



From the MD's Desk



Dear Reader,

A very Happy 2017 and season's greetings to you. We are very happy to ring in the new year with our first Newsletter. This has taken shape from a deep need - the need to be connected.

There is so much happening here at Support Elders that we felt you should know about. Also, it is a wonderful platform to showcase the talent of our members and also for them to share their thoughts and experiences with all of us.

We have also invited our key partners to share their thoughts and views on issues relevant to this sector.

Do send in anything that you would like to share in the Newsletter and also any suggestions and feedback that you may have.

*Happy reading!
Apratim Chattopadhyay*



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News of the Month

Support Elders felicitated as a social impact start-up by Public Relations Society of India.



Support Elders was felicitated as a social impact start-up by Public Relations Society of India was held on 26th of October, 2016 at Satyajit Ray Auditorium, Indian Council for Cultural Relations. Every year, PRSI felicitates young entrepreneurs with innovative ideas and it was the same this year. The dignitaries present in the ceremony were Padma Shri S.K.Roy (MD Peerless General Finance and Investment Co. Limited), Mani Shankar Mukherjee (Chief Group Advisor-Corporate Relations, RP Sanjiv Goenka group) and Rita Bhimani, (CEO Ritam Communications). It was Rita Bhimani who honoured us with the plaque. Other guests of honour were Grand Master Dibyendu Barua, Agnimitra Paul (fashion designer), Manoshi Roy Chowdhury (Co-Chairman Techno India Group), Kushal Maitra (Director & CEO IIIMLtd.) and Dr. Ajay Pathak, Director, IBS Business School. ■

Congratulations Shamlu Dudeja

We congratulate our member, Shamlu Dudeja, famous as the kantha queen, on being recently awarded for her fabulous achievements in the Bengal She Award. Her creations call for tremendous zeal and rigour, as she channelises her efforts in building an empire with her Kantha company, Malika's Kantha Collection. ■

Improving the quality of healthcare for elders.

To address the growing challenges of quality healthcare, Support Elders has tied-up with Vaidyaa to expand its bouquet of services. This will help members of Support Elders to subscribe to services, whereby they can avail the facility of doctor-on-call at any time of the day. Vaidyaa assures that they will arrange for a doctor to the member's home within six hours. This service can be availed by making a call or booking online through their website. Patients must pay the doctor's fee and a service charge. Besides doctors, Vaidyaa also provides nurses. ■



Health



Basics of Cataract

Rangana Bhattacharya gives you the lowdown on this common eye problem.

If you have blurred vision that makes it difficult for you to read print or knit or read signs while driving, then may be it is time to visit your ophthalmologist and get your eyes checked for cataract. Cataract is a clouding of the lens in the eye leading to a decrease in vision. It can affect one or both eyes. It usually happens after 40 years of age.

In the initial stages of cataract, spectacles help but if the condition deteriorates, then surgery needs to be considered. Through surgery, the cloudy lens is removed and an artificial lens is put in. Unfortunately, there is no medication or eye drop that can prevent or abate cataract formation. An important point of consideration here is the right time for surgery. Earlier, it was believed that a cataract needs to become 'ripe' before it could be removed, as the lens could not be extracted safely unless it was at a relatively advanced stage of development. However, thanks to modern technology, the faulty lens can now be removed at an earlier stage of development. In fact, since the faulty lens hardens as time passes, it can also lead to other complications and it is often deemed that a more developed cataract can be difficult to remove.

Typically, the time required for an uncomplicated cataract operation is about 10 to 15 minutes. As our member, Mr Dipankar Chattopadhyay, who had two cataract surgeries earlier this year, puts it, "The operation took less than 20 minutes. It was smooth, with the doctor chatting away with me to relax my mood." Immediately after the operation, one needs to take some rest in the recovery room, as one feels groggy from the anaesthesia. Overall, a thirty minute to one hour gestation period is necessary. "After a few days, I was allowed to watch TV (with glasses) and resume walking and moving. After the surgery, my vision became better within a few days. At first, your vision may be blurry as your eye heals and adjusts itself. However, as per my doctor's advice, I had to go for check-ups two or three days after the surgery, the following week and then again after about a month to monitor the healing process." ■

Post-operative care in case of a cataract surgery is important. Some general precautions in this regard are:

Eye Shield - You should use an eye shield for protection when they sleep. You may use dark glasses during daytime. Please wash the eye shield and glasses with soap and water each day and dry the same before use.

Washing the face - Cleaning of the operated eye will be as per the instructions given by the doctor/nurse. The rest of the face can be mopped with a clean and wet cloth. Avoid splashing water into the operated eye.

Shaving - Though shaving is permitted, avoid splashing water after shaving. Instead clean with a wet cloth.

Bathing - You can bathe from below the neck from the first post-operative day itself. But avoid head bath for a period of three to four weeks.

Travel



A Trip to Shantiniketan

Rangana Bhattacharya writes about her day-trip to Shantiniketan.

