

SILVER EDGE

The
Support Elders
Newsletter

A bi-monthly round-up
of the events, stories,
learning & more
at Support Elders.

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FROM THE MD'S DESK

Dear Readers,

This is our first newsletter in the pandemic-ridden world and I am indeed glad to be writing once again to the Support Elders family. To me, this newsletter is about celebrating how the Support Elders family has stood strong in the face of a nationwide lockdown and a pandemic which redefined life as we knew it. So, in these times, when words like 'lockdown', 'masks', 'physical distancing' have become a part of common parlance, let us celebrate our zeal to carry on in the new normal.

This new world has opened up a host of new opportunities. We have initiated online learning and interactive sessions and events and have been greatly encouraged by the enthusiasm it has garnered. Our members, many of whom shied away from technology, have taken to this with admirable eagerness. The best part of this is that many of our members, who have limited mobility or those who could not attend events due to other issues, can now participate in these online sessions. We are happy to see them enjoying these sessions. I am also glad to let you know that we are gradually stepping up our service levels to pre-lockdown times, albeit with required precautions.

*Happy Reading!
Apratim Chattopadhyay*

Support
Elders
INTEGRATED CARE

24 X 7 Info Line:
+91-33-6638 8888

Email:
writetous@supportelders.com

NEWS & EVENTS

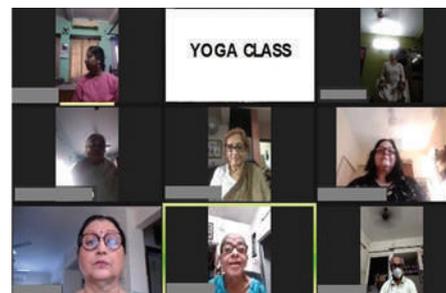
As we ushered in 2020, none of us had a clue of the pandemic that would soon sweep across the world. Fortunately, we, at Support Elders, had been able to gauge by February the kind of impact the pandemic would have on society and our services, and thus were able to preempt many issues and take steps to deal with the lockdown and COVID restrictions. So, to keep our members safe, we devised a strategy wherein emergency and essential services would be offered, while taking every precaution possible, and non-essential contact would be avoided as far as possible.

This was seen as a huge change for the entire Support Elders family—both for the staff and the members. Most of our members, who were used to weekly interactions and classes and frequent outings, were suddenly asked to stay put at home. Not

only that, even getting essentials was restricted. As usual, the team was not one to let anyone down. Taking maximum precaution, they did not flinch from doing their duty and going out to serve our members. They did whatever was in their power to make the lives of the elders that much easier in these trying times—from attending to medical emergencies, accompanying for medical exigencies like dialysis and chemotherapy to arranging for essential grocery items, medicines and pre-cooked food that would be suitable for our members, along with checking on them regularly about their physical and mental wellbeing. In fact, with children being unable to come down because of the global lockdown, the team often had to fill in the shoes of the family and stand by the family in times of great crisis.

As though life was not difficult enough, then came Amphan, the super cyclone, which as we know, completely ravaged the city. Many of our members were left without food, drinking water and electricity and some even had their homes wrecked by the lashing rain and whipping wind. Here too, the team stepped up and many of them went out the very next to help the members, while their own houses were still waterlogged or had no power.

But these are not the highlights of this period, the highlight is that the Support Elders family stands with each other and stands stronger than ever before! **SE**



DOWN MEMORY LANE

Meeting a Magician

As shared with Mousumi Gupta

Ms Anju Banerjee shared with us a very interesting story about the time she met magician P C Sorcar Senior.

Ms Anju Banerjee's family came to India from Dhaka, Bangladesh after the Bengal partition. She remembers here a time when her elder brother was the only earning member in the family.

She was pursuing her graduation at South City College, when she saw an advertisement in the local newspaper. It said that the renowned magician P C Sorcar Senior was looking to hire girls for his magic shows. Determined to take up a job and do her bit for the family, she decided to apply for the job.

Her elder brother, who was considered the head of the family, took his responsibility very seriously and was a strict guardian to all the siblings.

Knowing that her brother would not allow her to apply for such a job, Ms Banerjee decided to meet the magician without informing anyone at home. With only Rs 36, which was her tuition fee for college, and an exercise book in her bag, she bunked college to reach the interview venue.

Unfortunately, it was raining heavily that day and the roads were muddy and her saree was splattered with mud by the time she reached the interview venue.

But she was undeterred. When her turn came

and she entered the interview room, the magician was surprised to see her. "What are you here for?" he asked in surprise. Though her confident reply impressed the magician, he tried to convince her that the job was not suitable for her.

Crestfallen, she asked, "So, I won't get the job?" When he merely shook his head, on a rather childish whim, she said, "But Sir, can you show me a magic trick?" Taken aback, the legend said. "Magic? Now? In the midst of an interview? Are you joking?" But she insisted that he should fulfill at least one of her wishes. "You won't give me the job and now you won't even show me a magic trick. I don't even have the money to go and watch your magic at Mahajati Sadan," she said. "It is not possible at this point of time," he said indifferently. Disappointed, she stood up to leave, but she could not find her bag anywhere. Puzzled and frightened, she frantically searched for her bag everywhere, but in vain. Seeing her so agitated, the magician asked her what the problem was. "I can't find my bag, Sir," she replied. The magician promptly said that he had not seen any bag there. She grew very worried and soon started to cry. And then, suddenly, to her great surprise she found the bag lying exactly at the same place where she had kept it, just a few minutes earlier. "Here it is!" she jumped with joy. The legend smiled and said, "You wanted to see a magic trick... are you satisfied now?" Her bright eyes showed how happy she was! SE

SEPL EVENTS

Transforming Miles to Smiles

As we gear up for a changed world, Support Elders is also evolving into a different avatar, wherein face-to-face interactions and meetings are being replaced by online meets and learning sessions.

