

## Editorial

*The weak can never forgive.  
Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong.*

*-Mahatma Gandhi-*

Happy New Beginnings to all in the Passages Family!

As this year progresses, let us resolve to make it personally the best year! The only way to achieve and strive for that is by being at peace within yourself. That, of course, is the hardest state for all us humans. Our monkey ego mind judges others and itself, creates melons out of lemons, worries and ponders staying in a constant state of negative emotions, anxiety and agitation. It wavers to the past and projects the future, removing us from the present moment of time.

Several practices like meditation, affirmations, art and dance therapies help in effectively taming and silencing the mind. As one is unable to easily control the flow of innumerable thoughts, developing two virtues - gratitude and forgiveness - can lead to peace of mind!

Forgiving and moving on is wise! Let go of the coulds, woulds and shoulds; let it pass with the passage of time.

Live in the present; you will be free, mindful and awake! Go with flow!

Look forward to an eventful and gratifying 2018.

**Kaya Shewakramani**

## CANCER HEALTH PROGRAMME

### **MEDICINE BANK and ADOPT-A-PATIENT ACTIVITIES**

Under our Medicine Bank and Adopt-a-Patient initiatives, the financial and medical support that we extend to underprivileged cancer patients at the Cama Hospital, Fort, have been very well received and the number of patients has now increased. This on-going endeavour is ably supervised by two of our volunteers - Snehal Salve and Rehana Sheikh.

Our team at PASSAGES also screens other Individual Financial Assistance appeals that come to our office. This is either a one time financial aid, or on going, as per their treatment requirements.

### **GIFT YOUR TIME**

**5th & 17th October 2017**

Our volunteers, Snehal Salve, Rehana Sheikh along with our CAS student volunteer, Viir Khubchandani and Passages Director, Kaya Shewakramani, visited our Medicine Bank patients

at the Cama Hospital to distribute 'Care' packets under our joy of giving initiative.

Our sincere appreciation to the donors who sponsored items for these packets: Freni Avari; Vandana Juneja; Koshu Chanrai; Binny Havaladar; Kanchan Khubchandani; Bimla Makhija; Vibha Rupani; Vanisha Jagwani; Shilpa Saraf; Veena Avatramani.



'Care' packets being distributed by CAS Student Volunteer - Viir Khubchandani

## CANCER AWARENESS DRIVES

- **6th October 2017**

Passages was invited to spread the message of early detection to members of IMC Ladies' Wing

- **11th October 2017**

Passages was invited to spread the message of early detection through informative brochures for the Indus International members. Foundation for bringing these children.

- **16th December 2017**

The spirit of Christmas and the joy of giving were projected beautifully by our Passages' family and friends. All our young well-wishers enthusiastically organized the following two events:

- **Fundraising at the Christmas Carnival at Bombay Gymkhana.**



Our Passages' Stall at the Bombay Gymkhana Festival of Charities

Passages' benevolent well-wishers sold hand bags and home made cookies by Rhea Lambah to raise money for the Medicine Bank project.

We gratefully acknowledge "Designs by K" for the handbags and Rhea and Priya Lambah for all the proceeds that were donated to the Medicine Bank.

- **Christmas party for the C-Kids at the Madhuli Banquet Hall.**

"The efforts of 16 year Viir Khubchandani, a CAS student of the Cathedral & John Connon School, brought smiles and giggles to 35 cancer afflicted children, ranging from the age of 3 to 13, of the Asian Cancer Foundation (Sion).

This event, called [shift\\_the\\_spotlight](#), included a Dance performance by a young dance troop (age 9) from the Cathedral School. Dance choreographer, Anup Ingle, taught the kids steps to a popular Hindi song, which he had choreographed just for them. The interactive dance lesson also managed to get the otherwise shy children on their feet! This was accompanied by a Silent Magic show (organized by Payal Kilachand), which kept the kids amazed and aghast! A tattoo



The Magician enthralled at the C-Kids Party.

Foundation said that this was the best response they had ever received from the children. A short movie would also be available to see soon which would showcase more images and videos of the children; this would be available on YouTube under the name of the event.

