

Gratitude

In December 2019, a novel coronavirus called Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS- CoV- 2) caused an outbreak of Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) in Wuhan, China. By 27th January 2020, the first reported case emerged in Kerala, India. By 11th March, WHO had declared COVID-19 as a pandemic. On 24th March, the Indian govt announced the first nationwide lockdown.

Although it is a respiratory disease, which means the coronavirus mostly affects the lungs, the heart has to work extra hard to make up for the decreased lung capacity in pumping oxygen-rich blood throughout the body. Studies show that cancer patients, being immunocompromised, are at a slightly higher risk than the average Joe. Chances of organ-related complications increase when a cancer patient who has undergone radiation therapy or chemotherapy, develops a coronavirus infection. The situation gets even worse when we talk about aged patients and survivors.

As the weeks of lockdown rolled over to months, the world had to start adapting to this new way of life. Oncologists and cancer patients were not spared either. Dependency on technology increased manifold as physical consultations were replaced by teleconsultations and

logistics companies began filling the gap between pharmacies and patients. We at Friends Of Max also had to improvise our ways as our Support Group Meetings shifted to virtual platforms.

The road to the “new normal” was not all smooth, but at every bump along the way, our various stakeholders and our proactive community stood firmly by our side, at times paving new ways so that we can continue our service at our fullest potential.

This edition of Friends Of Max's newsletter is dedicated to such people who went above and beyond their responsibilities to serve those in need, and whose lives' motto is truly “Service Before Self”. We offer our heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of you.

- Aashray Paul,
Communications Manager, Friends of Max

A message from the Trustees Forever thankful to Team Max!

Any plan without great execution remains just that - a plan.

And when it comes to plans made by Friends of Max - whether a patient support group meeting, ensuring delivery of medicines to patients or

the Leadership Summit - none of them would have materialised and succeeded without the untiring efforts of the wonderful people at The Max Foundation.

We, the Trustees at Friends of Max, would like to profusely thank each and every Max Team member for their selfless commitment to the welfare of the FOM community even in the face of unprecedented challenges posed by the pandemic.

Amma Speaks

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair.

- Charles Dickens, A Tale of Two Cities

Over and over these past few months, my mind kept going to these very words when I had to define the times we are going through now – “the best of times, the worst of times...” As we enter what seems like a “Winter of Despair” let us know that the “Spring of Hope” will follow.

This was brought home to me last week

when one of our Friends of Max City Chapter Leaders was visiting Mumbai (from his little town in the South India) and asked me if I could meet him for a short while over a cup of chai. We chose a “safe” meeting place, had that chai together and spent a most rewarding hour catching up. No matter we could not hug each other like we always do when we meet.

So, this was the first patient I was meeting in all these long months. When on an average I see and interact with at least a dozen patients a day, one can imagine the feeling. Seeing Karthikeyan was like seeing all the Friends of Max. So many empty spaces in the heart were filled with hope. Something in me told me this was the beginning of our “back to normal” journey.

When Karthikeyan told me as we took leave of each other, “Amma, we are nothing without The Max Foundation”, a myriad of Gratitude was foremost. To be in a position to help, to have the resources to support each other and to have so many of our partners and well-wishers come forward to offer their help – this has been the narrative of the Pandemic that has unfolded in front of our eyes.

It has not been an easy year for any of us but we have somehow survived. Our heartfelt gratitude to each and every one who has done everything possible to make life better for the patients.

- Viji Venkatesh,
Managing Trustee, Friends of Max and Region Head
(India & South Asia), The Max Foundation



Clinical Coordinators

Special thanks to all our Clinical Coordinators for making themselves available for any help that was required of them. Their kindness and courage as frontline warriors through these wonderful and selfless acts of service have touched all our lives and given us hope in these unprecedented times.



CHANDIGARH



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Post Graduate Institute
of Medical Education
& Research

DELHI



Niharika Bhatia & Rajni Arora
Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Institute
& Research Center

JAIPUR



Pramod Basotiya
Mahatma Gandhi
Medical College

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Shaik Ismail
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CHENNAI



Selvi Nandaperiyasamy
Adyar Cancer Institute

BENGALURU



Kalavathi
Kidwai Memorial Hospital



Kerala Fire and Rescue Services

In this moment of darkness and uncertainty, the Aluva Fire Department stepped up to extend their support to our patients. The Fire Department sent their own personnel to collect medicines for more than 60 patients from the dispensing outlet and delivered the supply to them. We are extremely grateful for their assistance under these difficult circumstances.

