

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



MAJOR OLD AGE PROBLEMS

Physical decline and illness are amongst the biggest problems ageing people experience. Deteriorating health may prevent people from doing things they enjoy or interferes with their routine activities. Also, chronic illness in the elderly may limit or cause a loss of independence, which is distressing for most people.

Cognitive Problems

Mental disorders and cognitive decline are often associated with old age. Ageing adults are susceptible to dementia, psychotic depression, personality changes, mood swings, aggression, and other mental health issues.

Emotional Problems

The decline in health and mental ability makes ageing people dependent. Lost independence can be a great source of stress. Additionally, many ageing adults face emotional challenges such as feelings of loneliness and isolation. The death of a spouse and other loved ones can add to the stress, depression, and anxiety the person already experiences.

Social Problems

Transition to retirement often means limited social life. Also, the death of a spouse, friends, and relatives restricts the person's participation in social life. Studies show that loneliness and fear of being cut off from social circles are among the biggest fears people have as they age.

Source: Internet

AN ASTOUNDING STORY

At 89 & 71, Amazing Grandmas Run a Gorgeous, Successful Farm Stay With Fresh Food



An enchanting farm stay in Tamil Nadu called Pico is run by two senior citizens — Laxmi and Kasthuri. With organic farm fresh vegetables, they also offer modern amenities like WiFi.

For several years, Laxmi Ammal and Kasthuri Sivaraman (a mother-daughter duo) lacked the confidence of being independent. Both of them grew up in conservative households where they did everything their parents told them to do.

Women back then were not encouraged to think independently and to a certain extent discouraged from expressing their opinions. Moreover, while Laxmi (89) studied only till Class 3, Kasthuri (71) completed Class 7 in a Tamil-medium school. After marriage, they followed their husbands' orders.

It can be daunting for some to make decisions and take action when they are habituated to getting directions from others.

So when Kasthuri's son, Kiruba Shankar, suggested they run the family's farm stay in 2021, the duo was scared and lacked confidence. But with the family's support, they broke away from their fear.

The Pico farm stay was built on their 185-year-old organic farm in Tamil Nadu's Rettanai village but it was only open for relatives and friends back then.

"The only regret we have is why didn't we

start this earlier," begins Kasthuri. "I used to always wonder who would come to our farm stay hosted by two old women who knew to converse only in Tamil. My mother would be scared of interacting with strangers. But we shed away our inhibitions and hosted people who wanted to get away from their hectic lives. This has been the best decision we have taken."

Running a farm stay that is nestled amidst a vast agricultural 'Vaksana' farm can be physically exhausting, especially for senior citizens.

And it would be wrong to assume these ladies have superpowers to do it all because they do get tired. There are days when they rest more and work less.

However, in 2011 the family took a collective decision to bring back the greenery by developing a food forest, harvesting crops and building a farm stay for their guests.

Laxmi shares, "It was a family activity. Each of us, including my great-granddaughters, contributed to planting various trees. So many of our relatives started visiting us after our farm was ready. They wanted to take a few days off from their urban lives and spend time in peace and serenity."

More details on the web if you wish to visit the place.

By Gopi Karelia: Internet



Dr Naganath Narasimhan Prem
Consultant, Geriatric Medicine - Jaslok Hospital

The month of September is marked as world Alzheimer's month and 21 September is celebrated as World Alzheimer's Day. The awareness and sensitization towards this disease is very important.

Alzheimer's disease is the most common type of dementia. It was named in 1910 after the German Psychiatrist Alois Alzheimer. Alzheimer is a type of dementia that affects memory, thinking and behaviour. Symptoms eventually grow severe enough to interfere with daily tasks. It is not a normal process of ageing. It is a progressive disease and tends to worsen with time.

