

Government strives to build dementia and elderly friendly community (with photos)

The Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, today (January 26) called on different sectors in society to work together with the Government to build a friendly community for people with dementia, elderly persons and their carers.

He noted that two programmes were launched by the Social Welfare Department (SWD) last year in September and October, namely the Dementia Friendly Community Campaign and the Support for Carers Project respectively, each lasting for three years, with an aim to encourage members of the public to take action to support people with dementia and their families, and to raise public awareness and enlist community support for needy elderly people and their carers.

Speaking at the highlight event of the Dementia Friendly Community Campaign and the Support for Carers Project organised by the SWD, Dr Law said that among a series of activities under the Dementia Friendly Community Campaign, the SWD has commissioned the Hong Kong Alzheimer's Disease Association to assist in organising a number of Dementia Friends Information Sessions.

Members of the public who have attended the information sessions are eligible to register as internationally recognised Dementia Friends. They can wear the unique Dementia Friends orange wristband to show their support for people with dementia and their carers. They can also share their knowledge on dementia with others in the community.

More than 5 500 people have registered as Dementia Friends, Dr Law noted, adding that he was hopeful that the target of training 10 000 Dementia Friends within three years could be met.

Dr Law especially expressed his heartfelt thanks to the 49 property management companies, which are managing over 3 000 residential buildings territory-wide, for their participation in the Support for Carers Project by releasing their front-line staff to receive training provided by the district elderly community centres and neighbourhood elderly centres under respective District Social Welfare Offices of the SWD. The training has enabled them to identify the needs of elderly people and their carers and render suitable assistance, with a view to helping elderly people age in place.

Also speaking at the event as Dementia Friends, the Chairman of the Elderly Commission, Dr Lam Ching-choi, and the Director of Social Welfare, Ms Carol Yip, appealed to all Dementia Friends to pay more attention to needy people, particularly elderly persons, and wear the orange wristband and stand ready to offer assistance to people with dementia in need around them. They

expressed the hope that individuals from all sectors would help promote the dementia-friendly message.

Ms Yip also thanked the property management companies taking part in the Support for Carers Project and encouraged front-line property management personnel to offer help to residents with dementia.

Mr Chu Chi-keung, who works in a property management company, attended the event today. Having seen quite a number of relatives and friends diagnosed with dementia and having learnt from colleagues that some residents are likely to have dementia, Mr Chu, apart from registering himself as a Dementia Friend, also encouraged the management and front-line staff of his company to attend information sessions to learn more about the needs of people with dementia.

Mr Evan Law, a social worker at the Sai Kung District Community Centre Jockey Club Integrated Services Centre, also attended the highlight event. As a trained Dementia Friends Ambassador, he is planning to organise Dementia Friends Information Sessions to encourage young people to learn more about the needs of elderly people with dementia and register as Dementia Friends.

Initial achievements of the Dementia Friendly Community Campaign were showcased at today's highlight event. So far, a number of territory-wide and district-level talks and activities have been organised, and a set of television and radio Announcements in the Public Interest as well as a thematic webpage have been launched. A television docudrama series jointly produced by the SWD and Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) will be broadcast on Sundays for eight consecutive weeks at 8.30pm on the RTHK TV 31 and 31A channels from tomorrow (January 27). The series will also be rerun on Wednesdays at 6pm on TVB Jade starting from January 30.

The 49 property management organisations participating in the Support for Carers Project were commended at the event today (see attachment for the list of organisations). It was also noted that artiste Hacken Lee would render his full support to the Dementia Friendly Community Campaign.



