

Vol 2. Issue 12. December 2021

# NEWSLETTER

This is a monthly diary giving updates on activities at Graceful Living and providing information on ageing 'gracefully' to help elders live a life with maximum ease



GRACEFUL LIVING

LOVE LIFE LIBERTY

## AGEING WITH DIGNITY AND GRACE

**Tulsi Trust** was established by the Chanrai family in 1975. Graceful Living (GL) is a programme of Tulsi Trust which came into existence out of a realization that in today's world the elderly deserve due care and respect.

**Graceful Living** is a provider of elder care services. It has a presence on social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube) to create awareness of elders needs. GL aims to become the best service provider in Mumbai.

### COMPANIONSHIP

- Individual Interaction
- Counselling
- Creative Workshops
- Brain Stimulation Activities
- Specialised Care for Alzheimer's, Dementia, Parkinson's, through our Partners
- Regular Support Group Meetings
- Overcoming Loneliness

### MEDICAL SERVICES

- Comprehensive Geriatric Assessment
- Depression Screening
- Vision/Hearing Tests
- Individual Nutrition/Diet Plan
- Review of Medications
- Preventive Care... Vaccinations and Medicines
- Home-based Physiotherapy

### CURRENT ACTIVITIES OF GRACEFUL LIVING

**With Story Mitr.** Graceful Living conducted the 'Gupshup' paid session which was organized on 18 October 2021; 11 people attended this program. Focus of discussion: International Food Day and Annkot – Indian Harvest celebration. Topics included were stories on food, Karasthami, Govardhan Pooja and the making of special dishes. Recipes were shared as also the art of making food with timely available food items at home.

**With Dr Sharmila Donde, Director, Community Development and Training, PDMDS** (Parkinson's Disease and Movement Disorder Society). Dr Donde was our guest speaker on the subject of Parkinson's on 25 October. The audience included 48 people. She mentioned how her organization was working in 13 states and 60 centres supporting Parkinson's patients. She spoke at length and mentioned that Parkinson's was not curable but its impact could be reduced with many therapies and added that dance and music therapy were important. Her talk was on Parkinson's, strokes and types of Dementia.

**With Taare Social.** Graceful Living conducted two programs with Taare Social which were addressed by Dr Prem. One was on 23 October. Subject – 'Change in weather for seniors and what it means'. The second was held on 30 October on 'Headaches - what they mean and how to manage them'.

**With Ms Amruta.** The ongoing sessions of companionship were carried out by Ms Amruta. They revolved around singing songs and *bhajans*, reciting poems and tables, exercises of recognition of objects and discussions on varied topics. The service users do get distracted easily and find it difficult to sit at one place for long, so brief activities were done intermittently. The family members are kept abreast regarding the sessions, service users responses and feedback.

### GRACEFUL LIVING: RECENT SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS

- 'Keeping your curiosity alive' was the topic on 20 October; 41 people attended the session. Ms Amruta talked about keeping one's curiosity alive to improve the quality of life. According to research, there may be a mental decline with age. Keeping it alive can add longevity and also enhance one's coping abilities.
- 'Tips for better mental health' on 22 October; 31 people attended. Dr Prem said that accepting whatever mental disease one might have and visiting a doctor is a brave action. People have come out of the fear of the pandemic and have to understand the importance of mental health.
- Graceful Living conducted a quiz session on 29 October for all groups of seniors; 34 people attended. All showed a keen eagerness. Questions were selected from history, politics, geography etc.
- International Immunization Day was commemorated on 10 November. There is much unawareness on the subject. Dr Prem conducted the session and talked about ailments like pneumonia, Influenza, herpes vaccines and threw much light on the subject. People asked several questions, including frequency of vaccination, the right conditions for taking a vaccine, the allergy test and so on.
- 'Successful Ageing' was the subject presented by Graceful Living on 13 November at Vazira Naka Seniors Association, Borivali; 55 people attended. Ms Amruta mentioned three major points for maintaining happiness in one's senior years: 1) Risk of illness should be less 2) Mental and physical functioning should be good 3) There should be some purpose for living. She mentioned the 'Aspiration Index' for seniors. The session was presented with the help of examples and stories.

