



Ugam Calling...

16th Anniversary Edition-2025

Vision

- To ensure that every childhood cancer survivor finds his/ her way to celebrate life after winning their battle against cancer
- To facilitate their life's journey on the correct path & in the right direction

Mission

- Empowerment of young survivors
- Helping children with cancer who are undergoing treatment
- Social awareness and re-bonding with society

Donations are eligible for Income Tax benefits under section 80G of the Income Tax Act, 1961

Contact

Dr Purna Kurkure – Convener Ugam,
Trustee In-charge – Cancer Survivorship

Email / Phone

purna.kurkure@gmail.com

Dr Vandana Dhamankar - Deputy Director
General, Medical affairs

vandana@indiancancersociety.org

Dr Savita Goswami - Clinical psychologist,
Psycho oncologist, TMH

savitata@yahoo.co.in

Preeti Phad - Asst manager,
Survivorship and Rehabilitation

preeti@indiancancersociety.org
Tel : 7021715092

Ekta Rawat - Ugam coordinator

ugam.mumbai@gmail.com
Tel : 88052 67800

Tushar More - Ugam Member

Tel : 9702033515

HOW CAN YOU CONTRIBUTE

- Volunteer - help in capacity building of survivors and help find jobs for them
- Advocacy - help in promoting issues they face like denial of Insurance, and refusal of jobs
- Financial assistance - for education and skill development programs and also for the late effects of treatment

HOW TO JOIN UGAM

Please contact on this number 7021715092
Or meet psychologist in ACT Clinic of respective hospitals
(for Survivors from Mumbai)



Follow us

Toll free no.
1800 22 1951

For Donations
please scan:



INDIAN CANCER SOCIETY

74 Jerbai Wadia Road, Parel, Mumbai 400 012. Tel : 022-24161875/ 24139445-51
ugam.mumbai@gmail.com / info@indiancancersociety.org, www.indiancancersociety.org

Victors of childhood cancer
Ugam

DESIGNED BY: DISPLAY
HOUSE

CELEBRATING SURVIVORSHIP

कल, आज और कल



सपनों को साकार करने का सुहाना सफर

Edited by Dr. Purna Kurkure
Cover designed by Shweta Chawre



UGAM 15th Anniversary 2024

Organizing Committee UGAM Anniversary 2025

Organizing Chairperson: Dr. Purna Kurkure

Organizing Secretary: Dr. Vandana Dhamankar, Mrs. Ann Rawat

Co-ordination Committee: Mrs. Bhairavi Gawde, Ms. Preeti Phad
and ICS Survivorship and Rehabilitation Team

Registration Committee:

Smit Makhecha, Nirav Chotalia,
Anita Gupta, Ritika Maurya,
Vanchinathan Moopnar,
Uzair Sakhi, Anita Kamble

Sports Committee:

Vanchinathan Moopnar,
Nirav Chotalia, Sushant Bane,
Tushar More, Rohit Kanse

Newsletter Committee:

Shweta Chawre, Dr. Neha Joshi,
Arun Kumar Nadar,
Gopesh Chilveri

Education & Awareness Committee:

Keshav Jha, Vedharaman,
Reashma Godwin,
Sahithi Aravinda, Suraj Yadav,
Bhoomi Prajapati, Kunal Sharma

Cultural Committee:

Savita Goswami (Ugam Mentor),
Tushar More, Shravani Malve,
Rohit Kanse, Aishwarya Nikale

Fundraising Committee:

Nitin Landge (Ugam Friend),
Saiteja, Shweta Chawre,
Nagesh Naik, Harsh Baxi,
Narendra Shetty, Ekta Rawat,

- We sincerely thank Yashwantrao Chavan Pratishthan for hosting us in their auditorium for the Anniversary celebration.
- We acknowledge the support of ICS's Board of Trustees, Marketing, Administration and Finance teams.
- We sincerely thank our well-wishers, friends, donors, partner hospitals and volunteers for their invaluable contributions.
- We sincerely thank Display House for their consistent support in designing the newsletter.
- We appreciate Ugam members: Mrs. Shweta Chawre, Ms. Neha Konar, Anand Reddy, Sachin Chandorkar, Sanjeev Kumar, Prathmesh Patil and Surya S. K for donating through their expertise.



Message from Dr Purna Kurkure

Convener, Ugam
Trustee In charge, Cancer Survivorship & Rehabilitation Vertical
Joint Managing Trustee
Indian Cancer Society.
Head, Division of Paediatric Haemato- Oncology & BMT
NH-SRCC Children's Hospital, Mumbai

Welcome to the 16th Anniversary of UGAM

UGAM turns 'Sweet 16' today. Sixteen is an age of transition, a bridge between the carefree days of childhood and the responsibilities of adulthood. Psychologically, it's a pivotal moment, marked by self-discovery, identity formation, and a growing sense of independence.

The celebration of this age isn't just about the party—it's a recognition of the challenges and triumphs that come with navigating the tricky terrain of adolescence.

It's hard to believe that what began in 2009 with nine **Childhood Cancer Survivors (CCS)** has now grown into a strong and committed voluntary support group, **UGAM**, with more than 600 members fondly called as **Ugamites**, have inspired CCS across three cities of India- Delhi, Bangalore, Chennai to start similar support groups in their regions, as extension of project **PICASSO (Partnership In Cancer SurvivorShip Optimisation)** I am hopeful that more paediatric cancer units will become partner in project **PICASSO** & more CCS will join this movement to form such support groups across the country & be the advocates for curability of childhood cancers at Government policy making level. Over these years, UGAM has become more than just a group — it's a family. It's a place where survivors find their voice, where they support one another, and where they begin to believe that life after cancer can be full of purpose. This milestone is a time not only to celebrate our journey but to recognize the strength we have built together.

We are grateful to Yashwantrao Chavan Pratishthan for welcoming us to the beautiful venue this year also, to join thousands of cancer survivors for an annual, treasured Celebration of Life event held under **auspices of International Cancer Survivors Day**, in hundreds of communities nationwide, and around the world, on the first Sunday of June which also marks **birthday of Ugam** launched in 2009 under umbrella of **Indian Cancer Society(ICS)**, a first & premier Not for Profit organisation in cancer space in India.

Our theme this year **कल, आज और कल (Past, Present & Future)** gives us a moment to pause and reflect. **कल** (Past) was about planting seeds of sharing, learning, and realising our collective strength. **आज** (Today) is about building on that momentum to empower CCS through education & skill development & rehabilitation programmes of ICS & create awareness for their reintegration in the society. **Relay for Life (RFL)** is an important event in public domain conducted by Ugamites. RFL has been one of the most dynamic programs through which Ugamites have made a lasting impact. **Global Relay for life** is a franchised awareness & fund-raising event of **American Cancer Society** which is organized round the year in more than 30 countries where more than 4 million people take part, to create awareness to save lives from cancer and raise funds. **ICS** has been **licensed agency** for RFL in India since 2013. **कल** (Future) is about where we take Survivorship to new heights by networking with other CCS support groups & be the voice of CCS. RFL can work as link for such network. We are planning on expanding this effort with help of already existing functional support groups across India & urge more Paediatric Cancer Units to join this movement. A dedicated workshop has been organised tomorrow for representatives of these groups & **PICASSO** partners who are also participating in celebration today. This workshop will include live demonstrations for conduct of RFL by Ugamites—powerful examples of strength and hope in action.

As we look to the future, let's continue building a world where cancer survivors don't just survive — they lead, uplift, and thrive.

