



# THE ODYSSEY

17TH VOLUME - APRIL 2024



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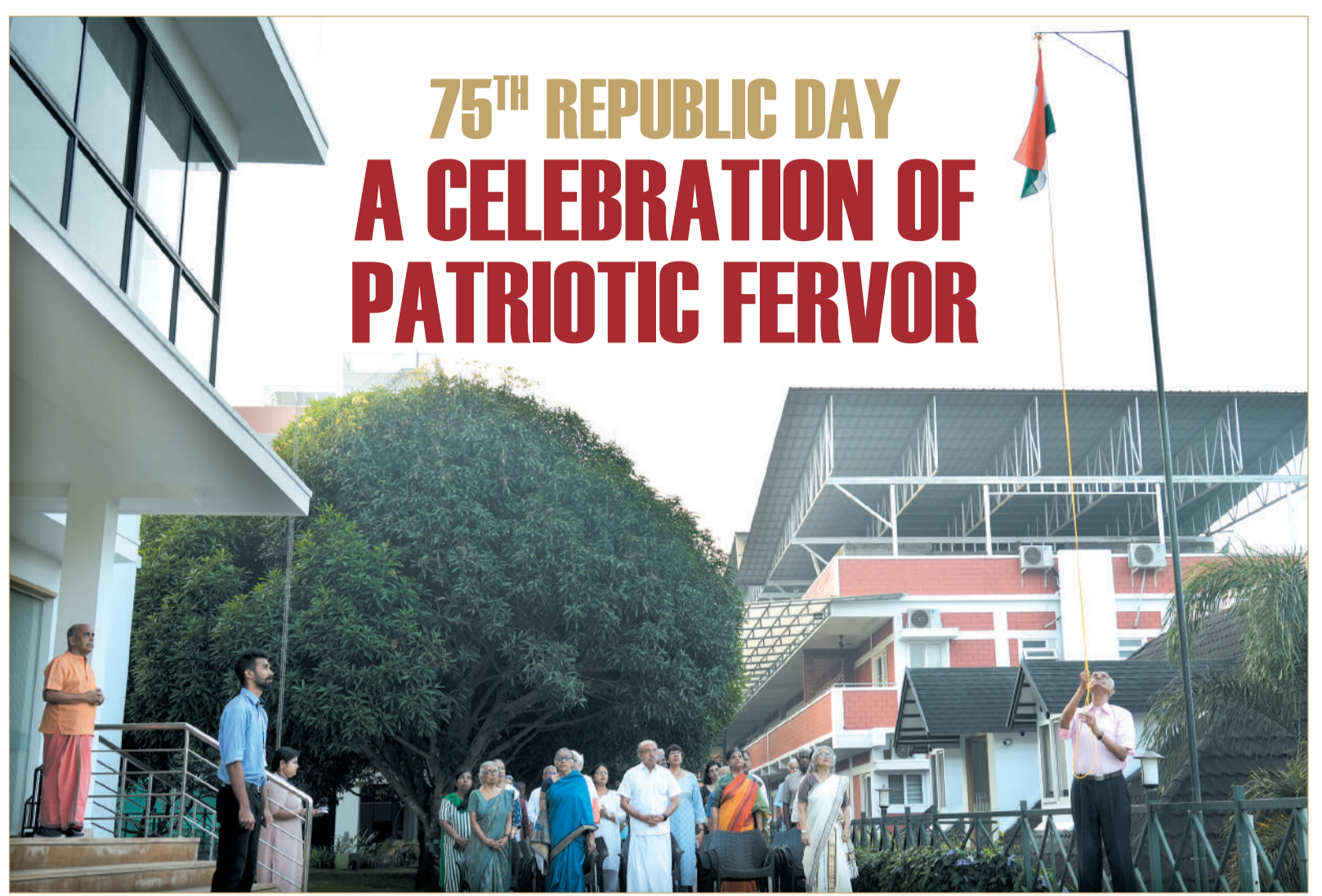
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The vibrant hues of the national flag danced in the wind as Dr. V. B. Kartha ceremoniously unfurled it, marking the commencement of a memorable Independence Day celebration.

