

# my experience as an international fellow at The Heart Institute, NUH

*Dr Hazel P. Penafiel, MD Honorary Fellow  
in Echocardiography, THI @ NUH*

**Sometimes we forget how we got to where we are** and the choices we made to get there. I can confidently state that my career path was placed in the right direction when I met Dr Tan Huay Cheem who visited our hospital some two years back. Summoning enough courage to approach him, I asked if I could apply for a fellowship in echocardiography at NUH. He gave me his calling card and the rest is history.

## **STRONG CLINICAL AND RESEARCH TRADITION**

Today as I ponder about the year that was, I cannot help but feel blessed for having had the opportunity to work with such wonderful people here in Singapore. I have to admit that I was initially half-hearted when I left for Singapore, mainly because I was leaving my little baby behind. The first few months were difficult as I tried to battle homesickness and adjust to my new workplace. Without the guidance of everybody, I probably would not have lasted this long. I came here with the expectation of being able to hone my skills in the performance and interpretation of echocardiography and its various techniques. Instead I got so much more! I was exposed to an extensive variety of cases and was meticulously coached on the interpretation of echocardiograms. I was also instructed on research methodology and was amazed at the wealth of data that could be used for this purpose, given the readily accessible images from the Xclera digital archive and the efficiency of the 4D database. My knowledge of general Cardiology has likewise been nurtured by the weekly talks that deal with complicated cases, updates and controversies in the different subspecialties of Cardiology. Indeed, The Heart Institute can boast of having state-of-the-art diagnostic and therapeutic facilities complemented by competent medical staff with a strong clinical and research tradition.



## **THANK YOU TO ALL**

I have truly enjoyed working here and appreciate the support provided to me during my tenure with the department. Everyone has been so helpful and hospitable, from the consultants, registrars and all the staff of THI especially the people in the Cardiac Centre. Thank you for the opportunities for professional and personal development that you have given me. Thank you for making me feel like family. You are such good people – with good hearts, good minds and good souls.

To my mentors, especially Dr Yeo Tiong Cheng, Associate Professor Ling Lieng Hsi, Dr Chai Ping and Dr James Yip – thank you for sharing your knowledge and wisdom. You have taught by example and guided me with patience. Your time, effort and devotion to mentoring me have made such a difference in my life.

I will always cherish the pleasant memories I have of NUH and its beautiful people. May God bless all of you and always keep you safe. I look forward to the day when our paths will cross again.