### WEBINAR ON HEALTHY AGEING

The Webinar on Healthy Ageing was held on 23 October, 2021. It was curated by MM-Activ Communications Pvt Ltd. Around 50 people attended the program. Ex-Mayor of Mumbai, Advocate Nirmala Sawant Prabhavalkar, Mr. Prakash Borgaonkar of HelpAge India and Mr. Chaitanya Kalyanpur were the panelists. Adv. Nirmala talked about the need for volunteers and trained helpers for seniors and felt that youngsters also should grab this as an opportunity.

Mr. Prakash Borgaonkar said that he came across many seniors requiring care during the pandemic and people were really looking for their day-to-day needs to be met. Mr. Chaitanya Kalyanpur talked about training the youth and taking up whistling as his hobby-cum-profession. Dr. Prem said that health of caregivers also needs to be given importance. At the end, Mr. Mahinder thanked all the panelists and the participants for attending this program.



## CATARACTS

**Dr Phiroze Patel**DOMS, MS-FRCS (ED) FRC OPHTH (UK)  
Consultant Ophthalmic Surgeon

Cataract is a condition which develops when the lens in the eye turns cloudy. It's a natural ageing process but can occur in a new born till ripe old age. The location of the opacification determines how much of visual loss will occur and the need for surgical intervention. When the central part of the back of the lens is opacified, the visual loss is severe and the individual is handicapped. But when the central part of the lens begins to get cloudy, the vision ie its clarity and contrast may be affected but the percentage of vision may not be altered and hence people manage for a long period before they begin to feel disturbed about it.

In the initial period, the numbers in the glasses change, one becomes short-sighted as the cataract progresses, so one can manage. These days cataracts are occurring in younger professionals and active working individuals, hence they need help and surgical procedure is the only way to restore the vision back provided there are no other pathology problems in the eye which may mar the outcome. Surgery is the only viable

treatment for this condition though eye drops were available in the old days which could halt the condition but no scientific evidence was produced to support its use.

There are different surgical techniques and various intraocular lenses that are on offer by the eye surgeon. Often, it's the purse that decides the technique and the lens but the results will satisfy all patients as long as a competent surgeon has executed it. The 'gold' standard since the past 30 years has been phacoemulsification cataract surgery which is highly sophisticated and done with 2mm incisions and folding lenses inserted through them. Sometimes other techniques are used and will be explained by the doctor due to different pathology and eye disease. Lasers have been added to the armamentarium of the surgeon - some surgical steps can be taken but are not in demand universally as the cost is in crores.

A wide range of intraocular lenses are in use. Monofocal lenses – gives you distance vision, for near you need glasses.

Multifocal lenses give you both distance and near vision, a GOOD choice but it has its limitations. People complain of halos and shadows but they usually settle down in due course of time. They are expensive and the insurance company DOES NOT pay for them. Even high cylindrical numbers can be corrected with custom-made lenses. Lately, EXTENDED DEPTH OF FOCUS lens is available which eliminates the halos and shadows and are half the price of the multifocal lenses. They give good distance and decent near vision at one to two feet range. Occasionally, the surgeon has to use another type of lenses if the case is complicated. NEVER forget that you may need glasses for far and near sometimes after all the fancy work has been done – there are NO guarantees. Have a chat with your doctor regarding the above and you will be guided. Remember it is about the surgical skill of the surgeon that overrides everything. Once you have made your selection, then go by his experience and guidance.

## RE-TIRE AND RE-INVENT YOURSELF

**Niloufer Bilimoria**

Founder-Director, Khushwant Singh Festivals, Kasauli and London

I always wanted to be a beach bum. Couldn't wait to retire and wallow on the golden Goan sands. Then the editor of your newsletter, Asha, introduced me to Vedanta and that put paid to all my retirement plans.

