

Vol 3. Issue 4. April 2022

# 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**  
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## AGEING WITH DIGNITY AND GRACE

**Tulsi Trust** was established by the Chanrai family in 1975 with an aim to fulfill basic needs of the poor and needy. At a deeper level, it's more than indulging in physical activities. Health care, skills development and education are top priorities. It envisages a fair world for all, working with partners to improve health care and opportunities for livelihood, and education. Add to this, the capacity to understand another's needs and do this with utmost integrity.

**Graceful Living (GL)** is an arm of Tulsi Trust which came out of a realization of a social need for elderly care. After three active years, GL is now a recognized organization for those in their twilight years and has created an awareness through its activities and talks for senior citizens. GL has a social presence viz. Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.

## ACTIVITIES OF GRACEFUL LIVING

### In Partnership...

- Intellectual companionship and special care programs – includes companionship, counselling and care-giving for Dementia, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's when required. These services are provided through our partners:

#### Echoing Healthy Ageing

#### Parkinson's Disease and Movement Disorder Society (PDMDS)

- Physiotherapy sessions which help the elderly to improve their mobility and become more independent:

#### Iconic Physio with Dr Pratha Mehta and Dr Rajshri Lad

- Training candidates in 'elder care' in order to have professionals for the same:  
**MMP Shah College** – elder companionship course for Sociology students  
**Aaji Care** – Geriatric counselling course for post-graduate Psychology students

- Activities for the elderly :

#### Story Mitr: story-telling

#### Mrs Manasi Golwalkar: technology training

- Sensitization programs for school/college students to create an awareness of the needs and issues of the elderly

### Direct Intervention by GL...

- Support Group Meetings
- Webinars (MMACTIV + Mr Manoj Gursahani)
- Guest Lectures by professionals/experts – mainly on Zoom
- Graceful Living Monthly Newsletter carrying important information for the elderly plus articles by known doctors and other professionals
- Online interviews with senior achievers called 'Sitare'
- Co-ordination by GL to create platforms for senior citizen organizations in the city

## RECENT EVENTS OF GRACEFUL LIVING

**With Mr Chandrashekhar Thakur, a financial expert.** Our month's guest lecturer, Mr Chandrashekhar Thakur has worked in the Bombay Stock Exchange for the last 33 years. Well-versed with the Stock Market and Mutual Funds, he explained the importance of investments/financial planning with a visual presentation of the same. He elucidated the purpose and workings of financial institutions like SEBI, NSE and BSE (On Zoom, 25 February).

**With Dr Rajshri Lad, physiotherapist (Iconic Physio).** This physiotherapy session conducted by Dr Rajshri on 4 March for seniors explained various good/bad postures - viz. standing, sitting or sleeping. She also explained the reasons for knee/joint pain in old age.

## WEBINAR

A webinar on 'Role of Seniors Associations' was held on 26 February.

Four panelists included : Dr Anagha Tendulkar, Vice-Principal (Administration) Head and Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, Sophia College (on history of associations); Mr Yashwant Deshpande, Vice-President of Dilasa Kendra; Mrs. Asawari Phadnis, President of the apex body of Senior Citizens Associations of Thane; and Mr Madhav Purohit, Secretary, Arya Chanakya Senior Citizens Association (Kandivali).

## SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS

- A physical Support Group Meeting for Sahabhaav residents (18 February), a luxurious premium geriatric facility for older adults above the age of 60. Nine residents participated. Amruta conducted a quiz program on the epics, *Ramayan* and *Mahabharata*, and some cognitive stimulation exercises.
- A story-telling session (22 February) was the outcome of a survey done by GL asking seniors about their hobbies and interests. Some expressed an interest in story-telling. This meeting was a platform for them to share stories, either written by them or by others.

- A physical meeting was held on 8 March with the Snehvardhini Mahila Mandal at Ghatkopar. Topic: logotherapy. Also, the importance of Women's Day was discussed.

### Geriatric Counselling Course

Graceful Living has collaborated with Aaji Care and MMP Shah College for initiating a course in Geriatric Counselling to create a cadre of professionals who can help seniors deal with loneliness/companionship. Only Psychology post-graduates can enroll for this course.



**Dr Phiroze Patel**

Consultant, Ophthalmic Surgeon

Some serious concerns occur when the blood sugar is not within the normal range. The eyes/kidneys can get damaged. Good management of blood sugar levels helps in preventing complications.

When mild eyelid infections like styes, meibomian cysts and conjunctival inflammation occur, they need to be treated with appropriate antibiotic drops/ointment. Stricter sugar controls are advised.

