

Kidney Care cookbook with healthy recipes

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Fun Walk being held today

To commemorate this year's annual World Kidney Day, a fully illustrated recipe book comprising a number of easy-to-prepare traditional recipes aimed primarily for patients with kidney disease was recently launched at the Renal Unit within Mater Dei hospital.

The publication includes a number of recipes by culinary enthusiast and kidney donor James Muscat, and also sees the involvement of dietician Dr Mario Caruana. This recipe book is an initiative funded by Vivian Corporation, on behalf of Shire, one of the official sponsors of World Kidney Day worldwide.

Also present during the launch were Dr Charmaine Gauci, director of Health Promotion Unit, Nursing officer Paul Calleja, consultant Nephrologist Dr Emanuel Farrugia and dietician Dr Mario Caruana.

"Vivian Corporation, through its local representation of Shire, is every year thoroughly involved in promoting World Kidney Day and to create awareness on kidney disease, encourage preventative behaviour and support local NGOs and Patient Support Groups," explained Hannah Cremona, Marketing manager at Vivian Corporation.

For the last four years, Vivian Corporation commemorated World Kidney Day with local activities including a Fun Walk, which this year is being held today. Besides the Fun Walk, Vivian Corporation is also helping the patients directly in their daily support programme. The cookbook contains recipes suitable not only for patients with kidney disease but also for transplantees with nutritional guidelines provided by Dr Caruana for patients and carers to consider and adapt according to the individual dietary requirements.

"Voluntary donations will also be collected for the Transplant Support Group. We also have the pleasure to announce that this important initiative has been also endorsed by the Health Promotion Unit."

The 2012 World Kidney Day Campaign is focusing on the positive outcome of kidney transplantation and the life-saving aspect of organ donation. In fact, the chosen slogan for this year's campaign is Donate – Kidneys for Life – Receive and is being organised in collaboration with the Transplant Support Group (TSG) who will also be promoting membership among all those who would like to register as donors.

TSG (Malta) was established in 2000 by a group of organ recipients on the initiative of Alfred Debattista, who, only a few months earlier was transplanted with the heart of a young Gozitan donor. One of the primary objectives of this philanthropic NGO is to offer support to organ transplantees and also to patients awaiting a transplant. TSG also keeps in touch with the families of donors and provides assistance during times of illness, recovery or bereavement.

Kidney disease affects around 600 million people worldwide, approximately one in 10 people. Kidney diseases are silent killers. The patients may have no symptoms until they reach kidney failure. It is then too late for treatment and the only way to stay alive is lifetime dialysis or transplantation, for the lucky few who manage to find a donor.

World Kidney Day is also a good opportunity to remind governments that the pandemic weighs heavily on all countries' healthcare budgets and that it is crucial to take action to facilitate early detection and encourage healthy lifestyles. Therefore, on World Kidney Day, thousands of organisers across the globe will create noise to call for the high risk population to get tested, disclaiming to all that, if detected early, through an inexpensive urine test, the patient can be treated with affordable medicine and avoid dialysis.

The annual World Kidney Day Fun Walk organised by Vivian Corporation, on behalf of Shire, one of the proud sponsors of World Kidney Day, is being held today at 10am, departing from Pjazza Tigné at The Point and finishing in St George's Square in Valletta.

The publication is available from the Health Promotion Unit, the Renal Unit and the Dietician Services Unit within Mater Dei hospital, from the Transplant Support Group and from Vivian Corporation's offices in Msida.