

25  
years

Championing  
the cause of  
Cancer



**Vasantha Memorial Trust**

*A Trust For Cancer Care & Cure*

*It was not easy to accept the sudden death of our mother when she was only 50. My brother's vision to start a trust in her memory was the only gateway to pay homage to this great soul. In 1999 we opened the help desk at KEM hospital . Handing over the first cheque of sponsorship to the patient brought in bunch of feelings. Will I , can I and a million more ! 17 years down the lane , I feel that we have been able to find niche for ourselves in this big city and have made some difference to many .*

*We began with awareness program in residential societies and moved to on to companies. Anti tobacco campaign in schools was an instant success and so was our cancer free tomorrow campaign in later years. Awareness talks led to screening camps which led to meeting more people and getting more volunteers too. .*

*The first fund raising event at the Shanmukhananda hall was a big eye opener for me. Nothing comes easily and I learnt it the hard way! Going house to house selling tickets of Rs.50/- and Rs.100/- met with little success and frustration set in. Thankfully closer to the date, sponsorships came in and there was sudden uptake of tickets . This event was a very emotional one for me as the trust got the first BIG Donor Mr. GK Ramamurthy whose blessings continue for the trust. This concert also*

*brought in new volunteers in to our fold and they in turn got in more*

*With the opening of the Help desk at Tata Memorial Hospital we couldn't manage with volunteers alone and we started employing people also. More staff came in with the opening of our centre at Vikhroli. Volunteers & staff together manage all our patient related programs be it Rose day, Harbour cruise, Women's day, picnics or the most important event Cancer Victors Day.*

*From the days of working from home to now having our centre which is always abuzz with activities, receiving donors, carrying out rehabilitation & counseling activities, organizing support group meets, conducting regular opds; has been a big long struggle but every bit of it is worth as gold.*

*At the 25<sup>th</sup> year, in this big city the Vasantha Memorial trust has gathered donors, well wishers, good Samaritans, volunteers and many more. One big family has raised hope for Cancer .It is glorious as it can be !*

*Jayalakshmi Krishnan*







*Hands small and big , efforts tiny and large and donations little and huge have made a resolve a reality , an idea an embodiment that grew in size & stature in the last 25 years . The Vasantha Memorial trust was incorporated on 4<sup>th</sup> Dec 1993 on the birth anniversary of Mrs. Vasantha in Trichy and moved on with chapters in Coimbatore , Mumbai & Chennai. Today it operates with its primary nodes in Chennai & Mumbai and has activities at several places.*

*In the last quarter century we from the trust have worked on 3 major platforms – Treatment , Awareness and Detection . We have met with quite a success in all these sectors. Apart from sponsoring treatment for **2360** patients, we have established a charitable hospital in Chennai that provides good quality treatment virtually free.*

*Our awareness have crossed geographic boundaries and percolated deep into the community. Our 2 flagship programs , Cancer free tomorrow and Pudhivasantham have met with phenomenal success. Millions of school children have been educated who in turn are motivated now to bring about a cancer free tomorrow. Nearly 150 women are taught breast cancer basics every day and in last 3 years more than 1 lakh women have been reached*

*Cancer screening has received a good response at Mumbai .Herein Pap Smear Camps & oral cancer screening are held once a week. Thousands have been screened and those affected given further assistance. In Chennai however the response has been poor, only free mammograms have found 1000plus takers.*

*Outside the 3 primary sectors we from the trust are trying to take up every aspect of cancer care. Amongst these is the cancer victor rehabilitation which has found a quite a number of takers in Mumbai.*

*Cancer is a disease where the community has to get involved to combat it. We from the trust have done our little bit in getting people of all walks involved. People honoured our invitation and came in hordes. They came as care providers , volunteers, as donors and as also participants in our patient / victor interaction with members of the community. Be it Rose day or victors Day we have seen huge participation of people from all sections of the society.*

*It is this involvement that keeps us alive, makes our dreams real and stokes the fire inside us to do more. Let this come in heaps and together let us conquer cancer .*

*Dr. Ramanathan Jayaraman*



**H e a r t y** congratulations to Dr. Ramanathan and Mrs. Jayalakshmi on the successful completion of 25 years of yeoman service championing the cause of cancer. It is hard to believe that from

humble beginnings the trust has grown phenomenally supporting over 2000 plus patients affected by cancer till date. It was way back in 2001 that Jayalakshmi came to GKR Charities office in Mumbai with an appeal for support.. Her assurance that every rupee given to the trust will be spent on patient care made me intuitively want to support them.

It was after the first fundraising programme in 2001 that I met Dr. Ramanathan. His passion for the noble cause of cancer care and cure was evident in his appearance and approach. He came across as a simple and humble man with a clear vision for Vasantha Memorial Trust. Having lost his mother to cancer he dreamt of Vasantha Memorial Trust as to be a platform where cancer victims who couldn't afford the high costs would be taken care. This empathy struck a chord in my heart and I knew that this was the man I could blindly support.

GKR Charities feels privileged to have been of support to Vasantha Memorial Trust in its unrelenting and selfless efforts towards reaching cancer awareness and cure to thousands of less privileged in the society .I wish Dr.Ramanathan, his beloved sister Mrs. Jayalakshmi and the kind hearted volunteers good health, peace of mind and God's blessings! -

**G.K.Ramamurthy , Chairman , GKR Foundation**

*A number of Volunteers , donors and well wishers have sent their congratulatory notes and wishes to us to publish in this report. Only a few have been included here due to lack of space. The trust thanks each & everyone for their warm wishes and cherishes their continued support for the fight against cancer.*

*When I was first invited to be associated with the Vasantha Memorial Trust, not really being literate enough in the field of work that the Trust was involved in and not fully aware of the Trust and its objects, I still agreed to*



*be part of it, as my inner voice and gut told me that this was indeed going to be my opportunity to serve Society, in my own small way, through the medium of the Trust. Now close to 15 years down the line, looking back, I can only say that I cherish every bit of this association, considering the yeomen work that the Trust has done and continues to do in treating, detecting and preventing Cancer.*

*Over the years, as all of us know and realize, Cancer has been one of those diseases that causes a fair amount of mortality and in India especially, literally everyday lives are lost to this fatal disease more due to lack of awareness and early detection. And that is where Vasantha Memorial Trust is different in its work, its USP being that of focus on prevention and creation of awareness about Cancer and how it is treatable with early diagnosis.*

*My association with the Trust has changed not only my perspective of the disease, but my entire perception of service to society and for that reason also I wish to place my thanks to the Trust. I wish Dr.Ramanathan, the other Trustees and those involved with the Trust the very best in the journey in fighting this disease and assure them my continued support in their campaign.*

**Asokan Muthuswamy, Managing director, AmbalAuto.**

We are very happy to hear that Vasantha Memorial has now completed 25 years of Yeoman service to the needy cancer patients. We would like to take this opportunity to wish the organization many more years of service to the cancer patients. We are proud to be associated with you.

**Trustee ,CVV memorial charitable Trust**



*On behalf of Godrej & Boyce Mfg. Co. Ltd., we would like to sincerely congratulate the dedicated Team of Vasantha Memorial Trust on successfully completing 25 years of selfless service to the needy and poor cancer survivors of all age groups, across India.*

*The Godrej & Boyce Mfg. Co. Ltd. & Vasantha Memorial Trust association for 6 years witnessed tremendous dedication, cooperation and support by the Trust in terms of complete cancer treatment as well as creating awareness from the generous funds donated by Godrejites, who represented the Trust at the Tata Mumbai Marathon, for 5 years.*

*We at Godrej, would like to compliment the Trust for becoming HOPE & then Reality, for many deprived and less fortunate people thereby bringing smiles on their faces. Our Best wishes for continuing the good work for many years to come & Godrej will always be there to support in the best possible way.*

*The eagerness and willingness – “TO GIVE” to the needy which has now become a Habit for Godrejites will go a long way in making each one of us more matured, understanding and compassionate, for which we sincerely thank Vasantha Memorial Trust for giving us this noble opportunity.*

**Nariman Bacha**, General Manager – Administration,  
**Godrej & Boyce Mfg. Co. Ltd, Mumbai**

*"HDFC Limited through the H T Parekh Foundation has been supporting Vasantha Memorial Trust for over 5 years. Seeing the dedication and empathy with which Jayalakshmi and her team work, to make a difference to the health and lives of so many women detected with cancer each year, is endearing. On their 25th year, we wish them the very best for all their future endeavors"*

**Ziaa Lalkaaka**, HDFC Ltd.

The Tamil word "vasantham" means freshness, air filled with fragrance, radiance, colorful flowers - in short LIFE & Hope! The Raga Vasantha is a refreshing raga filled with Melody and happiness & rejuvenates our minds. I am



happy the trust bearing this name has brought these meanings in the life of cancer affected.

It was in 2000 that I was introduced to this trust when I was invited to perform. It is indeed my good fortune and blessing to have presented my concerts on a few occasions and also releasing a Special CD for this organization. In a country where resources are scarce and the disease is rampant & awareness is poor, this trust has really played a significant role

I wish VMT, Dr. Ramanathan in particular, on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary to continue their good services to Humanity for many more years to come!

**Nithyashree Mahadevan, Musician**

*I am extremely delighted that the Vasantha Memorial Trust is celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Congratulations to the trustees and the entire team for the yeoman service done for cancer patients. It is an honour to be associated with the Trust. The selfless effort, dedication and hardwork has made this journey of Vasantha memorial trust a successful one.*



*May god give you the strength to successfully continue this service to society for many more years to come. Best wishes*

**P. Unnikrishnan**, musician



*I have been working with the trust for the past fifteen years. I took part in almost all the activities, awareness talks, functions, jumble sale, victors day etc. VMT has given me the opportunity to meet different people and tackle varied situations. The trust helped me in carving many aspects of my personality.*

*Whenever I am identified as a volunteer of VMT, I feel proud and wholeheartedly thank the trust as it has made a part of my life more meaningful. **Meenakshi Selvaraj, Volunteer.***



*I came to know about the Trust when I attended a fund raising concert at Chembur in November 2010. Having taken VRS from public sector, I was looking at ways to keep myself occupied. Very soon, I joined the Trust as a volunteer when the Trust inaugurated the*

*new centre at Kannamwar Nagar, Vikroli. It was a new experience for me and remains a great learning experience till date.*

*Each day at the Trust is different, depending on the impending event. One day we could be assisting the gynae for a screening test, or conducting a cancer awareness talk at a school or ladies group and the next day, we could be cutting cloth for stitching bags or making paper bags or painting diyas or feeding data in our system and preparing reports. It has been fun to work together all the while.*

*The guiding feature in all our various activities is the passion with which Mrs. Jaya runs the Trust, a passion which is contagious; the volunteers, staff, and our patrons are one big family and, added with the beneficiary-patients and victors, the family gets bigger every day.*

*The Trust is part of life and it is a joy and pride to be associated with VMT **-Latha Kumar, Volunteer,***

*I had fair knowledge about Vasantha Memorial Trust since long as I used to receive the cancer chronicle at home. However my first experience was when I had an opportunity to organise a screening camp for a NGO with whom I was associated*



*with in 2003. That is the first time I met Mrs Jayalakshmi, also called fondly Jaya, the Mumbai trustee. As they say the first impression is the best, I was impressed by her simplicity and down to earth attitude. The camp was a great success as we could detect an early symptom of cervix cancer in one of the volunteers of the NGO.*

*My first project with the trust was in organising an awareness lecture at Bangalore, since then there was no looking back. I took active part in organising World Cancer day poster competitions at Chembur besides playing a key part in organising Cancer Victors day in Februarys and also a regular participant in the Mumbai marathon. Setting up help desks at Tata and Kem hospital and going there every week and giving the personal hygiene talk to the patients in the wards has been truly rewarding experience for me.*

*On the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, I as a volunteer associated with the trust for more than 15 years, wish the trust stupendous success for the future **- Viswanathan V, volunteer***

*I joined the trust in May 2000 & the very next week I taken for the rally to mark the world No tobacco day. Jumble sale interested me and I started to enjoy participating in it. Tremendous pressure came on me when the Chennai hospital came up. Soon I became the manager of this. Then on it was no looking back & with the trust I have grown in every aspect of the term. I look forward to the growth of the trust and be a part of the success beyond 25. **- Pradeep Subramaniam, Manager, VMCC, Chennai***







*Late January this year one morning the nurse of ours handed me the mobile and said that somebody I knew wanted to speak to me. She was unwilling to disclose her name to the nurse. Wondering who it was I answered the call and a sweet voice asked me to guess her name . I couldn't and never could have for I had not heard that voice before. After a while she gave up and said she was Suganthi . Who Suganthi was immediate answer!, and I quickly ran through the list of Suganthis I knew. Without Sparing me the exercise, she said that she was my patient from Tiruchengode. Suddenly my mental RAM (random access memory ) seemed to have gained several terabytes in strength and everything about her flashed !*

*She was the shy girl from Tiruchengode who was diagnosed as a acute lymphoblastic leukemia in 1999 . The father on disclosure of the diagnosis wanted to take her home.” Let her die at home and let the end come quickly “ he had cried. It took us a great effort to convince him to let us treat her, fully sponsored which included a compensation for his daily wages. He reluctantly consented and treatment began. During her treatment and the follow up after that not once she had spoken to any of us. When injections were given or procedures were done, a silent stream of tears would flow down her cheeks, but no sound would emanate from her: When she was well she would give a radiant smile but nothing more! For last 12 years she was lost to follow up and then this call..*

*She said she was now married and had one son .She had gathered courage and convinced her husband to take her to the victors' day function. And she wanted to give me a big surprise. But the revelation of the second pregnancy 2 days ago prevented her coming! She expressed her thanks, wished the function well and closed.*

This hitherto unheard voice had expressed gratitude but it us who are indebted to her and scores of patients like her for giving us an opportunity to participate in their personal battle against cancer. At **25** years we are happy that we have been called for to help in the fight against cancer by **2360** individuals. That we have successfully taken them to victory hundreds of times makes us feel really privileged!