Occasionally, the spectacles number changes/fluctuates indicating that blood sugar is not stable and may be outside normal. Don't change your glasses but wait for the sugar levels to stabilize and then get them rechecked. The lens in the eye is affected and may precipitate cataractous changes which would require surgery at a later stage.

Poorly controlled diabetes can lead to infections in the body, and these occur concomitantly in the eye causing Iritis (inflammation in the front part of the eye) and rarely Endophthalmitis (involves the

back of the eye) with disastrous results.

When diabetes is poorly controlled, the eye and the kidney develop complications. Diabetic retinopathy occurs when the blood, fatty tissue, fluids leak out from the blood vessels into the retinal tissues causing damage (if not controlled leads to loss of vision). Hence, regular eye and retinal check-ups are required. Colour photos of the retina, angiography and OCT are the main imaging studies done to diagnose and treat the condition. Lasers and intravitreal injections are the mainstay; surgery at a later stage if medical therapy does not help. Healthy diet, exercise, intermittent fasting and a doctor's guidance, all help in preventing complications.

Rarely do the eye muscles get paralysed due to the main nerves in the brain getting affected - double vision is the outcome along with a squint. Medical treatment by the diabetic doctor/neurologist may be required. Recovery is slow.

Diabetes is a lifestyle disease; if one pays

attention to personal habits, many of the above situations can be avoided. I will share some personal guidelines that I give my patients. Eye surgeries, especially cataract surgery is very common. Control your sugar levels before you get operated. The fasting and post-prandial should be in a normal range ...Remember the test HbA1c should be below 7.5; then you are safe. Poorly controlled sugars lead to several general conditions like repeated infections in the body, heart conditions, various organ failures, especially the kidney which histologically is similar to the eye and when the retina is involved, we know for sure that the kidney is involved too.

In the last decade, intermittent fasting has played a major role in reversing many of the above conditions. There is a lot of information on social media which can be investigated and followed – it is not rocket science and all of us can use it for a better life. Often, it's a very good adjunct to the treatment given by the specialist. If discipline is exercised, the need for medication is reduced. Result: better health.

Believe in yourself and all that you are.

Know that there is something inside you that is greater than any obstacle.

## IS CURIOSITY PRESENT IN OLD AGE?



**Ms Amruta Lovekar**

Gerontologist & Project Coordinator, Graceful Living

The Portuguese writer Saramago told us that "Old age starts where curiosity ends". But is it really true that age leads to loss of curiosity in older adults?

Curiosity comes from a Latin word which means inquisitive thinking, exploration, investigation and learning. It is the state of active interest or genuinely wanting to know more about something.

Most of the breakthroughs and discoveries

and remarkable inventions throughout history, from starting a fire to discovering other planets, have one factor in common: to seek new information and experience.

If we try and understand how curiosity proceeds through different stages of life, it could be seen children are very curious and they explore new things. On an average, child development experts say children can ask 107 questions in an hour and although curiosity does tend to reduce thereon, it

needs to be noted that this is not a natural part of ageing.

Research studies have shown that there could be cognitive decline as we age but our curiosity remains intact and may actually increase. Studies have also shown strong co-relation between curiosity and strong physical and psychological health. They have further clearly stated that the loss of curiosity is not a function of ageing but a learned fear of knowledge.

“ I could not, at any age, be content to take my place by the fireside and simply look on. Life was meant to be lived. Curiosity must be kept alive. One must never, for whatever reason, turn his back on life. ”

- Eleanor Roosevelt

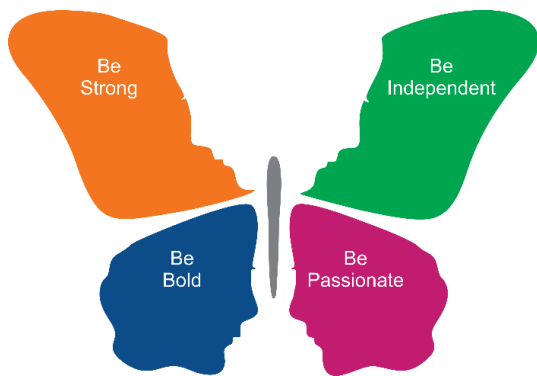
## WHERE THERE IS WOMAN, THERE IS MAGIC

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (also known as Global Goals) are 17 goals with 169 targets that all UN Member States have agreed to work towards achieving by the year 2030. They set out a vision for a world free from poverty, hunger and disease.