Dr. Lakshmi Kantham then led the pledge, with each word resonating with unwavering dedication to the nation. Residents and staff members who gathered under the open sky was inspired by Benjamin Uncle's stirring words that ignited pride and unity.

The atmosphere was further enriched by a soulful rendition of a patriotic song by Sunitha Aunty, Lizy Aunty,



# 75<sup>TH</sup> REPUBLIC DAY A CELEBRATION OF PATRIOTIC FERVOR



Lalitha Aunty, Gladys Aunty, Susan Aunty, and the entire team. Their voices, filled with passion and love for the country, echoed across the gathering. The celebration was made sweeter

with delectable cookies, pleasing the taste buds of all. The highlight of the culinary delights was the tricolor steam cake (putt), a masterpiece from our talented F&B team, symbolizing

unity in diversity. This Independence Day celebration was not just an event; it was a heartfelt tribute to our forefathers' sacrifices and a pledge for a brighter, united future. ■



A Book Review by Nirmala Pothan

## Love is Everything

ലവ് ഈ സമഗ്രതയുടെ അടിസ്ഥാനമാണ്. ഇത് ഞങ്ങളുടെ മനസ്സിൽ ഉയർന്നുവന്ന ചോദ്യം ഇതാണ്: എന്താണ് യഥാർത്ഥ സ്നേഹം? പുസ്തക രചയിതാവ് പറയുന്ന പോലെ നമ്മുടെ ചുറ്റു

സ്നേഹത്തിന് ഈ പുസ്തക രചയിതാവ് കൊടുത്തിരിക്കുന്ന അർത്ഥം നമ്മുടെ ചുറ്റിലും നമ്മളിലൂടെയും സംഭവിക്കുന്നതെല്ലാം സ്നേഹത്തിന്റെ മാന്ത്രിക ശക്തിയിലൂടെ മഹനീയമാവുകയും അതിന്റെ തുവൽ സ്വർഗം നമ്മെ കുളിരണിയിക്കുകയും ചെയ്താൽ അത് സ്നേഹമായി-എന്നാണ്.

ഇത് വായിച്ചപ്പോൾ എന്റെ മനസ്സിൽ ഉയർന്നുവന്ന ചോദ്യം ഇതാണ്: എന്താണ് യഥാർത്ഥ സ്നേഹം? പുസ്തക രചയിതാവ് പറയുന്ന പോലെ നമ്മുടെ ചുറ്റു

ലും നമ്മളിലൂടെയും സംഭവിക്കുന്നതെല്ലാം സ്നേഹത്തിന്റെ മാന്ത്രിക ശക്തിയിലൂടെ മഹനീയമാവുകയും അതിന്റെ തുവൽ സ്വർഗം നമ്മെ കുളിരണിയിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുമ്പോൾ മാത്രം സംഭവിക്കുന്ന ഒരു പ്രതിഭാസമാണോ യഥാർത്ഥ സ്നേഹം? വേദനിക്കുന്നവന്റെ കണ്ണീർ തുടയ്ക്കാനും അവന്റെ വേദനയ്ക്ക് ആശ്വാസം പകരാനും സാധിച്ചാൽ അത് സ്നേഹമായി, കരയുന്നവന്റെ കൂടെ കരയാനും അവന്റെ വേദനയ്ക്ക് ആശ്വാസം പകരാനും കൂടി സാധിച്ചാൽ അത് ദൈവം നമ്മിൽ നിന്ന് ആഗ്രഹിക്കുന്ന യഥാർത്ഥ സ്നേഹമായി.

കരയുന്നവന്റെ കൂടെ കരയുകയും, വിഷമിക്കുന്നവന്റെ കൂടെ വിഷമിക്കുകയും, അവന്റെ കണ്ണീരിന്റെയും, വിഷിപ്പൊട്ടലുകളുടെയും ഭാരം കുറയ്ക്കാൻ, സ്നേഹപൂർവ്വം ഒരു വിരൽ നീട്ടി കൊടുക്കുകയും ചെയ്താൽ അത് സ്നേഹമായി.