*Be wise enough to learn from the past,
Shrewd enough to capitalize on the present, and
Clever enough to prepare for the future.*

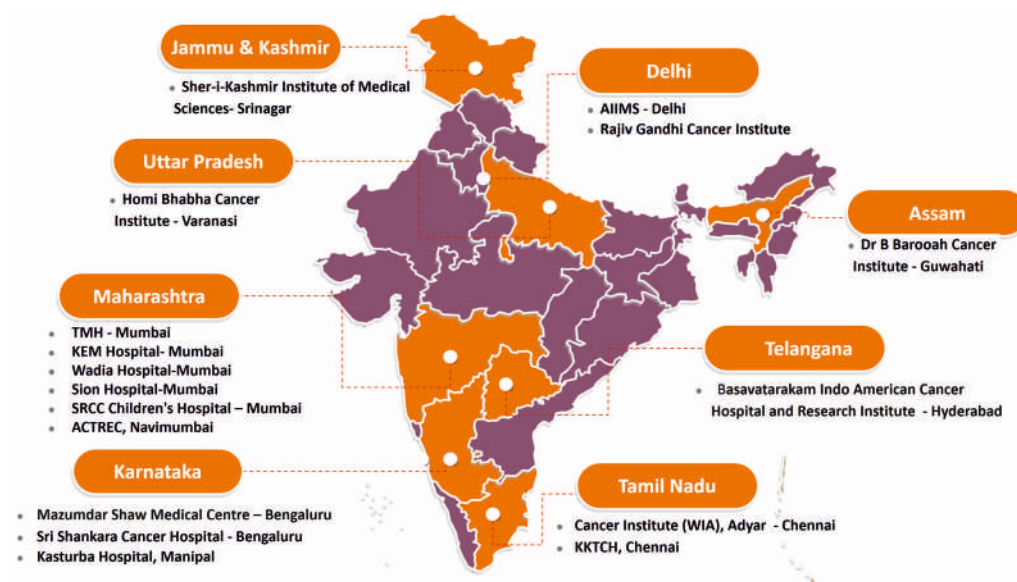
**Matshona Dhliwayo*

UGAM PROFILE

- Indian Cancer Society was founded in 1951 by Dr D Jussawalla and Mr Naval Tata as India's first non-profit organization for cancer. Our activities encompass the entire continuum of cancer care - cancer awareness, screening for early detection, financial help for treatment of the underprivileged, support groups, rehabilitation of cancer survivors, cancer registry, research, and education. UGAM is the emotional support group of ICS for Childhood cancer survivors. Ugam means “To Rise”, underscoring the determination of the survivors to rise above all obstacles in life and become VICTORS. UGAM was launched in June 2009, on Cancer Survivors Day celebrated worldwide as a mark of Celebration of Life. Ugam now has 616 members.

The first ACT clinic was started at Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai. Based on that model, Project PICASSO (Partnership in Cancer Survivorship Optimization) was developed and launched by ICS in 2016 to promote and facilitate paediatric cancer unit (PCU) based ACT clinics and provide psychosocial support for holistic care of cancer survivors across India.


After Completion of Treatment Clinics (ACT) in India




WHAT WE DO?

- Create awareness about the curability of Childhood Cancers.
- Help childhood cancer survivors to begin a new life after cancer and make them aware that there can be and there is a “normal life” after winning the battle with cancer.
- Promote the importance of monitoring the late effects of cancer therapies.
- Advocate against discrimination in society to cancer survivors.
- Highlight the need for public support for the cause of childhood cancer survivors.
- Ugam meetings are held regularly at ICS.
- Encourage formation of other support groups.

How to apply



Scan for more details



Scan for more details

LATE EFFECT FUNDING SUPPORT

Applications Open for F.Y.2025-26

Eligibility Criteria:

- Cancer survivors who have completed treatment and are registered with the ACT Clinic at ICS partner hospitals.

Counselling and Financial Support Provided For:

- Hearing Aid
- Growth Hormone & Other Issues
- Vision Problems
- Prostheses
- Fertility Issues
- Dental Problems
- Other Problems

Supporting survivors beyond treatment, for a healthier tomorrow.

For more information: 0222 4139445 / 51

• Ms. Preeti Phad: lateeffect@indiancancersociety.org / 7021715092

• Mr. Kiran Shinde: kiran@indiancancersociety.org / 82219 21799

Disclaimer: Applications will be evaluated and selected by the ICS Advisory Committee.

Dr. D J Jussawalla Education & Vocational Skills Fund

Applications are open for the academic year 2025-26

Eligibility Criteria: Cancer victims between the age group of 10 to 20 years who have completed treatment in ICS empanelled hospitals.

Support provided: Career guidance, school and college fees, psychological counselling, vocational course fees and individualised education guidance.

Education is your passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today

For more information: 0222 4139445 / 51

• Ms. Prejatta Dandge: educationfund@indiancancersociety.org / 8591400082

• Mr. Kiran Shinde: kiran@indiancancersociety.org / 82219 21799

Disclaimer: Applications will be evaluated and selected by the ICS Committee. No reimbursements will be provided for fees already paid.

2

Victors of childhood cancer
Ugam



Dr Vandana Dhamankar

Deputy Director General - Medical Affairs,
Director - Survivorship and Rehabilitation, Indian Cancer Society
Chairperson- Survivorship and Reintegration Task force, Indian Childhood Cancer Initiative(ICCI)

Congratulations to Ugam on completing sixteen years of it's inspiring journey!

Project *PICASSO* (Partnership in CAncer SurvivorShip Optimisation) is a holistic rehabilitation initiative of ICS inspired by the After Completion of Therapy (ACT) Clinic at Tata Memorial Hospital (TMH), Mumbai and ICS Ugam, a support group for childhood cancer survivors. The project facilitates hospital based ACT Clinics in major paediatric cancer units across India, offering long-term follow-up care for childhood cancer survivors more than two years post-treatment and disease-free.

Through these clinics, survivors receive comprehensive medical and psychosocial assessments conducted by paediatric oncologists and ICS psychologists using standardized tools. This helps identify common medical as well as psychosocial concerns such as medical late effects of treatment, anxiety, academic challenges, body image issues, and social reintegration difficulties. Neurocognitive testing kits have been provided to few centres to identify issues and deliver appropriate care and referral . Risk based regular follow-ups of survivors are conducted promoting long-term emotional well-being and adjustment.

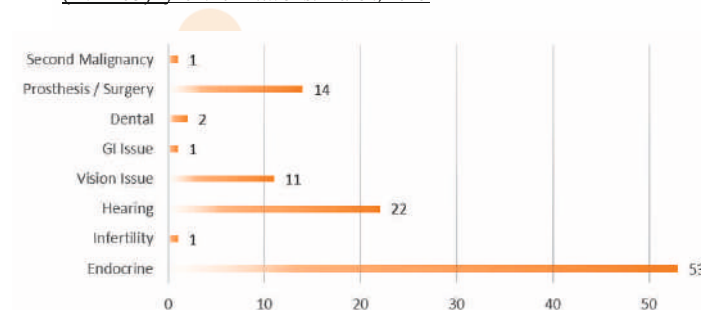
Project PICASSO at a Glance (From Yr 2017 till 31st March 2025)

- 17 ACT Clinics facilitated nationwide
- 3590 * survivors enrolled
- 100+ survivors received financial support for late effects
- 450+ survivors supported year on year through education aid
- 144 milestones achieved in education/employment, 63 now in jobs
- HPV Vaccination for survivors initiated at Mumbai based ACT clinics

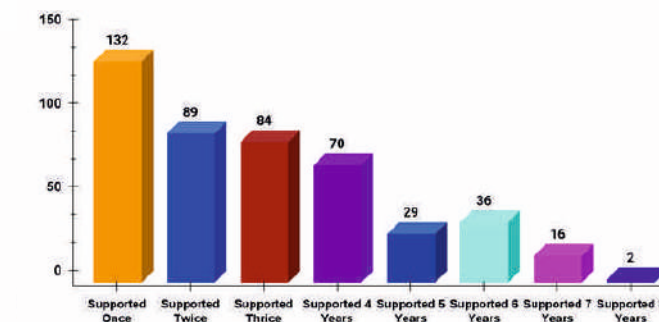
* In addition to 5000 + survivors following up at TMH ACT clinic which is operational since 1991

While challenges remain in reaching all survivors post-treatment, Project *PICASSO* has proven to be a replicable, impactful model. Its success is reflected not only in numbers, but in the lives, it has touched and transformed. Hospitals such as All India Institute Of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi and Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Institute (RGCI) have established clinics much before project *PICASSO* was launched, ICS is complimenting their medical care with psychosocial care. Congratulations to *PICASSO* partner hospitals, Cancer Institute Adyar (WIA) and Mazumdar Shaw Medical Centre, Bengaluru who have retained the psychologists after few years of starting the clinics and have institutionalized the clinics.