**STOP! GOAL 5: GENDER EQUALITY...**to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls – (published 29 October 2019). Gender equality is a goal in itself and a prerequisite for sustainable and peaceful development. It is achieved when women, girls and boys have equal rights, conditions and the power to shape their own lives and contribute to the development of society.

So where has women empowerment reached?

Women have taken a giant leap first at home, then the workplace. They are not only the decision makers at home but even in the corporate world they hold high positions. Women are more than mere 'at home' beings. They are moving out in society in a big way and are also contributing financially.



Today, a woman's realm includes so much more. She runs the home, takes up a job, brings up the kids and often tutors them on a daily basis. Wouldn't you call her a wonder woman? Being a woman I can see it so clearly...doing it all and smiling through it.

There was a time in the past when women were treated as mere 'slaves' or sex objects. This was what they were made to feel. They were child bearers and thus had to tend to the upbringing of the kids totally with the man providing the finance. I have witnessed several movements in the last two decades in the bigger cities in India, more so in Delhi where *morchas* were carried out by women with raised placards. Did the men listen? Did the world listen? Obviously they did. Women are involved in so many different spheres which otherwise would not have been accessible to them. With the innate charm that they have (no dispute on that), they are moving in a positive direction.

But scorn her and not give her due respect and ... "hell hath no fury like a woman scorned" ... you can be sure of all hell breaking loose. Today's modern woman will let go of her man if she is not given due respect. Her dignity is important (it's not about pride). Why should a man look down upon her when she has so much in abundance, not only to give but is ready to receive? Her self worth is what is important to her.

But what about the elderly women who may be still vulnerable as theirs is a story of the past. They were given due importance/respect because they did all household chores, cooked the food, looked after the kids, and so on. But once they became seniors, did their importance wane? Are they still able to put their best foot forward despite being in the retired mode? If not, they have to wake up to the fact that they are important entities. They may not have been part of today's women brigade, but nonetheless they are achievers in their own way. So all women, hold your heads high. **YOU STILL HAVE FIRE IN YOUR SOUL AND GRACE IN YOUR HEART.**

March 8 was International Women's Day.



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## ACTIVITIES THE ELDERLY SHOULD INDULGE IN

**The elderly do not have to live a life of inactivity. They have to buckle up and make that effort to be active, physical and otherwise. Here are ways suggested by 'Great Senior Living'**

### Dancing, Karaoke, and Other Performance Arts

Dancing to music can connect your body to exciting and healing rhythms. Singing popular songs (even out of tune) in front of other people can help you enjoy the humour in your efforts and avoid taking yourself too seriously.

*Try things like: Ballroom, salsa, or swing dancing; acting in a play; reading books to groups of young kids; writing and acting out skits and maybe starting a seniors dance troupe.*

### Parties and Other Social Gatherings

Socializing can be a powerful way to inject more fun into your life. That's particularly true if you get to reminisce about old times or talk about the other things that interest you. So don't shy away from attending other people's parties or joining clubs. *Consider planning some of your own events around themes like: a murder mystery; Filmfare awards; formal tea/coffee dos.*

### Traditional Games and Puzzles

Board games and card games provide great ways to socialize and benefit from the joyful challenges of friendly competition. And puzzles can help sharpen your mind and give you a sense of progress and accomplishment.

*Consider options like: Card games Uno/Open Rummy; Scrabble; Chess; Bingo; Chinese checkers; Crossword puzzles; Jigsaw puzzles.*



### Animal Interactions

Just like people, animals want and need to have fun. So playing with them can be mutually beneficial. Many animal shelters welcome seniors who want to give dogs, cats, or other critters some quality attention.

### Arts and Crafts

This kind of a creative recreational pursuit is great for people of all ages, and can often make terrific elderly activities.

*Ideas that can reignite a person's liveliness: Painting; sketching/drawing; paper craft; crocheting; embroidery; quilt-making.*

### Active Learning

Learning is always more fun when it's something you choose to do for its own sake. Whole new avenues of possibility reveal themselves. So follow your curiosity and impulses. Learning something new is beneficial at any age.

