

Vol 3. Issue 6. June 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



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## HEALTH SECRETS

Want to keep your mind and body healthy over time? Here are some top insights from the most popular stories published

### 1. For successful ageing, recognize one's issues and adapt accordingly.

So said Jane Brody, our Personal Health columnist, after she turned 80. Inspired by Steven Petrow's book, *"Stupid Things I Won't Do When I Get Old,"* Ms Brody took an inventory of her own life and decided what she no longer needed to do (colour her hair; talk about aches and pains to anyone who will listen) and what she is unwilling to give up (walking her dog in the woods). "Sooner or later, we all must recognize what is no longer possible and find alternatives," Ms Brody wrote. In her case, that has meant giving up ice skating, but still taking 10-mile bike rides.

### 2. The more your gut microbiome changes, the better.

You may be able to predict your likelihood of living a long life by analysing the trillions of bacteria, viruses and fungi that inhabit your intestinal tract, Anahad O'Connor reported, citing a promising study.

The findings suggest that a gut microbiome that continually transforms as you get older is a sign of healthy ageing. "People who had the most changes in their microbial compositions tended to have better health and longer life spans," Mr O'Connor wrote. "They had higher vitamin D levels and lower levels of LDL cholesterol and triglycerides, a type of fat in the blood. They needed fewer medications, and they had better physical health, with faster walking speeds and greater mobility."



### 3. 'Cognitive Super-Agers' may hold clues to how we can keep our brains in shape.

Ms Brody reported on a study out of the Netherlands that focused on "cognitive super-agers" — people who approach the end of the human life span with brains that function as if they were 30 years younger. By studying centenarians, researchers hope to identify reliable characteristics and develop treatments that would result in healthy cognitive ageing for most of us. Meanwhile, Ms Brody reported, there is much we can do now to keep our brains in tiptop condition. These centenarians tend to maintain good vision and hearing, and past research has revealed lifestyle factors that contribute to resilience such as obtaining a high level of quality education; holding occupations that deal with complex facts and data; consuming a Mediterranean-style diet; engaging in leisure activities; socializing with other people; and exercising regularly, Ms Brody wrote.

### 4. The sweet spot for longevity lies around 7,000 steps a day (or 30 minutes of exercise).

To increase our chances for a long life, we probably should take at least 7,000 steps a day or engage in sports such as tennis, cycling, swimming, jogging or badminton for more than 2.5 hours per week, Gretchen Reynolds reported, based on two large studies.

Accumulate and measure your activities "in whatever way works for you," a professor who led one of the studies told Ms Reynolds. "Step counting may work well for someone who does not have the time to fit in a longer bout of exercise. But if a single bout of exercise fits best with your lifestyle and motivations that is great as well. The idea is just to move more."



### 5. Older couples are thriving while 'living apart together'.

Older people are increasingly partnering and re-partnering in various forms, Francine Russo wrote, but for women in particular, there's a fear "that a romantic attachment in later life will shortly lead to full-time caregiving." One solution may be living apart together, meaning you can maintain a long-term committed romantic relationship without sharing, or intending to share, a home.

"I have friends who say they never want to meet anybody unless they're 10 or 15 years younger, because they see it as having to move in and be the sole caretaker," one 81-year-old woman practicing "living apart together" told Ms Russo. "I wasn't about to do that. I think I have the best of two worlds."

### 6. Dr Fauci has a few ageing tips, too.

Who better to share tips for ageing well than an 81-year-old who has dedicated his career to public health? Dr Anthony S Fauci, who has led the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases for 37 years spoke to Ms Brody when she joined the octogenarian's club this year about staying fit and focused.

His tips: "Take care of yourself, get some reasonable sleep, don't get overcome by stress, include a good diet. Enjoy life, but don't do things in excess. Exercise is really important. I think that the fact that I've been a marathon and 10K runner for the last multiple decades has been very important in my staying fit, looking fit and feeling fit."

Courtesy: The New York Times (Internet)

Advice from Well's most popular stories. NYT Health



# OLDER ADULTS & THE NEW NORMAL

**1. Be kind to your skin.** Your skin is your body's largest OrganTrusted Source. If you treat it with care, it can better protect your body from the elements, regulate your body temperature, and provide sensation. To keep it looking and functioning at its best: \* Wear sunscreen and protective clothing when outside. \*Get yearly skin cancer screenings. \*Stick to gentle products in your anti-ageing skin care routine. \*Stay hydrated.