No. of Cases Supported for Late Effects
(N= 105) from 2022 till 31st March, 2025



Students supported through Dr. D.J. Jussawalla
Education Fund (N= 458) from 2017 till 31st March, 2025



3

Victors of childhood cancer
Ugam

Way Forward

It is our unwavering resolve to support survivors. We will continue our educational series to raise awareness and empower Ugam members with knowledge about late effects and the importance of regular follow-ups. To align with the WHO's goal of eliminating cervical cancer in India, the HPV vaccine drive launched at Mumbai-based hospitals will be scaled up to reach as many survivors as possible. Our priority is to support hospitals in establishing a robust referral network for management of late effects. Equally important is the continued advancement of rehabilitation efforts aimed at supporting the reintegration and mainstreaming of survivors. We aim to deepen our understanding of the challenges faced by BMT survivors and work towards providing them with meaningful support. Additionally, we continue our active engagement with national networks to promote research and strengthen advocacy. With the foundational infrastructure in place, the project is poised to generate valuable evidence-based insights and support long-term outcome tracking.



Dr. Rachana Seth
Professor-Division of Pediatric Oncology Chair, Department of Pediatrics, AIIMS, New Delhi, InPHoG Late Effects subcommittee:

PICASSO, Partnership in Cancer Survivorship Optimization, stands on the principle to improve quality of life of Childhood Cancer Survivors by providing post treatment psychosocial care, support and rehabilitation for late effects. It encompasses financial and emotional assistance both for children and their families to transition smoothly from acute care to survivorship care. Survivorship is a concept that helps patients and their families navigate life after cancer. There are various models of survivorship care, the most popular being the survivorship/ after completion of therapy (ACT) clinics.

The Indian Cancer society (ICS) via the *PICASSO* initiative has facilitated survivorship services in many cancer treating centers/units .This has been accomplished by setting up survivorship clinics and providing a psycho-oncologist to the centers. The objective is to facilitate the Pediatric Cancer Unit (PCU) to start ACT Clinic for holistic care for cancer survivors and optimizing survivorship care in India .

Psycho-social concerns form an important late effect after cancer treatment, are seen in all types of cancer and are seen in various grades of severity. A psycho-oncologist is an essential requirement for efficient conduct of survivorship clinics.

The Childhood Cancer Survivorship (C2S) Study, the first survivorship study of the INPHOG survivorship & late effects subcommittee , aims to form the survivorship registry and the Indian childhood cancer survivors' cohort and evaluate survivors for late effects. This study has become an integral part of the *PICASSO* project via the psycho-oncologists who are provided to cancer treating centers actively engaged in survivorship services. The psycho-oncologists use age appropriate psychosocial tests to evaluate psychosocial deficits for the C2S study. Under the Umbrella of *PICASSO* project and Survivorship subcommittee , national psychosocial conclave was organized in 2024 at AIIMS New Delhi where more than 25 psychologists participated. CCS cohort created through this project and C2S study will be an invaluable asset to start clinical trials to answer many questions relevant to India & LMIC .

• **Sambhav'** is a support group for Cancer patients, survivors and their families. Sambhav means 'possible' therefore, the name of the support group was originated, as it spreads the message of hope and that Cancer is treatable! It was started in the year 2012 for children on Cancer treatment, their families and survivors.

- **Objectives of SAMBHAV in survivorship domain-**
- Ensure smooth transition from acute care to survivorship care and integration into the survivorship clinic (PCSC/ACT) Offer a safe interactive space for families and children
- Identify and locate eligible candidates for scholarships
- Forum for parent and caregiver counseling, ('Parent meets a parent forum'- A monthly activity practiced to introduce parents of children on treatment with parents of survivors, it is an interactive session with the motive to encourage and inspire families and share their Cancer journeys with successful outcomes and provide them with a sense of optimism and motivation to walk their own respective journeys)
- Rehabilitation for medical and psycho social late effects such as Onco-Fertility concerns, eye prosthesis, vocational guidance, coping with stress and anxiety, and others
- Designing patient education materials for survivorship care and emphasize on the ATCC card

Outcomes of SAMBHAV group-

- Holistic care
- Mutual support and empathy between parents, coming forward to help, engage and do their bit
- Programs on Cardio Oncology and Onco- fertility in survivorship care
- Recreation and celebration of survivorship in yearly organized events and activities planned for survivors and by survivors
- Improve drug compliance, follow ups and patient tracking
- Building confidence among families to face and fight Cancer



Dr. Anita Borges
Vice Chairperson, Indian Cancer Society
Consultant Histopathologist, S L Raheja Hospital
Director, Centre for Oncopathology, Mumbai

The first Sunday in June is eagerly awaited every year by Cancer Survivors all over the world. It is World Cancer Survivor Day, when the world honors the heroic struggle of those who have fought the good fight and lived to fulfil their dreams of a better life for themselves and for others afflicted by the disease. This day is even more special for children who have traveled through this dark tunnel and come out blinking into the bright sunlight. The way forward is not always easy for many of these kids. The Indian Cancer Society (ICS) perceived this need and over the years, has offered a firm guiding hand for these young survivors, through a support group called UGAM

UGAM, which means to rise, was started in 2009 and has gone from strength to strength. It is now a pan-India movement that brings together survivors of childhood cancer to share their narratives of life, love and livelihood, after cancer. Through UGAM they meet other survivors and take courage from their stories. They get help from donors and experts in the field who help them find their feet in life, be it in the fields of education, employment or counselling. UGAM's goal is to make every survivor of childhood cancer a fully adjusted and productive member of our society.

On June 1, the talents of the children and young adults of UGAM from all over the country, will be showcased at the YB Chavan Auditorium in Mumbai. In the audience will be survivors and their proud families, NGOs, donors, oncologists who have seen these kids beat the odds, and so many well-wishers. They will be cheering these champions on.

As a trustee of the ICS and the vice chairperson of its board, I add my greetings to all the members of UGAM and salute the exceptional triumph over adversity that they have shown. I also salute all those who work tirelessly to make the lives of children stricken with cancer better.

Three Cheers for UGAM.



Dr Maya Prasad
Paediatric Oncologist and Professor- Tata Memorial Hospital

Knowledge is power
Congratulations to all members of Ugam on the 16 th anniversary. Children who are treated for cancer need to follow up with the medical team regularly and for a long time. In the first few years the follow-up visits mainly focus on whether the cancer is completely cured, and to see if the child is well after completing treatment and whether there are any side effects of treatment. Survivors of childhood cancer may sometimes develop health problems after cancer treatment – these are called late effects. The type of late effect may depend on the age at treatment, the

type of treatment received and whether there were any serious complications during treatment. It is important to note that with newer treatments, fewer children have late effects listed.

Another important aspect of follow-up care is to make sure that children resume their normal activities and lifestyle, including return to school, sports and social activities. It is very important for survivors of childhood cancer (and everyone else) to lead a healthy lifestyle and avoid risky behaviours.

As children grow older, it is very important for them to take care of their own health. For that, it is important for survivors and parents to understand what treatment they have received and what could be the health problems after childhood cancer treatment. While the best place to get this information is from your medical team, there is often not enough time for a detailed discussion at the hospital. While there is a lot of information available on the internet, this may not be reliable. In April 2025, Ugam and Tata Memorial Centre Mumbai started an educational series. This series aims to provide reliable information in a structured manner, while allowing for questions and open interactions. We are planning to continue this series as a monthly event on the second Sunday of every month from April to December. For details of the programs and to learn how to join these sessions, please contact Ms. Preeti Phad or Mr. Keshav Jha (7021715092)

For more detailed information and your specific issues, talk to your doctor. You may also visit the following websites (QR codes below).