Around late January, as winter wanes and the days become warmer, we decided to go to Shantiniketan, 'The Abode of Peace', for a day. It was a weekend and four of us friends packed our bags and drove down to this quaint small town to escape the din and bustle of the city.

Shantiniketan, a small town near Bolpur, is situated 160 km north of Kolkata. Established by Maharshi Debendranath Tagore, and later expanded by his son, Rabindranath Tagore, whose vision became what is now the Visva-Bharati University, it is steeped in culture along with a romantic and spiritual flavour, which makes it an attractive weekend getaway.

On arrival, we proceeded directly for lunch at a shaded shack, which served excellent comfort food. After satisfying our gastronomical needs, we hired a local guide to show us around. We visited the university campus before continuing to the village of Sriniketan, where Tagore's Institute of Rural Reconstruction is located. The main attractions of Shantiniketan are Rabindra Bhavan, the house where Tagore lived and worked; Cheena Bhavan, Institute of Chinese Language and Culture; Kala Bhavan, the college of arts and crafts; Patha Bhavan; Sangeet Bhavan; and the Prayer Hall. It seemed quite a challenge to cover all this in such a short time, but our guide took us to the right spots, expertly guiding and explaining to us, the history of the place. The more we saw, the happier we felt in being able to connect with such a rich and varied cultural heritage. We also saw some of Tagore's personal belongings, paintings, and various editions of his work at Bichitra, research centre and museum.

Our next stop was Tagore's Ashram, Upasana Griha, a beautiful glass house made by Maharshi Debendranath Tagore in 1863. It took our breath away as we could almost sense Rabi Thakur's presence there. A sense of calm prevails, which is very appealing to lovers of Tagore's works. The Kala Bhavan with its iconic mud hut with its paintings by Sri Nandalal Bose has been renovated. Here, you get to see various figures from Tagore's poems on the walls. The pulse of Tagore's thoughts and philosophy is felt at its strongest at the Vidya Bhavan, the study centre for the social sciences and humanities, which sports the innovative concept of open-air classrooms.

As we all wanted some souvenirs, the best place to go was Amar Kutir. Known for its excellent collection of local handicrafts, ranging from batik printed garments, leather handbags to Kantha stitch saris, at reasonable prices, it was a treat for us. ■

Recipe



Kadhi Chawal

Punjabi kadhi chawal is an all-time favourite in Indian homes. This Indian yogurt curry with rice is prepared by putting fried pakodas in a yogurt-based curry. Shopna Ghosh, one of our members, shares her recipe.

Serves: 4

Preparation time: 20-30 minute

Ingredients for making Kadhi

One and a quarter cup hung curd(sour)
3 tbsp. gram flour
1 tsp mustard seed,
pinch of asafoetida
¼ tsp methi
1 tsp ginger garlic paste
½ tsp turmeric powder and oil
Add green chilies finely chopped for taste.

Ingredients for rice

1 cup rice
3-4 cups of water
1 tsp salt.

Ingredients for pakoras

2/3 cup gram flour
1/2 tsp baking soda
1 onion (finely chopped)
2 tbsp. coriander leaves (finely chopped)
Add salt to taste and oil for deep frying.

Method for making pakoras

- Take a mixing bowl; add gram flour along with salt, baking soda, onions, green chili and coriander leaves.
- Add water little by little so that it forms a thick batter.
- Heat oil in a frying pan for deep frying, Make small ball shaped pakoras and fry them. Keep turning them occasionally. Fry them until golden brown in color. Drain them on a tissue paper to remove out the excess oil.

Method for making kadhi

- Take a big mixing bowl and mix curd with gram flour and water.
- Make a smooth mixture without any lumps.
- Add red chili powder, turmeric and salt.
- Heat oil in a frying pan, add cumin seeds, methi seeds and asafetida. When cumin seeds start to crackle add green chili, ginger and garlic paste. Stir well and add the sour curd mix with one hand while stirring constantly with the other hand. Do not stop stirring otherwise lumps will form. Now lower down the heat stirring constantly till it starts boiling. Let it simmer for 10 -15 minutes on low heat or till the kadhi thickens.
- Now add the fried pakodas to the kadhi and before serving garnish it with coriander leaves.

Method for making rice

- Wash the rice properly and keep aside.
- Boil the water in a boiling pan (dekchi).
- When the water starts to boil, add rice and salt. Cook for 15 minute, then reduce the heat and let it cook till the rice is completely soft.
- Switch off the heat and drain the starch water
- Serve hot with Punjabi kadhi. ■

Gallery

Pretty handmade bags by our member, Ms Sandhya De.



Member speak

Life in all its colours

Our member, Mrs Atashi Basack, shares with us her thoughts and experiences, especially about the concept of living in a joint family.

I was born in Bangladesh and did my schooling there. It was in 1945 that I shifted to Kolkata for my graduation. Finally, I got married and settled down here. My husband was in the Air Force and his was a transferable job. Although we moved to different places because of his transferable job, my early days as a bride were mainly spent in the comfort of a doting joint family. As luck would have it, when my father started looking for a befitting groom for me, he insisted on a joint family background to match my upbringing.

