

FOM Trustees AGM

14-15 March 2026 | Worli, Mumbai

The Friends of Max Annual General Body Meeting (AGM) was held in Mumbai as it is every year during this time, bringing together over a weekend, the 12 Trustees from all over India. Two complete days were devoted to reviewing the activities of the Trust in the year gone by and charting the course for the coming year during the course of which FOM turns 25.

Beena Narayanan (Country Head) and Priyanka Kubal (Regional Program Manager) from The Max Foundation India Team were also invited to join the Trustees during specific sessions structured to strengthen the seamless coordination in patient related activities.

The Managing Committee started the proceedings setting the context of the AGM for 2025-26 and sharing the mandatory Financial Report and other requisites. Designated Trustees shared presentations on mutually agreed upon interventions and projects that FOM would focus upon in the coming year. The focus was on strengthening and sustaining existing projects on patient welfare and wellbeing.

The Trustees who have known one another for many years also found some time to unwind and enjoy their company in the city's energising atmosphere.



V Care 2026 Victor Award Kailash Ingale

February 2026

On 14 February 2026, Kailash Ingale, FOM City Chapter Leader from Nanded, Maharashtra, received the V Care 2026 Victor Award. Surrounded by his family and care team (Viji Venkatesh, FOM Managing Trustee and Priyanka Kubal, Regional Program Manager, The Max Foundation India, along with Dr Manju Sengar, Professor & Head, Dept. of Medical Oncology, Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai), his journey stands as a testament to resilience and hope.

"For someone so young, there is a huge amount of wisdom in Kailash. He fought the fear and stayed strong and took his family along with him on his journey of survival," shares Viji about Kailash's inspiring journey.

Friends of Max is grateful to V Care for acknowledging Kailash's courage and bestowing upon him their much respected Victor Award. It is a great validation of all Kailash and the CML community in India stand for.



A new year and a new quarter, a busy calendar bringing with it hope and good cheer and helping Friends of Max to look at the coming months ahead with great optimism and enthusiasm.

Validation from peers and physicians, recognition from respected patient organisations and our own determination to contribute and be heard at patient forums.

This issue brings to you all of the above and our regular patient interventions and fund raising activities through *Chai for Cancer*.

- Viji Venkatesh
Managing Trustee, Friends of Max, Member, Board of Directors,
The Max Foundation and Trustee, Being Human Salman Khan Foundation

Friends of Max on Advocacy Platforms

01



Breakfast with Borges 2 Jan 2026

Viji Venkatesh invited to speak at this unique Friday morning knowledge-sharing platform at S.L. Raheja Hospital, Mumbai.

Breakfast with Borges, created by the late Dr. Anita Borges, is a long-standing faculty tradition at Raheja Hospital involving informal talks over breakfast. As a tribute, Viji spoke on their friendship, shared love of sarees, and work on the Ethics Committee. She highlighted Dr. Borges' belief that patients' lived experiences matter beyond data, making her a true patient advocate who protected patient rights and dignity.

02



Women X Health 22 January 2026

Panel discussion at St. Xavier's College, Mumbai, as part of its flagship event Ujali, organised by The Women's Commission.

A meaningful conversation was held with over 50 young adult students of the Institution. The session featured Dr. Indrani Joshi, a prominent breast cancer surgeon in Mumbai, and Viji Venkatesh, an expert in patient care and advocacy. Their combined expertise in awareness, prevention, treatment, and counseling provided key insights into factors affecting women's health across different life stages. As initial barriers of shyness and fear diminished, the students, both young men and women, asked questions freely. The speakers addressed each query with clarity and compassion.

03



Illuminate 3.0 2 Jan 2026

Illuminate is an oncology-focused academic initiative organized by Dr. Sewanti Limaye, Medical Oncology, Precision Oncology Sir H. N. Reliance Foundation Hospital & Research Centre Mumbai, bringing national and international cancer experts together.

The aim of the conference is to foster collaboration among healthcare professionals, highlighting advances in precision oncology, immunotherapy and patient-centered care. This year, the conference hosted in Mumbai, in Feb 2026, had 1,200 doctors. It was attended by Viji Venkatesh who spoke on patient advocacy with special emphasis on the needs of patients with breast cancer.



Seen here Mr Anil Nagpal, FOM Trustee, (second from right) receiving the award on behalf of Viji Venkatesh in Delhi

Awards and Recognition

Viji Venkatesh received the Leadership in Patient Advocacy & Access to Cancer Care Award at the 7th Cancer Summit & IHW Awards 2026 held in Delhi on 3rd February 2026, the eve of World Cancer Day.

Social Media Campaigns

Joining the Global Cancer Voice



04 Feb 2026

WORLD CANCER DAY:
Cancer turns lives upside down and creates a new but different 'normal'. Facing cancer with courage, hope and the determination to live well

15 Feb 2026

INTERNATIONAL CHILDHOOD CANCER DAY:
Celebrating the strength of 100+ children under Project Shiksha

28 Feb 2026

RARE DISEASE DAY:
Reinforcing that Rare does not mean Alone.



Celebrating Max's Day at FOM with our young patient survivors

9 March 2026

Max was 14 when diagnosed with Chronic Myeloid Leukemia. Three years later, he was gone. With no TKIs then, a bone marrow transplant was the only option, and no match was found.

For Pat, his stepmother and co-founder of The Max Foundation, this was a beginning, not an end. Determined that Max's journey would not be in vain, she helped create the foundation to support families facing similar battles.

This year on Max's Remembrance Day, we honour his courage through the voices of our young patients whose lives reflect his enduring legacy.

