



HONG LEONG
FINANCE

Press Release

Hong Leong Finance Is A Front-Runner In Being Dementia-Friendly

Singapore, 25 October 2016 – Singapore’s largest finance company, Hong Leong Finance (HLF) is upping the ante in being more dementia-friendly. For the first time on a large scale, about 200 HLF employees have enrolled in a dementia-awareness training programme by Forget Us Not (FUN), a joint initiative by Lien Foundation and Khoo Teck Puat Hospital. The training sessions aim to provide staff with better understanding of dementia, and equip them with the knowledge and skills to recognise and act on its signs and symptoms at work and in the community.

“Every HLF employee plays a social role in helping to spot tell-tale signs. The trust and relationship that we have with our customers is one that is built for over 50 years; it is our commitment and civic responsibility to ensure that we look out for them and maintain their trust. The training equips our branch staff with the knowledge and skills to recognise and appropriately engage with customers who display signs of dementia,” said Mr Ang Tang Chor, President of Hong Leong Finance.

Dementia causes progressive intellectual decline leading to increasing difficulties in coping with everyday activities. It is not part of normal aging and affects mainly seniors above 60 years old. According to figures by the Health Ministry, Singapore’s aging population has one in every 10 persons aged 60 years and older suffering from dementia, and one in every 2 persons aged 85 years with dementia. This means more than 45,000 people in Singapore’s elderly community are currently living with dementia.

HLF is committed to understand and respond to the needs of customers living with dementia so that they can still access financial services safely and receive the necessary help to remain independent for as long as possible.

According to FUN, HLF is the first financial institution in Singapore to put all their branch frontline staff through the programme.

“Responding to people with dementia can be challenging as they have difficulties with memory, reasoning and judgement. Reports of sufferers being suspicious of and mistrustful towards their caregivers on money matters are not uncommon,” said Associate Professor Philip Yap, Clinical Director of the Geriatric Centre of Khoo Teck Puat Hospital at one of the training sessions. “We are appreciative of Hong Leong Finance, which has spent decades in cultivating relationships and building trust with their customers, for joining the cause in building a dementia friendly environment.”

Professor Yap, who also spearheads the FUN campaign on dementia awareness, shared the example of how HLF went the extra mile to assist a customer with dementia at the training. A branch manager who knew a customer well, observed frequent and unusual withdrawals of substantial amounts that were not consistent with the customer’s transaction history. To ensure the safety of the customer’s finances, the manager visited the customer at home to learn more about the situation and better manage the case.

“This is the kind of *gotong royong* (or community) spirit that we hope to foster with FUN. Dementia sufferers should be included and supported so they can live in their cherished communities for as long as possible,” continued Professor Yap.

HLF leads in making a commitment to ensure their banking halls will always be dementia friendly. Its trainers will be participating in the Train-the-Trainer Programme that FUN will be initiating. With their own Dementia Awareness Trainers, HLF’s new frontline staff will undergo Dementia Awareness Training Course as a part of their compulsory training curriculum.

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About Hong Leong Finance

Hong Leong Finance, seen as the SME Specialist, is Singapore’s largest finance company with 28 branches island-wide with shareholders’ funds at S\$1.69 billion, S\$11.44 billion in deposits and S\$10.091 billion in loans, advances and receivables as at 31 December 2015. It has won the “ASEAN Finance Company of the Year” three straight years since 2014 at the Asian Banking & Finance Review Retail Banking Awards.