My mother-in-law was a sweet lady, strict and disciplined. Her sense of punctuality has instilled in me a value for time. Staying together not only provided positive role models, but also new learning experiences and development of new skills for both children and adults. In the end, it was all about quality time for the family to spend together.

The concept of a joint family strongly supports some beliefs and traditions that are passed on. It ingrains in us a sense of bonding. Making us learn many things which one cannot understand while staying in isolation. Being close with one another makes a person accommodating and of mild temperament. I could feel this difference in my children's behaviour when they interacted with others at ease and learnt to show respect to all elders known and unknown.

In a joint family, the oldest person was the head of the family and other members were guided by him/her under any situation. It maintained proper discipline in the family. Disputes were directly resolved by the head after consulting the other members. It worked out as an amicable resolution. I was happy to imbibe disciplinary rules within the family such as follow fix timings of returning, managing the food timings etc.

Continued on next page...

Partner Speak



How to choose the right hospital?

Suparna Sengupta, COO, Woodlands Multispecialty Hospital, advises on how to go about choosing the right hospital for you and your family.

We are currently spoilt for choices—ranging from the kind of food we put into our mouth to the kind of working hours we prefer. So, it is but natural that something as serious as the Health Industry has also seen a paradigmatic shift in the kind of choices it offers, making it imperative that you make an informed decision while choosing a hospital for yourself or your family.

Having worked for about 20 years in this industry, this is a very dear topic to me, not only from the patients' point of view but also from the point of view of a hospital administrator. We, hospital administrators, are constantly looking at this aspect, as it helps us to predefine and delineate our hospital services according to the needs of patients. It helps us to decide not only on service accessibility but also to bring in new technology and upgrade our facilities.

Here are a few things we need to look into while choosing a hospital for our near and dear ones:

- Having experienced and responsive personnel, including physicians and employees:**
 This is by far the most important factor that needs to be considered. For example, whether you are greeted with responsiveness by both the staff of the hospital as well as the physician is an important factor; in fact, a small, disrespectful gesture may put you off and you may not want to visit the hospital again.
- Environment:**
 It includes how clean the hospital is, whether it has an appropriate hygienic environment and how clean the waiting area, rooms, toilets and public utilities are.
- Physicians:**
 One expects the doctor to be knowledgeable; clear and easy to understand; and to be involved in treatment decisions. Many a times we choose a physician who is referred to by one of our relatives or hospital personnel, or from advertisements and if the above parameters of expectations are not met, we feel disappointed. So, it is best that we clearly understand what kind of a doctor we want and then go about it. Other factors include, timely appointments; personal attention by the physician; and being treated with respect and dignity.
- Superior technology:**
 Latest state-of-the-art equipment is an important factor but patients rarely have much knowledge about these. Here the physician plays a very important role as they need to explain the necessity of such equipments in diagnosis (by giving a clearer picture backing up his clinical findings) and treatment.
- Price:**
 Trying to optimise price and quality is a very tough decision. The right choice has to be made while keeping in mind that price does not always signify quality and vice versa. It is always better to choose a hospital which has cash and cashless insurance facilities.

In spite of all the above factors, when you fall sick the first thing which will come to your mind is where you will be admitted and treated promptly and cured swiftly. In case of emergencies, you rarely get a chance to exercise much choice. However, once you are diagnosed, you can then choose to either continue in the same hospital or shift to another one, depending on your health and your doctor's advice. Thankfully, most hospitals in Kolkata are well-equipped for emergency management.

Though I do agree that choosing a hospital is not an easy task, you can rest assured that most hospitals have a basic code of ethics and standard of treatment and the patient is top priority.

Continued from previous page...

Life in all its colours

I am happy that my two daughters could learn good habits and it built respect, affection and understanding of family values. As years passed, we had to leave the comfort of our home and move out to various places of work with my husband. It was a challenging job to bring up my children alone, however I was grateful that the initial formative years had been spent under the umbrella of my relatives and mother-in-law. Taking everything into my stride, I gradually crossed the ordeals of nuclear living.

As time passed and age took its toll on us, I eventually lost my husband. It was rather sudden and took me by surprise. I could not go back to my in-law's joint abode as I had been living separately for many years by then. Connecting with our contemporaries was even more difficult, as my mother-in-law was no more, and I somehow lost the confidence to get back and mingle with my other relatives. It was then that I decided to return to a life of self-contained living with my daughter.

Working it out, I came across Support Elders. Going through their operations and services, my daughter, who had also lost her husband, decided that their support would be the best option for us. Signing in for their services has taken such a load of our shoulders. They typically provide us assistance for out-of-home work and co-ordinated separate living. They are really god-sent, and till date we are very happy to be their members. They also arrange frequent outings and functions, something we really look forward to. It is a life lived to its full and with confidence. We don't regret losing out on joint abodes for Support Elders has included us in their big joint family and we cherish that feeling of oneness with them.

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