The patient support program began with Sakthi a 6 yrs old boy with Acute lymphoblastic leukemia who incidentally inaugurated our trust on 4<sup>th</sup> Dec 1993 at a tiny ceremony at my residence . He didn't make it to victory and the next 20 odd also did not do so .Most of them had come in quite advanced stages and our assistance could help them very little.

The shift to Coimbatore also got cases to us early in diagnosis. Balan a carpenter with a highly curable cancer, Hodgkin's disease was the first beneficiary who raced past the victory line. The second one was Ms. P , a case with cancer of the ovary . Supporting her was quite a challenge. We had just taken roots in Coimbatore and had very little funds. Usually unless we have funds for the entire course

#### **Guidelines & eligibility**

More curable the cancer more support rendered  
Breast & Blood cancer take predominance  
Acute lymphoblastic leukemia in children and breast cancer upto stage II gets support almost always  
Patients with poor financial status  
Family support essential

of treatment we did not venture in taking up a patient. This was a young girl of 12 and she had elder sister also succumbing to the same disease. We had to somehow salvage the only surviving kid in the family. An appeal was put up to one and all and people started contributing. But the donations only came as 50s or 100s and each cycle cost 15000 plus. The number of hands I begged was countless nevertheless we managed to raise funds in time for each her course. In 2000 when we stamped her cured after 4 years of follow up our joy was limitless.

In the initial years of the trust to raise funds at par with need for support of patient care was very tough but that it did not deter us taking up deserving patients for fully sponsored treatment . For 2 of our boys a newspaper appeal helped and our first Fund raising concert gave us a small buffer and this was strengthened further by fund left by Mr. Jayaraman, founder trustee and emboldened us to take up the treatment of children like suganthi .

While we were steadily taking patients and managing funds for their treatment a group of so called 'elite ' Coimbatoreans floated a rumor that we actually do not have patients being supported but we are raising funds in "pseudo " names for my personal financial benefit. In a measure to quell this rumour , we got our supported patients to come on stage in the fund raising concert held in November 2000. And for the next couple of years we did the same at our concerts and we are thankful that our beneficiary patients consented for this appearance. Even this did not deter few of the same , a person took up a door to door campaign to malign us. A particular person

called up every name in the person's phone book to tar to our image . Fortunately the more the negative campaign, more came the funds and more number of patients sought our help.

The year 2001 brought a radical change to our patient support program. The Mumbai chapter was opened on 4<sup>th</sup> Dec 1999 and the 1st fund raising concert was held in Jan 2001. At the concert a new and huge hand of support came in the guise

of **Mr.G.K.Ramamurthy** , founder GKR Foundation. He began with a solid contribution of Rs. 15 lakhs and promised a never ending support towards treatment of patients. He has been true to his word and till date nearly 200 patients have been taken up for complete sponsorship of treatment with his contribution. We are indeed grateful to him for making our lives so easy.

He was also a lucky charm and with him a host of others joined in the sponsorships. We crossed the 100 mark in terms of patient support in the year 2001 and in 2004 went past 200 mark. The hundreds after that came in quick succession and the Mumbai chapter has been contributing to this shift of pace.

At Coimbatore and later in Chennai , our policy was to take up deserving cases for total sponsorship and sometimes this included accommodation expenses and compensatory wages to parents. This manner continued in Mumbai in the initial years when patients were supported in KEM & Sion hospitals. The opening of the Help cell at TATA Memorial Hospital brought about a



#### Modalities of support

types – total , partial , Token ( max 2 cycles chemo)  
Mostly chemotherapy, Surgery & radiations  
Always in kind never as cash  
Reimbursements never done



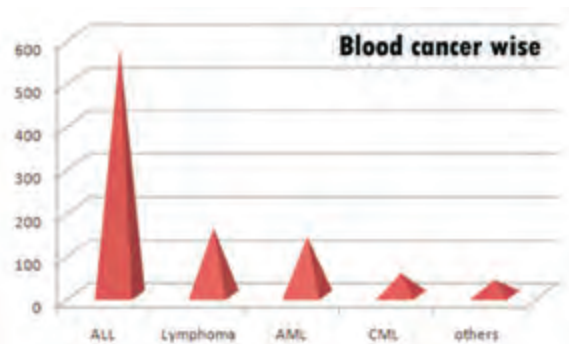
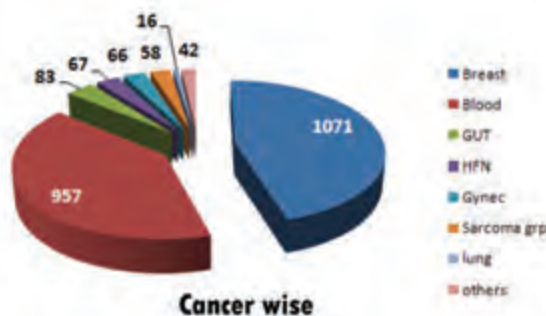
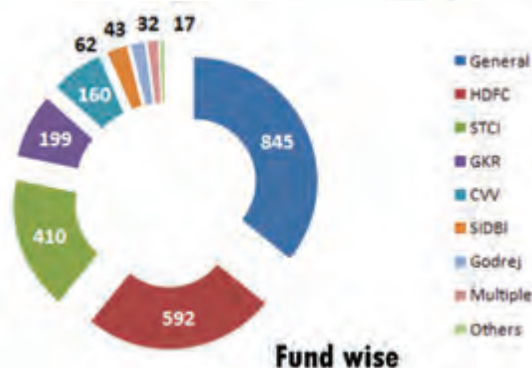
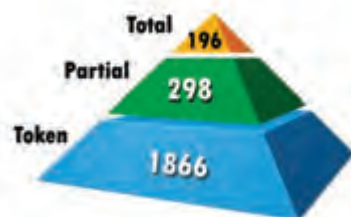
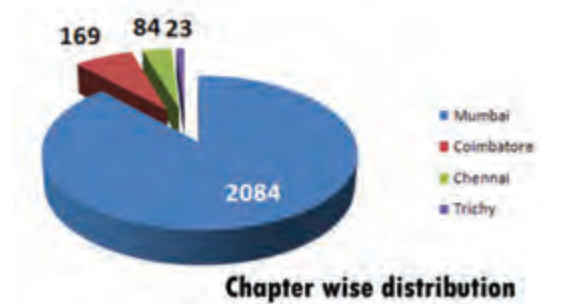
paradigm shift. The number of seekers of assistance was huge here and it was difficult to refuse many. Secondly at TATA a large number of NGOs were helping patient care and patients sought help from each one of them. The Authorities here told us that it would be adequate to help one or 2 cycle and Token sponsorship program began here. It got the score for us moving fast but at the same time we were unable to track the patients during their treatment or after that in an optimum manner.

In 2008 we had another boost to our patient support. We opened our own charitable hospital in Chennai and now we could give patients the best possible mode, without any compromise and in really small budgets. Around 1540 patients have received chemotherapies here and from the year 2014 one after the other they are emerging as cancer victors. This is really satisfying and we hope that from a day care facility we will grow to a full-fledged cancer centre with all facilities under one roof. .

Our support of patient does not end with treatment or its sponsorship but beyond that to counseling , providing ancillary care during treatment and finally rehabilitating them as useful citizens in the community. The details of each of these is given in further sections.

**Finally** it is the victory that counts for all care providers. For this we have considered only patients who have been supported either totally or partially . And we have further narrowed it to the data from Chennai – Coimbatore sector . A total of **186** patients have been supported in this manner in this sector, Of these **45** persons have emerged as victors which is close to **25 %** ! 21 of these are on treatment still and 16 of them have completed treatment are on follow up. We hope that a sizeable number of this 37 will also emerge victorious & bring to us the standard **40 %** cure rate!

Victory or otherwise we from the trust are happy that we have had the opportunity to play a little role in the actual treatment of few cancer affected. The success in a fraction of them has made us feel worthy and motivated us to push ourselves more in the area. ***Drive us more ...***



# Vasantha Memorial Cancer Centre

Ashok Nagar , Chennai

The ambitious project of Vasantha memorial trust , a 1.2 crore rupees charitable cancer hospital Vasantha Memorial Cancer centre – stood alive with the aid provided by **898** donors and was inaugurated on **27<sup>th</sup> Aug 2008** at Ashok Nagar Chennai. Charities & philanthropist further contributed to develop an ICU like facility at the day care ward, equipped the laboratory to the required level, sponsored the treatment of cancer affected and even supported the staff salaries

The local media was generous and word of mouth had created an impact. Patients started to seek in help and soon chemotherapies began. In the initial months many of them wanted a second opinion, some came to explore and some thought it was a palliative care home. The turning point was in Jan 2009 when a newly diagnosed case child with blood cancer and a lady with Breast cancer were started with treatment. Then on it was steady progress and both the poor and middle class people with various cancers & blood diseases started coming here for definitive treatment.

Another landmark year was 2014. This year persons who were hitherto patients with us emerged as Cancer victors and stood with happiness & pride at the Cancer victors day celebrations. It was a great moment for us! **The success of treatment at our centre was now proven!** In the coming years the numbers have swelled and victors emerged from here are a sizeable chunk at this function today.

Till date this hospital has seen a turnover of **10,000** patients and the new cases taken up of treatment is **1540**.

What makes us happy is that every patient who has sought our help has been taken care of well. The treatment is at par with any other cancer centre in the world. The staff here is highly trained. **80%** of patients get **free** treatment. The rest get a host of concessions, **20%** off on medicines, highly discounted surgeries & radiotherapy.

The **Nalam aayiram** scheme gives one month's treatment of patients affected by Chronic Myeloid leukemia , a blood cancer at Rs.**1000/** per month irrespective of financial status .Thousand plus **FREE** mammograms have been made available to deserving women . Free Pap Smear camps have been held periodically. And several other essential tests for the treatment of cancers, including PET scan have been provided with heavy discounts or free

Looking back at our work over the decade, this small centre has made a change to a small number of people but the difference it has made to their lives is very big. .In the decade that comes next we hope to be much stronger, make bigger differences, rope in more people both lay and medical and strive to make tomorrow cancer free.



## Vasantha Memorial Cancer Centre, Mumbai

In the 10 years since the Mumbai chapter began its operations the chapter had become very busy and it was difficult to function out of the Trustee's flat. Secondly cancer screening camps were receiving good patronage and a space was required for this. On **4<sup>th</sup> Dec 2011** the trust opened its own office at a 2 bedroom flat at Kannamwar nagar in Vikhroli. The place also functioned as clinic and was to become a rehabilitation centre in the future.

It is a hub of activity from the day of its inauguration. The centre receives patients seeking aid or counseling, till date **929** patients have visited the centre. Apart from patients, visitors include donors, local people involved in Seva Mandals and people from Institutions seeking to organize screening camps or cancer awareness talks etc. Weekly Pap smear camps held on Wednesdays & Fridays gathers a large number of women and so far **2953** women have been screened here.

