

Caring for mum with dementia drove entrepreneur to raise funds for the cause

Having cared daily for her mother who had dementia until her death in 2019, entrepreneur Esther Ho understands the difficulties and challenges faced by caregivers like her.

"It took a lot of effort, patience and love for the family to look after her. My mother had memory loss and we used old photos to jog her memory. There was a lot of communication. I challenged her by talking... about things that I knew would confuse her," said Ms Ho, 58, eyes brimming with tears.

After her mother died, Ms Ho, who founded fine jewellery boutique MUS Zenith Affair (MUS.za) in 2005, wanted to do something meaningful in her memory. It was then that she discovered Dementia Singapore.

"Seeing the work it does for both the elderly living with dementia and their caregivers, I decided to help raise funds for the organisation," she said.

Even when the Covid-19 pandemic hit in 2020, Ms Ho did not hesitate in kick-starting MUS.za's first fund-raising initiative for Dementia Singapore. MUS.za raised \$100,000 that year and \$133,000 in 2021.

In 2022, through a charity auction gala dinner, the kitty grew to \$210,000. MUS.za also continued to raise funds for Dementia Singapore by donating proceeds from



Ms Esther Ho has raised several hundred thousand dollars for Dementia Singapore through her fine jewellery boutique MUS Zenith Affair (MUS.za). For her efforts, MUS.za was presented with the Agency for Integrated Care Friends of Community Care Award on Monday. ST PHOTO: KEVIN LIM

all storewide sales in November that year.

For her efforts, MUS.za was presented with the Agency for Integrated Care (AIC) Friends of Community Care (FOCC) Award at AIC's Community Care Work Plan Seminar, held at Sands Expo and Convention Centre on Monday.

Health Minister Ong Ye Kung presented the awards to 13 recipients, including CapitaLand Hope Foundation (CHF) and Deutsche Bank.

CHF committed more than \$5 million to support seniors to age in place in the community through various initiatives, bene-

fitting more than 80,000 seniors in Singapore. It contributed \$400,000 to build Touchpoint@AMK 433, an Active Ageing Centre by Touch Community Services.

Deutsche Bank contributed cash and in-kind donations, and gave close to 400 volunteering

hours to HCA Hospice since 2020.

The FOCC Awards, introduced by AIC in 2020, recognise the contribution of partners outside the community care sector for their steadfast support to enable seniors to live well and age gracefully.

Judith Tan