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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

RECENT ACTIVITIES OF GRACEFUL LIVING

With Dr Chintamani Pant, a south Mumbai dentist. Our month's guest lecturer was Dr Pant (21 January) who spoke on the importance of looking after one's teeth, keeping the mouth clean and generally maintaining good, hygienic dental care. He mentioned about harmful infections in the gums and expressed the importance of visiting a dentist once every six months. His presentation was followed by an active question-answer session.

With My Retired Life Foundation. Organised by its founder-member, Dr Sengupta, an online session on the concept of logotherapy was conducted on 27 January by Ms Amruta who

explained how this therapy could be used to lead a meaningful life in old age. Seniors found this session unique and interesting.

With MMP Shah College. Graceful Living is conducting the Elder Companionship Course with third year Sociology students of MMP Shah College. The main purpose of this course is to enable students to understand how they can better understand older adults, be sensitive, and provide companionship through practical experience. Four sessions have been conducted so far by Dr Prem and Ms Amruta. Around 40 students of the College are attending the course.

SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS

- 'Growing old at home' was a subject taken up by Dr Prem on 18 January. He mentioned tips for seniors living alone. He said that it was important for them to jot down their queries when visiting doctors. Important points they need to have in mind: Keep a stock of medicines; meet friends and have meals with them; connect with neighbours; make changes/alterations at home as required; not share any secret pins (credit cards) with anyone on the mobile and keep children informed.
- An 'Ageing quiz' on 25 January, was conducted by Ms Amruta (attendance 37). It was on ageing in general. Participants were asked to name associations working for seniors. Few people did mention the name Graceful Living. They were asked to send their area of interest so as to organize better programs for them in the future.
- This meeting was conducted by 'Story Mitr' on 28 January. The subject was mainly on the importance of Republic Day followed by other topics related to India as it was held just after 26 January. An online game on travel ensured active participation by the seniors. It was fun time as correct answers were given virtual tickets.
- A meeting (4 February) was held on 'Looking forward to the new year for seniors'. Ms Amruta discussed how looking ahead in the future, introspection and goal setting for seniors was important. People shared their experiences, expectations and reflections. They were very happy to share their thoughts and there was active interaction amongst the participants. A total of 36 people attended the session.
- A physical meeting on 8 February was held after a long time with senior women members of 'Snehvardhini Mahila Mandal' (22 women members participated). Ms Amruta spoke on Gerontology, the need for studying it and how its principles could be applied to everyday life. The group participated actively and showed their interest for ongoing support group meetings on varied subjects such as logotherapy and so on.
- A paid session was conducted by 'Story Mitr' on 10 February. February 13, World Radio Day, was the theme. Radio has been an integral part of older adults' lives and experiences related to listening to the radio were talked about in the program. Ms Nandita and Ms Prakriti shared some noise/sounds made by electronic gadgets and participants were asked to identify these sounds. At the end of the meet, people were also asked to present a hypothetical radio show hosted by them.



Dr Phiroze Patel
Consultant, Ophthalmic Surgeon

The condition of glaucoma indicates a condition of a rise in EYE PRESSURE which causes damage to the optic nerve head and loss of vision. Normal eye pressure is 10-20 mm hg measured by *applanation tonometry* on the slit lamp (Gold standard). Various air puff non-contact techniques are used which are reliable too. Further studies such as corneal thickness, gonioscopy, fundus exam, field of vision, OCT of optic nerve head analysis are carried out to help in the diagnosis and management of this condition.

Hardly any symptoms in the **chronic** form (chronic simple glaucoma), the patient can feel the discomfort regarding this condition. Only an examination by your doctor can help in the diagnosis. Occasionally a painful eye with colour halos and loss of vision may suggest an **acute**

attack of glaucoma (acute angle closure glaucoma) when immediate attention is required. Contact the local hospital which has eye emergency facilities or a local eye doctor. It is known to occur in the evenings especially while watching television, usually in the 50-80 age group.

If there is a family history of glaucoma (mum, dad, brother, sister), myopia, hypertension, diabetes, please get yourself examined. If you are on steroids for any reason, glaucoma and cataract are always of concern.

The chronic form of glaucoma needs local drops to be put in the eyes, laser treatment or if the condition progresses, then surgery will be advised. This is with you for a lifetime and hence regular checks must be done to see that your vision and

ocular pressures are stable. Please take this seriously as it is a common cause of blindness worldwide.

The acute form needs immediate attention and occasionally admission too. The eye pressure is lowered with medication and laser treatment or surgery will subsequently follow to stabilize the eyes.

There are other forms of glaucoma which can be spotted during a regular eye examination. Your eye doctor will guide you. The important message is that once this is diagnosed, it is vital to have a regular follow up, diligent drops protocol to follow – forgetting to put the drops will only worsen the condition. The optic nerve fibres damaged by the higher pressures DO NOT regenerate and thus loss of vision/blindness sets in.

