launch the “Perfect Wish” pilot program to arouse public awareness about the preciousness of life and the importance of caring for people around us.

People care most about spending the last days of their lives with their families

The "Top Ten Perfect Wishes" survey aimed at investigating on what the general last wishes of Hong Kong people could be, and their level of concerns for having their last wishes communicated to the others. The survey came in two parts: the first question asked "What would be your most important last wish if there were only three months left of your life?" The second question asked "Have you ever shared your last wish with your family or friends?" Through random telephone sampling, 350 members of the general public gave their answers. The data was then processed to yield the list of the Top Ten Perfect Wishes of Hong Kong people. The survey results indicated that most of the interviewees wished to spend more time with families and friends - those who made this as their top concern made up 32 per cent of the interviewees. It is followed by "travel to overseas" and "plan and arrange for their departure for the ease of their families", comprising 29 per cent and 26 per cent of the total number of interviewees respectively. These three wishes together make up 87 per cent of responses. It is noted that the first and third most important last wishes, which together make up 58% of the responses, involve caring for families and friends. However, only 21 per cent of interviewees had communicated their wishes to their families and friends.

The summary indicates that “death” is simply the affair of individuals; it links to their relationships with families and friends. People at their last journey of life put the wish of spending as much time as possible with their families and friends at the top priority. They also try to take care of those affected by their departure. However, on the other hand, people for whatever reasons seldom talk to their families or friends about their last wishes. The reasons behind this reluctance to confide are yet to be studied.

Survey results are as the following:

The listing of "Top Ten Perfect Wishes" of Hong Kong people	
(1) What would be your most important last wish if	Percentage

there were only three months left of your life?		
1	Spend more time with families and friends	32%
2	Travel to Overseas	29%
3	Plan and arrange for their departure for the ease of their families	26%
4	Spend the rest of life in peace	4%
5	Spend all of my own money	3%
6	Get involved in voluntary work to help the others	2%
7	Try something that I have never done before	1%
8	Eat my favourite food	1%
9	Have as much fun as possible	1%
10	Change job / resign from current job/ Others	1%
	Total:	100%
(II) Have you ever shared your last wish with your family or friends?		Percentage
	Yes	21%
	No	79%
	Total:	100%

Most of the respondents have never shared about their last wishes with families

Mr. Kwan Kam Fan, Executive Director of The Society for the Promotion of Hospice Care (SPHC), says: "Whenever issues about terminal care are concerned, people in general pay their attention to practical aspects like medical care, inheritance and funeral etc., and tend to undermine the psychological needs of those who are in the last days of their life. From the experience of the Society in promoting hospice care, often those who are at their last days of have some kind of last wishes they earnestly wish to fulfil before their life comes to an end. Fulfilling the last wishes may bring about peaceful departures of those who pass away; and facilitate peaceful farewells from those who are yet to journey on with life."

Mrs. Faye Chan, Program Development Director of SPHC says, in general, everyone has his or her immediate and long-term wishes. However, when one knows that his or her life will end soon, the priority of wishes will be reshuffled dramatically. "When terminally ill patients recover from the shock from hearing the bad news, they will immediately adjust and get in touch with the true priority in their personal wishes. However, since they are seriously ill, they may find it difficult to express to their families the very last dreams of their lives. From the Society's experience in providing hospice care to patients, we have found that their last wishes concern more about their families and friends than their own selves. Interestingly, what families value the most is to care for the patients and fulfilling their wishes. Both the patients and their families value each other the most, but love is always buried deep in one's heart instead of being expressed openly."

Sharing from terminally ill patients on their last wishes

In order to encourage the public to care about those who are in the last days of their lives, SPHC kicks off the "Perfect Wish" program today. This is a pilot program trying to help fulfil the last wishes of the participants, bringing peace to them and their families. Its aim is to raise public awareness about the preciousness of life, encourage people to live the best of their lives now, and promote a culture of caring amongst the general public in Hong Kong. All those who are willing to help fulfilling the last wishes of those who are in the last days of their lives are welcome to join as a "Perfect Wish Angel". The Society today inaugurate singer Suzan Guterres as the "Perfect Wish Ambassador". Suzan says she has once experienced the deep regrets of failing to fulfil the last wishes of her family member, and that the success in fulfilling last wishes should have positive psychological impacts on both the terminally ill patients and their families, and motivate the patients to finish the last race of their life journey in a positive mindset without regret.



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SPHC “The Perfect Wish” program will first fulfilling the last wishes of five terminally ill patients, including three male and two female terminal cancer patients. Among them is a 46-year-old, male patient who is suffering from melanoma and tetraparesis and is temporarily residing at a rehabilitation centre. He is present in the press conference today, sharing his last wish with the audience. He would like to have a tilt table, which could enable him sit up and stand up and thus essentially release the burden to his wife for taking care of him. All of the audience are moved by this expression of his most genuine thoughts and feelings.

Background information on the give the “The Perfect Wish” program

Beneficiaries	1	2	3	4	5
Age	46	70	71	68	64
Gender	Male	Male	Female	Male	Female
Diagnosis	Melanoma	Liver cancer	Oral cancer	Lung cancer	Brain cancer
Last Wish(es)	Resting near home – to instal a tilet table	Resting at home – to obtain a heater Reishi Mushrooms	Spending more time with family – to visit Disneyland with all of her 15 family members which include children and grandchildren	Spending more time with friends – to travel to Shenzhen with good, old buddies	Spending more time with family – to see again her sons and grandson who live in Hunan

To further develop the program, SPHC will endeavour in further research works and fund-raising events. This year, on April 16 and 17, The “Perfect Wish Ambassador” Suzan Guterres will perform with various singers in town in “The Perfect Wish Charity Concert”. A book on stories about how to “live to the full”, jointly written by Suzan, Michelle Yim and Candy Chea will also be published soon. All revenue from the book sale will be donated to SPHC.

For those who are interested in joining the the “Perfect Wish” program and become an "Perfect Wish Angel", please call 2868 1211

The press release is produced and distributed by Wasabi Creation Ltd. For enquiries, please contact:

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