



NEWSLETTER

Friends of Max

(October - December 2017)



FEATURE STORY: MAXIMO

MAXIMO AND THE BIG C

It is more than four years since "Maximo and the Big C", the story of the little bird who found both his wings and the courage to fight the fear, was introduced to the world.

Here are the people who brought you Maximo's story in a beautifully crafted book.

Author: Viji Venkatesh, a cancer advocate in Mumbai, India who is endearingly known to patients as "Amma" meaning Mother. She has dedicated 35 years of her life to serving and supporting people living with cancer in her community. She is widely respected in cancer circles and has worked with The Max Foundation for over sixteen years.

Illustrations and Design: Wen Huei Fan is one of the founders and the most dedicated volunteer of Max Family, the Malaysian organization that supports people living with chronic myeloid leukemia (CML) in Malaysia. Fan is a 15-year CML survivor who continues to inspire the community daily through his service and his graphic art.

Original story concept: Maria Isabel Gomez de Soriano is from Caracas, Venezuela where she led for many years

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Pat and Viji at the first international reading of Maximo in Beijing



Fan and Pat with the original inspiration for Maximo



Maria Isabel proudly holds her first copy of the book

AMMA SPEAKS

The anticipation of pain. The endurance of pain. The loneliness of the sufferer. The ordeal of caregivers watching a loved one walk alone.

Simplifying the dread and strengthening the mind - making a small difference in the minds of youngsters who have to learn to cope with pain at such an early stage of their lives. Giving hope. Stepping in to their shoes and world. And getting them to "see" their experience in their terms.

These thoughts along with a story idea by wise Maria Isabel, deft touches by the creative genius of Fan and with invaluable encouragement from Pat, resulted in the recognition of a world peopled by Maximos. A tale waiting to be told and re-told.

As an author the work was in a sense, a catharsis.

With the continued support of Being Human -The Salman Khan Foundation, we are planning a reprint - to reach more children whom Nature has paradoxically "blessed" with more courage than we can imagine.

- Viji Venkatesh



Salman Khan and Viji with the latest copy of Maximo and the Big C

True Exemplars

Every month we choose a Volunteer from the Friends of Max fold: people whose courage in the face of adversity is exemplary.

OCTOBER:



Ushakant Shah
from Ahmedabad: is a
FOM Trustee

NOVEMBER:



Vir Krishen Bhatt
from Jammu: is an
auditor by profession

DECEMBER:



Sandhya Venugopal Godey
from Vizag: is a devoted
social worker

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the effort to support people living with CML and other cancers in her home country. Maria Isabel is a CML survivor, the founder and President of Association of Help for Hemato-oncological Patient (ASAPHE), and a recognized figure in cancer advocacy throughout Latin America.

It is **Pat Garcia-Gonzalez**, CEO of The Max Foundation based in Seattle USA who brought these three people together and enthused them to work on Maximo. Fan had already created the little blue bird in whom Pat had seen great potential and then Maria Isabel gave her a one-page story line outlining an inspiring story about a little bird. Pat eagerly invited Viji to write the story and Fan to breathe life and colour into Viji's words.

And so Maximo was born.

His story was translated into several languages and children in hospitals the world over received their own copies. Maximo's story was read out to them and acted out even by dedicated volunteers and advocates and Fan even created a fun Colouring Book for the eager little ones.

Soon we realized Maximo was everyone's favourite and demand for the book grew in great numbers.

In India and the sub continent, it was Salman Khan and his Being Human Foundation who helped us translate and print Maximo and the Big C in all the Indian languages.

Now, once again he has come forward to add his support and Maximo and the Big C goes into print once again ...



“

Viji Venkatesh is one amazing woman. I admire the boundless energy and enthusiasm with which she approaches her work at the Max Foundation and the compassionate and empathetic manner in which she works with patients and their families. So I don't know how, when and where she managed to pull out time to write a book but, well, she has, and it's a wonderful story and beautifully told with words and pictures and is designed to appeal to all ages. She said it's about a dabangg sparrow so would I read it and write an introduction to the book and would Being Human: The Salman Khan Foundation please help with the book in any way. I said it would be a pleasure to read the book, I don't know who would read the introduction and Being Human would be happy to support the book in any way. So here we are. The really interesting bit comes when you turn the page.

”

Salman Khan





Roll of Honour - Our Clinical Co-ordinators



Purvang Shukla

of Gujarat Cancer & Research Institute (Ahmedabad), is a post graduate in clinical research and has been associated with the Max Foundation and Friends of Max for 8 years. Outside of work, activities like cricket, badminton and listening to music keep him occupied.



Jitender Kumar

is a MSW from Himachal Pradesh University and works at PGIMER Chandigarh as clinical co-ordinator. He has been associated with the Max Foundation and FOM for more than six years; he is an avid reader in his spare time.



Riddhi ("Pinky") Rakesh Adawade

a BA graduate, has been with Tata Memorial Hospital (Mumbai) and committed to helping us at the Max Foundation, for 11 years. She sees every crisis as an opportunity to help others and improve herself. Her "likes" include cooking and listening to music.



Swapnil Sudheer Chavan

a post graduate in clinical research, has been with ACTREC (Kharghar) the state-of-the-art R&D satellite of the Tata Memorial Hospital in Mumbai, for 7 years. Music and cooking are his hobbies.



Subhash Kisan Sable

has about 14 years' experience in the field and is now working in Dr Jayant Indurkar's clinic in Aurangabad. He loves running and singing and is a genuine social worker at heart.



Tamilselvi

has been in various departments of Adayar Cancer Centre (Chennai) for nearly two decades, the last 4 years as Chief Co-ordinator. Adept at routine administrative functions, she uses her extensive knowledge to encourage and counsel patients.

Endless hours of seamlessly weaving between physicians, patients and Max Stations is the lot of overworked clinical co-ordinators - the silent and happy benefactors that inhabit crowded corridors in Govt hospitals all over India. A quick but kind smile, a hushed reassurance to a distraught patient, fielding telephone calls from harried patients, checking medical records, every day 6 days a week -- these are young, unheralded professionals who have dedicated their lives to making patients more comfortable. Beyond the call of duty, they are welcome contributors at every FOM Patient Group Meeting at their hospitals.

We feature six clinical co-ordinators who have done their profession proud and are key to the Max Foundation and Friends of Max's managing nearly 20000 CML and GIST patients since 2002.

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Twitter : @vijivenkatesh

To Donate: cheques should be drawn in favour of Friends of Max and couriered to our office in Worli (Mumbai); to donate online visit www.friendsofmax.info; Receipts u/s 80 G of Income Tax Act, 1961 will be issued. Friends of Max is registered as a Public Charitable Trust: Regn No E-24284(B) Mumbai, dated 4-7-2007