With the commencement of the Vasanth Mitra program, the Mumbai centre has seen a huge surge in footfall. Started in Aug 2018, this is a support group for Breast cancer survivors - **275** women visited the centre in the course of 7 such meetings held between 21st Nov 17 to 3rd Nov 18. The program has been quite a success as seen by the increased attendance in successive meets. The last meeting in Nov 2018 saw a huge attendance of 82 women, due to which we had to hire a bigger hall nearby!

This year, we added one more activity at the Mumbai centre viz., rehabilitation activity for women under the rehabilitation scheme for cancer survivors. Cancer survivors regularly come to the centre to stitch bags, pouches etc.

Other activities at the centre include training workshops; Diwali & Christmas parties for cancer patients, workshop for breast cancer educators, regular volunteer meetings etc

Volunteers also come regularly to the centre to coordinate the various activities and also to maintain and update registers, data-entry, preparation of reports etc.

***The centre has received very good patronage, is active all 365 days and it hopes grow bigger and involve more in the fight against cancer***







The trust has been associated with Tata Memorial Hospital for more than a decade and this has brought a very fruitful and satisfying experience for us. With the opening of help desk in **2009** at the Golden jubilee block, it has become easy for patients to access aid from us. It functions from **Mondays to Fridays from 9.00am to 5.00 pm** and is manned by volunteers & staff.. Mr. Viswanathan, our volunteer is a regular at Tata Hospital for many years now & from this year we have another volunteer Mr. Sitaraman, They are ably assisted our staff , Ms.Prabhavati Mhatre & Ms.Namita Ghadi . On special occasions & for patient counseling they are also joined by volunteers, Latha, Aarti, Valli & Shanta.

At the desk patient appeals are received and thereafter their prognosis is discussed with the doctor concerned and visit is also made to the accounts department to check the balance of funds in the patients' account. The patients here receive assistance from a number of NGOs and this pooled into their account at the hospital. Deserving patients are then given aid. Coordination of patient related activities in the hospital and mobilizing patients for outdoor programs are also taken care by the

people manning the stall. A synopsis our activities here are as follows :

Total number of patients sponsored till date is **1906**. Many of the patients were taken up for sponsorship more than once

**4839** patients and their attendants were counseled in the wards on personal hygiene during chemotherapy.

**Hundreds of** children were distributed Raincoats, notebooks & pencils .

**1150** painted diyas were distributed to the children on the occasion of Diwali.

**1615** breast operative patients were counseled on drain care & suture care.

Gifts were distributed in the female ward on the occasion of Women's day.

Christmas parties & Diwali parties are organized on a regular basis

Rose day is also celebrated here every year.



The trust opened its Mumbai chapter on **4<sup>th</sup> Dec 1999** at the premises of the Hematology dept at KEM hospital then headed by Dr. Farah Jijina . It commenced work by sponsoring the chemotherapy of deserving patients in the ward and soon took up more patient related activities .Personal Hygiene counseling was first such step and 1000plus patients have been educated so far.

The trust also started another activity at this hospital of **giving ration** under the Mother & Child project. Rice, dal & Atta are given to the patients every week on Wednesdays. Mrs. Kamala Rajaram & Mr. Rajaram. Mrs. Vimala Rao & Mr. Venkatesh are regular donors for this project. Our volunteers also chip in on their birthdays & anniversaries. . Till date **2864** packets of ration have been distributed.

Volunteers Latha, Valli & Shanta engage the children in painting, crafts & other creative work. . Once a month the children are involved in a small DIY craft activity with colorful craft papers and simple techniques of folding and sticking. In about an hour the children make birds, animals, mini notebooks etc. These add vibrancy to newly opened colorful day care centre.

In December, the patients are taken for harbor cruise. For the cancer victors day celebration the sponsored patients are invited for the program. Raincoats are given to them during Monsoon and they too attend the Joy of Giving program. Our volunteers distribute gifts in the ward during Diwali & Christmas. The sponsored patients also visit our centre at Vikhroli periodically.



The activities of the Trust attracted the interest of Dr Amin, research scientist at **TATA Memorial hospital , Actrec, Khargar** & Dr Geethanjali Amin, visiting Gynaecologist at our Wednesday Well Women Clinic furthered it. On Thursday , **23<sup>rd</sup> Feb 2017** , the help desk was opened here and functions on Tuesdays & Thursdays from 9 am – 1 pm

Volunteers Mrs Dini Surendran, Mrs Pravin Khatri and Mr Khatri & Mrs Debjani take turns in manning the help desk and also counsel patients in the wards on personal hygiene aspects.**967** patients have been reached out o far. The volunteers in liaison with Mrs Bhagyashree Tillu, Medico Social Worker, ACTREC also conduct various craft activities for children at their St Jude's children home and a few activities, games, karaoke singing etc for adults too at the Vasundhara centre. Volunteers Latha, Valli, Vibha, Shantha also join in to conduct these activities

On special occasion like Independence day, women's day etc special programs like Magic show, cultural programs with distributions of gifts is done. Finally sponsorship of patients' treatment is also done though in lesser in numbers when compared to Tata Memorial,Parel.

**At Sion Hospital** : On **27.3.2000**, cancer help desk was opened at the Lokmanya Tilak Municipal Medical College & Hospital, Sion to take care of poor patients with cancers of breast and blood.. The trust also donated 2 TVs for the Pediatric ward. Then on every Friday the trust volunteer visited the Pediatric OPD no.7 to reach out to the ALL patients. Lack of patronage caused its closure very soon



Cancer Victors Day is 'Diwali' to us at the trust. The triumph over Ravana, an evil force caused a festivity and so does the victory over a dreaded disease. The reason and origin of this festival of lights is several thousand years old but it never lost its charm or the quantum of joy it gathers. And over the years it has become larger in every aspect. Much like it is our cancer victors' day program, it began in the year 2001 in Coimbatore and went on to become bigger & bigger event that was hosted from 3 cities and is celebrated with greater zest with every passing year & ushers in larger loads of happiness.

Yes it is happiness! The affected is happy to have conquered the disease, family & friends are happy that their loved one has retained life and it is sans cancer & the care providers are happy that their efforts have borne fruits. And that world is happy that there is life after cancer. The fact that cancer can be triumphed over is best learnt on this day & that there are so many to cheer this victory is also evident on this day.

It was celebrated this year on **10th Feb** at Mumbai & **11th Feb** at Chennai. Preparations began 3 months before. Victors were contacted and were urged to come for the program. There is a strong stigma attached with disease and lots of people though cured of cancer are reluctant to attend this event. This is especially among the well educated and the well placed! Great efforts are taken to protect the privacy of the attendees and yet many are shy to be seen here. Anyways this year we had a very good response in both places **Chennai gathering 132 & Mumbai 200 plus.**

Like always this year too it was a grand celebration. Amidst cultural programs we had victors relating their tale of triumph and participate in group discussions with our special guests and also sing a few songs.. The highlight as always was the lighting of lamp ceremony, which symbolizes their rebirth after cancer. In Chennai to the special composed song sung by Ms. Bombay Jayashree, victors lined up the stage with their lit lamps. It took 300 second for the victors to do so and in that short span of time every soul in the hall was swamped with a range of emotions & flashbacks and left every eye moistened and every face sport a smile.

This year in Chennai, 12 prominent personalities from different walks of life graced the occasion and congratulated the victors and the trust for leading them to this state. In Mumbai the 4 guests who attended were associated the trust for several years and they were happy that their support had brought so much joy & worthiness. Reputed cultural organizations, individual artistes and college students gave a variety of entertainment programs and enthralled the victors at both places

This year we had a large number of donors supporting this program. And our "one Rose, 3 cheers" campaign which enables people to send a rose to victors at Rs.100/- had 500 plus takers! This enabled us to give a grand lunch to our victors and present them a splendid gift hamper. Finally the goodbyes begin and so does the longing, the longing for the event next year and plans begin immediately.







### **Vasantha Mitra** *Support Group for Breast cancer survivors & patients - monthly get-togethers*

The support group, inaugurated on **22 August 2017**, has been a run-away success. While in the initial months, the trust volunteers would call up survivors to attend the meeting, over the passing months, women began to look forward to these monthly get-togethers and began to call us to enquire about the next meeting date and pass on the information to their fellow participants!

The Vasantha Mitra sessions are very much interactive. The participants have innumerable queries/doubts to ask to the experts be it doctors or psychologist or nutritionist. They had wanted to raise such queries at the outpatient clinics but couldn't do it because the care providers were busy and now they had an opportunity to do so. Yoga & meditation sessions gave them a feel good factor. The Incense stick workshop gave them an occupational option.

One of the sessions transformed to a picnic when they were taken to Krishna resorts at Dahisar and they spent the day in fun frolic and sisterhood. On International women' day the group was invited by Godrej & Boyce Mfg Ltd., wherein a clinical psychologist interacted with them.

Date	survivors attended	Guest Speaker
21.11.17	40	Dr. Purvee Thakker, Oncologist,
19.12.17	42	Ms Neha Vohra, Nutritionist
21.4.18	55	Dr. Jaya Ghosh, Onco Surgeon,
26.6.18	31	Ms Shammi Gupta Yoga teacher
28.8.18	20	Vaibhav Optics for free eye-camp & Ms. Vidya Khudate, for agarbatti making
25.9.18	31	Ms Riddhe Ashar, Psychotherapist,
3.11.18	82	Ms Gowri Ramesh, Cancer victor

### **Xmas party at the centre**

Christmas parties for cancer affected have been a regular feature at the Mumbai centre. Christmas means ringing in the New Year with goodies, Xmas tree and Santa Claus.

And all these elements were there at the specially lit centre when 25 children from Tata Memorial Hospital arrived this year. Magic show, storytelling & a bunch of games entertained the gathered.



Amongst all the merriment they were served a variety of snacks & drinks and they returned to the hospital with a big gift hamper, which incidentally was sponsored by Ms.Sudha Shenoy & her sisters. All our staff & volunteers are enthusiastic about patient related activities and this party brought it in a little extra measure

### **Vasantha Illam**

A home for outstation patients was donated by Mr.Jagadeesan & his wife Mrs.Rajeshwari from Kovaipudur,Coimbatore to our Chennai chapter in the year **2011**. The fully furnished flat housed several patients during their chemotherapy at Chennai and they found it very comfortable. In the last couple of years the number of patients coming from outstation has decreased substantially. In view



of this , the facility has been closed in January this year. The proceeds will now be utilized for the development of a rehabilitation centre at Mumbai. The trust thanks the Jagadeesans for their huge & spontaneous donation.

**During Navy week** , the naval authorities invite us to take the cancer affected for a harbour cruise in Mumbai. This has been a regular feature for over a decade now.



To return the cancer victor back in the community as a useful & worthy citizen has been our aim since inception. The young ones have been provided assistance in education, employment & even in matrimonial expenses. The elderly have been provided monthly pensions for a very long time. Handicraft jobs have been created by us for and women embroidered kerchiefs , made bags ,pouches, dolls etc and they were provided remuneration.

In **February 2018** we launched a special project in Mumbai and gave it a big thrust. Corporate sponsorships were sought and some organizations and individuals also pitched in help. The ban on plastics bags in Mumbai also came as a blessing. We started making cloth bags in full swing and they came in different sizes, colors & specifications.

During our interaction with cancer victors, we found that quite a few were interested in stitching and offered to come to the centre twice or thrice a week to learn and work. We started with three sewing machines and volunteers joined in organizing things like procuring material, maintaining registers and in finding buyers for the products. Mr

Radhakrishnan, long time well wisher of our Trust made the initial contribution for this program. When Ms. Ziaa Lalkaka from HDFC visited the centre and saw the survivors stitching, she was impressed and decided to allocate funds.

Bags became made in dozens in a day and visitors who came to the centre started picking up these and the slowly the news spread and the pickup became faster. At all our awareness programs we had a small table space for these bags and they were eagerly bought. At the stall put up recently during the Durga puja Mahotsav as many as **250** bags were sold. Organizations & corporate have also started placing orders with us. The program received further impetus when 2 more machines were donated by Lions Club of Bombay Airport & Vardhaman Sthanakwasi Jain Sangh .