Early signs and symptoms

- Memory loss disrupting daily life
- Challenges in planning and solving problems
- Difficulty in completing familiar tasks.
- Confusion with time or place

- Trouble understanding visual images and perception of distance
- New problems with words in speech or writing
- Misplacing things and inability to retrace them
- Decreased or poor judgement
- Withdrawal from work or social activities
- Changes in mood and personality

Things to do when visiting the doctor for memory loss

- A list of any changes in your health, including your mood, memory and behaviour. Make a note of any changes you've noticed since your last appointment. Be as specific as possible.
- A list of past and current medical problems: Tell your doctor if other family members had illnesses that caused memory problems.
- A list of current prescriptions and over-the-

counter medications.

- A list of vitamins or supplements you've added to your medication regimen.
- A list of questions you want to ask.
- Be prepared to answer the doctor's questions honestly and to the best of your ability.

Treatment

- Pharmacological**
Medications for memory, behaviour and sleep-related issues.
- Non-Pharmacological**
Memory and orientation exercises, art therapy, aromatherapy and music therapy, and contact with animals. Caregiver training for family members is also offered.

Get your memory screening done at the earliest

Normal age-related memory changes	Symptoms that may indicate dementia
Able to function independently and pursue normal activities, despite occasional memory lapses.	Difficulty performing simple tasks (paying bills, dressing appropriately, washing up). Forgetting how to do things you've done many times.
Able to recall and describe incidents of forgetfulness.	Unable to recall or describe specific instances where memory loss caused problems.
May pause to remember directions, but won't get lost in familiar places.	Get lost or disoriented even in familiar places; unable to follow directions.
Occasional difficulty finding the right word, but no trouble holding a conversation.	Words are frequently forgotten, misused, or garbled. Repeat phrases and stories in same conversation.
Judgment and decision-making ability the same as always.	Trouble making choices. May show poor judgment or behave in socially inappropriate ways.

TYPES OF DEMENTIA

Dementia is an umbrella term for loss of memory and other thinking abilities severe enough to interfere with daily life.

- Alzheimer's
- Vascular
- Lewy body
- Frontotemporal
- Other, including Huntington's
- ★ **Mixed dementia:** Dementia from more than one cause

Note: Lewy body... cognitive decline (inability to stay alert, disorganised), muscle rigidity, insomnia. Frontotemporal... behavioural & emotional problems, excessive emotions or vice-versa, shaky balance, difficulty in understanding words.

ORAL & DENTAL HEALTH IN THE ELDERLY



Dr Chintamani Pant
Dentist, Implantologist and Orthodontist

GUEST SPEAKER

We all age gracefully and accept the course of nature as we age. Ageing brings along a lot of changes physically and mentally. Our organs and body parts have been serving us to do our daily activities right from our childhood and continue to do so. There is wear and tear of body parts and organs with time. Oral health too, gets affected as we age. We go through a number of medical problems and take medication for the same. However, certain medicines do affect the body and bring about reactions in the oral condition of the person.

Ageing teeth and gums are an inevitable issue faced by the elderly, and as gums age they lose their elasticity which causes them to recede. However, receding gums is not

the biggest concern for dentists when it comes to tooth loss in the elderly. The gums are the foundation of the teeth to be held in position. As the foundation gets weaker, the teeth get weak too and start shaking. Shaking teeth can cause bone loss and eventually the tooth or teeth fall off or have to be removed.

Bleeding of gums is also a very common problem, especially in women going through menopause or other changes during menopause. The gums are in direct relation to sugar levels of the body (diabetes) and so are heart-related conditions. The gums host bacteria if not kept in check and can cause heart-related problems.

Patients who wear dentures must have them checked often for the fitting as bad fitting dentures may cause discomfort and not chewing the food properly may cause indigestion and bigger problems.

What do elders do about their teeth?

No matter what your age, proper dental care can keep your teeth and gums healthy. Brush twice a day with a soft-bristle toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste. Floss at least once a day. See your dentist for regular check-ups

Keep smiling.

SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS OF GL

Physical

- A mobile technology training session was held on 20 August at MMP Shah College, Matunga. Mrs Golwalkar discussed the basics of mobile handling, its applications and its uses. The GL staff and 10 volunteers of MMP Shah College helped seniors to understand this on their own mobiles. One-to-one attention was provided to all.
- GL visited Narmada Niketan, the seniors old age home at CBD Belapur on 23 August. The charges are Rs 8,000 per month for each individual. Recently, a TV has been installed in every room, mentions Mr Ashok Purohit, the man in charge. At present, they house 90 people.
- On August 24, a youth sensitization session was conducted at S S Sahney School, Khar. Ms Amruta and Ms Akanksha conducted the session for 240 students. Ms Jyoti Penkar and Adv Supriya Rele were present as volunteers for both the sessions.
- A 'cardiomelon activity' session (performing physical and mental exercises at the same time) was held on 8 September at the Sahabhav Old Age Home. Ms Amruta conducted the session. Participants: 20.
- In memory of Mrs Sushila Chanrai, a special program for 'youth sensitization' was conducted by Mr Pravin and Ms Akanksha on 13 September with the 9th standard students of Guru Nanak School of Bhandup. Attendance: 72.

Online

- A meeting was held on 18 August in collaboration with My Safe Place and Rotary Club of Bombay Hills South. The topic: '360 degrees of freedom'. Mr Rajiv Chachara discussed the role of the individual, state and nation in connection with his/her responsibility in personal life and society towards the country.
- An online session on 'Seniors learning from seniors' was held on 26 August. Purpose: to enable seniors to share their experiences so that other seniors could learn from them. In this session, Mr Chaitanya Kalyanpur, a senior citizen mentioned his experience as a volunteer in training the disadvantaged youth in society. Attendance: 18.
- A session on osteoporosis was conducted by Dr Rajshri Lad on 29 August (attendance: 23 people). She mentioned several reasons why this ailment sets in, how it can be prevented, and the therapies and tests for it.



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TESTIMONIALS: What people say about us...

- “ **Ms Ujjwal Pathare, Dadar Senior Association.** This is regarding the fashion show organised by GL. It was not only good, but well organised too. The yoga activities were very interesting, but senior citizens are advised to be careful. Overall, it was a successful fashion show. Next time, do mention the names of the participants. Also, the speaker should carry a lower volume mike. This was a 'daring' experiment. Congratulations. Looking forward to more such programs.
- “ **Mr Meghnath Patkar, Dombivali Senior Association.** I attended the music therapy event which took place on 17 May. It was a great event. We thank Ms Munmun Ghosh and the Rotary Club for putting forward such an excellent session.
- “ **Ms Pratiba Taneja, Goregaon Seniors Group.** The talent show program held on 6 July, conducted by Graceful Living, was enjoyable. Useful for me and every senior. Thank you Graceful Living for conducting such online programs.
- “ **Mr Anil Tawde, regular attendee of GL's programs.** I attended the technology training program conducted by GL with the department of sociology, MMP Shah College, Matunga, on 20 August. I was happy because it taught us much about the mobile phone and its usages: online booking of Ola and Uber cabs, as well ordering medicines, vegetables, and other items online. We also learned about making payments online, using YouTube. The audience comprising senior citizens was very satisfied with all this information. Salutations to GL.
- “ **Ms Alka Tompe, regular attendee of GL programs.** The guest lecture conducted by Ms Geeta Curumsey held on 23 August was a learning process. I learned new aspects about yoga and enjoyed the session. Do conduct such sessions more often. Thank you.

GUEST LECTURE

On 23 August, Graceful Living presented a talk by Ms Geeta Curumsey. This was an online meeting on Zoom. A Yoga teacher and Yoga therapist for the past 20 years, she firmly believes Yoga is a balance of the body, mind and breath. She feels that all should use their energy to live a healthy life and the path is through Yoga. She got the listeners to participate as she demonstrated some postures/exercises for seniors. The exercises included breathing while holding your breath a bit, aligning your walk from one heel to the next and more. She explained basic principles of Yoga and stressed on various *asanas* and their importance.