THE SHOW GOES ON...



Serena Franklin
Journalist

Another year and the pandemic still prevails...though hopefully it is petering out. It has hitherto been “a lockdown here and a lockdown there—open now, close now, mask on, mask down. Covid has to go... move on...and go”. I wish we all can shout and sing it from the rooftops and not just clang *thalis* and light candles.

We are well into the second month of 2022, and it has been two full years since the COVID pandemic plagued our world. Nowhere, nothing, no one has been spared— man, woman, child, the young and the old, animals, birds, and fish, industry and employment, travel and tourism, education and research, religions and rituals, politics and powers, wars and

violence— save one thing: Our Faith in God. I dare say this with full confidence, that religion and religious practices may have been compromised, but faith has stood the test of time and survived the crucible of the lockdown, suffering, pain, and death. Seniors and the home-bound have taken a massive hit during these days, not least because of the lack of human interaction and visits from friends and well-wishers.

Our faith and belief have stood the test of time. We have managed to keep above the waterline, bobbing up and down in sync with the fluid situation, and may continue for a while because of our prayers, attendance at services online and in-

person, whenever permitted which have kept our spirits up and how!

This month of February catapults us Christians into the beautiful season of Lent and springs of mercy and grace. Our hearts and minds are to be set ablaze with all things godly and gracious – divine repentance and metanoia (change in one's way of life). As we struggle on we will join our prayers and supplications with those of parents and students that they will do well in their Board exams and tests. Our “vale of tears” continues, Covid or otherwise, for the simple reason that life goes on, much the same way as the sun continues to rise and set each day. And as the adage goes... “the show must go on”.

“ You can’t go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending. ”

- C S LEWIS



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IS IT TRUE THAT THE PANDEMIC HAS MADE SENIORS LESS ACTIVE?

Health experts are concerned that the pandemic, in upending daily routines, has reduced mobility and physical conditioning in older adults

In normal times, Cindy Myers, an executive at a non-profit organization, is “not a real physical person,” she said. “I work at desk jobs. I’m not a big exerciser.” Still, before the pandemic, Dr Myers, who is 64 and has a doctorate in organization development, commuted from her home in Petaluma, California, to an office in San Francisco. She met friends for lunch or coffee, and she went to restaurants, theatres and lectures. “There was so much more variety in my life, more locations, more people,” she said. “You’re not cognizant of all the moves you’re making.”

Like many employees, Dr Myers has now been working remotely for two years, curtailing social and cultural events and forgoing travel. That shift, perhaps exacerbated by a bout of depression in 2020, has taken a physical toll, she said. Her limbs feel weak, her balance rocky; she has fallen several times.

“Basic kinds of movement you take for granted, like walking from one end of the house to the other, are exhausting,” she said. “I’m worried about it.”

Many health experts are worried about worsening physical conditioning and mobility among older adults since Covid-19 upended the daily routine. Recent research indicates that many of those who had mild to moderate infections, even some who have managed to avoid the virus altogether, may be suffering functional declines. Researchers have reported that, unsurprisingly, older adults whose Covid symptoms became serious enough to require hospitalization often contended with persistent physical and mental health problems.

“When you’re hospitalized and you’re older, it takes a long time to get back on your feet,” said Marla Beauchamp, who researches mobility, ageing and chronic disease at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario. “Covid is still impacting them in a significant way months and months later.”

But less severe disease can also affect their physical ability. Dr Beauchamp led a recent study of Canadians over 50 who had confirmed, probable or suspected Covid in 2020, when testing was not widely available. The study revealed worsened mobility among those with mild to moderate illness — 93 percent of whom were never hospitalized — compared with those without Covid.

“It’s a cascade of effects,” said Geoffrey Hoffman, a health-services researcher at the university’s School of Nursing and the lead author of the study. “You start with changes in activity levels. That results in worsened function. That in turn is associated with both falls and fear of falling.” Dr Beauchamp added: “It’s really concerning to see this decrease in mobility. This is telling us that the pandemic alone has had a significant impact on older adults.” Neither of these observational studies, in Canada or in the United States, explored reasons for the self-reported increase in physical decline. But their authors suggested that pandemic-related restrictions could have caused deconditioning, even in people who were not ill.

BY PAULA SPAN
Source: Internet

ALERT!

wave tail After Omicron, long battle with fatigue & muscle pain

Ref: Sunday Times of India, Mumbai, February 6, 2022

TESTIMONIALS: What people say about us...