The progress of this program has really made us & the victors very happy. **Vaishali Parab** , a cancer affected who was supported by us during treatment and has been stamped cured in 2016 visits the centre thrice a week to stitch bags. The program has given her a vocation and the finance to be independent and also support the family. The congenial atmosphere at the centre makes her do more than what she can . Two years ago she did not know how to operate a sewing machine and today she is making bags by the dozens.

When ideas take form and it gets implemented it gets all the concerned happy. We are happy this program has met success in such a short time and cherish that it gains momentum .



# Creating Awareness



The shift of priority from conducting screening camps to creating awareness about cancer began in the year 1998. It was after a shocking incident when we found the nurse Who assisted in our camps had actually hidden her cancer for a very long time and when she was ready to disclose it was in a very advanced state. We began with the Breast cancer awareness program in the **October 1998** and over the next year and half we reached knowledge about all commonly occurring cancers to the people.

In quantity, in coverage of geographic areas, in reaching depths in the community and in the spectrum of age groups this has been our largest work. At the same time it is the one which has met the largest number of challenges. Mind you it is not easy to educate a person about a disease that he /she thinks that it will never occur in them .If the less literate runaway because of the fear associated with it , the literates think they already know about the stuff. But in reality even in 2018 both the groups present quite in advanced states at most of the times to their doctors.

In our 2 decades of work in this aspect , we have seen only small change , nevertheless, that it has begun, makes us happy. In the last couple of years we find takers for this program comparatively more easily .Women have shown more eagerness compared to men and they have been more accessible. Children are very receptive and our talks in schools evoke great responses.

All our programs also give information about ways to prevent cancer and of course enlist the warning signs. A big stress is given to the former, specially to children, and we hope it will be soon that cancer will be never.

**knowledge is health**



## The tools

1. **Handout:** These were made in Tamil, Malayalam, Telugu, Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati & English and contained basic facts on common cancers
2. **Books:** Books covered the essential features of the common cancers seen in India. The Tamil version is the most popular. The English version was translated by Mrs. Meenakshi Selvaraj to lucid Tamil. A Gujarati version was also printed.
3. **Power Point Presentations:** In all of these risk factors, clinical presentation and preventive measures were touched upon. Several types of presentations were made to suit the type of audiences
4. **Short Films:** Three films were made. One was a 100 second film which depicted how a teenager falls into the tobacco trap and gets cancer. The second was the success story of child with blood cancer. The third film was titled as “A Civilized Clown” which gave details about five common types of cancer and is interspersed with clips from popular Tamil films. These films were very useful in rural settings and it gathered large audiences. These were also shown in public places like Bus depots & railway stations.
5. **Breast Self exam video:** An explicit film which shows the breast self exam was borrowed from a Canadian cancer society and with permission dubbed in Tamil. This proved very useful during the awareness sessions
6. **Breast models:** Indigenously made models using cotton wool were made to teach breast self exam. Simulated nodules in different size and location were placed there. It is a very important tool for our Pudhuvasantham project wherein breast self exam is taught on a one on one basis
7. **The Cancer Chronicle:** For about 12 years the trust ran a monthly magazine which carried information about cancers, advances in diagnosis & treatment and all related aspects to 10,000 households all over India.

## Vasantha Shiksha

To train the trainers, a multi pronged approach was employed.

**Continuing Medical Education** Practicing Doctors: were addressed annually by cancer specialists to sensitize them as well update on the latest in the field .

**Medical students:** A couple of times students a full day course on cancer was conducted for the final year MBBS students. Poor responses made us discontinue this.

**Lay men:** Like it was done for medical students, lay persons i.e people with no medical background, were also educated about the basics of several cancers. The first one was held in **May 2003** at Coimbatore had a good response and some participants became our educators in our Vasantham & other projects. In years after 2014 those attending these courses were predominantly nursing students and we changed the course to “**care of patients during chemotherapy**” It was a half day course



and it attracted both nurses and other care providers and was held annually at our centre in Chennai

**Breast Cancer Workshops.** . In **1998** we conducted the first workshop for breast cancer for doctor across specialties who were ladies. These doctors went into the community to educate women for the next 4 years. Though doctors conducted these sessions in full sincerity and with no added benefits, many women's groups perceived that these doctors gave these talks to recruit patients. To overcome this we started training volunteers and held our first workshop in **Oct 2002**. . Such courses were then held twice or thrice a year. Women trained at these workshops became our community educators. .

## General cancer talks

This talk enlists the common risk factors for cancer, the presenting features, the diagnosis and treatment of cancers and finally ways & means to prevent cancer. This usually lasts for 45 minutes to one hour and is given to audiences wherein there are men and women. At the end the men are sent out women are shown breast self exam video. Such talks have been given at innumerable places at a variety of establishments likes offices, banks, factories, residential complexes, villages etc These talks have been the backbone of our awareness programs and over time we have branched out to take sessions such as 'cancer in women " , "Breast cancer" , "Cancer in the young " etc.

The list is of these talks is enormous and is impossible to list it here, only **details of the last year** is being given. In Mumbai 26 talks have been held and 1465 persons have been covered. The details are in the adjacent table.

In Chennai it was more of breast cancer talks and the highlight this year was the 'cancer in Women "talks at the Madras High court on 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> of March. 500 plus women attended these sessions and the women also enrolled for the Pudhuvasantham program.



Date	Area	women covered	men covered
10.12.17	Vakola	50	
17.12.17	Kharghar	40	
05.01.18	Bandra	40	
18.01.18	Thane	15	100
28.01.18	Ghatkopar	70	
25.02.18	Ghatkopar	60	
27.02.18	Ghatkopar	50	
15.04.18	Kandivili	35	
26.04.18	Mulund	20	
05.05.18	Vashi	30	
21.05.18	Fort	40	
26.05.18	Nerul	25	
12.06.18	Thane	25	
21.06.18	Dadar	30	
24.06.18	Kurla	20	
15.07.18	Ghatkopar	45	25
21.07.18	Andheri	55	30
31.07.18	Chembur	50	
10.08.18	Marol	30	10
13.08.18	Vashi	80	
21.08.18	Ghatkopar	25	
29.08.18	Vashi	65	
31.08.18	Chembur	250	
02.09.18	Borivili	40	20
16.09.18	Ghatkopar	30	10
30.09.18	Thane	50	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1270</b>	<b>195</b>

## Anti tobacco Campaign

This campaign began with the World No tobacco Day program on **31<sup>st</sup> May 2000** and thereafter there was no looking back. It was held the round the year and covered offices, factories, construction sites and of course schools

### Campaign in Schools :

It began with short talks on ill effects of tobacco use in schools in June 2000, later poster exhibitions, painting competitions were added to reinforce the message. From the year 2008 this transformed to the 'cancer Free tomorrow campaign "and added the role of diet & lifestyle to it. In the initial years we faced a lot of

resistance from all girls' schools. The principals chided us saying that we will spoil their girls. A Lot of convincing , making them known that the risk of passive smoking equals that active smoking and bringing to their knowledge that girls could persuade the men around them – father , brother, uncle , grandpa – to quit , got us entry into such schools.

A set of 40 posters were made from the drawings made by students at our anti tobacco campaign painting contests. From 2002 & 2004 in addition to our talks, we displayed this set at several schools in Coimbatore & Mumbai.

In 2006 we had a project called “ **Add colour to Cancer**” wherein children from 90 schools in Coimbatore painted Diwali and New year greeting cards depicting a message on the ill effects of tobacco. Each of these campaign evoked good response.

#### **At other places :**

Like in schools, talks on ill effects of tobacco use were held at several offices, factories, etc. Men would sit through the talk and understand all what is told but at the end they will express their inability to quit the use. These talks have a large number of takers at Mumbai especially the construction companies. Marathon Realty has these programs every year for several years now.

#### **At Colleges**

The usual talks failed to attract the young men and women in the colleges. We had to hold debate sessions, skit competitions , advertisement contests and the like to engage them. They were quite ready to stage street plays for us and we did have them perform for them at several places..

#### **Saying it to tobacco producers**

During our coverage of Annur taluk in Coimbatore district with cancer awareness we had an opportunity to encounter farmers who grow tobacco. In one particular village we even faced a gherao. Last year the Mumbai chapter was invited to give talks on ill effects of tobacco to employees of Godfrey & Philip, leading manufacturers of cigarettes!



### **Cancer Free Tomorrow Campaign**

This is one of our flagship programs and the campaign which has met great success and reached **children by the millions**. In the year 2008 we expanded the anti tobacco campaign to include the role of diet & life style in causing cancer and also added a list of early signals for cancer. Our target group was children from 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> standards, an age group that is still open to ideas. From our experience secondary school children already have fixed ideas, a sizeable have used tobacco and most think they know everything

A new presentation was made which included the basic biology of cancer, the role of tobacco m diet and exercise in causing cancer and ways & means to prevent cancer in them and their folks. Each year the presentation was altered to include an event or instance or a film which had attracted children's attention. It found immediate takers and the response swelled with the passing of each year.

In the past couple of years it has picked extremely well in Mumbai and is sort of subdued in Chennai. This year in Mumbai it was conducted in **34** schools covering **15260** children. This year 5 new schools also opened the doors for us . Sessions were conducted in Palghar schools also. In Chennai it covered about 10 schools alone this year but the response was excellent.





The campaign also reached other places in Tamil Nadu and in states where the trust went for cancer awareness. For example it was there in Coimbatore, Darjeeling , Uttarakhand ,Dindugul ,Kodaikanal , thanjavur etc. This year it was also held in Palghar . In the last decade it has reached over **700** plus schools covering several lakh students. What is heartening is that many schools call us year after year to conduct this campaign.

### World Cancer Day – Paint contest

In a measure to reinforce what we have taught them in our cancer Free tomorrow campaign , we conduct a paint contest on the same theme on **4<sup>th</sup> February**, the World Cancer Day . It is held at Chennai, Coimbatore & Mumbai on the nearest Sunday to 4<sup>th</sup> Feb. Each year a particular aspect of the cancer free tomorrow campaign is selected as them .Last year it was the role of diet!

There is good response to this on the spot poster painting contest at all three cities. The contest is judged by a panel of famous painters & cartoonists and last year onwards we have also included an environmentalist in the panel. While the children paint their parents are given a talk about aspects in cancer prevention. And before & after the paint contest reinforcements are given on the ways & means to make tomorrow cancer free. 20 – 60 schools , depending upon the city, send children to this contest.

**Last year** Mumbai held it at 2 places, Chembur & Vikhroli and had 14 & 11 schools participate in this respectively and gathered a total of 250 students to paint . In Chennai, 308 children from 30 odd schools participated and made some stunning posters.



### Awareness along with NSS camps

NSS units of several colleges From Coimbatore like Government polytechnic, CIT , PSG Arts, Sakthi Engineering and VLB polytechnic invited us for creating awareness along with their rural camps.

### 4 months of Intense awareness @ Chennai

From 22nd Feb 2007 , in a matter of 150 days, the trust could complete a 100 talks. 62 were held at venues where the trust knew no one. Chennai Police, MTC ,CMDA ,CIPET were a few such organizations

### Breast Cancer awareness

With our batch of 10 trained doctors we approached women's groups and conducted 24 talks in October 1998. The next October, in the year **1999** , a **100 talks** were conducted by these doctors in one month and received a very good response , so much so that one Hospital in Coimbatore started a special breast clinic on a weekly basis . By the turn of the millennium Breast cancer awareness no longer remained an only October event, talks were held throughout the year.

From the year 2002 the mandate was taken by up trained volunteers who showed great enthusiasm and the audience was able to relate to them immediately. We were able to cover larger ground and have reached **lakhs of women in the last 16 years**. These are conducted on a regular basis at Chennai, Mumbai & other places. Enlisting them here would consume several pages and is not attempted. In sum these sessions have tremendous response and the impact is also seen as improved attendance to our screening camps and increased utilization of the free mammogram facility.





this short session and they went to the field to create awareness. By March 2016 this group has covered close to **20,000** women around Chennai & Coimbatore.

This encouraged us to take it forward with help of paid educators and an appeal for support was put up to Association for India's development . Its Chicago & Boston chapters pitched in support for the next 2 years . And from october 2016 – 2018 we have reached to 80,000 women . Our total score in this project has reached to nearly **1, 40 ,000 women !** In the last year we have been consistently reaching **125 – 150 women every day of the calendar !**

The Pudhuvasantham project aimed to drive home the basics about breast cancer and teach them breast self exam on a one on one basis. This was felt deeply necessary as the decade old lecdems that we were conducting did not seem adequately effective. . Secondly women were shy to attend such programs and hardly looked at the visuals displayed at the presentation. It is then in **Oct 2008** we embarked on this project with 25 lady volunteers who were trained to give a 15 minute program which included a 5 minute demo of Breast self exam on a hand model. Importantly at the end , women who attended were asked to fill questionnaire which covered the minimum information to be remembered by them.