**2. Exercise.** Regular exercise significantly lowers your risk of diseases, such as heart disease and cancer, and helps you retain your mobility longer. Exercise also lowers stress and improves sleep, skin and bone health, and mood. Recommended: 1.25 to 2.5 hours per week of vigorous-intensity aerobic exercise, or a combination of the two; muscle strengthening activities of moderate intensity or greater, that involve all major muscle groups, two or more days per week; Some examples of aerobic exercise include: walking, swimming, dancing, cycling. Muscle- and bone-strengthening exercises can be performed using weights or resistance bands.



**3. Mind your diet.** Healthy foods are the way to go when it comes to ageing gracefully. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans Trusted Source recommends that you eat: fruits and vegetables, either fresh, frozen, or canned lean protein, such as fish and beans; at least three ounces of whole-grain cereals, breads, rice, or pasta

every day, three servings of low-fat or fat-free dairy, such as milk, yogurt or cheese that are fortified with vitamin D, healthy fats. Avoid using solid fats for cooking and use oils instead. Note: Stay away from processed foods, refined sugars, and unhealthy fats, minimum salt intake.

**4. Mental health matters.** Being happy and keeping your stress down goes a long way in helping you live and age well. To keep your mood elevated: Spend time with friends and loved ones. Meaningful relationships and a strong social network improve mental and physical well-being and longevity. Don't forget your furry loved ones as having a pet has been linked to lower stress and blood pressure, reduced loneliness, and better moods. Also, accept your age. There is evidence that people who maintain a positive attitude about ageing live longer and may recover better from a disability. Ageing is inevitable and learning to embrace it can make all the difference, and do things you enjoy.



**5. Stay physically active.** Numerous studies have linked a sedentary life to an increased risk of chronic illness and early death. Some options to stay active are going on walks and hikes, taking vacations, and participating in group exercise classes.

**6. Lower your stress.** The effects of stress on your body are vast, ranging from premature ageing and wrinkles to a higher risk of heart disease. To relieve stress: use relaxation techniques such as meditation, breathing exercises, and yoga; exercising; getting adequate sleep lowers the risk of heart disease/ stroke and obesity, reduces stress and depression, and improves focus and concentration.

**7. Quit smoking and decrease alcohol consumption.** Smoking and alcohol have both been shown to cause premature ageing and increase the risk of disease. Recommended: one drink per day for women and two drinks per day for men.

**8. Find new hobbies.** Finding new and meaningful hobbies can help you maintain a sense of purpose and keep you engaged throughout the course of your life.



**9. Practice mindfulness.** Mindfulness is about acceptance and living in the moment by focusing on the present. Practising mindfulness has many proven health benefits that can help you age better.

**10. Drink plenty of water.**



**11. Take care of your mouth.** Not taking care of your teeth not only ages your smile, but also puts you at risk for gum disease, which has been linked to heart disease, stroke, and bacterial pneumonia. According to the American Dental Association, a dentist can spot signs of nutritional deficiencies, infection, cancer, and other illnesses, such as diabetes. They recommend brushing twice a day, flossing once a day, and using a mouth rinse.

**12. See a doctor regularly.** Seeing a doctor regularly can help the doctor find problems early or even before they start.

*Medically reviewed by Cynthia Cobb, DNP, APRN, WHNP-BC, FAANP — Written by Adrienne Santos-Longhurst on June 18, 2019. EvidenceTrusted Source*

“ Health is not valued till sickness comes ”  
-Thomas Fuller

## SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS OF GL

### Physical

- A physical support group meeting was held with Snehavardhan Seniors Association on April 12. Meeting point: Snehavardhan, Andheri. The main purpose was to discuss the needs of senior members of Snehavardhan and also how their association could be strengthened. Members shared their thoughts and interest in volunteering in nearby organisations. Attendance: 40.
- A meeting with Dombivali Seniors Association was held at Jyestha Nagrik Kalyankari Sanstha, Saraswat Colony, Dombivali East. A quiz on the epics, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* was the crux. Seniors participated enthusiastically and shared stories related to the same.
- A physical meeting was conducted at Dosti Acres Senior Citizens group at Wadala on April 25. This was a quiz on *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*; 27 people were present. The program was very successful as people participated with great enthusiasm.
- The main purpose of this meeting on 26 April was to introduce Echoing Healthy Ageing and their group sessions for cognitive stimulation to members of Arya Chanakya Nagar Seniors Association. There were 50 attendees. Amruta Lovekar spoke about why cognitive stimulation is necessary and Amrita Patil Pimpale explained in detail about group sessions. More than 10 people showed interest and have given their names for attending these sessions.