Our grateful thanks to Alea Motwane, Navya Shah, Anup Ingle, Aeshna Shah, Aditya Jaishankar, Yuvaan Khubchandani and Arvaan Motwane.

parlor and a Christmas card making stall also kept the kids constantly engaged in the event. A nourishing meal was served to all those present. Lastly, two talented musicians, Alea Motwane and Navya Shah, performed for the attendees, after which some of the children volunteered to sing for the audience themselves! Before the event came to a close all children were given useful presents to take home. This event ended on a high note as Gitanjali Deshpande from Asian Cancer

## PASSAGES' VOLUNTEER SPEAKS

- 17th June 2017

**Cancer Awareness Camp for the residents of Dr. Ambedkar Nagar Colony, Cuffe Parade.**

**Co-ordinated by:** Ana Rath (CAS Student volunteer)

**Facilitator:** Geeta Dhote

As I entered the community, what struck me first was the abject poverty and appalling living conditions of its residents. The nonstop buzz of the swarm of flies, unbathed children, infected dogs, elderly immobile men, heavily perspiring stronger men ensconced in dark dingy gyms, unkempt women with wailing infants and tiny rooms crammed with family members busy on their cell phones.

The total lack of basic hygiene and sanitation was shocking.



Geeta Dhote, facilitator, answers a question regarding breast cancer at the awareness camp at Ambedkar Nagar.

In a feeble attempt to gain some sense of privacy for this exclusive talk for women, we tried to weed out the men folk from amidst us. Ironically, despite living in a hotbed of susceptible illnesses, their lack of awareness towards disease in general was shocking.

Cancer was a word outside their 'shabd-kosh' (vocabulary). They had neither heard of it, nor seen it happen to any of their kin. They were oblivious to the implications of this anonymous disease. I guess their day-to-day living challenges were far greater than worrying about this.

The talk that I had come prepared with was based on the premise of further educating an already aware populace. But here I was, facing a group of women and young girls who were clueless about the issues that I was going to address.

So I spoke extempore. And I spoke from my heart. All 30 pairs of eyes were on me. While my words fell on innocent ears straining to make sense of what I was saying and questioning its relevance to their lives, one of them mustered the courage to confide about a small growth that she felt in her body, that she would like to get investigated.

Even if PASSAGES is able to render help to one such woman, it is well worth it.

**Geeta Dhote**

## CARE TO SHARE

On 17th October 2017, I visited the Cama Hospital, Fort, to distribute the “Care packets” that we had put together at Passages; these included some sweets and other healthy foods along with towel and scarf for the patients and nursing staff at the Hospital. I went there not knowing what to expect. I had waited a long time to meet everyone and get a first-hand experience of the work Passages does for needy patients.

I expected the hospital ward to be a gloomy environment; instead, I was surprised to see everyone in the hospital (especially the Sisters) so jovial in the morning. I guess visiting during the festive season really does have its charm. Snehal, Rehana (from Passages) and myself, along with Mrs. Kaya Shewakramani, used an empty room for our duration at the hospital. This room was right opposite the routinely check-up room and all I could see was a line of eager women waiting to get done with the check-up. I initially felt petrified to enter this room as I did not know how they would react to a stranger such as myself asking questions about something that had impacted them in the way it did (all the patients were Breast cancer patients and every few months these women need to come in and get a check-up to prevent recurrence). They also receive Tamoxifen and Letroze tablets (supplied regularly by Passages), which they needed to take daily, post surgery.

I was very apprehensive while walking into the room, but I walked out with a big smile! Interacting with these women really enlightened me and showed me how petty my daily struggles are. These stories humbled me made me feel grateful for all that I had - including good health - that I had just taken for granted. Their individual battles were truly moving! These patients/survivors had just shared the most touching stories with me about their fight with breast cancer and they told me of the valuable contribution from the Passages organisation over the past few years, which I was not aware of. This made me feel so proud that I was volunteering with Passages that had really impacted women’s fight against a life

threatening disease.

We next distributed the “care packets” among the nursing staff as well; these were the sisters who had been working on a daily basis in the ward to ensure the well-being of all the patients. I truly felt happy acknowledging those who often go unnoticed. Speaking to these nurses also opened up my eyes as they told me of incidents that they had experienced first-hand. It was also great to hear of how many years these sisters had devoted to this place. They all seemed to have this ‘bond’ between them; this is so hard to see in today’s world and that’s why I am going to try and establish long lasting and truthful relations with my friends and others! The smiles that I witnessed there that morning were truly a memorable sight.



At Cama Hospital: (R to L) Viir Khubchandani (CAS Student Volunteer); Snehal Salve and Rehana Sheikh (Passages); Ward Sister (Cama Hosp.)

This overall experience was an eye-opener for me. The issue at hand was truly one of global consequence and the poor execution of a lot of the procedures is something I intend to try and change as much as possible. This has made me aware of the fact that we are not the only struggling ones; others all around us are fighting a much greater fight that we can ever begin to understand. Working towards such a big cause has its challenges but every drop contributes to this ocean and I will continue to work with the Passages’ team and try to make a difference!

**Viir Khubchandani**

