

She gets her wish at 114 – a durian treat

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If you were 114 years old, what would you want if you were asked to make a wish?

Madam Lau Pay, who is that age, wanted a durian treat.

So, the resident of Villa Francis Home for the Aged was given just that yesterday, when the Tan Chin Tuan Foundation launched its Project Wish 100.

Altogether, the foundation will fulfil the wishes of 19 centenarians in seven homes for the elderly, including the Society for the Aged Sick and Ju Eng Home for Senior Citizens, in coming weeks.

Madam Lau is the oldest of the 19.

This year is the 100th anniversary of the birth of Tan Chin Tuan, the former chairman of OCBC Bank, who died in 2005 at age 97.

Mr Eric Teng, chief executive of the foundation, said: "Giving is not just about money. We also wanted to celebrate the human side of giving and bring cheer to these old folk."

At the Villa Francis Home yesterday, three other centenarians – Mr Loy Kai See, 103, Madam Teo Say

Geok, 100, and Madam Agatha Koh, 101 – plus 110 other residents tucked into a wished-for buffet lunch and enjoyed song-and-dance performances.

Surrounded by noodles and buns symbolising longevity, the four centenarians blew out the four candles on a large birthday cake.

They also shared the results of one of the wishes: ice cream for all the residents.

Said Madam Teo's son, Mr Thng Dip, 60, a taxi driver: "She has been a very good mother and she is now very weak, but here, she can enjoy entertainment."

Madam Koh's niece Audrey Huan, 75, visits her two or three times a year on special occasions.

"This is a wonderful thing to do for the residents. I didn't know it would be so grand and it certainly brings some cheer to the home. My aunt is very cheerful today," said the retiree.

Equally pleased was Ms Susan Gui, nursing director at the home: "It's very hard to take everyone on an outing as many residents are wheelchair-bound. With this celebration, all the residents can participate and family members can come and be with their loved ones."