### Online

- The online meeting held on 19 April was in collaboration with Rotary Club of Bombay Hills South and My Safe Place. The purpose of this meeting was to explore art-based skills in seniors (making of book-marks - Mandala art). Ms Vaishnavi Luniya conducted the session, explained Mandala Art and demonstrated how the book-mark is made. She gave instructions and explained the process in a lucid and simple manner; 32 seniors actively participated.
- This meeting on 28 April was conducted by National Burns Centre on skin donation. A total of 27 people attended the session. Mrs Sanketa Tambe and Ms Shruti Dukhande conducted the session. They explained how the skin is removed, stored and finally used.
- The purpose of this meeting on 5 May was to explore and showcase skills and talents of seniors. Some of the talents presented at this meeting included poems, singing rare, old songs, whistling and mimicry; 10 performances in all were given by seniors. Attendance: 42 seniors.
- A meeting was conducted by Dr Prem on 'Dengue in Older Adults' on 10 May. Dr Prem explained dengue symptoms, its causes and emphasised on the preventive and self-care measures. About 27 seniors attended the meet.

## RECENT EVENTS OF GRACEFUL LIVING

**With Dr Pervin Dadachanji, psychiatrist.** Our guest lecturer on March 22 was Dr Pervin Dadachanji, a practising psychiatrist since the last 25 years, with a special interest in child and adolescent psychiatry. In this Zoom talk, she addressed the problem of depression in the elderly. She mentioned that support and self-help groups were of great help to those undergoing depression. She discussed its causes and symptoms and the way forward and talked about the treatment.

**With Mr Nitten Mahadik, Mindfulness practitioner.** Mr Mahadik spoke about 'mindfulness' = to enhance one's well-being and happiness as a way of life. A certified 'Search Inside Yourself' teacher, he has conducted several workshops on the subject. In this Zoom talk on 22 April, he discussed ways to cultivate mindfulness and be more aware of our inner existence – really looking at life outside and within ourselves with full consciousness. "Pain is inevitable, suffering is a choice," he quoted from the *Bhagwad Gita*.



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## TRAINING COURSES

### Elder Companionship Course with Sociology students of MMP Shah College:

One physical and one online session was conducted by Dr Prem and Amruta. After its completion, an exam was held on 12 May. Graceful Living was also involved in arranging field work opportunities for students. Organisations for field work included Silver Amore at Bhayander, Sahabhaav Premium Care Home for Seniors at Andheri and Jeevan Anand Sanstha at Virar.



## WEBINAR

Graceful Living conducted its 19<sup>th</sup> Webinar on 30 April. Topic: 'Why learning should be a part of ageing'... The panelists for the webinar were: Mrs Manasi Golwalkar, technology mentor for senior citizens, Dr Pettarusp Wadia, consultant neurologist, Jaslok Hospital, Mr Madhav Purohit, secretary and founder of Arya Chanakya Senior Citizens Association at Kandivali and Dr Prem. The webinar was moderated by Amruta. All the panelists stressed that the learning process in an elderly was and is extremely beneficial and does good for the brain. This webinar was attended by 30 people and 150 people have viewed it on Facebook.

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



**Ms Mangla Kadam, Member, Goregaon Seniors Group.** I have been attending Graceful Living meetings since the last four months. GL always does its best for senior citizens by arranging the right programs required for them. I have attended the multi-lingual songs meet and the *Gupshup* sessions. On World Health Day, a meeting conducted by Dr Prem on Healthy Life & Healthy Ageing was really good. Keep it up.



**Ramakant Kamat, Savali Seniors Association, Thane.** The workshop for seniors associations held on 23 March was very well conducted. Each session was well explained and gave ample information for seniors, even regarding government schemes.



**Rajesh Nadkarni, Kurla Seniors Association.** Very nicely organised Zoom meeting; audio and video quality simply superb. People sang without hesitation, recitation of poems and stories was also good. My suggestion: each person should get just five minutes. My humble request to give me a chance to play/sing on stage (Karaoke) which is my passion. All the best for your future plans.



**Anuradha Deshpande, Dosti Acres Group, Wadala.** The talent show arranged by Graceful Living was very encouraging/interesting for senior citizens. All in all, a total success.