There was a great response to this method. In the 30 months beginning Oct 2008 ,**37,000** women were educated! This was a phenomenal number considering that it was one to one, 95 times out of hundred. The response was very good, but the momentum couldn't be kept up as volunteer enthusiasm dampened over time. It slowed down but it continued.

In **2015** July for the first time in the history of trust we decided to enroll paid educators for this program. In Aug 2015 we had 12 ladies who were well trained to conduct

The project Pudhuvasantham was happening from several nodes in Tamil Nadu and at a couple of centres in Maharashtra. In 2008 – 2010 periods it was a quite happening in Coimbatore, in 2015 it picked up in Chennai and gave a huge momentum to our second mode. This enthused us to open new nodes. A Workshop was conducted in Dindigul under the auspices of Shanthi Seva by Mrs. Meenakshi Selvaraj , our volunteer. From the 70 women , 22 qualified to be educators in this project. In the months to come more workshops were conducted and today a group of 11 women educators are conducting these sessions on a regular basis.

In the last one and half years these educators have reached to a huge number of women in Dindigul, **46411** women accounting for nearly 57 % of total women reached under this project in the last 2 years. These ladies are highly motivated and conduct these sessions on a daily basis. Interestingly they have formed small groups of 3 or 4 and this group reaches a village or a locality by 10 in the morning. Through the day they cover the area literally house by house.

In January 2018 more nodes were begun at

**To have this program in your neighbourhood contact : 7200414446**

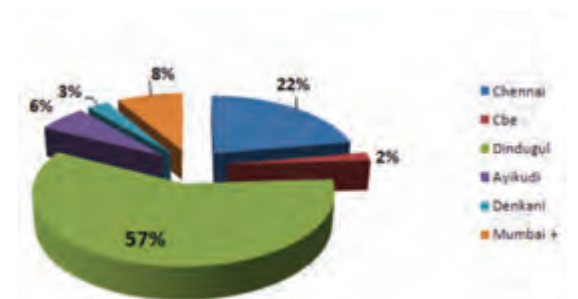
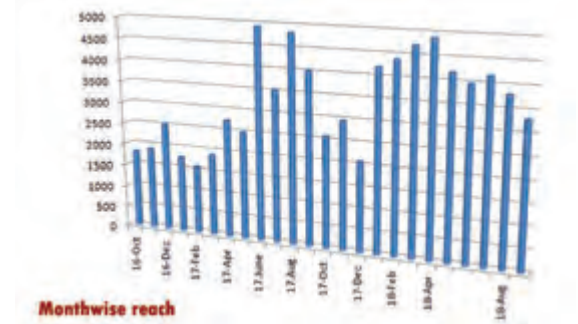
Denkanikottai , near Hosur and Ayikudi near Tenkasi. There was a lot initial enthusiasm but this speedily declined. At Mumbai & Sangmeshwar this project is moving t a slow but steady pace.

The lady educators are constantly reinforced with knowledge about breast cancer and workshops have been conducted on a half yearly basis. At the field these educators are asked a number of queries and we from the trust have trained them well to clarify these queries and most importantly give the correct answers. To the reader it may sound very simple but in reality this is quite a tough job. These women do not have any medical background and most of them haven't gone to a college too. To implant in them a subject like cancer and its nuances is quite a task. We are happy that we have managed it reasonably well and the lady educators are quite thorough in their subject.

A question often asked, especially by the people who funded the project, is what has been its impact. A Greek proverb says that society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in. Much is the same for this or any kind of awareness program. The impact takes several years or decades. This knowledge that they have gained will help them to pick up cancer early or even prevent it in the future, near or distant

Certain amount of impact is already visible. In the last couple of years we have seen many women seeking mammograms or breast examination. And in the last year we have had 3 women who had attended these sessions over the last 3 years come to our hospital in Chennai with breast cancer. Two of these women have had treatment at our hospital in Chennai, one of them totally sponsored, the other partially.

Pudhuvasantham is definitely a need & is a simple cost effective way of creating awareness about a cancer which is the most common type in India. We from the trust profusely thank our lady educators who have taken up this with such great enthusiasm. Association For India 's development we are happy gave us the necessary energizer for the last 2 years . We have to take it further, make it larger and cover as many women as possible. **For this we need Funds & platforms aplenty.**







### Vasantham – Awareness at the Grass roots.

Vasantham was a project launched by us to reach awareness to villagers' right at their door step. It began on **1<sup>st</sup> June 2003** at Karai Gounden palayam, Annur taluk, Coimbatore district.

Our team of volunteers would typically reach a village around 6 – 6.30 pm in the evening and the first task would be to gather villagers. This was the most difficult aspect of the program, villagers would find a million reasons to not to assemble. Then we will put on films on cancer and few would get attracted seeing Kamalahassan on the screen. By the end of the film atleast 20 – 25 would have gathered to whom the male volunteer will give a general talk on Cancer. Later the women would be pulled to a verandah of a nearby house and educated on breast & cervix cancers.

In the initial 3 months there was a great reluctance for people to congregate & an indifference to whatever was taught. But as months progressed the indifference turned into concern and villagers started congregating with ease & enthusiasm. In **15** months time, 14 panchayat unions comprising of more than **90** villages in the **Annur** taluk of Coimbatore district were covered. In addition a couple of panchayats in Pollachi taluk of Coimbatore District and few villages in Perinaikenpalayam have also been covered.



### Reaching Awareness beyond our Nodes

*All the forms of awareness listed above have done at several places near & far from our 3 nodes. A brief description of some of our visits are given below*

#### Ooty & Coonoor

In June 2005, 1100 people from the Madras Regimental center at Wellington were educated. This included recruits, junior commission officers and their wives. In addition stalls were put up at the annual Flower Show in Ooty and Fruit show in Coonoor to educate the visitors.

#### Kodaikanal

We made **4 visits** to this scenic hill station to create awareness about cancer. The first one was in Nov 2005, the subsequent ones in 2006, 2009 & 2010. Of these the **3<sup>rd</sup>** visit in June 2009 was the most successful one.

#### Tirupur

The proximity from Coimbatore enabled us to conduct awareness program in several hosiery factories and also in schools. .

#### Trichy

Awareness sessions were periodically conducted in this city at several venues over the last 20 years. On two occasions intense campaign was conducted on single days. The first one was on **4<sup>th</sup>** Nov and the second on **29<sup>th</sup>** Nov 2009..

#### South Gujarat, 25<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2005

A weeklong long awareness campaign in the coastal towns of Saurashtra, from Bhavnagar in the east to Probandar in the west, was undertaken Mrs. Jayalakshmi Krishnan & Dr.Ramanathan. The tour was coordinated by Mr. P. N. Hariharan, Manager, J.M.Baxi & Co, Pipavav port. It was very much like an election campaign, we would be taken to waiting crowds in factories, offices, schools and public places. It was felt that Awareness about cancer was very low, usage of tobacco was rampant and socially acceptable especially of the chewing form; factory workers didn't care much about occupational exposures and medical facilities in small towns was very poor.

#### Kutch yatra, 29th Sept - 1st Oct 2005

A chapter of our trust was operating in Gandhidham from

1993 – 99. When the massive quake struck in 2001 we were here again providing relief and we also provided a women's ward at the Divine Life society hospital. This place and neighbourhood was visited again for cancer awareness in late September 2005. Dr.Farah Jijina, Mrs. Kamala Srinivas & Mrs. Jayalakshmi Krishnan gave talks at several places which were organized by Mr.P.N.Hariharan.

#### **Darjeeling, 16<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> Nov, 2009**

Four of us, two from the Mumbai chapter and two from Chennai chapter visited the Darjeeling hills to create awareness about cancer in Nov 2009. Sisters Pushpa & Anasatasia from FMM convent, Santhome , Chennai & Father George ,Principal Salesian College ,Sonada, organized this entire program. Each day we were at a different place, Siliguri, Kurseong , Sonada & Darejeeling town. In 4 days we had sessions at 13 places which included schools, colleges & public meetings.

#### **Uttarakhand , 16<sup>th</sup> April –6<sup>th</sup> May , 2014.**

The tour was primarily to inspect projects supported by Association of India's Development (AID) through



Himalayan Environmental Studies & Conservation (HESCO) in the state of Uttarakhand. It began with Dehradun and covered most of Garwhal region and ended with a visit to Badrinath. The visit also provided opportunity to create cancer awareness mainly to school children and women's groups

#### **Pilgrim Awareness**

Awareness was provided to the Lakhs of people who walk to the Shrine of Lord Murugan in Palani from all over Tamil Nadu from January to March every year. We had put up stalls in all the 3 approaches , via udumalpet, via



Dharapuram & via Dindigul , to Palani in different years- 2000, 01 & 02.

#### **Dindigul**

Our campaign here began in Aug 2009 when we went to address students of st Anthony's college. In the coming years the campaign strengthened and today we have very active group conducting breast cancer awareness.

#### **Gudalur, Kumbakonam, Mayiladuthurai**

We visited this sector 3 times from 2009 to 2012. The campaign was mainly in the schools run by GKR foundation

#### **Sangameshwar near Ratnagiri, Maharashtra .**

Volunteers from Mumbai chapter camped from 13 – 15<sup>th</sup> March 2016 and conducted several awareness programs covering men, women & children. We also have a group conducting the pudhuvastham project here. In March 2017 our volunteers spent 3 days here and carried out an intensive campaign reaching people in government offices, factories, colleges and in villages. To **686** people from different social sections awareness was created. A screening camp for women was also squeezed in.



## Pune

The first visit was on 24th May 2013 wherein 200 persons were educated through 3 sessions. The second one was from **1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> May 16** which had 5 sessions. More visits were made in April & Sept 2017 and over 4 sessions around 212 women were taught about cancers in women

## Bangalore

Several trips were made to this city and an attempt was even made to set up a centre here in 2005 but did not materialize. However awareness sessions were conducted in May 2005 & in Dec 2005 covering a total of 470 people.

## Martalli, 21 -23 Sept 2012

This is a town situated in Veerappan territory at the Tamil Nadu – Karnataka border. Sisters of FMM convent who run a hospital invited us for talks here. Students from 5 schools in the area & one college were addressed. Meetings were also held after masses at 2 churches. On 21st evening our films on cancer were screened at the large church ground attracting a crowd in hundreds.

## Short Visits

These visits have been for a just a day or two . At all these places all forms of cancer awareness was created . At times there was focus only cancers in women. Listed are a few of the many places visited :

1. **Mangalore** : 4<sup>th</sup> May 2003 : awareness at Mangalore Tamil Sangam , 16<sup>th</sup> April 2005 : Employees & trainees at Mangalore Refineries were talked to
2. **Mysore** , 6<sup>th</sup> March 2005 : Members of the Tamil sangam addressed
3. **Ranipet** , 9<sup>th</sup> July 2005 : 330 children of 2 schools and about 880 employees of several companies were reached. 22<sup>nd</sup> April 17 : 300 women at Salim Shoes
4. **Srikakulam** , 27<sup>th</sup> Jan 2007 : Volunteers of Association for India's development organized awareness programs in the villages they had adopted
5. **Nagercoil** , 12<sup>th</sup> June 2008 : During the day students from 3 schools, students from a polytechnic college, a couple of women's groups were covered and finally there was an open session for public..