I began to learn that work is our only salvation. Vedanta is an ancient Indian philosophy that teaches us how to live life. There is nothing religious about Vedanta. I have a Parsee Vedanta teacher, Adi sir, from whom I am still learning. So as I bumbled along, a realization gradually began to unfold. Retirement is not meant to retire. But to re-tire and re-invent ourselves. It can be a wonderful opportunity to do all the things we

wanted to but never had time for.

So I find myself starting yoga late in life and doing more yoga every day than I thought was possible. I am even attempting to decipher Patanjali's yoga *sutras* with my group of fellow yoginis.

I turned an entrepreneur of sorts and began an unusual boutique literary festival in Kasauli. That extended to London too, a few years later when the then Indian High Commissioner invited us over. It is the only festival in the country named after a person, the Khushwant Singh Literary Festival. The last two years put paid to all events. But we did not let that deter us. Technology came to our

rescue and we went online. So now all the festivals and classes are online and my day as a 'senior' is a rather full one.

But there is an important point I want to make here. It's not just a matter of keeping busy in retirement. It is more important to keep abreast of what is happening in the world, to keep pace with technology, and yes, even social media. When I meet youngsters, I find we have so much to talk about. And I learn so much from being in their company. And I hope it's the same for them too. So the next time any of us complain that children or grandchildren have no time for us, let's look within. Am I worth spending time with?



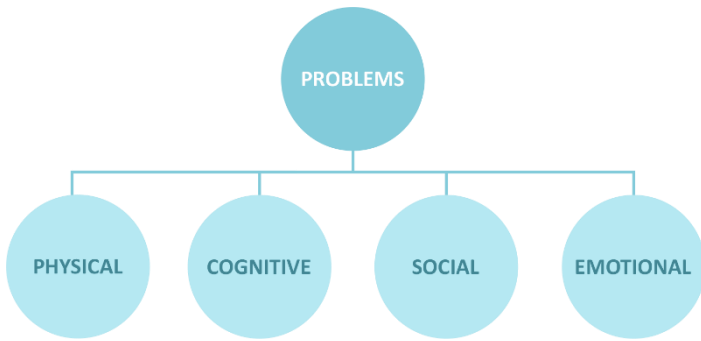
Never settle for anything less than what you deserve.

It's not pride, it's self respect.

- Chanakya



## The major old age problems are...



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## What are the first signs of old age?

- 🍃 Skin gets thinner and becomes less elastic.
- 🍃 Sweat glands produce less sweat.
- 🍃 Nails grow more slowly.
- 🍃 Hair gets grey and some no longer grow.

Source: Internet

## Experts generally break down the ageing process into 5 stages:



## “The elderly face many challenges in later life, but they do not have to enter old age without dignity.”

It’s no secret that there are plenty of issues in today’s world. Between a worldwide pandemic, civil unrest, global warming, salmonella outbreaks...I mean, if you watch the news it makes you want to crawl into a hole and hide.

For seniors, there are issues that affect them in a bigger way than others. The issues do not necessarily affect seniors exclusively, but they have a significant impact on their lives, more so than for the general population.

Three issues seem to be the top concerns that keep showing up for seniors.

- 1 Financial Stability
- 2 Social Isolation, Loneliness, and Bereavement
- 3 Ageism

Excerpts. Courtesy: SilverCompanionsGA (info@SilverCompanionsGA.com)

## TESTIMONIALS: What people say about us...

“**Meera Hinduja, regular Jaslok attendee.** I attended a very interesting session for seniors conducted by Ms Amruta on ‘Curiosity for Seniors’. It was informative and really good. I would love a repetition of this particular session and I request Ms Amruta to do so. Her explanation on the subject was much appreciated. In fact, I love every program of Graceful Living. You all are doing a good job.