It is not easy being cocooned in our homes for days, without an end in sight... but few things are as heartwarming and reassuring as seeing familiar faces and smiles and sharing your feelings with like-minded people.

“ Thank you for giving us the opportunity to be a part of the sessions and helping us to come online through our mobile phones. I hadn't thought I would be able to do so through my mobile phone. Now, I know the joy of being online.

Ms A Dutta

Our members, who had been used to regular interaction through learning sessions and outings, were more than happy when we announced our plan to have online meets and classes, even though some of them were slightly sceptical about the digital world. In fact, many of our members initially shied away, as they were hesitant about using technology. So, we decided to take it slow. We first talked with our members to understand their apprehensions and inhibitions, then guided them and helped them gain confidence. Our team visited interested members, apps were installed in their mobile phones and they were taught how to use them. We started with online meets. Our members were visibly happy to see each other and share their lockdown experiences and concerns. Soon, the joy and excitement spread like wildfire and after a couple of online meets, we started our learning sessions.

Currently, there are three online classes—namely, Yoga/Pranayama, Recitation and Singing—with around 26 members attending them. With talented artistes, attached to well-known institutions, mentoring our members, the

singing and recitation classes have become very popular. The Yoga instructor, in keeping with the requirements of our members, help them practice yoga and pranayama, which help them to relax and de-stress.

We are proud to say that although we are handholding every new joinee, many earlier joinees happily offer to guide the new joinees.

The classes are becoming increasingly popular with the members, as they can attend the sessions from the safety and comfort of their homes.

“ Thank you, Support Elders, for creating such an exciting opportunity for me. Now I can think of something creative other than the everyday mundane household work.

Ms S Lahiri ”

These online sessions, events and meets are here to stay. After the lockdown is over, members can opt for either or both online and offline learning sessions and meets, as per their preferences and convenience. SE

SEPL EVENTS

The Last Pre-lockdown Event—Dol Utsav



An impromptu dance by our members, Ms S Ghosh and Manidra Gupta Ray, and our guest, Ms G Das.



Our members, Ms K Mukherjee and Ms B Chattopadhyay, presenting a poem and a medley of songs.



Members and guests enjoying a festive lunch.



Recitation by our member, Ms N Dasgupta, and songs by our member, Squadron Leader Ashish Dasgupta.



Mark Your Calendar

Swarna Juger Gaan

A musical extravaganza in which members will sing and speak about yesteryears' musical fraternity. This programme will go live on the Support Elders Facebook page.

Date & Time: 8th July, 5.30 p.m. - 6.30 p.m.



A Slice of Kolkata

Our member, Ms Flower Siliman, will speak about the history of Park Street restaurants in the 30s. This pre-recorded programme will be featured on the Support Elders Facebook page.

Date & Time: 14th July, 5.30 p.m. - 6.30 p.m.

Rabindra Sangeet

Programme by renowned Rabindra Sangeet singer, Ms Joba Banerjee. It will be featured on our Facebook page.

Date & Time: 30th July, 5.30 p.m. - 6.30 p.m.



Old Kolkata Bazaar

Online adda session

Date & Time: 5th August, 5.30 p.m. - 6.30 p.m.

Meghdoot

Online programme on Rabindranath Tagore's *Meghdoot* by our members, Ms Basudhha Chattopadhyay (recitation) & Ms Kumkum Mukherjee (song). This pre-recorded programme will be featured on the Support Elders Facebook page.

Date & Time: 12th August, 5.30 p.m. - 6.30 p.m.

Independence Day Programme (1st part)

Our member, Ms Uma Ahmed, will share how she had celebrated India's independence in 1947. This pre-recorded programme will be featured on the Support Elders Facebook page.

Date & Time: 14th August, 5.30 p.m. - 6.30 p.m.



Independence Day Programme (2nd part)

An interview of our member, Gen. Shankar Roy Chowdhury, former Chief of Army Staff of the Indian Army, about his memories of 15th August celebration. This pre-recorded programme will be featured on the Support Elders Facebook page.

Date & Time: 15th August, 5 p.m.

Lucknow Connection

Members will speak about their Lucknow Connection, especially the food, culture and traditions that have been adopted and appreciated in different parts of India, especially Kolkata.

Date & Time: 26th August, 5.30 p.m. - 6.30 p.m.



The Southern Connection

An interactive session on the influence of Malayali culture

Date & Time: 3rd September, 5.30 p.m. - 6.30 p.m.

Teacher's Day

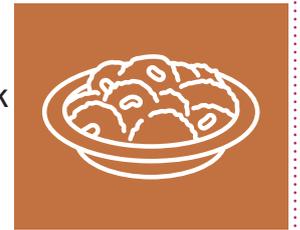
Discussion: Teachers will speak about their experiences and how teaching methods have changed over the years. This will be featured on the Support Elders Facebook page.

Date & Time: 5th September,

Kolkatar Misti

An interactive session, wherein members will speak about some traditional and well-known Bengali sweets and their origin, and how Bengali sweets have evolved over the years.

Date & Time: 9th September, 5.30 p.m. - 6.30 p.m.



Other than these, there are forums in which members meet online to speak about their childhood, travel experiences, cinema, and their life with adopting new technology, etc.

Online Class schedule

- Singing Class: 1st and 3rd Friday of every month at 5 p.m.
- Recitation Class: Every Tuesday at 5 p.m.
- Yoga/ Pranayama Class: Every Monday and Thursday at 5 p.m.

The medium of communication for all the interactive sessions will be on Google Duo except some specific topic-based sessions, which will be on the Zoom App, depending on the availability and ease of use for the members.