Remember, knowledge is power. No one can take care of you better than yourself.



Mrs Ann Rawat
Deputy Director General- Operations, Indian Cancer Society

It's inspiring to see how ICS continues to strengthen its impact across its different verticals—be it through awareness, timely screening, Dr. Arun Kurkure Initial diagnosis, Cancer Cure Fund, focused survivorship and rehabilitation efforts, or having a robust cancer registry. What sets Ugam apart is not just its involvement to these initiatives, but its active role in spreading awareness outside the hospital premises. Participation in events like Relay For Life (RFL), marathons, and other outreach efforts reflects a commitment that resonates powerful, purpose-driven, and genuine appreciation.

Wishing Team Ugam heartfelt congratulations on its 16th anniversary—may your journey of strength, hope, and impact continue to shine brighter each year.



Savita Goswami
Clinical Psychologist , Psycho Oncologist - Tata Memorial Hospital

Challenges After Childhood Cancer

Young adults typically aspire to achieve financial and emotional stability, seeking a caring and affectionate partner. However, those who have survived childhood cancer often encounter distinct obstacles in pursuing marriage and romantic relationships within the Indian sociocultural framework. These challenges arise from a combination of physical, psychological, social, and cultural factors.

Cancer treatments like chemotherapy and radiation may lead to infertility, which is often a significant concern for potential marital alliances in Indian society where having children is highly valued. Survivors may face long-term health complications such as fatigue, organ damage, or secondary cancers, which could make them less desirable in the marriage market. Families of potential partners may hesitate due to the perceived risk of cancer recurrence. Cancer survivors are often stigmatized due to societal misconceptions, such as the belief that cancer is hereditary or contagious. Survivors may struggle with body image concerns, especially if they have scars, disfigurement, hair loss, or other visible or invisible side effects of treatment. Past trauma related to their illness can make it challenging to build trust and emotional intimacy in relationships. Survivors and their families often grapple with whether and how to disclose the history of cancer during marriage negotiations.

In traditional arranged marriages, families often prioritize "healthy" individuals, leading to rejection of survivors. In some cases, families of survivors may face increased dowry demands as compensation for the perceived "risk" of marrying someone with a medical history. Some people or communities, view cancer as a "curse" or bad omen, further complicating marriage prospects. Traditional beliefs around fertility and physical health can exacerbate challenges for survivors, especially women. Families of survivors may face financial difficulties due to the high costs of cancer treatment, which can affect their ability to meet societal expectations in marriage arrangements. Potential partners may worry about ongoing healthcare costs for the survivor. Women survivors may face harsher judgment due to societal expectations around beauty, fertility, and care giving roles. Male survivors may encounter skepticism regarding their ability to fulfill traditional roles as providers, especially if they have health-related limitations.

Lack of clear guidelines on the disclosure of medical history in matrimonial arrangements creates legal and ethical dilemmas for survivors and their families. Discrimination based on health history is an unaddressed area in matrimonial laws in India.

To reduce stigma, promote acceptance, and support survivors in navigating marital challenges following measures might be useful.

- **Timely management of late effects**
- **Raise awareness to combat stigma associated with cancer**
- **Support groups for shared experiences and advice**
- **Pre-marital counseling for survivors and partners**
- **Legal protections against discrimination**
- **Engage community and religious leaders to challenge outdated beliefs**



Chandan Kumar
Co-Chair ICCI, Survivorship and Reintegration Taskforce

About the Survivorship and Reintegration Taskforce Indian Childhood Cancer Initiatives (ICCI)- The Survivorship and Reintegration Taskforce is one of ten key working groups under the Indian Childhood Cancer Initiatives (ICCI), a national collaborative effort dedicated to ensuring equal access to patient-centred, holistic care and standardized treatment for all children with cancer and survivors in India. ICCI aims to achieve 100% access to care, comprehensive financial protection, and a 60% survival rate by 2030 through multi-

stakeholder engagement. This initiative is part of a global collaborative movement to transform childhood cancer care through shared expertise, innovation, and solidarity across borders.

This Taskforce focuses on developing a standardized aftercare model and surveillance guidelines to ensure long-term, high-quality follow-up care for childhood cancer survivors. Our goal is to complement the work done by other national networks , establish survivorship clinics in every cancer centre and create comprehensive national guidelines for follow-up care, helping to ensure consistency in patient monitoring, improved outcomes, and better resource allocation across institutions. By focusing on continuity of care from diagnosis through post-treatment, the Taskforce ensures that survivors are not left behind and are given the tools and support needed for a healthy reintegration into society. Our work lays the foundation for a future where survivorship is not just about survival, but about thriving.

For more details visit the website: www.indiachildcancer.org



Patrick Yip, Hong Kong
Senior HR Consultant in a multinational consulting firm, Member of CCI Global Survivor's Network, Convenor of CCI Asia Survivor's Network Development Working Group

- The Childhood Cancer International (CCI) Global Survivor’s Network is part of CCI’s broader effort to establish local, regional, and global networks for childhood cancer survivors. These networks are designed to create a strong sense of community, sharing the message "You are not alone" with all those impacted by childhood cancer.

Closely aligned with the global network, the CCI Asia Survivors Network aims to provide support, resources, and a sense of community for childhood cancer survivors within Asia. A working group consisting of survivor representatives from different Asian countries was established in June 2024 to drive the development of the Asian network and to initiate and execute the programs planned for survivors and/or local survivor groups.

The Global and Asian networks create a supportive community of peers who understand the challenges of childhood cancer and its survivorship. Additionally, the networks provide opportunities to connect with other childhood cancer survivors, share stories, and find hope and inspiration. They represent a collective voice for survivors to advocate for better healthcare and support services.

As a member of the steering committee of the CCI Global Survivor’s Network and the convenor of the CCI Asia Survivors Network Development Working Group, I am always heartened to witness new programs and support groups dedicated to improving the quality of life for childhood cancer survivors and providing a safety net for them to share their life experiences and empower each other. I started my CCI journey back in 2013 as an event helper when the ICCCP Annual Conference (now regarded as the CCI Annual Conference) was held in my hometown, Hong Kong. Inspired by stories from overseas survivor participants and the momentum in the survivors' meeting, I have volunteered for various CCI campaigns and survivor-led initiatives over the past 11 years, with the continued support from the Pau Kwong Wun Charitable Foundation in Hong Kong.

Both the Global and Asian Networks are looking for active childhood cancer survivors who are passionate about empowering survivors and advocating for this community to be part of this impactful journey through the following means:

- Join online groups or communities: Search for social media content related to CCI Survivor Network groups and spread it to your network.
- Be an event participant: Look for webinars and events hosted by CCI and participate.
- Share stories and experiences: Contribute to future online forums organized by CCI or share your stories with others for inspiration.
- Reach out to the CCI Global Survivor’s Network:
Contact us at <https://www.childhoodcancerinternational.org/survivors> if you would like to create an impact and contribute back to the childhood cancer community with your experience and identity as a survivor.

Last but not the least, Congratulations to Ugam for its tremendous work in empowering childhood cancer survivors in various aspects of their post-treatment life over the past 16 years! Cheers to many more successful programs and a brighter future for childhood cancer survivors!