“**Mr Yashwant D, Dilasa Kendra.** I wish to address and mention Dr Rajashree Parab’s presentation which was excellent. But I have a suggestion to make. Please print matter like this in the following monthly issues since they are worth preserving and could be documented for reference. Also, those who couldn’t attend will be able to benefit. This gesture of GL will be highly appreciated.

“**Murlidhar V Shukla alias Bapu, ex-GM Marketing, Group Manager, Bluestar.** Your quiz and brain stimulating activities are really good. I am 70 and after retirement I got associated with Senior Citizens Association, (Virangula Kendra) Mulund. At present I am the secretary of the association. I came to know about Graceful Living which works towards making the life of senior citizens better through their various activities. Their efforts have been especially appreciated during this pandemic.

“**Ms Lalita Naik, Nana Nani School.** Graceful Living is doing a great job for the benefit of senior citizens. The ‘quiz and brain’ stimulating programs, plus the guest lectures which are again helpful and act as a guideline bring out a feeling of gratitude from us. The quiz sessions activate our brain and give us mental enjoyment. Thank you, Graceful Living.



## SPIRITUAL CORNER

The spiritual journey is the unlearning of fear.  
And the acceptance of love.

- Marianne Williamson



# FUN TIMES

## WORD PUZZLE

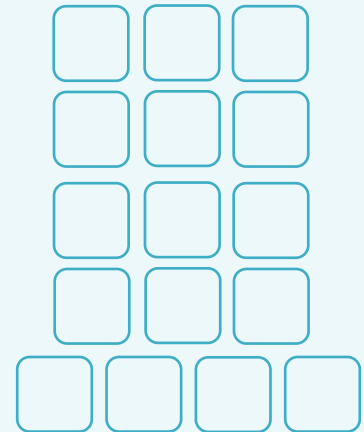
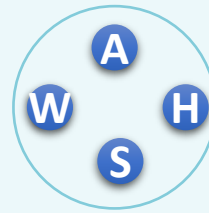
Find the words in the puzzle



- |          |        |         |         |
|----------|--------|---------|---------|
| BLANKET  | COAT   | ICE     | SKATING |
| BOBSLEDS | GLOVES | MITTENS | SWEATER |
| BOOTS    | HOT    | SCARF   | WINTER  |

## FORM WORDS

From the letters in the circle below



Courtesy: Humour Spot (Pinterest)

## VIEWPOINT

It's no secret that there are plenty of issues for everyone in today's world. What with the pandemic at one end and ailments/diseases at the other, the elderly face even more challenges. Research mentions financial instability, social isolation, loneliness, bereavement and ageism as 'red' factors for the senior. But in today's progressive life where being an elderly is pushed even further (70 is not old any more) the seniors do not have to live without dignity. This is today's world where official retirement at 60 can mean another innings of work and earnings.

Dr Phiroze Patel, consultant ophthalmic surgeon, has honoured us once again as our guest writer, giving us details about cataracts, usually unavoidable as one ages. He writes about the way to recognise when the cataract is ripe and has to be surgically worked upon. Our other guest columnist, Ms Niloufer Bilimoria, founder of Khushwant Singh Literary Festivals, mentions a very important point that it's not just a matter of keeping busy in retirement. It is more important to keep abreast of what is happening in the world.

Our December Newsletter lists the several activities of the month which include our recent support group meetings, our activities with Story Mittr and Taare Social. Our guest speaker of the month was Dr Sharmila Donde, Director, Community Development and Training, PDMDs, who spoke on the subject of Parkinson's and the therapies that could help reduce the impact of the disease. Our ongoing sessions of companionship continue to be carried out by Ms Amruta.

An aside: Visiting friends, partying with them and inviting them over is a joy that has been rekindled in our lives. This is because we are more free to do so with 'you know what' bidding us adieu. I recently attended two parties, one with a large crowd of 200 or so and another, a house party of 12. My pleasure was unlimited. An exhilarated feeling of freedom and meeting friends and exchanging ideas. THIS IS LIFE! And my son's friend, Avi, has started calling me 'partying aunty'.

Asha Gurnani Vohra  
Editor



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