6. **Thanjavur** On 4<sup>th</sup> Nov 2009 , 1900 students and 50 teachers from Sacred Heart convent school were educated about cancer. Subsequently small trips were made to educate women's groups on breast cancer
7. **Sivakasi** , 7<sup>th</sup> Jan 2010 : 700 students of SFR college addressed in batches
8. **Sattur** , 23.9.2009 : 600 students of Naidu memorial college educated
9. **Tiruvavur** : On 31<sup>st</sup> Jan 2012 900 students & 45 staff at Rabiammal College addressed. On 2<sup>nd</sup> Mar 2012 : 550 students from 2 colleges educated
10. **Perambalur** , 6<sup>th</sup> Mar 2012 : 350 students of Thanthai Roever College educated
11. **Erode** , 17 & 18 Sept 16 : Dr.Ramanathan & Mrs. Sundari Vishwanthan conducted cancer awareness programs in 3 villages around kilampadi . Cancer Free tomorrow campaign was conducted at a school in Thindal
12. **Pen** , Raigad dist, April 2017 : Awareness sessions followed by oral and Pap smears camps were conducted here
13. **Palghar Dist** , May 17: Women in Ambenagar & wadhna villages had breast cancer awareness program followed by Pap smear camp . 13<sup>th</sup> Apr 18 : 100 women from boisar village were addressed before the screening camp.
14. **Tuticorin** , 27 & 28 Oct 17 : 11 sessions were conducted at the SPIC factory and women in the township were also addressed
15. **Daman** , 2<sup>nd</sup> Dec 17 : 70 women & 180 men at temple packaging industries were addressed
16. **Sindkhed** , Jalna , 22 Jan 18 : 230 people covered
17. **Goa** , 17 Feb 18 : 25 women & 200 men staff of Hindustan waste management were addressed .
18. **Puttaparthi** , 22 & 23 Mar 18 ; Over 7 sessions patient relatives, staff & visitors to the Sathya Sai General Hospital were talked to about breast cancer.

Apart from these visits were also made to Madurai , Karaikal , Manargudi Ahmedabad ,Nashik, Belgavi, karjat, Neral , Panvel and many more towns & villages to create awareness about cancer.





It happened in the year 1935 whence Pap smear screening became mandatory for all women in the United states . Cervical cancer was picked up at very early stage, women were getting cured and the intensive awareness programs brought to control the incidence of this disease. Even though the prevalence of this disease is quite high in Indian women, till about 2 decades this was the most common cancer in Indian women , even in 2018 it is a tough game getting women to undergo a Pap Smear test.

Women have advantage over men in the sense that the 2 commonly occurring cancers in them – Breast & uterine cervix – are slow growing ,especially cervix cancer which takes close to 25 years ; have easy methods to detect them early. Women seldom enjoy this privilege. Similarly tobacco related cancers too are slowly growing and can be detected in the premalignant stages itself but no man by choice will get himself examined

We from the trust have literally put up a struggle, coax them or lure them with a gift to get people to come for detection camps. Some people show up for these camps merely to show solidarity to the organization that promotes this camp. A substantial number does not even bother to collect the results of the tests done during the detection camp.

In the last decade we have seen that an awareness program precedes a detection camp and this increased the attendance and also the willingness to get screened. The Mumbai chapter has certainly a better response compared to others and over the years the camps here have increased quite significantly. Secondly organizations are keen to hold these camps as a goodwill gesture and this has also stepped up the numbers. Timely support from organizations like association for India's development has eased our push to the detection programs.

These screenings for cancer have value only if done regularly and little value if done only once. But what we believe is that the attendance at the first camp will remove the fear associated and people will be emboldened and motivated to get themselves checked annually. Hope attitude will change with times and getting screened for cancer will become an act by choice.

## Camps in Chennai – Coimbatore Sector.

The first camp was held at Suriyur near Trichy on **23<sup>rd</sup> Oct 1994**. This camp screened 82 women, 2 of them had frank cancer of uterine cervix and 8 of them had premalignant conditions. This was shocking!

This camp showed us in real the state of rural India with respect to cancer and urged us to do more in villages. For the next 3 years screening camps was on top of our minds and we had detection camps in several villages around Coimbatore. Of these the one at Melkaraipatti, near Palani, drew the largest number, 400 persons were screened on a single day.

The First camp at Anamalai, near Pollachi, had very good response both in terms of numbers & interest. It seemed possible that Camps could be held here on a regular basis. Association for India's Development consented to support the camps and we took up 3 villages with this support and planned to conduct detection camps every 3 months for the next 3 years. The first camps like the one in Anamalai, generated a good response, second a mild response & by the 3<sup>rd</sup> camp the villages lost interest. Secondly patients with frank cancers refused treatment even if we offered it free!

Over the years we have reduced camps to bare minimum and in Chennai they are held only on anniversaries. Last 2 years there has been a slight improvement in Chennai. Women have come more easily and **this year** 55 women enrolled in advance for this camp. It is heartening that 80% of them turned up voluntarily to collect the report of the Pap smear tests. Such responses will encourage us to conduct more of these and more often.



The team that conducted the camp in Aug 18

### Aayiram Mammogram project, Chennai.

Aayiram in Tamil means a thousand and we envisaged to sponsor Mammograms in 1000 women from October 2012 to September 2013. Women had to attend a session on Breast cancer awareness and learn breast self exam. After that women above 40 yrs were offered a free Mammogram. Campaign was then taken up on a war footing and nearly 40,000 women were contacted but the turnout remained poor. In one year's time **713** women were offered free mammograms of which it is sad that only **563** actually underwent mammography.

**The second** 1000 mammogram was launched with the Support of Sri Matha trust in October 2017. In one year's time we managed to coax only **283** women to get this test done. At the Madras high court 500 women were educated and 99 of them wished to avail this facility. Of these only 44 got it done in actual. Only 50% got themselves screened even when this offered free!

Though the western world advocates only Breast consciousness today, it is very useful to get one baseline mammogram done at 40yrs. Knowledge about breast cancer creates this 'consciousness' which we successfully created but the latter couldn't be accomplished successfully. The fear & perception about mammogram still persists.

### Free Mammograms

Under 2nd Aayiram Mammogram project  
In support with Sri Matha Trust

For women above 40 yrs who attend  
a session on Breast cancer held at  
Vasanth Memorial cancer Centre at  
11 am every Wednesday

to Register contact  
**72004-14446** or  
**97910-48379**



*Breast is Beautiful  
Life More*

## Camps in Mumbai Sector

*The first camp was held in **April 2000** in Kalina where our office was situated then. It was in association with an organization that was welcoming the Shankaracharya of Kanchi. 35 men & 47 women were screened . A second camp was held at the same venue 3 months later. Soon we got calls from several groups & organization to hold camps and in next few years this activity gained steam.*

*Since the time our own centre opened in 2011 and even before that at the spaces provided to us , screening camps were held regularly. **From September 2013 it is regular feature at the Centre** , Pap smear camps are held on Wednesdays and on Sunday oral cancer detection is done.*

*The response to camps has been good at Mumbai and has encouraged us hold more and more. It has also taken us beyond Mumbai. Gynecologists have been particularly cooperative & so are the dental surgeons, they readily accept our invitation and spend quality time at our camps .Similarly our volunteers & paramedical staff show great enthusiasm and conduct camps smoothly & efficiently.*

### Screening Camps for Women

The majority of camps done in and around Mumbai are for women. While both Breast examination & Pap smears are done, the latter takes predominance. These camps were held at several venues and at times at the same venue many times. The numbers are huge and it is not possible enlist them here.

The first place where a series of camps was held was the Railway hospital at Bandra in **July & Aug 2004**. The second place was the L & T Health Centre. 233 women were screened over 8 camps. Similarly a number of camps were held at several other places in association with a number of organizations.

The Municipal Corporation of **Navi Mumbai** took it a notch up. They permitted us to hold Pap smear camp in each of their primary health centres and had their health workers campaign for the camp weeks before. In **17** days we had screened 578 ladies and 423 of them underwent the Pap Smear test, averaging 25 women per camp! The second stint was from 11<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> Dec 2009. During this period 228 women were screened over 7 camps and 168 Pap smears were taken. Hope other municipalities follow this example.

### Women's cancer Clinic, VMCC ,Mumbai

The Women cancer clinic came into being on **25<sup>th</sup> September 2013** and screening camp was held once a week on Wednesdays. For a year or so, Fridays too had these camps to accommodate the increased attendance. A lot of home work is done before the camps are actually held. Our health workers go on a house to house campaign in Vikhroli and also conduct awareness programs in the locality. Women are explained the importance of Pap smear and the availability of this free facility at our centre.



In the period from Sept 2013 to March 2015 , **1140 women were screened in 89 camps** . Of these 80 women had abnormalities and 18 of them needed advanced colposcopies and 3 of them required cervical biopsy. 232 women did not bother to collect their reports despite several reminders. This was very sad and defeated the very purpose of conducting this screening. In a measure to overcome this, from Jan 2015 we started giving gifts to all women who came to collect their report. In the next few months the difference was obvious.



### 1000 Pap smears in 9 months !

The success of our camps encouraged us to do it in a bigger fashion and it received support from Association for India's



development (AID). The AID supported project took off on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2015 and was completed on 27<sup>th</sup> Feb 2016. In this period of 9 months, 1000 women were screened for cervical cancer. 88 women had local infection 73 women needed detailed colposcopy and there

were 2 ladies with frank cancers. Both these women were sent to Tata Memorial Hospital and treatment has already begun. Of the 73 women advised colposcopy, 14 have got it done and are on follow up, the remaining have been constantly reminded.

### Camps in 2016 – 17

At the Centre, 65 Pap smear camps were conducted this year at the centre and 786 women were screened by our gynecologists. 27 women were advised for colposcopy. With the support from AID a digital colposcope was purchased by the trust. This was inaugurated on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2017 at the centre so that the women who come for screening could also avail this facility.

In addition to screening camps held at the Vikhroli centre, camps have been held at other places such as residential



societies, colleges and in low income group dwelling areas such as Reay Road, Govandi and Kalwa. They were held in association with N G O S & organizations such

as Vision Rescue, Lions Club Mumbai Airport etc. . Over the year 11 such camps were held screening 264 women.

Month	At centre	
	No. of pap smear camps	No of women screened
Nov'17	4	65
Dec'17	6	101
Jan'18	4	79
Feb'18	3	32
Mar'18	4	31
Apr'18	3	38
May'18	3	37
June'18	3	42
July'18	2	30
Aug'18	5	73
Sept'18	2	28
Oct'18	2	16
<b>total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>572</b>

Date	Area	women screened
03.11.17	Naigaon	18
10.12.17	Vakola	42
17.12.17	Kharghar	33
05.01.18	Bandra	17
16.01.18	Mulund	18
18.01.18	Mumbra, Thane Dist	15
22.01.18	Sindkhed, Jalna	54
28.01.18	Ghatkopar	64
17.02.18	Goa	18
25.02.18	Ghatkopar	56
27.02.18	Ghatkopar	50
04.03.18	Nala Sopara	26
13.04.18	Navapur	95
05.05.18	Vashi	27
20.05.18	Khar	38
26.05.18	Nerul	23
09.06.18	Ghatkopar	25
21.06.18	Dadar	12
01.07.18	Palghar	58
15.07.18	Ghatkopar	39
29.07.18	Palghar	39
21.08.18	Ghatkopar	23
05.09.18	Vashi	34
09.09.18	Bhandup	29
30.09.18	Thane	48
11.10.18	Trombay	39
<b>total</b>		<b>940</b>



The team conducting camps in Mumbai Sector

### Camps in 2017 – 18

At our Vikhroli centre, **41** camps were conducted and **572** women were screened, details in the table. 18 colposcopies were done this year. 6 of the women had to undergo biopsy, out of which one was malignant and has been sent to Tata Memorial Hospital. The others were advised regular follow up with the Gynecologist

We also conducted Pap smear camps at various places not only in Mumbai but also in the interiors of Maharashtra. Camps at residential societies is a now a regular feature. The big ones this year was those conducted for police women, staff of Naval Armament Depot, teachers & construction site female workers.

Airport Authority of India (AAI) arranged for 4 camps. One camp was conducted in Vakola and the remaining 3 in Asapha, Ghatkopar where we got a very good response. Total of **212** women were screened and advised. There were 7-8 cases for colposcopy & biopsy which were later done. A special mention needs to be made of Dr Geethanjali Amin, who incidentally was instrumental in getting these camps organized, and Dr Reena Upadhyay who have accompanied our staff and volunteers for the camps in the suburbs near and far.

**Outside Mumbai** we had Pap smear and oral screening camps at Sindkhed, Jalna and in Goa.. Both places together, 72 women underwent Pap smear tests. We thank Dr. Archana, her brother & sister for the excellent arrangements and great hospitality given at both these places. Like last year, this year too in association with Sathya Sai group the trust conducted awareness and screening camps at Palghar.

### Oral cancer detection camps

The awareness campaign in construction companies brought in added benefits. It resulted in detection camps for oral cancers. Marathon Realty & Wadhwa Constructions permitted us to hold camps at several sites of theirs. In one of sites of Wadhwa constructions **450** men were screened at one go and therein **53** men were found to have white patches in their mouth, which is a premalignant condition for oral cancers. At other sites too there was a sizeable number of men who had white patches or their mouths were narrowed (Oral sub mucous Fibrosis, Gutka is particularly notorious for causing this within 2 years of usage). These men were advised follow up with Dental practitioners & some prescribed drugs.