"Love is everything & love everything" എന്ന് പറഞ്ഞു കൊണ്ട് എന്റെ വാക്കുകൾ ചുരുക്കുന്നു. ■



# VALENTINE'S EVE

## A FUN CELEBRATION OF LOVE



Valentine's Day at Bless Retirement Living was a delightful mix of love and laughter! Residents came together on the day of love at our gazebo for an evening filled with music, photos, and games.

The highlight of the evening was the Valentine themed photo booth, where residents and staff mingled and captured beautiful moments together. Laughter echoed through the air as everyone posed for memorable snapshots.

Adding a competitive edge to the festivities, two exciting competitions were organized. The "Heart Maker" competition challenged residents to solve a heart puzzle in just three minutes, testing their skills and quick thinking. Congratulations to Mrs. Annie Mathew and Mrs. Sunitha Lazar for triumphing in this chal-

lenge and earning the coveted title of Heart Maker!

Meanwhile, the "Heart Breaker" competition brought out the competitive spirit as residents aimed darts to burst balloons. Each pop was met with cheers and applause, turning everyone into delightful Heart Breakers for the evening.

The atmosphere was electric, filled with the warmth of camaraderie and love. It was truly a magical evening as residents shared laughter, competed in friendly games, and celebrated the spirit of Valentine's Day. ■



# A SYMPHONY OF NOSTALGIA

Bless Retirement Living recently hosted a special symphony session, inviting residents to gather and reminisce about their radio experiences while indulging in their favorite tunes to celebrate World Radio day.

The Symphony, a beloved weekly activity among residents, saw them eagerly flocking to relive the significant role that radio played in shaping their love for music. The session com-

menced with residents settling in to watch a documentary detailing the intriguing origins of radio.

This informative segment was followed by a heartwarming exchange of memories



as residents shared their personal stories about their relationship with the radio.

Dr. Venugopal fondly recalled waking up to the nostalgic theme music of Akashvani FM, evoking a wave of nostalgia among the listeners. Dr. Jaya Radhakrishnan transported everyone back in time with her vivid recollections of beloved

radio hosts and programs that left an indelible mark on their lives.

Mrs. Sita, with a smile of reminiscence, shared her fond memories of the radio and its captivating programs. Mr. George Kadankavil and Mr. Gopinath shed light on the crucial role radios played in the lives of Indian soldiers, underlining its significance beyond entertainment.

The session also delved into the realm of radio plays and theatrical songs, with Mr. Pailo Paul passionately discussing the timeless creations by K. S. George. It was a day filled with nostalgia, as residents shared their treasured memories and immersed themselves in the enchanting melodies of yesteryears. ■

## MASTERS OF MALAYALAM

In a vibrant celebration of World Mother Language Day, Bless Retirement Living hosted an exhilarating Brain Gym event that had everyone's linguistic skills put to the test! The event was a colorful homage to the richness of Malayalam, the mother tongue of Keralites.

Residents eagerly delved into the festivities, kicking off with a spirited Malayalam language quiz. Minds were buzzing as questions about the language's history, literature, and cultural nuances sparked lively discussions and friendly competition.

Next up were the tongue twisters, where nimble tongues twisted and twirled around tricky phrases in a bid for linguistic mastery. Laughter filled the air as participants valiantly attempted to navigate through the challenging phrases with finesse.

However, the pinnacle of the event was the 'Speak Only Malayalam' competition, where participants embraced the language wholeheartedly. Conversations flowed, stories were shared,



and bonds were forged as residents and staff immersed themselves in the beauty of their mother tongue. World Mother Language Day at Bless was indeed a testament to the power of

language in fostering unity and preserving heritage. It was a joyous occasion where the beauty of Malayalam was honored and cherished by our residents. ■



