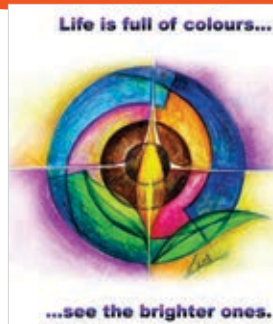




# NEWSLETTER Friends of Max

(April-June 2018)



## AMMA SPEAKS

The idea of life being a train ride to symbolise our journey from birth to end of life struck me all of a sudden, several years ago. At that stage, I had spent over two decades in the field of cancer advocacy and care.

Taking the lead for the Max Foundation in India and managing the thousands of patients under our care, made me realise the acute need for an advocacy group that could bring patients on lifelong therapy & caregivers closer to each other and establish a platform for sharing authentic information that most patients were denied access to. Add to that the human touch.

We are all in a sense, travellers on a journey called 'life'; some alas, have to disembark on a darkling plain . . . struggling to make sense of some twist of fate. While others can measure their happiness or life in landmark events, which are shared with family and friends, the CML & GIST patient is at first essentially isolated and cast into a different world.

It becomes our duty to help in any way possible. This edition of the newsletter is a salute to the efforts of many who add value and comfort to the lives of CML & GIST patients and caregivers.

- Viji Venkatesh

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### FEATURE STORY: LIFE, INTERRUPTED



Mumbai 2017

While the journey of life, akin to a train journey, unfolds for many without anything untoward happening, for the CML and GIST patient it involves 'getting off' at unscheduled stops and enduring severe emotional and physical trials. It then falls upon themselves to care for each other, to seek and find a "parallel track" and reach not so much a promised land, but a "new normal". To stop together for a while at each station, to help make sense of their situation and to help each other find fresh resolve to carry on to the same destination as everyone else. Because Cancer is not the end of life.

"This dream led us at The Max Foundation to take our first, tentative steps without a fully charted out plan but with a shared

passion. Our dream was to establish a cohesive system, a network that would involve not only a host of others to support patients and caregivers but to get them to gel and grow organically, to carve a niche for a distinctive personality named Friends of Max, our Support Group Arm," says Viji Venkatesh.

Geographical reach and emotional reach with firm advocacy were our objectives.

This track to a 'new normal' involves other persons, guides, mentors, professionals, family and friends and of course The Max Foundation and its support agency Friends of Max whose "reach" covers nearly 18000 patients in all corners of India. The system offers a variety of separate but

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Bhubaneswar 2016



## Life, Interrupted - Continued from Page 1

interconnected influences that make this “stoppage time” only a stop before getting back on track armed with more meaningful knowledge.

Initial feelings are of shock and dismay, isolation and fear which often create a vacuum that our Patient Group Meetings needed to fill. The parallel track takes patients to a new normal where life can not only still be productive and useful by society's standards but also gives many patients the opportunity to see life differently and probably even share with those 'without' small lessons in resilience. A redefinition of 'normal' is possible and indeed appreciated and admired by all.

**A Patient Group Meeting is a beehive: Together We Share and Learn.**

Setting up a dozen Patient Group Meetings in 12 cities all over India every year involves a host of activities: homing in on a city or town, out-calling / encouraging patients and caregivers to attend, co-ordinating with City Chapter Leaders, physicians and vendors, for hospital auditorium or venue as the case may be ...

These Meetings fulfil a need. The gap between acceptance of one's 'condition' and falling into depression is often a lack of knowledge because the environment is sullied by misinformation, hearsay and superstition which is compounded by isolation. Just an exchange of experiences and knowledge between patients, caregivers, physicians can mean so much.



Nashik 2016



Vizag 2016



Bangkok 2016



Kolkata 2017



Mumbai 2016



Mumbai 2016



Mumbai 2015

## Sessions at Meetings

- Drama therapy
- Art therapy
- Music therapy
- Q&A sessions
- Advocacy
- International knowledge sharing
- Volunteer Training
- Compliance Workshops
- CML & GIST Quiz





Chennai 2016



Guwahati 2017



Nashik 2016



Mumbai 2018

## Hospitals

Premier Cancer Institutions that have supported the Max Foundation & Friends of Max by hosting our Support Group Meetings. Here is the list of hospitals-

1. Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh
2. Indira Gandhi Institute Of Medical Sciences, Patna
3. All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Patna
4. Tata Medical Centre, Kolkata
5. Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai
6. Advanced Centre for Treatment, Research and Education in Cancer (ACTREC), Navi Mumbai
7. Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences, Hyderabad
8. Kidwai Memorial Institute of Oncology, Bangalore
9. Adyar Cancer Institute, Chennai
10. Sir Gangaram Hospital, Delhi
11. Basavataarakam Indo American Cancer Hospital & Research Institute, Hyderabad
12. Sawai Man Singh Hospital, Jaipur
13. Amrita Institute of Medical Sciences, Kochi
14. Lakeshore Hospital, Kochi
15. Malabar Institute of Medical Sciences Ltd., Calicut
16. Regional Cancer Centre, Thiruvananthapuram
17. Meenakshi Mission Hospital, Madurai
18. United CIIGMA hospital, Aurangabad
19. Acharya Tulsi Regional Cancer Treatment & Research Institute, Bikaner, Rajasthan



Chandigarh 2016



Chandigarh 2017

20. Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Institute and Research Centre, Delhi
21. The Gujarat Cancer & Research Institute, Ahmedabad
22. Bombay Hospital & Medical Research Centre, Mumbai
23. Sahyadri Speciality Hospital, Pune
24. Mazumdar Shaw Medical Centre, Bangalore
25. Kasturba Medical College, Mangalore
26. St John's Medical College Hospital, Bangalore
27. Healthcare Global Enterprises, Bangalore
28. Welcare Hospital, Kochi
29. G Kuppuswamy Naidu Memorial Hospital, Coimbatore
30. Coimbatore Kidney Centre, Coimbatore
31. Artemis Hospital, Gurgaon
32. Shri Kshetra Dharmasthala, Dharwad



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**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](http://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