

Dad and daughter go into nursing together

He was a lecturer, she was inspired by nurses who helped her through cancer

CHEOW SUE-ANN

He might be 49, but Mr Joshua Liew, a former lecturer at Temasek Polytechnic's Centre for Character and Leadership Education, along with his 17-year-old daughter Ophelia Liew, have just entered their first year of nursing school.

While helping his daughter research her career options in nursing, he stumbled upon a professional conversion course for himself and decided to take up nursing to live out a passion he always had.

Mr Liew is one of about 1,300 mid-career locals who have participated in the nursing professional conversion programmes (PCP), including the PCP for registered nurses (degree), PCP for registered nurses (diploma) and PCP for enrolled nurses, to make a switch into nursing since 2003.

Mr Liew is currently enrolled in the PCP for registered nurses (degree) at the National University of Singapore's Alice Lee Centre for Nursing Studies, while Ophelia is doing a diploma in nursing at Ngee Ann Polytechnic.

The Liew's passion for nursing was borne in part out of the family's own experience with dedicated nurses.

Ophelia told The New Paper that when she was diagnosed with childhood acute lymphoblastic leukaemia, a type of



Mr Joshua Liew and his daughter Ophelia.
PHOTO: NUS

cancer, at the age of five, the patience and care shown by the nurses who cared for her inspired her.

She recalled one nurse, whom she referred to as Nurse Cing, who would take time to distract and comfort her when she was afraid – especially whenever she had to face needles.

Mr Liew said that the period, which was trying for the family, was made easier by nurses who cared tirelessly, not just for his daughter, but for him as well.

He said: "After hours of being by her bed, when the nurses came by and asked if they could get me anything, with their cheery disposition, it made even me – as tired as I was – feel cheered up."

Mr Liew, who has another daughter, 14, added that the medical profession was some-

thing he had always been interested in.

He said: "At first, I was worried. It's a big change, especially financially. As a lecturer, I was earning a comfortable amount, and I was worried about how my family would feel about it."

"While we were concerned at first, they supported me and told me to go for it."

He said whenever the work gets difficult, he reminds himself that nurses fulfil an important role in caring for patients.

Mr Liew said: "I ask myself, if not us then who (will care for the patients)?"

Ophelia added: "I want to be able to give back to the nurses who helped me."

"When I went through chemo and lost all my hair, people at school would bully me, snatch my hat off and laugh at me. I became very self-conscious and afraid."

"The nurses gave me hope, and I want to be able to give hope to other patients."

Mr Liew added that now that they are studying the same field, it makes for additional bonding time.

He said: "We can study together, share notes, and she even corrects me sometimes."

Applications for the PCP for registered nurses (degree) September 2020 intake are open till the end of the month.

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