# WORLD CANCER DAY



**WORLD CANCER DAY**  
4 FEBRUARY

In a collaborative effort with representatives from Aster Medcity, Bless Retirement Living recently marked World Cancer Day with a series of informative and proactive events. Dr. Fahad Bin Abdul Majeed, a distinguished surgical oncologist renowned for his expertise in minimally invasive cancer surgeries,

including Robotic and Laparoscopic procedures, led a compelling session on cancer awareness. The informative session served as a beacon of knowledge, enlightening attendees about the various aspects of cancer, its prevention, early detection, and available treatment options. Dr. Fahad's expertise



shone through as he shared valuable insights and answered queries, empowering the audience with crucial information to combat this disease. The collaborative efforts of Bless Retirement Living and Aster Medcity on World Cancer Day not only raised awareness about this prevalent disease but also highlighted the significance of regular screenings and informed healthcare decisions. It was a day dedicated to empowerment, education, and a collective commitment to fighting cancer and promoting overall well-being within the community. ■



**kma** KERALA  
MANAGEMENT  
ASSOCIATION  
FOUNDED IN 1957 SPEARHEADING MANAGEMENT MOVEMENT

## KMA CONVENTION

The 41st Annual Management Convention's International Edition, hosted by KMA on January 18th and 19th, 2024, at The Grand Hyatt Kochi Bolgatty, Kerala, was a remarkable experience for the delegates from Bless Retirement Living.

Themed "Beyond Borders: Fostering Management Excellence," the convention resonated with insightful perspectives shared by luminaries such as Mr. Deepak Parekh and Dr. Shashi Tharoor.

The gathering was graced with the presence of Convention Chairman Bibu Punnooran, KMA President A. Balakrishnan, Honorary Secretary Dileep Narayanan, and Convention Co-Chair Jibu Paul, whose exceptional leadership was instrumental in the event's success.

The 11-member delegate group from Bless Retirement Living, comprising rep-



representatives from various departments and management members, had an enriching and memorable experience.

Over the course of two days, the convention featured engaging panels and discussions. Mr. Madhu S Nair, Chairman & Managing Director of Cochin Shipyard Ltd, shared the shipyard's remarkable success story, offering inspiring insights and anecdotes of hard work.

A special highlight of the event was Mr. Blessy, Renowned Film Director, sharing captivating behind-the-scenes experiences while shooting "The GOAT Life" in Jordan. The gathering of minds was truly unforgettable!

Hats off to KMA for organizing such an outstanding event that brought together thought leaders, industry experts, and enthusiastic participants from various sectors. ■



"Staff Day 2024" commenced with an explosion of cultural vibrancy and sporting fervor at Bless Retirement Living!



# PRATIBIMB 2024 CELEBRATION OF CHAMPIONS

Pratibimb 2024 commenced with an explosion of cultural vibrancy and sporting fervor at Bless Retirement Living! The festivities kicked off with a grand inauguration ceremony, led by our Managing Director, Mr. Gijo Antony, who proudly raised the Pratibimb flag.

The excitement mounted as Ms. Jisna John, last year's victorious Green House captain, unveiled the gleaming Pratibimb championship trophy before the gathered houses and our es-

teemed residents.

The energy of Day 1 was palpable as cricket teams clashed in exhilarating matches, culminating in triumphant victories for the Yellow and Green Houses amidst thunderous cheers and applause.

Day 2 unfolded with a whirlwind of thrilling tournaments in carroms, dodgeball, and badminton, keeping the competitive spirit soaring high. The Green team showcased their prowess,

dominating the scoreboard, with the Yellow, Blue, and Red Houses in hot pursuit!

As the sun set on Pratibimb, the celebrations continued with a delightful blend of cultural performances and outdoor activities. The morning session was a dazzling display of talent, with teams mesmerizing the audience with group dances, comedy skits, and enchanting fancy dress contests. This session was hosted by K. T. Thomas Uncle. The Green House maintained





their lead, captivating the crowd with their performances.

The evening session, guided by our beloved host George Uncle, featured an array of thrilling games including musical chairs, threading the needle, and the classic lemon and spoon race. Despite Green's persistent dominance, Team Yellow remained tenacious, keeping the competition fierce and spirits high.

The pinnacle of the event was the epic Tug of War showdown, a gripping battle of strength and strategy. In a stunning upset, Team Yellow emerged victorious, ending Green's unbeaten streak in Pratibimb and seizing the coveted trophy in a blaze of glory!