October 19, 1973 - March 9, 1991

Simran Thoolkar

"Being diagnosed with cancer at such a young age was one of the most challenging moments of my life, but it also became a turning point that shaped who I am today. It taught me resilience, courage, and the value of every single day. Instead of letting the illness define me, it inspired me to become stronger and more determined to live a meaningful life.

My journey encouraged me to support and connect with other patients who are going through similar challenges. Being part of the FOM community showed me the power of hope, empathy, and collective strength. It inspired me to spread awareness, offer encouragement to others, and remind people that even in the toughest situations, there is always hope.

Today, as I move forward in life and complete my PGDM, I carry this experience as a source of strength. It motivates me to keep growing, helping others, and living with gratitude. My journey with cancer didn't just challenge me, it also inspired me to become more compassionate, purposeful, and determined to make a positive difference."



Samanwita Dey

"Being diagnosed with Chronic Myeloid Leukemia at such a young age changed me in ways I never expected. At first, it was frightening and confusing. When you're young, you don't imagine your life including hospital visits, medications, and learning about a disease most people your age have never even heard of.

But slowly, that experience taught me something very powerful, how strong the human mind can be. I began to see life differently. I started valuing the small things more: a normal day, laughter with family, feeling healthy, even simple routines.

It also made me more determined. I realized that my life may have challenges, but it also has purpose. Instead of asking 'Why me?' I began asking 'what can I do with the life I've been given?'

Today, my journey with CML doesn't define my limits, it reminds me every day of my strength, my resilience, and my desire to live fully and meaningfully."



Nitesh Verma

"Cancer defines a chapter, but it doesn't have the final authority to define your entire story. Once you choose hope, anything's possible."



Abhishek Patidar

"At 23, I was diagnosed with Chronic Myeloid Leukemia (CML). Timely treatment with Imatinib, supported by a foundation, gave me a second chance at life. The support group Friends of Max gave me strength during my toughest days.

Max never received this medicine, but through his legacy, I live today—healthy, grateful, and committed to honoring the life he inspired."



8 March 2026 | #beyondthewhitecoat

International Women's Day

Honouring our "Lady Doctors"

"What brings you the most joy when you see a CML patient today? "

CML, three decades ago was a disease that despite all efforts could not be tamed. To think that it is now diagnosed, treated with least toxicity and most precision, followed up and cured in a number of patients with minimal intervention, gives immense joy to all patients treating Leukemias. Patients with CML live their lives to the fullest, studying, working and building careers, bringing up families, travelling and eventually retiring peacefully, makes us wish the same for those diagnosed with other leukemias and many other cancers as well.



- Dr Reena Nair, Kolkata

Over the 20 years of my journey as medical oncologist I have seen such a heartening and welcoming change in CML therapy. It gives me immense joy to tell the patient that is very likely that you will have a lifespan like anyone else of your age, you can do everything which your peers can! And treatment free remission is a reality in considerable number of people! CML is one disease where we can truly bring a patient back to being a person!

- Dr Manju Sengar, Mumbai



Seeing patients with Chronic Myeloid Leukemia live full and productive lives today is one of the most rewarding parts of being an oncologist. What once felt like a life-limiting diagnosis has now become a manageable condition for many. The greatest joy is watching my patients regain hope, plan their future, and continue living life with confidence.

- Dr Pritanjali Singh, Patna



Chai for Cancer Adda Diaries



JAN 26 Paushali and Farrukh's Musical Chai for Cancer Adda brought together over 140 people on X Spaces and more than 1500 joining from outside X, all for their love of music and a common cause.



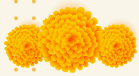
FEB 22 Anu Singh, well known author, script writer and filmmaker hosted her second Chai for Cancer Adda, this time in the form of a Baithak titled Raaz-e-Ulfat with Delhi's well known Lawyer-Singer, Meghna Mital on stage in Mumbai.



MAR 22 Palak Bedha and Oorjaa Academy hosted another and the third Musical Adda of the season on 22 March 2026 at the popular venue antiSOCIAL in Lower Parel, Mumbai

Together We Share and Learn

- Jan 24, 2026** ● CML & GIST Patient Support Group Meeting in Nagpur
- Feb 28, 2026** ● CML & GIST Patient Support Group Meeting at hosted by Amrita Institute of Medical Sciences in Kochi
- Mar 07, 2026** ● GIST Patient Support Group Meeting at The Max Center in Worli, Mumbai



In loving memory

Remembering George Colaco and Bharat Bhushan Vashisht, you remain in our hearts forever

In February this year, we lost two of our very active and dearly loved City Chapter Leaders, both under treatment for GIST over many years. This understandably shook us all very deeply and each one of us in the group reached out, we ourselves getting as much solace as we gave to the grieving family.

Their unwavering commitment to FOM will always inspire us.



George Colaco

Bharat Bhushan Vashisht

In Gratitude

We extend our heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to Philip Fernandes who retired in March 2026 after 18 years of dedicated service to The Max Foundation and the Friends of Max family of CML and GIST patients.

It was Philip who was always there with his warm smile, and a cheering cup of tea or coffee; ready to support patients and their families whenever they came to the Centre in Worli. Behind the scenes, he played a vital role in ensuring the seamless execution of all FOM-led patient activities, quietly keeping everything running smoothly.

He believed in fostering a positive attitude, knowing how a compassionate and caring approach can inspire patients and their families to live with dignity and hope through their cancer journey.



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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/
www.facebook.com/Chai-for-Cancer

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X : @Friends_Of_Max
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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
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