Our Colleagues from *PICASSO* Partner Hospitals



Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai



King Edward Memorial Hospital (KEM), Mumbai



All India Institute Of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi



Lokmanya Tilak Municipal General Hospital (Sion), Mumbai



Bai Jerbai Wadia Hospital, Mumbai



Dr Bhubaneswar Borooah Cancer Institute (BBCI), Guwahati



Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Institute (RGCI), Delhi



Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS) Srinagar



Homi Bhabha Cancer Hospital (HBCH), Varanasi



Mazumdar Shaw Medical Centre, Bengaluru



Cancer Institute Adyar, (WIA) Chennai



Kasturba Hospital, Manipal



Basavatarakam Indo American Cancer Hospital, Hyderabad



Sri Shankara Cancer Hospital, Bengaluru

Events organised by Ugam

Ugam's 15th Anniversary – A Celebration of Life and Hope

2 June 2024 | Y.B. Chavan Auditorium, Mumbai



Lighting of the lamp ceremony

Theme: #ForHerFuture

Ugam's 15th Anniversary marked a powerful celebration of survivor strength, community, and empowerment. The event was filled with emotion, energy, and inspiration, reflecting Ugam's journey and vision for the future.

Distinguished Guests:

- **Chief Guest:** Mr. Navneet Munot – MD & CEO, HDFC Asset Management Company
- **Guests of Honour:**
 - Smt. Nidhi Choudhari (IAS) – Commissioner, Skill Development, Government of Maharashtra
 - Ms. Viji Venkatesh – Region Head, India & South Asia, The Max Foundation
 - Mr. Amole Gupte – Renowned filmmaker, screenwriter, actor, and former Chairperson, Children's Film Society
 - Dr. Samir Dalwai – Developmental Pediatrician and Trustee, Yashwantrao Chavan Pratishthan
 - Mr. Hari Mundra – Chairman, Indian Cancer Society
 - Dr. Anita Borges – Vice Chairperson, Indian Cancer Society
 - Mr. Kiran Talcherkar – Trustee, Indian Cancer Society
 - Mr. Amar Kedare – Program & Digital Lead, WPP
 - Mr. Dharma Raju – HES Infra (Founder Supporter of PICASSO)
 - Dr. Girish Chinnaswami – Pediatric Oncologist, Tata Memorial Hospital
 - Dr. Shruti Adkar -Sr. MO, MCGM



Release of the UGAM newsletter 2024

A soulful prayer and ceremonial lamp lighting set a reflective tone. Dr. Purna Kurkure welcomed guests, and Ugam's Annual Newsletter was launched, capturing vibrant moments from 2023–24.

Link to full Program- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JvnNDIsLXsg>



Ganesh Vandana – Anamika Soni & troupe

Cultural Splendour and Survivor Strength

- Prayer Dance – Shiv Vandana
- Ganesh Vandana – Anamika Soni & troupe
- Dance-drama – “Cancer Warrior – So What?”
- Fashion Show – “Vaccinate the daughters & Screen the mothers”
- Ugam Theme Song – Performed by survivors



Fashion Show – “Vaccinate the daughters & Screen the mothers”



Dance performance by Survivors



Dance-drama – “Cancer Warrior – So What?”

Empowering Survivors

- **Survivorship Program Presentation** by Dr. Vandana Dhamankar, showcasing ICS's comprehensive care approach
- **Screening of a Short Film** capturing powerful survivor journeys across India
- **Felicitation of Dr. D.J. Jussawalla Education Fund Beneficiaries** – Recognizing young achievers' academic excellence

Moments to Cherish: Chai with Ugam:

A heartwarming session of Chai pe Charcha conceptualised and led by Mrs. Savita Goswami, featuring real conversations between survivors, doctors, and volunteers.



Chai with UGAM led by Dr.Savita Goswami

Season 2024 – Celebrating Survivorship For Her Future Batein Bold & Bindaas 'For Her Future'

Personal experiences and honest conversations around marriage and fertility—navigating the future with clarity, courage, and community.

Season 2023 – Celebrate, Remember, Fight Back Bold or Bindas Batein

A tribute to care, compassion, and communication. Survivors share how they find joy, express love, and support one another.

Season 2022 – Subsee Behtareen Rishte Wo Hai Jise Hum Khud Banate Hai

BBB – Batein Bold Bindas
Let's talk about relationships—no filters, just heartfelt stories and bold conversations about love, bonding, and self-worth.

Season 2021 – Hausale Hai Buland, Hum Jeetenge Ye Jung (COVID period)

Smiling Through Struggles: Life During COVID
Living with hope, finding solutions. Stories of resilience from young adults who refused to give up.

Season 2020 – Hum Har Nahi Manenge (COVID period) UGAM Champs Experiences & Challenges During Lockdown

From isolation to inspiration—how survivors stayed strong and supported each other through the uncertainties of the pandemic.

Season 2019 – Together We Can Create Miracle

Telling the truth before marriage – Couple experiences
How survivors shared their cancer history, convinced families, and found acceptance. Married couples reflect on vulnerability, love, and strength.

Season 2018 – Rise, Shine and Celebrate Survivorship

Should I tell my partner about my childhood cancer history before marriage?? Is it okay to hide??

A raw and real discussion on honesty, fear, and courage in relationships. Survivors open up about what it means to tell—or not tell—their truth.

Celebration of Cancer Survivors Month June 2024 by PICASSO Partners



Rising Strong: SAHAS Support Group Launched
12 June 2024 | Mazumdar Shaw Medical Centre,
Bengaluru



Celebrating Survivorship in Sher-i-Kashmir Institute
13–14 June 2024 | Srinagar



Shine Gold: Raising Voices and Awareness for Childhood Cancer- September 2024

Ugam led advocacy and educational activities. Report submitted to CCI.

One Day, One Voice, One Mission to Conquer Childhood Cancer- 15th February 2025

Theme: #Together for Hope: Bridging Gaps, Saving Lives.

Empowering Through Education-On International Childhood Cancer Day 2025, ICS & Ugam in partnership with Kotak Securities Reach 1100 children across PICASSO Partner hospitals with educational kits 15th February 2025 | Mumbai



KEM Hospital, Mumbai



SKIIMS Hospital, Srinagar



Dr. Bhubaneswar Borooah Cancer Institute Guwahati



From Treatment to Triumph: Ugam Members Speak at St. Jude's Child Care Center - 30 Sept 2024 | Mumbai



Wadia Hospital, Mumbai



RGCI Hospital, Delhi



BIACH Hyderabad



SRCC Hospital, Mumbai

UGAM participation across various platforms



Ugam with CM! Ugam survivors joined Gokul Ashtami celebrations, invited by MLA Mr. Pratap Sarnaik. CM Shri Eknath Shinde also attended. 40 Ugam members joined Gokul Ashtami for Awareness and celebration. 27 August 2024 | Vartak Nagar, Thane



Stride for Life: Survivors Unite in the Dream run at Tata Mumbai Marathon creating awareness for cancer and HPV vaccine 19th Jan 2025 | Mumbai



Celebrating 50 Years of Wankhede Stadium: Uniting for a Cause – Raising Cervical Cancer Awareness with Doctors, Survivors, and the Spirit of Hope. Thank You, MCA 19th January 2025 | Mumbai



Ugam Lights Up the Stage: A Captivating Performance on ICS's 74th Founders Day 25th January 2025 | Mumbai



Retinoblastoma Awareness Week- Vision of Hope: Retinoblastoma Warriors Share Their Light 15 June 2024 | SRCC Hospital, Mumbai



TYAcan National Conference "Strength in Survivorship: Ugam Members Shine at TYAcan Hyderabad" 21-22 Sept 2024 | Hyderabad



Ugam at Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai for HOPE 2024 – Honoring Courage, Celebrating Life 1st December 2024 | Mumbai



UGAM Meetings: From Conversations to Change – Ugam Members Unite to Share, Support, and Strategize for the Road Ahead | Mumbai

Ugam Open Forum – Let's Talk

Ugam has launched an educational series, in association with Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai, titled "Ugam Open Forum – Let's Talk", aimed at empowering cancer survivors through open discussions on health and well-being post-treatment. This initiative provides a safe space for survivors to gain knowledge, share experiences, and support each other on their journey beyond cancer.

Sessions conducted so far:

- 13th April 2025 – Introductory Session
A warm and engaging start to the series, introducing the goals of the forum and setting the tone for future discussions.