WEBINAR

Graceful Living conducted a webinar on 27 August. The topic: 'What do seniors want?'

There were three panellists which included Mr Sharad Dicholkar, president, FESCOM, Mumbai; Mr Chaitanya Kalyanpur, life skills coach; Mr Madhav Purohit, secretary, Arya Nagar Seniors Association, Kandivali. Mr Dicholkar mentioned that the percentage of pensioners is a mere nine per cent in India, therefore most of the non-pensioners need support; Mr Kalyanpur said that seniors should think of an active social life thereby giving back to society; Mr Purohit explained how government schemes were not really reaching the senior citizens. As usual, Mr Manoj Gursahani conducted the session in an apt manner.



As you grow older, you will discover you have two hands...
one for helping yourself, the other for helping others.

- Audrey Hepburn





US PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN AGE: 78 YEARS

Sequence of events :

1. Wife and one-year-old daughter died in a road accident whilst going to purchase a Christmas Tree.
2. One son died due to brain cancer in 2015.
3. Biden suffered two life-threatening brain aneurysms in 1988. In fact he said that the experience had shaped him into the "kind of man I want to be".

Despite the negative life situations, this man went on to become the President of USA at 78.

This is one perfect case study for senior citizens of the world, about a man who has taken on this huge responsibility. And we at the age of 60-65 think that everything is over.

So all senior citizens! Take this as your new beginning! Set your targets! You are still young!

Work hard and achieve what you could not achieve until now!

Courtesy: Internet

AGEING WITH DIGNITY AND GRACE

Tulsi Trust was established by the Chanrai family in 1975 with an aim to fulfil 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 :
My Safe Place: online activity programs
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 (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.



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VIEWPOINT

The festive month is here! Early October, on the 5th, is Dussehra, denoting victory of good over evil. Then comes Diwali on 24 October, followed by New Year and then Bhai Bhuj on 26 October, the day of exchanging blessings between brother and sister. All that noise of crackers up to a point is fun as we must have the forbearance to let youngsters enjoy, but at the same time we must understand low-intensity crackers should be in and a time limit set for it. And of course, a limit on the money spent for this. Wishful thinking!

Our October issue carries our support group meetings held off-line and online. A mention must be made of a special physical program for 'youth sensitization' in memory of Mrs Sushila Chanrai (trustee of Tulsi Trust) with students of Guru Nanak School of Bhandup. Another physical program included 'mobile technology training' but mention must be made of GL's visit to Narmada Niketan, the seniors old age home at CBD Belapur. At present, they house 90 people. Cost: Rs 8,000 per month with basic amenities provided. Online sessions included 'seniors learning from seniors' with some of them sharing experiences and others learning as a consequence. A session on osteoporosis was conducted by Dr Lad.

On 23 August, Graceful Living presented a Zoom talk by Ms Geeta Curumsey (guest speaker of the month). A Yoga teacher/therapist for the past 20 years, she firmly believes Yoga is a balance of the body, mind and breath. She explained basic principles of Yoga and stressed on various asanas and their importance. Our webinar on 'What do seniors want?' conducted by Mr Manoj Gursahani included panellists Mr Sharad Dicholkar, Mr Madhav Purohit and Mr Chaitanya Kalyanpur. Conclusion: Elders need financial/physical support and social recognition.

And more: A friend recently went through a bad phase when her good friend suddenly started ignoring her. She didn't understand why. There must have been a reason, I told her. But her answer was: the least she can do is send a whatsapp to say hi. It affected her so badly that she is now wary of friends and relationships. She says that it hit her hard and trusting again would not happen. Well, we are here to learn lessons from life. But to give up on relationships because of a one-timer? Life is more than that!

Asha Gurnani Vohra
Editor