- “ Ms Maya Mirchandani, Jaslok meetings regular attendee: I enjoyed your program on ‘Looking forward to the new year’. A “full of knowledge” session. Ms Amruta explained about happiness and its value in a relationship and the way out of problems. The subject of ego and then gratitude was a good dose of medicine for seniors. Thank you.
- “ Mr Anant Devlekar, Goregaon Seniors Group: GL’s Gupshup program on 28 January, ‘Around India in an hour’ was very enjoyable. The focus was on India because of 26 January, Republic Day. The speakers, Ms Nandita and Ms Prakriti were good. The games played were very enjoyable.
- “ Ms Latika Naik, Nana Nani School: I am referring to the quiz program, Brain Gym, conducted by Ms Amruta. Not only was it good but it actually exercised the brain which is what we seniors need. I appreciate such talks as I feel rejuvenated. Thank you Graceful Living.
- “ Ms Vijaylakshmi Shetty, My Retire Life Foundation: Ms Amruta’s very lucid and impressive lecture on 27 January well explained the concept of logotherapy and how to go about finding a meaning to life beyond mere happiness. It was very motivating and inspiring. Thank you so much, Graceful Living.
- “ Dr Vasant Bhumkar, regular attendee of support group meetings: The Gupshup program on ‘Radio Day’ was good. When listening to programs on the radio, the participating artistes seem more realistic and this enriches a listener’s experience. Thank you for bringing a smile on our faces.

MORE HUMOUR

Hospital regulations require a wheelchair for patients being discharged. However, while working as a student nurse, I found one elderly gentleman already dressed and sitting on the bed with a suitcase at his feet, who insisted he didn't need any help to leave the hospital. After a chat about rules being rules, he reluctantly let me wheel him to the elevator. On the way, I asked him if his wife was meeting him. He said, "I don't know, she's still in the bathroom changing out of her hospital gown."



A little old man shuffled slowly into an ice-cream parlor and pulled himself slowly, painfully, up onto a stool. After catching his breath, he ordered a banana split.

The waitress asked kindly, "Crushed nuts?"

"No," he relied, "Arthritis."



Feeling down about my thinning hair, I told a friend, "Soon I'll never need to go back to the beauty salon. Whenever I vacuum, all I pick up is my hair."

A glass-half-full kind of gal, she responded, "Well, then you won't need to vacuum either."



112-A Mittal Towers, Nariman Point,
Mumbai – 400 021. Tel. +91 22842006
Email: info@tulsitrust.org

www.tulsitrust.org



GRACEFUL LIVING
LOVE LIFE LIBERTY

Email: info@gracefulliving.co.in

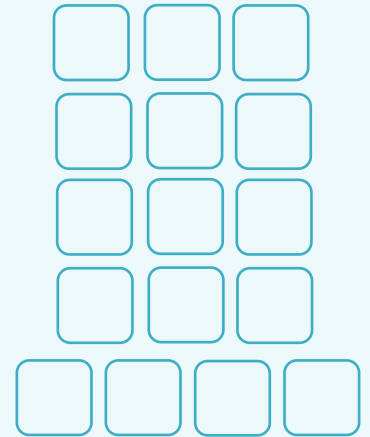
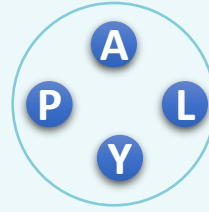
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FORM WORDS

From the letters in the circle below



VIEWPOINT

Are we still struggling with Covid? Not much at the present moment as numbers are low and we are feeling safer. But please do not let your guard down. Do wear your masks to keep/feel safe. Life can only get better and maybe, just maybe, by April this year, the pandemic will have completely left us. Let's hope and pray.

Our March issue comprises several activities: our guest speaker for the month was Dr Chintamani Pant, a recognized dentist of south Mumbai. He listed some dos and don'ts to maintain good 'pearly whites' along with some important considerations. My Retired Life Foundation, with its founder-member, Dr Sengupta at the helm, organised a session on logotherapy for its members which was conducted by Ms Amruta; MMP Shah College has joined hands with Graceful Living to conduct the Elder Companionship Course with its third year Sociology students. The purpose: to enable students to understand older adults better and work out an effective way to deal with them.

Our recent ongoing support group meetings included the following topics: 'Growing old at home' by Dr Prem; Ms Amruta's 'Looking forward to the new year', Story Mitr's India quiz, and its second session in February on the 'radio' as a vital medium of communication in the past; a physical meet after a long time with senior women members of 'Snehvardhini Mahila Mandal' where GL introduced the subject of Gerontology.

And now for some lingering thoughts...Met a few friends in the midst of greenery in an open air area. We sat chatting away after ages, drinking coffee and eating sandwiches. Suddenly, two of my friends who hadn't really been out socially in the last two years other than the necessary provision shopping and the occasional doctor's visit seemed to be content with a smile that lights up the face. They exclaimed at the power of nature and its beauty. It was a realisation after being indoors for so long without time to appreciate life despite hardships. This is what the pandemic has done: post the lockdown, an attitude of gratitude, thankfulness and awe.

Asha Gurnani Vohra
Editor