The weeks following the COVID-19 outbreak and the lockdown were a difficult time for everyone. It had been especially so for our patients who had been affected by the travel restrictions and faced with many challenges in collecting their prescriptions and medicines while dealing with their cancer diagnosis.

We salute the services rendered by the Fire Department for going above and beyond their call of duty and standing up for those affected by this pandemic. These heroes have selflessly worked towards providing succour for those who are deeply impacted by the crisis. Words become superfluous as we



express our sincere thanks to each and everyone who came forward to serve others by risking their own health.

Thank You.



Kerala Police Department

Kerala has been a role model in the fight against COVID-19. The Police Department rose up to the occasion and delivered on all fronts. They played a very active and frontline role in helping patients get their medicines during the lockdown. Patients who were unable to travel due to restrictions imposed in the respective area, reached out to the Police Department who implemented ways of getting the supply and delivering it to the patients. The steps taken by the police department were unique and were applauded globally too.



City Chapter Leaders

Nothing is more important to our patients than being able to have their medication on time and in an uninterrupted fashion. We all know that compliance is paramount to our health and well-being.

The pandemic and the ensuing lockdown saw many of our patients unable to make it to the dispensation outlet especially when restrictions were extreme and fear of infection at its worst height. It was at a time like this that some of our City Chapter Leaders came to the help of their brethren in distress and facilitated the collection of their supplies.

**Friends of Max
salutes your spirit
of service!**



Rajiv Kumar,
Guwahati



Suresh Pawar,
Mumbai

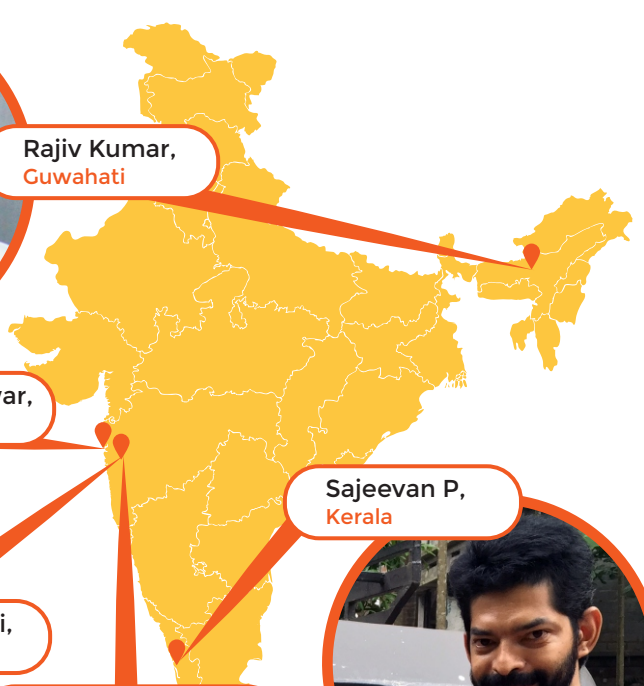


Milan Hakani,
Pune



Shashikant Jakhade,
Pune

Sajeevan P,
Kerala



Chaithon!



CML requires life-long treatment and care. Chai for Cancer helps patients cover costs for travel, lodging, monitoring tests (BCR-ABL), nutrition needs, etc. The support we receive also helps in compiling and printing educational material in English and other regional languages as well as in organizing patient support group meetings all over India.

Chai For Cancer launched a special edition of Chaithon on 22nd September i.e. World CML Day. Its purpose was to encourage patients, caregivers and advocates to show the world that they are spreading goodness, even in the times of a pandemic.

The Chaithon campaign was launched on 22nd September with more than 200 Friends of Max CML patients who had joined us virtually to share and learn together with their treating physicians and The Max Foundation Team. Our supporters helped our cause by donating online on our website (www.chaiforcancer.org), as well as sharing their selfies with a cup of chai on social media and inviting their friends to spread the word.

Every cup of chai raised helped a CML patient live with dignity and hope. We thank all our dear supporters.

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Address: Friends of Max, Secom Business Centre, A Block Basement, Shiv Sagar Estate, Dr A B Road, Worli, Mumbai 400018

Website : www.friendsofmax.info

Website : www.chaiforcancer.org

Email : friendsofmax@gmail.com

Facebook :

www.facebook.com/CMLGISTsupportgroup/
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LinkedIn : <https://in.linkedin.com/in/chai-for-cancer-702630117>

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@chaiforcancer

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