- 11th May 2025 – Heart Health
Focused on cardiovascular wellness, this session highlighted the importance of heart health for cancer survivors, addressing both preventive measures and lifestyle adjustments.



Relay For Life: A Walk of Hope Across Schools

RFL Committee - Anita Ramsinghani, Preeti Phad, Keshav Jha, Dr. Ishwarya Reddy

Ugam Members - Tushar More, Rohit Kanse, Sushant Bane, Suraj Yadav, Jagdish Namdar, Suheb Salmani, Saif Shaikh, Om Patil, Altaf Shaikh, Abid Shaikh, Vaibhav Jasiwal, Amay Tandale, Shrihari Naidu, Abhishek Yadav, Imran, Gunjan Jotkar, Bhakti Solkr, Sakshi Dalvi, Lavina Naikar, Bhoomi Prajapati, Priyanka Panmand, Anushka Nandgaonkar, Nirja patil



Ugam Cricket League: Training with the Best! Grateful to Mr. Ashish Parulekar for an Inspiring Coaching Session and to Mr. Kiran Talcherkar for Continued Support.

The Indian Cancer Society's Relay For Life (RFL) brought energy, empathy, and awareness to different schools in India, uniting students and cancer survivors in a shared mission to Celebrate, Remember, and Fight Back.

1. G.D. Somani Memorial School



Cuffe Parade | 12th January 2025
Highlights: Football match – Students vs. Ugam Members | Survivor talks: Tushar More & Gunjan | Performance: Gunjan, Sakshi & Lavina | Awareness talk: Dr. Ishwarya Reddy | Luminaria Ceremony

2. Singapore International School



Dahisar | 7th February 2025

Highlights: Cricket & Throwball Matches- Students vs. Ugam Members | Survivor talks: Tushar & Gunjan | Performance: Bhakti & Anushka | Awareness talk: Dr. Ishwarya Reddy | Youth-led enthusiasm | Luminaria Ceremony

3. Kanakia International School



Ghatkopar | 18th February 2025

Highlights: Dance by Priyanka, Anushka & Bhakti | Survivor talks: Tushar & Preeti | Awareness talk: Dr. Ishwarya Reddy | Funds raised through RFL | Coordinator: Priya Pathak | Luminaria Ceremony

4. Oberoi International School



Goregaon | 28th March 2025

Highlights: Performance: Bhakti & Anushka | Survivor talks: Tushar & Preeti | Awareness talk: Dr. Rohan Bartake | Luminaria Ceremony

5. Oakridge International School - Bengaluru



Oakridge hosts Bengaluru's first overnight Relay For Life walkathon | 21st March 2024

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/oakridge-hosts-bengaluru-first-overnight-relay-for-life-walkathon/articleshow/119643270.cms>

6. Microsoft Campus, Bengaluru



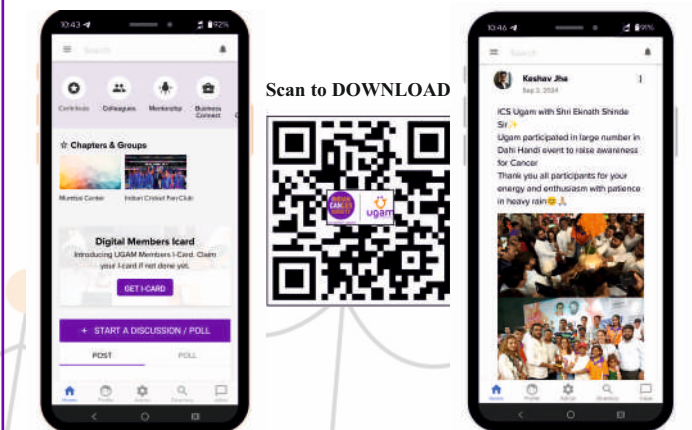
Bengaluru | 11th November 2024

Highlight: Microsoft Employees with cancer survivors for RFL

From football and cricket matches to survivor performances and Luminaria ceremonies, these events blended youth participation with powerful survivor advocacy.

UGAM APP

UGAM Community Portal App was launched during UGAM's 14th Anniversary in 2023! Conceptualized by Arun Kumar Nadar and Ekta Rawat, the app is now live. Built on the Almashine platform, it connects UGAM members across India, allowing them to register, update profiles, share stories, ask questions, and access events and wellness resources. The UGAM Community App is not just tech, it's togetherness.



Key Highlights from National & International Forums

3rd International Symposium on Late Complications after Childhood Cancer (ISLCCC), June 27–29, 2024

Dr. Vandana Dhamankar participated and presented paper “Enhancing childhood cancer survivorship care in LMIC through the *PICASSO* model (Partnership in Cancer Survivorship Optimization) by the Indian Cancer Society.”

UICC- Union for International Cancer Control World Cancer Congress – Geneva

17-19 Sept 2024 | Geneva, Switzerland

Dr. Purna Kurkure presented an abstract titled - “Childhood Cancer Survivorship Care in LMIC - Bridging the gap with model *PICASSO* (Partnership in Cancer Survivorship Optimisation).”

25th IPOS World Congress

24–27 Sept 2024 | Maastricht, Netherlands

Ms. Revathi delivered an Oral presentation on "Partnership in Cancer Survivorship Optimization: Role of Not-for-Profit Organisations".

• ICCI -Indian Childhood Cancer Initiative Psychosocial Task Force Meet

• 5–6 Sept 2024 | New Delhi

The ICCI meeting emphasized the need for standardized psychosocial support guidelines for paediatric cancer patients and their caregivers in India. Ugam’s inclusion reinforced the critical need to have survivor voices in policy rooms ICS representatives Revathi, Priya, and Preeti contributed key insights.

8th Paediatric Haematology Oncology Support Services Conference (PHOSSCON)

22–23 Nov 2024 | Sheri-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences, Srinagar, Ugam was co-organizer

Dr. Vandana Dhamankar delivered a keynote lecture on survivorship, while Ms. Sadaf Wani presented a poster on the impact of After Completion of Therapy (ACT) clinic. This conference put a spotlight on the vital bridge between cure and care—an area ICS continues to pioneer.

International Society of Ocular Oncology ISOO 2024 organized by Cankids

3 Dec 2024 | Goa

At “India Fights Retinoblastoma - 2030 Goal for 2020 Vision”, Dr. Vandana Dhamankar, spoke on “Beyond Cure - Supporting Survivorship and Reintegration in RB Care. Ms. Preeti Phad from UGAM presented the journey of Retinoblastoma cancer survivors.

Dr. Vandana Dhamankar was nominated as a core member of the Asia Regional Committee of **Childhood Cancer International (CCI) Asia**.

Preeti Phad was nominated as a **Global CCI- (Childhood Cancer International) Steering Committee Member** and CCI Asia Survivors network working group member.

Lynette Francis delivered an oral presentation on "Optimizing Psycho-social Care through Routine Screenings and Interventions among Childhood Cancer Survivors" at the 7th Asia Pacific Psycho-Oncology Network (APPON) Meeting on 18th January 2025.

