

Government strives to build dementia friendly community (with photos)

The Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, said today (August 24) at the "CareNin" movie screening and sharing session of the Dementia Friendly Community Campaign organised by the Social Welfare Department (SWD) that the Government is highly concerned about elderly persons with dementia and their carers' needs. He called on different sectors in society to work together with the Government to build a dementia friendly community.

Dr Law added that in 2018-19, the Government has allocated about \$264 million as recurrent resources to strengthen community care and support services for elderly persons with dementia and their carers. Measures include additional recurrent provision to elderly community care and support services units for strengthening manpower and staff training, as well as regularisation of the Dementia Community Support Scheme.

The SWD also launched the three-year Campaign in September last year. The Campaign comprises a set of television and radio Announcements in the Public Interest, a thematic webpage, a television docudrama jointly produced by the SWD and Radio Television Hong Kong, a number of district-level talks and activities organised by district social welfare offices, and commissioning the Hong Kong Alzheimer's Disease Association (HKADA) to assist in organising Dementia Friends information sessions, to enhance public understanding of dementia and to show care and take action to support people with dementia and their carers.

At present, more than 11 000 people have attended the information sessions and registered as internationally recognised Dementia Friends, far exceeding the original three-year target of 10 000, which reflects the public's concern and support. Speaking at the event as Dementia Friends, the Director of Social Welfare, Ms Carol Yip, appealed to all for continuous support to elderly persons with dementia and their carers. The Chairman of the Executive Committee of the HKADA, Dr David Dai, deepened people's understanding about the needs of people with dementia in his discussion.

"CareNin", the Japanese movie shown in today's event, was adapted from a true story and vividly depicts a 21-year-old care worker's reflections gained from looking after an elderly lady with dementia in a small residential care facility. Through trial and error, the young care worker gradually developed insight about dementia.

Mr Matthew Shum, the founder of the Illuminant, a social enterprise that co-organised today's event, spoke on his experience in taking care of elderly persons with dementia. Mr Shum studied a masters degree in elderly welfare in Japan and worked at a residential care home for the elderly there. Through training and public education, he hoped to cultivate a new culture on elderly

care and to promote autonomy as well as dignity for the elderly.

One of the audience members today was Mr Liu Man-him, who became a health worker in a residential care home after he completed the training offered by the Navigation Scheme for Young Persons in Care Services of the SWD. He noted that he met many elderly people with dementia there and was therefore eager to gain more relevant knowledge. He also encouraged young people to join care services of the welfare sector.

Ms Tsang Yuk-sau, a service recipient of the Dementia Community Support Scheme provided at a District Elderly Community Centre, also discussed her experience in taking care of her husband and pointed out that elderly persons with dementia and their carers face numerous challenges. She expressed the hope that the public would have more understanding of their needs and provide support.