### Oral detection camps at VMCC , Mumbai

These camps made beginning with World No tobacco day, 31<sup>st</sup> May 2014. The proximity to BEST bus depot to our centre got the conductors & drivers to the camp and slowly men in the neighborhood too trickled in. Doctors, interns & final year students visit the centre on alternate Sundays and on rest of the days dental surgeons practicing nearby pitch in help.

**60** camps have been held so far screening **1137** persons. 5 men were found to have frank cancers & they were referred to TATA Memorial hospital or to their hospital of choice. 108 men were found to have premalignant conditions and they have been advised to quit smoking and take treatment. 11 men had severe narrowing of the mouth due to Sub mucous fibrosis, they too have been advised similarly. Of these men 3 come to the centre for exercises to increase the size of mouth opening.

### Oral cancer awareness & detection camps for construction workers, 2017 – 18

The trust has been conducting oral screening camps in association with the women's wing of MCHI Credai at different construction sites. These regular programs at the sites has brought in the much needed awareness in these men about the critical need to stop tobacco chewing & smoking habits. The trust would like to thank the women's wing team for organizing these awareness programs on a regular basis. The **details are on next pg..**

**30.11.17**

180 plus labourers were given the cancer awareness talk prior to the detection camp. The nine steps for checking and the four finger test were also explained to them.

**09.01.18**

Oral cancer awareness camp was held at Kanakia site in Bandra East. 160 plus workers were given the talk. Many of them said because they have this habit for long, giving up may be very difficult. Consulting a doctor and counseling will definitely help urged the speaker. The dental doctors too advised them during the detection camp.

**12.01.18**

In Mulund near the P&T colony for the workers of the construction site of Marathon group awareness and detection camp was arranged. 90 workers were spoken to on the signs and symptoms of cancer and Dr. Ashwini screened the patients and advised them on oral hygiene.

**18.01.18**

oral cancer awareness & detection camp for 200 men and 20 women were done at the construction site of Dosti Builders at Mumbra in Thane. Reiterating on the ill effects of tobacco and the benefits of quitting, we felt a little bit of awareness had definitely set into the minds of these workers. They were also screened by the Doctors and 3 men with pre cancerous lesions were identified and advised.

**28.01.18**

At the Marathon site at Panvel, the construction workers gathered for the power point presentation specifically stressing on oral cancers as many of them were regular tobacco chewers. An appeal to all the 580 labourers were made for quitting this habit and the benefits of quitting were emphasized by the speaker. After the talk, many wanted to know how they could stop this habit and what test they should do. The message was well taken, and this was very satisfying for us after having come so far.

**26.02.18**

In association with MCHI Credai, the trust conducted an oral cancer awareness and detection camp for 150 workers at Rajesh Torres site in Thane. Drs. Sachin Tudme & Pratiksha Borwankar advised the patients after screening.

**13.03.18**

Oral cancer awareness camp for the workers was conducted at Tridhaatu Kshitij site in Matunga for 80 workers.

**16.04.18**

Mr. Gaurav Menariya of Marathon group, who has been taking initiative in conducting the camps at Marathon group, arranged for one more site at Byculla. 450 labourers attended the cancer talk and stress was laid on tobacco related cancers.

**04.09.18**

80 workers of the Gundecha Developers in Andheri were given the cancer awareness talk. The spouses of these workers were also given a separate talk on women specific cancers. They were later screened by the dental team. It was alarming ! Of the 80 workers more than 10 had pre cancer lesions.

**13.10.18**

The trust conducted an oral awareness and screening camp at Balkum, Thane for the site workers of Dosti constructions. The sessions were conducted in batches for the workers and also one for the staff & management. Here too, in a total of about 200 workers more than 10 of them had pre cancer lesions. Drs. Sunita Chheda & Shruti examined the workers and advised them further.







A strong drive to espouse the cause of cancer led to the founding of the trust and it began with the bare minimum capital that is required to register a trust in the year 1993, that was **Rs.2,500/-**. By the first year the figure was up 10 times. The first big donation came in late 1994 when Mr. Chandrasekharan gave us a cheque of Rs.30,000/- as a gesture of thanks for treating his father, who had blood disease which was not cancer. Till about 1996 the donations came like this as gestures of thanks or from donations by the family members of the Trust or friends.

The opening of the chapter in Coimbatore in September 1996 drew the attention of a larger number of people and one fine morning a total stranger, Dr. Chandra Kumaraswamy from Tirupur, came to my clinic and placed 2 bundles of 100 rupee notes on the table, I didn't know how to react and sat stunned. This was first time that somebody I never knew came and gave a big donation without making a request! This gave us a good head start in Coimbatore.

With wider attention, the number of patients requesting for support also increased and we accepted patients for sponsorship only if we had adequate funds for the complete treatment. Ms. P, was case we found impossible to refuse and we had to raise funds with literally a gun on our forehead. We pushed ourselves and begged a thousand hands to garner the required amount. At the same time we realized that we have to have some sort of buffer capital to meet such demands and that led us to host our first fund raiser, The heart for cancer carnatic nite by Sudha Ragunathan in **Feb 1998**. About 2 lakhs was raised from this concert and another lakh got added in Dec 1999 when Mr. Jayaraman, founder trustee, left it for the trust in his will.

As It is called today, **“Crowd funding “**, was the main source for us to raise funds for the trust. Donor passes were sold for the Cancer Carnatic Nites, T. Shirts were

procured from Tirupur and sold, Sarees from Chinalampatti were sold and the like. Our existence was literally was from hand to mouth. The year 2001 brought an end to this state of ours, when **Mr.G.K.Ramamurthy**, Chairman, GKR Foundation, came into our lives. His agreement to sponsor our patient care came as big relief to us and from now on all we had to do was send an appeal to him and the contribution came! Soon more individuals, establishments and organizations made large donations and encouraged us to take up projects boldly.

Despite the big donors we continued the crowd funding, we believe involvement is equally important as quantum. The jumble sale which was begun in the year 2000 grew in size by the year and involved people by the thousands, grossed money in lakhs. Our Cancer carnatic Nites continued with donor passes. We also started selling products made by volunteers and cancer victors. Ladies embroidered kerchiefs and a set of 3 was sold at Rs. 25 /-. One particular organization made 1000 sets for us. Bags & pouches were stitched by cancer victors and they brought in cash and acclaim. And finally coins were eagerly dropped at our charity boxes which were kept at shops & restaurants.

**What makes really happy is that when a need arises, donors surface.** The biggest example is our hospital at Chennai. We took up a 1.20 crore project with quarter of the amount in our pockets. In 30 months the entire capital was raised with the help of 898 donors. Friends & acquaintances, some forgotten for years, suddenly came to make spontaneous donation even without the knowledge that such a project was on. That is when we realized if something has to happen, things fall in place!

*We are thankful for being considered worthy to receive the support of all you people and cherish that this energy flows and emboldens us further in the fight against cancer.*



### Heart for Cancer Carnatic Nite

This event was conceived with an aim to associate good things in life with cancer, gather people who want to lend a hand in the fight for cancer and also raise funds for the treatment of the cancer affected. The first such concert was given by Smt. Sudha Raganathan in Coimbatore on **1<sup>st</sup> Feb 1998**. Subsequently it became an annual feature & from 2001 it was also held in Mumbai. Over the years 24 such concerts have been held.

Top Carnatic musicians, P. Unnikrishnan, Bombay Jayashri, Lalgudi trio, S. Sowmya, Abhishek raghuram and many more, gave concerts virtually free. They were duly honoured by us for this. While Unnikrishnan's concerts drew the maximum number of audience, Smt. Nithyashree Mahadevan rendered the maximum number of concerts for us - 2 each in Mumbai & Chennai & one in Coimbatore.

These events raised the necessary funds but were not restricted to that. Several members from the audience not only became regular donors but also enrolled themselves as volunteers and worked with full zest. These events also introduced us to prominent citizens in each of the city, who then became our advisors & patrons

### Music with Mission

The beautiful concert rendered by Smt. Nithyashree Mahadevan in Nov 2000 at Coimbatore included two compositions that would melt away people's hearts & actually beckon people to the cause of cancer. We wanted to reach these songs to the masses and chose to release the recording of this concert as CDs & Cassettes. Vasantha Ninaivu was the name given and was released on **27<sup>th</sup> march 2001** at Mumbai on the Remembrance day of Mrs. Vasantha. It was well received and that emboldened us to

produce 2 more albums, Vasantha Guhane – Songs on Murugan – By P. Unnikrishnan & Endrum Vasantham – Songs depicting the tale of cancer affected from trouble to triumph – by Bombay Jayashri. Subsequently all the 3 albums were combined as a DVD and called Music with Mission. We took the albums for release & sale to different cities all over India from 2001 to 2004.

### Ritu vasanth

To draw people to the auditorium from a wider section of the society we had to move to a more popular kind of music and we began organizing Film music orchestra. It was named Ritu Vasanth and began with a concert by P. Unnikrishnan & his group on Jan 2004. The next one was Hindi film orchestra, Ajit Parab & group gave their recital the next January gathering a full house! In the subsequent years more such programs were held drawing audiences, funds and gathering hands for the struggle against cancer.

### Dance & Drama

The success of Ritu Vasanth broadened the scope and we began hosting fund raising events with Dance & drama. Drama came in first. In Feb 2003, Crazy Mohan & his troupe gave a performance for us at Coimbatore on the eve of the cancer victors' day. In Mumbai Santhosh Rajan & her troupe presented dramas to mark our 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> anniversaries. The responses were poor at all times

**Nrithya vasanth**, came into being when a Mridula Rai & Mrs. Chitra Krishnaswamy decided to raise funds for the Vasantha Memorial cancer centre, Chennai through a dance program by their dance group. They raised Rs. 5 lakhs from each of their programs held in Dec 2007 and Nov 2009.



## Jumble sale

The westerners call it Garage sale and we in India have named it Jumble Sale and in our hands it has grown to become a Jumbo Sale. The idea was mooted by a volunteer but we had no clue as to how to conduct the sale. We consulted a few veterans in the field but their suggestions confused us further. Finally on the Independence Day of India, the idea to price & label stuff came to us and one by one things fell in line and on **23<sup>rd</sup> September 2000** the first sale was conducted at CSI girls's School Coimbatore. We had collected 44,000 odd rupees and this excitement kept us awake all night.

Thereafter it became an annual event in the **3<sup>rd</sup>** week of September. It grew in size by the year & posed new challenges every year. The growing quantity of goods overwhelmed us in every aspect. It demanded intensive labour, large number of volunteers, managerial abilities & crowd management techniques. We have coped to these quite successfully and it grew to mammoth proportions. So much we had to abandon the conduct of this sale in 2010.

Of course it generated funds. The final sale in year **2010** raised **12** lakh rupees from selling goods loaded in 19 Lorries. Over the years this event had raised over **65** lakh rupees. It also got a good number of persons who enrolled as volunteers for the sale stick to us as our core volunteers and provide assistance to all our activities. The junk to life process got us funds & also added a family

## Mumbai Marathon

Mumbai Marathon conducted United way of Mumbai by itself is a great inspiration. Thousands run the marathon & with them an equal number take up the Dream run bring attention to a socially relevant issue to raise funds for a cause. We participated in this event in **2010** for the 1<sup>st</sup> time. L & T had taken up our cause in the corporate challenge category and donated 10 lakh rupees to us. This was big start for us and there was no looking back. L & T continued the support for 3 years, ICICI employees and Stock holding Corporation also pitched in their support. Our volunteers also jumped in as fund raisers and as participants.

In the year **2013**, with **Godrej & Boyce** taking up our cause in the corporate challenge the response took up a brighter hue. Mr. Nariman Bacha & his team of 70 – 75 employees walked for our cause. In addition he organized interaction with us, organized awareness programs & even screening camps to get them motivated. He also visited our centre and saw in person what we do. This really helped and over the years the company has raised over a **Crore & 60 lakh rupees** over 5 years! This year they raised a sum of Rs.37 lakhs plus and an additional donation of Rs.5 lakhs from Pirojsha Godrej Foundation was also sent. This is the biggest support we from the trust have got from a single source. **Cheers!**

This year, 35 volunteers of the trust also ran the marathon carrying placards and collected a sum of Rs.1.5 lakhs





## HDFC Ltd.

HDFC Ltd has been providing a solid support to us. The first donation was in the form of Rs. 2 lakh towards medical equipments for Vasantha Memorial Cancer Centre , Chennai in the year 2013. Subsequently they took up the support of patient care and so far given **45 lakh** rupees .We are thankful Delnaz Madam & Ziaa Madam for their initiative.