Happy News



Shweta Chawre & Satish Pathak blessed with a baby girl on 7th December 2024



Prashant Date got married to Shraddha Date on 15th July 2024



Ashwini Chorge got married to Mr. Suraj Waychal on 16th March 2025

We thank the Honorary Advisors for their valuable time and expertise

Dr. D J Jussawalla Educational Fund Selection Committee

Dr. Purna Kurkure - *Trustee in charge - Cancer Survivorship & Rehabilitation, ICS*

Mr. K A Narayan - *Trustee-ICS, President HRD - Raymonds Ltd.*

Ms. Sarika Parab - *M.S.W., Tata Memorial Hospital*

Dr. Neelima Dalvi - *Social worker, HBCH - Chandigarh*

Prof. Asha Banu Soletti - *CMHM, Dean - TISS*

Smt. Shailaja Muley - *Senior educationist, Career Counsellor*

Dr. D J Jussawalla Educational Fund Governing Advisory Council (GAC)

Mr. Hari Mundra - *Chairman , ICS*

Mr. M K Sharma - *ICS Trustee*

Mr. Kewal Nohria - *ICS Trustee*

Mr. Gautam Chakravarti - *ICS Trustee*

Mr. Kiran Talcherkar - *ICS Trustee*

Ms. Ann Rawat - *Dep Director General - Fundraising, Finance & Operations, ICS*

Mr. Pankaj Madholkar - *ICS Member*

Late Effects Advisors

Dr. Puneet Arora - *Fertility expert, Delhi*

Audiology Department- *Nair Hospital, Mumbai*

Dr. Manish Agarwal - *Consultant Orthopaedic Oncosurgeon*

Dr. Prof. Sudha Rao - *Paediatric Endocrinologist*

Dr. Himika Gupta - *Ocular Oncologist and Ophthalmic Plastic Surgeon - Vision & prosthesis*

Dr. Prof. Kanchan Dholam - *Prosthodontist*

Advisors for psycho social assessments

Dr. V Surendran - *Head, Dept of Psycho-oncology, Cancer Institute (WIA), Chennai*

Dr. Savita Goswami - *Clinical psychologist, Psychiatry Unit, Tata Memorial Hospital*

Dr. Savita Sapra - *Senior Clinical Psychologist, Centre for Health Research & Development, Society for Applied Studies, Delhi*

Skill Development Courses available at Rehabilitation Centre, ICS

फ्री ब्यूटिशियन कोर्स
सर्वाङ्घर, कैंसर मरीज़ और उनपर निर्भर लोगों के लिए

- कोर्स पूरा होने पर सर्टिफिकेट और ब्यूटिशियन बौट दिया जायेगा
- कोर्स के लिए सभी सामग्री सोलावटी द्वारा उपलब्ध कराई जाएगी
- प्रतिदिन के हिसाब से ₹400 ट्यूशनिक दिया जायेगा

कालावधी : 44 दिन उमर : 14 से 49 साल तक
सोमवार से शुक्रवार दोपहर 12 बजे से शाम 4.30 बजे तक

श्रीमा परब - 9769939954
आ. जीवन कश्चिमा (म. मोहोदया, मोम. मुकुंद-मोमोरा (अमर)
दारा अमरपार के पास, मायका पुणे कोरान और मोहोदया देवली रीर के समीप

फ्री सिलाई कोर्स
सर्वाङ्घर, कैंसर मरीज़ और उनपर निर्भर लोगों के लिए

- कोर्स पूरा होने पर सर्टिफिकेट, सिलाई मीट और सिलाई मशीन दिए जाएंगे
- कोर्स के लिए सभी सामग्री सोलावटी द्वारा उपलब्ध कराई जाएगी
- प्रतिदिन के हिसाब से ₹400 ट्यूशनिक दिया जायेगा

कालावधी : 100 दिन उमर : 14 से 49 साल तक
सोमवार से शुक्रवार सुबह 11 बजे से शाम 4 बजे तक

श्रीमा परब - 9769939954
आ. जीवन कश्चिमा (म. मोहोदया, मोम. मुकुंद-मोमोरा (अमर)
दारा अमरपार के पास, मायका पुणे कोरान और मोहोदया देवली रीर के समीप

ACHIEVEMENTS



Rupja Banerjee has completed Bachelor's degree in Mass Communication from SIS College, Nerul, with the generous financial support of the Indian Cancer Society through the Dr. D. J. Jussawalla Fund from 2020 to 2023. Recently, I have completed my Master's degree in Journalism from Somaiya

University (2023–2025) with 93.1%, marking an important step forward in my academic and professional journey.



Shweta Chaware had Osteosarcoma and had her knee replaced with a prosthetic implant followed by aggressive chemotherapy and physiotherapy when she was 15 years old. She is an artist and designs and sells art calendars to collect funds to help children fighting cancer with their treatment. She has done it

continuously for five years. She has donated Rs 71,800/- for the year 2025 to ICS. What motivated her to start this was when she met a young girl in the OPD where they had their follow up. She had the same diagnosis Shweta had, Osteosarcoma. Yet her leg was amputated. She learned that the girl could not afford the prosthetic implant and had to go with this difficult decision. Shweta felt very hollow and that was when she decided to raise funds once she completed her education. She uses her art to make calendars each year and donates the collected money to ICS which helps children with their treatment.



Parag Shrinivas Ligde, a determined marathon runner since 2017, has completed 45 races covering 5K and 10K distances. A true fighter, Parag overcame a hypothalamic glioma (NF1) brain tumor, with treatment starting in 2011 and completing in 2014.



Sachin Chandorkar, a UGAM member and an artist presented his art in a prestigious 'CHATAK 2024' festival at Nehru Centre, Mumbai.



Vansh Gupta, 20 (TMH) cracked the JEE advanced level exams with a good rank. He is currently doing his Computer Science Engineering from IIT Hyderabad. At the international level, he has won gold and bronze medals for running and football, respectively.

सपने

सपनों को हकीकत में बदलना है, हर कदम, हर सांस में जगाना है,
टूटी उम्मीद को फिर ख्वाब में लाना है, मुश्किले आयेगी, रुकावटे होंगे,
लेकिन हारना नहीं है, ये याद रखना है।
एक नई सुबह, एक नया विश्वास मन में लाना है, दिल में जगा के आग,
डर को मन से भगाना है।

सपनों को पाने की चाहत, हर सांस में साथ रखनी है।
सपनों की दुनिया में खोना है, लेकिन फिर हकीकत में भी आना है।
एक दिन, सपने जरूर सच होंगे, बस मेहनत हमको करनी है
सपनों को हकीकत में बदलने का हौसला रखो बस मेहनत करो, कभी हार मत मानो।
Written by Mrs. Ashwini Chorge

Standard	Name of Survivor	Hospital	%
10th	Janani S	Shankara	97.00%
10th	Abrar Mohd	BIACH	94.00%
10th	Fatima Shah	SKIMS	93.50%
10th	Anshvardhan Deshmukh	TMH	93.00%
10th	Vedesh Joshi	BJWH	91.00%
10th	Adhayan Tripathi	RGCI	90.00%
10th	Piyush Shivkumar Gupta	TMH	86.40%
10th	Sumit Sidram Mane	BJWH	85.00%
10th	Pradhumn Shukla	RGCI	84.20%
10th	Nammula Gowthami Durga	BIACH	84.00%
10th	Ayush Mishra	HBCH	83.00%
10th	Abhishek Kumar Mahto	SION	82.00%
12th	Sai Namit	Shankara	88.80%
12th	Ishani Panja	TMH	88.27%
12th	Sunil D Gehlot	CIA	85.00%
12th	Arshath	CIA	84.00%
12th	Syed Niyamat	Shankara	81.00%

** All the survivors/parents have given consent for publishing the stories and the photos*



Shiv Prafulla More (13 years)

My name is Shiv Prafulla More. I was diagnosed with Neuroblastoma, a rare and aggressive cancer, at just 1 year and 8 months old. For my family, it felt like the ground had crumbled beneath them. My mother had already lost a son during heart surgery, and the fear of losing me was unbearable.

Still, my parents strength and brought me to Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai, on June 31, 2014, hoping for a miracle. At the time, we faced a financial crisis. My father had lost his job, and we had no place to stay in Mumbai. We stayed with distant relatives and made hard trips from Nashik. Dr. Girish at Tata explained that treatment would last 9 to 12 months and be full of uncertainties. We were later referred to St. Jude India, where we got free accommodation. Slowly, help arrived. Several organizations supported us financially and emotionally. I underwent 8 rounds of chemotherapy, followed by surgery and radiation. Later, doctors suggested an experimental medicine through a clinical trial. With our consent, I was included. The 3-month cycle had 15 days of medication and 15 days of rest. My skin peeled, lips cracked—but I slowly recovered. By God's grace and my doctors' care, I was declared cancer-free in 9–10 months. It was the happiest day of our lives.