Our residents acted as our guides, mentors, and referees during this 3 day event making these moments more unforgettable. Congratulations to Team Yellow for their outstanding performance and well-deserved victory in Pratibimb 2024. This year's event truly showcased the competitive spirit, camaraderie, and unity among the Bless staff. A heartfelt thanks to our dedicated residents and manage-

ment for their unwavering support in making Pratibimb 2024 an unforgettable celebration of sportsmanship and unity. ■





## REVERSE BRAIN GYM

Dr. Lakshmi Kantham, our amazing resident, turned the tables with a surprise General Knowledge test for our Relations department team, injecting a delightful dose of nostalgia into their day.

The twist? The team, usually orchestrating daily activities for residents, found themselves on the other side of the test!

With the fantastic support of Dr. Gita Devi and Dr. Geetha M. K., Lakshmi aunty led the charge, and our team mates embraced the challenge, reminiscing about their school and college days.

A round of applause for the brilliant minds of Mr. Bibin Benny and Ms. Kavya Sunil, who claimed victory with their impressive knowledge. Ms. Angel Maria secured the second spot, and cheers to Mrs. Devika S. Nair for bagging the third prize. ■



## THE RIDDLE RUMBLE

Our residents love a good riddle, so we organized a Malayalam riddle competition. They were divided into a group of three and competed with each other to prove their riddle prowess. Their competitive spirit was in full display as hands were quickly raised and answers were shouted even before the questions were completed. ■

## EFFORTLESS CYCLING

Bless organized a product display of VAAN premium electric cycles. Our residents had a fun evening riding our walkway on the cycles and reminiscing about their days of youth were they raced each other on cycles. ■



## EMPLOYEE EXCELLENCE AWARD

(December 2023 & January 2024)

| Name of the Award          | Name of the Recipient |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Maintenance Marvel         | Asim K. A.            |
| Housekeeping/ laundry hero | Simi Manoj            |
| F&B Champion               | Ansiya P A            |
| Guest Relations Champion   | Megha Menon           |
| Apex Achievers Award       | Niya Thomas           |
| Resident relation champion | Bibin Benny           |





# EMPOWERMENT AND EDUCATION THROUGH SANTI BHAVAN

"Mrs. Ajitha from the Vazhakulam division and Mrs. Shyla from the Choornikkara division of the esteemed Kerala Literacy Mission recently visited Santi Bhavan.

Their interaction with the participants of Santi Bhavan was inspiring! The participants, currently mastering Malayalam letters and aiming to tackle English next, found the visit incredibly enlightening. Mrs. Ajitha and Mrs. Shyla shared valuable insights about the courses offered, their durations, and the certificates available upon completion.

The session was lively and interactive, with participants asking insightful questions. By the end, everyone left with a clear understanding of the diverse programs offered by the Kerala Literacy Mission.

This visit was not only informative but also



deeply motivating for the participants. It served as a beacon of hope, inspiring them to embark

on their educational journeys with renewed enthusiasm.

## CANCER AWARENESS WITH SANTI BHAVAN



Santi Bhavan recently collaborated with the esteemed medical team from Aster Medicity for a powerful event focused on cancer awareness and breast cancer screening for local residents and participants of Santi Bhavan.

Led by the esteemed Dr. Mishal Abdul Rahim, the team included Senior Nurse Anitta, Psychologist Aparna, and dedicated volunteers who brought their expertise and compassion to the event.

Dr. Mishal Abdul Rahim and Senior Nurse Anitta conducted the

screening procedures with meticulous care and professionalism.

The event was a resounding success, drawing participation from local residents, Santi Bhavan members, and ward members alike.

Together, we are making strides in spreading awareness and empowering health within our community.

Our heartfelt gratitude goes out to all who contributed to this meaningful event, as we continue our journey towards a healthier and more informed future.



Dr. A. V. Ramanathan



## സഖിയോട്

പോകുന്നു, പോകുന്നു എന്നു പറഞ്ഞു നീ പോയില്ലേ! എന്നാലും കാത്തിരുന്നു.