## STCI Finance Limited.

Their continued support from 2014 has again helped us take more patients for aid as well as conduct screening camps at centre and outside. Their benevolence for the past so many years has been **34 lakhs** plus. The trust thanks Ms. Suparna Sharma for her initiative .

## Gateway Distriparks Limited (GDL),

A leading integrated logistics facilitator in India is promoted by Mr. Prem Kishan Dass Gupta and his family has a pan-India presence. Under the Corporate Social Responsibility headed by Mrs. Mamta Gupta made a donation of Rs. **25 lakhs** for Cancer Victor Rehabilitation program.

## Other corporate

In Chennai , Chennai Petroleum corporation & Universal Medicare Pvt. Ltd. & STUP Consultants Pvt. Ltd. sponsored lab equipments for the Chennai centre. LIC of India made a grant of 6 lakhs plus their golden jubilee fund for the centre at Chennai . Another body which has been supporting activities in Mumbai since long is the Stock Holding Corporation. Outside these many corporate, banks & the like have given lakh and above rupees for a number of activities conducted by us.

## Regular Donors

The worthiness of the work an organization is proven when people come to support again & again. We from the trust are lucky that we have gathered a good number of them. The Muthiah family from Coimbatore makes the first cheque of the new financial year on our name, so does another auditor from Coimbatore. Mrs. Usha , an insurance employees makes sure that her contribution reaches us every month. Usha Lala, from Mumbai supports us in a big way each & every month and so on. On Birthdays & anniversaries , a donation comes from a many a person year after year.

## GKR fund

Mr.G.K. Ramamurthy from Mumbai is a bigwig from the pharmaceutical industry who sold of his ventures and invested the profits to form a Charity, GKR Foundation and supported education, health & restoration of temples. In 2001 we got introduced to him at the 1<sup>st</sup> Heart for Cancer Carnatic Nite held at Mumbai in January 2001.

In the last **17** years the assistance from this foundation has crossed **1.45 crore rupees** supporting not only patient care but a variety of activities undertaken by us. 199 patients have been sponsored through this fund and many of them stand cured. He donated a Toyota Qualis for us to enable us to travel to villages for awareness programs. When our cancer centres came into being he donated towards their acquisition. He underwrote the cost of Cancer Carnatic nites ,a couple of music albums and also a 100 mammograms. The cancer victors' days have become grand celebrations thanks to his support from the year 2006.He is a more than a donor for us, a patriarchal figure whose guidance & advice we constantly seek.

## CVV Iyengar Memorial Charitable Trust

This Trust from Coimbatore which was founded in the late 1920s and presently managed by its managing trustee, Mr. C. B. Suresh associates itself with several social causes. Mr. Suresh approached us after learning about us from a mutual friend and expressed his desire to aid us. This assistance began in 2010 with support to patient's treatment went to sponsor mammograms & lab equipment.

Over the years the quantum of donation from this trust has crossed **47 lakh** rupees. Yes ! donation came from them but most importantly it came for a purpose which donors generally do not come forward to. They



consented to sponsor the salaries of our staff at the Chennai hospital and continues to do so till date. Thanks to this gesture we are able to employ good quality paramedics.

This year one more person , Mr.T.V.Srinivasan , from Bangalore has joined Mr.Suresh in sponsoring staff salaries and helped us give uncompromised care to our patients.

### Association For India's Development ( AID)

This United States of America based welfare organization founded by Dr. Ravi Kuchimacnhi & Aravinda in 1991 has several chapters all over USA. It is run by volunteers and they aid numerous projects in India. We received their support for the 1<sup>st</sup> time in **1999** when they gave a grant to us to conduct camps in 3 villages around Coimbatore. Our relief work for Kutch quake victims & Orissa flood affected was also aided. Subsequently they supported the Pap Smear Project in Mumbai in 2015 in a big way. From 2016, two chapters of theirs, Chicago & Boston , took care of Pudhuvasantham project for 2 years.. We have received nearly **34 lakh** rupees as assistance from this organization

### Ashokan Ambal

Saradambal Auto & its Managing director, Mr. Ashokan Muthuswamy , have been a pillar of strength to us since the year 2001. In the last 17 years their support has increased in quantity and frequency. Notable amongst their regular donations is the assistance towards the conduct of cancer victors' day. The aid from them has crossed **20 lakh** rupees!

### Continuing assistance beyond life.

Mr. N. Jayaraman, one of Founder trustees, left a lakh rupees for us causing the formation Jayaraman Leukemia

fund , which went to sponsor children who were affected by leukemia. Subsequently a few others, known and unknown, have willed handsome sums for us in their wills. . These include Mrs. P.V.Parvathy ,Coimbatore – Rs.8 lakhs, Ms Komala Srinivasan ,Chennai –



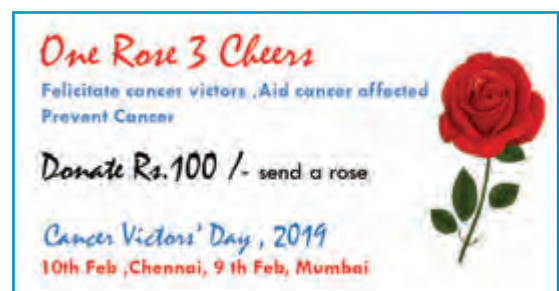
Rs.4.6 lakh , Dr.Kamala, Trichy – Rs.3 lakhs, & Mrs. Prema Ranganathan Chennai, - Rs.7 .25 lakhs. The last lady was totally unknown to us. Merely from what she learnt through sources known to her willed such a large amount for us. We are floored !

In addition a number of people have donated in memory of their loved ones. Mr. Jayarajan & his wife Sandhya have a fund under us , named Aishwarya Memorial fund in memory of their daughter. Mr.V.R.R.Ramalingam from Madurai has an endowment with us in memory of his wife , Madurai Revathy devi and this fund supports patient with Chronic myeloid leukemia. M. B .Mehta trust from Coonoor makes an annual donation every year. Many more persons have also made a onetime contribution in memory of their loved ones. To honour the lakh & above donors, commemorative plaques have been put up at our Cancer centres.

### Coupons for Life

In the year 2005 we decided to take up rehabilitation of cancer affected in a big way. There was sizeable number of cancer victors who were finding difficult to continue their education or get married or get living support from their family in their autumn years. Coupons worth Rs.25, 50 & 100 were brought out & sold .Around a Lakh rupees was collected and this was used for rehabilitation purposes solely.

The success of this venture got us to use this modality for events conducted in later years. In October 2014, it was used for the Daan Utsav , the Joy of giving month and Rs. 1,73,650 was raised in Mumbai . At the Diwali function that year, this was disbursed to cancer patients , for purposes other than treatment , like food & transport, school fees etc. It was also similarly done in 2015.



## Make a Difference - Donate

I/we .....

would like to contribute **Rs.** ...../-

towards

- ☐ General Fund
- ☐ Treatment of patients
- ☐ Awareness Programs
- ☐ Pudhuvasantham project
- ☐ Screening Camps
- ☐ Staff Salaries
- ☐ Hospital Equipment
- ☐ Cancer Victors' day event

Name.....

Address.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Mobile .....

**Cheques /DD should be raised in favour of Vasantha Memorial Trust and post to our offices in Chennai or Mumbai**

### Donations can also be sent by Bank Transfer

**Indian origin :** Axis Bank Ashok Nagar ,Chennai,  
A/c No. 913010029370661 , IFSC Code :  
UTIB0000285

**From Abroad :** Canara Bank ,Ashok Nagar ,Chennai  
a/c No. 0975101051971 ,swift code CNRBINBBID.  
IFSC code : CNRB0000975 ,FCRA Reg No.  
075901337.

If bank transfers are made please send an email which has your name & postal address

**All Donations are exempt from Income tax under section 80G**

To felicitate cancer victors and to sponsor treatment of cancer patients, **Rose coupons**, each valued at Rs.100/- was sold prior to cancer victors day from the year 2016. People could send a rose for every hundred rupees to a cancer victor on the day of the celebration. There has been a very good response. The collection is **4 lakh** upwards every year .

### Other donations

A large number of donations are made to the trust not necessarily in cash. Apart from contributions to jumble sale which as goods & clothes , hospital & patient home needs were also donated by a good number of people. For the Mother & child project there are regular donors who send rations to us. Years ago Mrs. Sumithra Shetty from Coimbatore baked cakes & raised a lakh rupees. Stalls are put by us at various fairs and our goods are sold to raise funds. Finally sponsorship banners are put up at our events to raise funds.



Mrs. Jayalakshmi Krishnan being awarded on International Women's Day



Vasanth Uttam awards to Drs. Krishnan, Dhanshekar & Srinivas Raman by the trust on the 10th anniversary of VMCC ,Chennai



## Beyond cancer

### Remembrance Day Concerts

On the Remembrance days of Mrs. Vasantha, in whose memory the trust was formed, we held devotional music concerts. They were held in Coimbatore, Chennai, Mumbai and one occasion at Bangalore. Several musicians, famous & less known, have presented classical music, abhang , Bhajan & Nama Sankirtan recitals for us. Amongst them are Smt Nithyashree Mahadevan, Shri Vihyabhushana & Smt. Shruti Sadolikar . This year on the 28<sup>th</sup> death anniversary of Vasantha, a bhajan program by Sri Muthumani and party was organized at Hariharaputra Bhajan Samaj, Chembur,Mumbai on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2018.

### Endrendrum MS

This was a movement started to propagate the music & memories of the legend, Smt.M.S.Subbulakshmi . It began in Oct 2008, very soon the movement gathered momentum .Young upcoming artistes & established ones joined us in this venture and gave monthly concerts which dealt with one aspect of MS's music. They did sincere homework and presented concerts as MS would. The disturbing behavior of a couple of musicians in mid 2013 put us off . The already scheduled concerts were conducted and the concert series closed after 64 concerts in March 2014 with a recital on Surdas Bhajans

### Relief during Disasters

The first time we got into the activity of relief work was when we sent medicines to people in Orissa in 1999 when the floods caused havoc there. When a severe shock rocked Kutch & we were in action again and this culminated with the provision of a ward for women at the Divine Life society hospital at Adipur. Flood relief was carried out in Chennai 2015 and we also volunteered in medical camps for flood relief in Bihar in 2017..

### Summer Camps

In 2008 a 10 day camp was organized for children at our centre in Coimbatore. 20 odd children were taught art & crafts, spoken English , art of story telling , etc & also a class on the ill effects of Tobacco use was squeezed in . It was a success and this emboldened us to conduct more such camps. It was replicated in Mumbai the next year and thereafter this chapter took the lead & conducts it every year till today.

## Trustees

### Dr.Ramanathan Jayaraman MD, Managing Trustee

A Hematologist & hematologist - oncologist with more than 26 years experience in cancer therapy and care. Dr. Ramanathan completed his post graduation in Internal medicine at LTMMC Mumbai and subsequently underwent training in Hematology & hemato-oncology at CMC, Vellore. He worked as a consultant in the said field at KMCH, Coimbatore for 12 years and quit in 2007 to be full fledged with the Vasantha Memorial Trust & Vasantha Memorial Cancer Centre, Chennai. He also visits several hospitals in Chennai



### Mrs. Jayalakshmi Krishnan , Trustee

Her smiling face has championed the crusade against cancer, almost single-handedly in the big city of Mumbai. She oversees the complete functioning of the trust's activities in Mumbai and is actively involved in the day to day activities of the trust.. She works with volunteer teams, coordinates activities, personally runs the awareness programmes and actively pursues fund raising efforts in the commercial capital of the country. Her work has been appreciated well by Mumbaikars and she has been honoured several years in a row on International Women's Day by different organizations



### Mr. Krishnan .N.Iyer, Trustee

Mr. Krishnan is a source of strength and support to the trust's activities across its branches. He is a commerce graduate & presently General Manager in Longulf Trading India Private Limited



# Vasantha Memorial Trust

*A Trust For Cancer Care & Cure*

## **Chennai**

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**[www.vasanthamemorial.com](http://www.vasanthamemorial.com)**