*Consider learning how to: Sing or play a musical instrument; take professional-quality photos; write great stories; cook exotic meals.*

### Outings and excursions

Many great options exist, especially when you gather a small group of people to share the experiences. *Consider excursions to places or events like: Theme parks; comedy events; concerts; art shows; sporting events.*

Courtesy: Great Senior Living...Internet



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

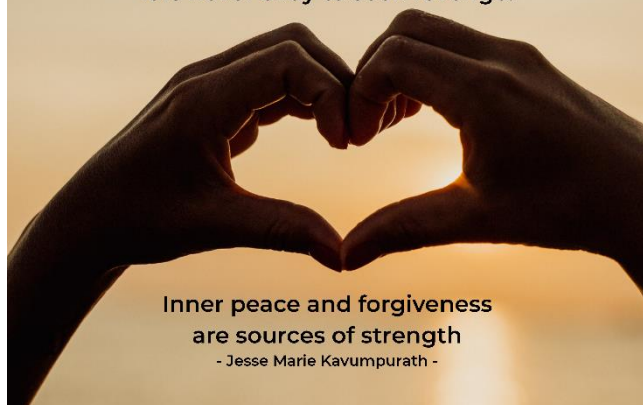
“ **Mr Deepak Shroff, Goregaon Seniors Group.** Your annual issue of the *Newsletter* was too good. The design was excellent and so was the content. I also want to mention that Dr Rajshri Lad was very effective in explaining the postures for senior citizens in one of her Zoom classes. I have benefitted from her demonstrations. Thanks Graceful Living. Keep it up.

“ **Mrs Anjali Shanbagh, Ghatkopar Snehvardhini Group.** GL conducted a session on logotherapy on Women's Day and it was well appreciated. It was positive in its approach. The name of the game is looking forward in life. Please do conduct regular sessions on such subjects so that we seniors can benefit.

“ **Mr Suresh Devdhar, Borivali Seniors Group.** Your recent annual issue of Graceful Living was really very special. Each page was informative. I thoroughly enjoyed it and use it as a reference book. Graceful Living is surely taking up seniors issues and writing so explicitly on/for them. Thank you.

“ **Mr VK Laxman Pai, Prabhadevi Seniors Association.** This is with reference to your 'special' annual *Newsletter*. Someone did comment and called it 'perfect' in your earlier issue. I second that and think that it carried ample, good information. More than that, it made interesting reading. Also, I must add, that the magazine was well designed.

If a situation does not work, then let it be  
It is never okay to seek revenge.



Inner peace and forgiveness  
are sources of strength

- Jesse Marie Kavumpurath -



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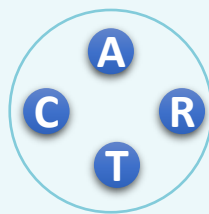
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## FORM WORDS

From the letters in the circle below




## VIEWPOINT

Certain changes in Graceful Living's activities are listed in the April *Newsletter*. We have clearly outlined 'activities in partnership' and those which have our 'direct intervention'. Companionship and counselling will be provided through our partners Echoing Healthy Ageing and Parkinson's Disease and Movement Disorder Society (PDMDS), physiotherapy through Iconic Physio. Graceful Living will still continue to hold support group meetings (Zoom or physical) and monthly webinars.

This issue comprises several activities: our guest speaker, a financial expert, Mr Chandrashekhhar Thakur, a man who 'knows so much' when it comes to investments/financial planning, spoke on the subject with a visual presentation. Dr Rajshri Lad held a session on physiotherapy for seniors; our webinar was held on 26 February on 'Role of Seniors Associations' - four panelists held forth... Dr Anagha Tendulkar, Vice-Principal (Administration), Sophia College; Mr Yashwant Deshpande, Vice-President of Dilasa Kendra, Mrs Asawari Phadnis, President of the apex body of Senior Citizens Associations of Thane and Mr Madhav Purohit, secretary, Arya Chanakya Senior Citizens Association (Kandivali).

Our support group meetings were on the following subjects: a quiz session on epics *Ramayan* and *Mahabharata*, a story-telling get-together on 22 February and more. Graceful Living has collaborated with Aaji Care and MMP Shah College for initiating a course in Geriatric Counselling. The main purpose is to create a cadre of professionals who can help seniors deal with loneliness and offer companionship.

An interesting thought: Recently, a friend of mine remarked, "Imagine, one has no control over one's body and mind." Why?" I questioned. She had recently discovered she had a grave illness. She felt we are so unaware of what goes on inside the body. And hardly any control over the mind. With the same token, another friend spoke about the unseen power that puts people together, builds relationships, and mysteriously two people suddenly share the same thought/action. Again how? It is the unspoken supremacy of God AND the realization of us being powerless in the presence of the Divine Power. Our strength lies in doing our best to make ourselves better human beings.

**Asha Gurnani Vohra**  
Editor