പാപിയാമെന്നെ പിരിഞ്ഞു നീ ചെന്നതാൽ സ്വർഗ്ഗ കവാടം തുറന്നോ?

ഇക്കടൽ താണ്ടി ഞാനെക്കരെ ചെന്നിട്ട ചക്രവാളത്തെ കടന്ന്, അപ്സര കന്യകൾ ഓടി വിളയാടും പൊയ്കയിൽ നിന്നെ ഞാൻ തേടും.

'പോരിക' എന്നതാ കുവി വിളിക്കുന്നു ജന്മാന്തരത്തിൽ ഖഗങ്ങൾ.

അങ്ങത്തി നിന്നോട് കൈകോർത്തു നില്ക്കുവാൻ ആശിച്ച ഞാനിതാ, നോക്കൂ! കർമ്മത്തിൻ ബന്ധങ്ങൾ അറ്റുപോകുവരെ ഒന്നിച്ചു മേലോട്ടുയരാം

ദർശോമയമായ കൈവലു വേദിയിൽ ആത്മാവിൽ ഒന്നായ് ലയിക്കാം.





# THE ART OF LOVE

## A TALE OF PAUL AND MALLIKA

By Mrs. Mallika Paul Chirayath

The first time I met Paul Chirayath was arranged by our families with the intention of marriage. It was a moment of instant connection, a love at first sight. We found an immediate liking for each other, and as we spoke, I knew in my heart that Paulettan was the man meant for me. When my father later asked if I wished to spend my life with him, my response was an immediate and resounding yes.

Thus began the love story that would shape my life. We spent years together, supporting and loving each other. Paulettan was a man of few words, reserved and to the point, while I was the opposite - talkative and emotional. I loved cracking jokes with him to just see him smile. Everyone in my family adored him; my sisters often remarked that they wished to marry someone like Paulettan.

He possessed every quality one could desire in a partner - supportive, caring, and always by my side. Paulettan stood by me throughout my artistic journey, encouraging my passion for painting. When I expressed a desire to learn sugar craft, he wholeheartedly supported my decision to study abroad.

Paulettan possessed a wide array of interests, finding joy in painting, photography, electronics, and immersing himself in music. Through his career, he was fortunate to collaborate with numerous legends of the film industry, including the unforgettable experience of recording the legendary Muhammad Rafi. His friends from the industry still keeps in contact with me, remarking on what an excellent guy he was. His ventures took us across various parts of India, and later to Muscat and Dubai. Upon retirement, we moved to the USA to be closer to our children.

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very very much, shocking me further with his usage of two verys. He enjoyed and looked forward to engaging conversations with Mr. Gijo Antony, the MD of Bless, who would visit him and chat about anything and everything. I found solace and comraderies with my fellow residents at Bless and Mrs. Lija Gijo, ED of Bless.

Sadly, towards the end of July last year, Paulettan fell severely ill and eventually passed away. His loss left me devastated and lonely. Thankfully, I found solace and support from my children, our family, and Bless. They took care of everything, easing my burdens during that difficult time.



However, as he entered his seventies, Paulettan's health began to decline. He was diagnosed as a Chronic Kidney Patient, and his battles with illness led us to Bless Retirement Living. He still remained supportive, particularly when I took over the art classes for our fellow residents. Yet, the toll of his health and medications altered his once calm demeanor into occasional bouts of anger. To all who met him at his worst, it was not who he was and he couldn't help it, his emotions were altered by his failing health and medications.

During his time at Bless, which spanned 2.5 years, he often remarked that he liked this place

Following his passing, I spent six months in the USA with my sons, slowly coming to terms with his absence. There are moments when I dearly miss him; his presence always brought me happiness and unwavering support. Our mutual love for art was what bonded us together, sharing the same passion, we lived harmoniously with our priceless gems- our children!

Paulettan was a great dreamer and most of his dreams were fulfilled! His mother was his true inspiration and he was my inspiration which placed me what I am in society. If given another chance at life, I can only wish to be married to Paulettan once again. ■