**Arun Rao, Goregaon Seniors Association.** I was a first-time participant in the Zoom meet of 5 May. I enjoyed singing and listening to others. An excellent concept by Graceful Living to engage senior citizens and exhibit their various talents like singing, story-telling and poetry recitation. I appreciate the sincere efforts put in by the Graceful Living team. Keep up the good work.



Everything is within your power,  
And your power is within you.



- Janice Trachman



## 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 :

**Story Mitr:** story-telling

**Mrs Manasi Golwalkar:** technology training

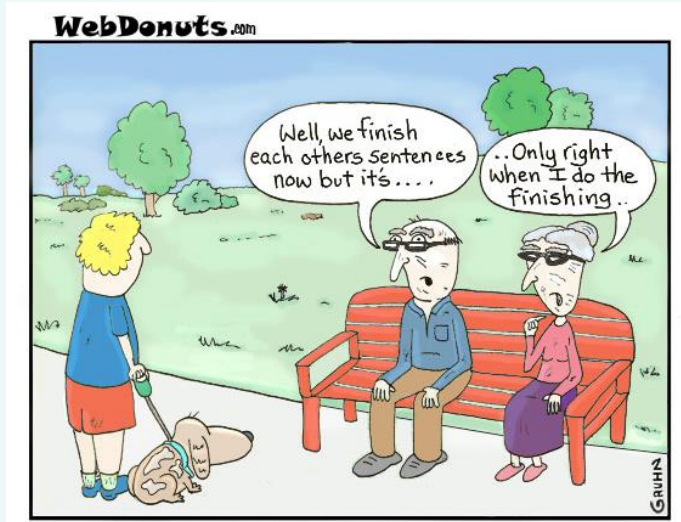
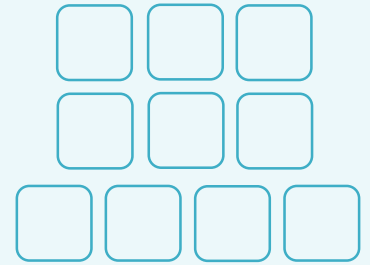
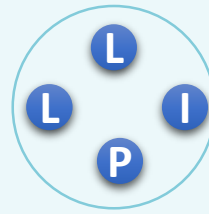
Sensitization programs for school/college students to create an awareness of the needs and issues of the elderly.s

### 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.

## FORM WORDS

From the letters in the circle below



## VIEWPOINT

We are opening the June issue with more health information for the elderly ... 'Health Secrets' to successful ageing. This article appeared in *The New York Times* ... take an inventory of your life, recognise that you are getting older and don't shy away from displaying signs of old age like grey hair, exercising regularly, socialising, consuming a good diet, walking those 7000 steps. You may be surprised at the results: this will keep your brains in tiptop condition and you can become one of those "cognitive super-agers" who approach the end of the human life span with brains that function as if they were 30 years younger. And more ... on minding your health!

Our support group meetings include some physical, some online, all of course of interest to our seniors. A quiz on the epics once again, exploring art-based skills in seniors, add to that an unusual subject...skin donation (Mrs Sanketa Tambe and Ms Shruti Dukhande conducted the session) on how the skin is removed, stored and finally used and Dr Prem on Dengue and issues that can trouble the elderly. We had two interesting Zoom guest lectures: On 22 March, Dr Pervin Dadachanji, a practising psychiatrist addressed the problem of depression among the elderly. The second guest lecturer, Mr Nitten Mahadik, Mindfulness practitioner, spoke about ways to enhance one's well-being and happiness as a way of life. In this Zoom talk on 22 April, he discussed ways to cultivate mindfulness and be more aware of our inner existence.

Graceful Living conducted its 19<sup>th</sup> Webinar on 30 April. Topic: 'Why learning should be a part of ageing'. All the four panelists stressed that learning for the elderly was and is extremely beneficial and does a lot to increase brain activity.

And now for some personal observations. April-May was a heavy (cricket) month as the IPL matches were held in our 'Amchi Mumbai'. The city was agog with activity and movement as the matches were held at Cricket Club Of India, Wankhede Stadium and D Y Patil Stadium. I was lucky to attend some of these matches. Honestly, who was playing with whom didn't matter; just watching the cricketers play was enough. And the most exhilarating part was the electrifying atmosphere. Excitement everywhere amidst fun and frolic. Lucky us, Mumbai-ites.

**Asha Gurnani Vohra**  
Editor



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