Today, I am 13 years and 6 months old, in 7th standard, and usually rank 1st or 2nd in class. I've won medals at school, state, and national levels in academics, sports, storytelling, and more. Organizations like Indian Cancer Society (ICS), Impact Foundation, CanKids, and St. Jude India have supported us. ICS still offers scholarships, and my mother—who learned tailoring through them—now contributes to our income. We are forever grateful. To us, Tata Hospital is not just a hospital—it is a temple that gave me life again.

My Message to the World and Families Battling Cancer: Trust your doctors and follow their advice with faith. Spread awareness and offer support to families going through cancer.

Keep cleanliness around hospitals—it saves lives. Respect and uplift organizations helping cancer patients. Don't waste food and water—it's a step toward humanity. Be a guiding light for those lost in fear. You don't need wealth or power to make a difference—just a kind heart and small effort.

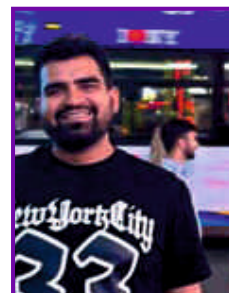


Alakesh Ghosh (14 years)

It started with some tiny lumps in his ear for which he was taken to Barpeta Medical College and Hospital in Assam. They referred him to B Borooah Cancer Institute, Guwahati where he was diagnosed with Rhabdomyosarcoma. His treatment went for around 2 years from 2019 to 2021. "It was a difficult and emotional journey.

I barely felt alive during that time. I was functioning like a robot. Financial constraints were large, and although the hospital extended much-needed support—and I am extremely grateful for that—still arranging some more money for treatment was a battle. The COVID-19 lockdown made things really difficult. His father is physically handicapped, so sometimes I had to travel back home to work and take care of him, as well as keeping my older son there in the hospital. Whatever little I earned also went there. During my absence, Alakesh barely ate, so I used to return quickly with home-cooked meals. During those times he used to cry, feeling homesick. We felt very helpless." He is in class 9 now. Extremely grateful to ICS for giving us the education fund. It was my dream to study in that school. Now that ICS provided the DJ Jussawala Education fund, my mother and I could fulfil our dream and learn more. We are happy and motivated, and my parents want me to go much ahead in life. - **Alakesh's mother**

I want to be a good human being in life, help and motivate others like me. - **Alakesh**



Siddharth Bhardwaj

From a Hospital Bed to New York: A Survival and Faith

When I think back, I don't remember all the medical terms. What I remember is not being able to stand on my own. I remember the pain, and I remember the look on my parents' faces. I was six years old, and I had no idea what Leukemia or Hepatitis B meant. But I knew

something was wrong. I was sick. And suddenly, the world around me became doctors, hospital rooms, and needles. Some memories from that time are blurry, but a few are etched into my mind—especially seeing my parents in the hospital prayer room. Even as a kid, I could feel their strength, even when I couldn't feel mine. I went through chemotherapy, endless hospital visits, and treatments that were hard to understand at that age. But I always felt supported. My doctors, especially Dr. Gauri and Dr. Sandeep, and my family—they were my team.

In 2010, my treatment ended. Slowly, the check-ups became less frequent. Eventually, the hospital became a memory, and life moved forward. But inside, I had changed. I didn't take things for granted. I felt like I had been saved for a reason. I joined Maharaja Agrasen Institute and pursued a BBA. Along the way, I started volunteering, teaching underprivileged kids, and giving back in small ways. After graduating, I explored different jobs. I took the GMAT and scored 770 out of 800. It still feels surreal. I got into nine universities in the U.S., and I chose New York University to pursue my Master's in Management of Technology.

Moving to a new country was a big shift. But I kept reminding myself—I've already come through something much harder. At NYU, I learned so much—not just from textbooks, but from the people, the culture, the conversations. After I finished my degree, I joined Europastry USA as a Procurement Analyst. And now, I'm preparing for higher studies again. Surviving cancer didn't just give me a second chance. It gave me a reason to live better, to live fuller. I believe in something we say in my culture—Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam—the world is one family. And if there's one thing I've learned through this journey, it's that we don't rise alone. We rise together.

Reshma (Smile Volunteer)

My Journey with Ugam

I'm incredibly excited to be joining Ugam, a support group formed by childhood cancer survivors like myself. While I wasn't there at its start, I'll be attending their conference for the first time this June—it feels like a new chapter for me. Ugam was created by survivors who completed treatment at Tata Memorial Hospital. They were inspired by other survivors they met globally during a major meeting in October 2007. Ugam officially began on June 7, 2009, which is also celebrated as Cancer Survivors Day. The name "Ugam" means "To Rise," symbolizing our determination to overcome challenges and emerge victorious. As the survivor group of the Indian Cancer Society (ICS)—a non-profit fighting cancer for over 68 years—Ugam has a strong foundation to help more survivors. I'm excited to attend Ugam's anniversary celebration, which I expect will be truly inspirational. Witnessing fellow childhood cancer survivors gather with energy and commitment will surely be moving and empowering.

My own journey began with surviving stage 3 osteosarcoma. Now, as a medical and psychiatric social worker, I've sought spaces where my experience would be understood. That search led me to the Smile Support Group, which I joined through the ACT clinic at Adyar Cancer Institute about a year ago. What truly drew me to Smile was the deep sense of belonging and mutual understanding. We share not only the medical challenges but also the emotional and social aftermath of childhood cancer. Together, we exchange coping strategies, celebrate triumphs, and support each other through ongoing struggles. Most importantly, we feel safe to seek help and are met with empathy and practical advice.

Stepping Up as a Volunteer

The positive impact of Smile inspired me to take a meaningful step—I became a volunteer. This decision wasn't casual but a purposeful move born from my search for deeper meaning. After seeing Smile's thoughtful efforts and how they support us with limited resources, I felt compelled to contribute more. With my background as both a social worker and an artist, I bring a unique perspective. My training has taught me how to understand community needs, foster communication, and advocate for the vulnerable. I'm excited to apply these skills, alongside my personal experience, to help Smile Support Group grow and support even more survivors.

Once again, I feel so grateful, happy, and honoured to be a part of this event.



Scan to read more stories

Proud Of You



Dr. Purna Kurkure, our Joint Hon. Secretary and Joint Managing Trustee, was honored with a prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award from V Care, presented by Dr. Sudeep Gupta, Director of Tata Memorial Center. Congratulations on this well-deserved recognition!



Dr. Vandana Dhamankar's abstract, "Partnership in Cancer Survivorship Optimization (PICASSO): A Comprehensive Model for Paediatric Cancer Survivorship Care in India," was selected for an Oral Presentation and won second prize in Track 1 – Paediatric Cancer Care at the XXIII EBM 2025 Conference held on 1st March at Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai. Congratulations on this remarkable achievement!



Mrs. Savita Goswami was honoured for 29 years of dedicated service at Tata Memorial Hospital in the field of cancer care. Your commitment and compassion continue to inspire us all!

We are thrilled to celebrate the incredible achievements of our teammate, Mrs. Shweta Chawre who has served as an Animation Lead on several high-profile animated features (Spongebob Squarepants - Netflix, Thelma the Unicorn - Netflix, Skyforce and Kalki) released globally on OTT platforms in 2024 and 2025. Congratulations on these accomplishments!



Ugam Anthem launched on 3rd June 2012

Written by Shashank Johri
&
Music composed by Immanuel Berlin

चल दिए हम लेकर अपना कारवाँ
लिखेंगे खुशियों से भरी एक दास्ताँ
राहों के टेढ़े मेढ़े जो मोड़ हो
टूटे ना इन हाथों के जो जोड़ हो
जीवन की धुप में हम पले हैं
काँटों के रास्तों पर चले हैं
महकाए फूलों से ये चमन
देखा जो दर्द को हम मिटा दें
एक लौ से ये जहाँ जगमगा दें
भरदे उमंगों से ये गगन
हम हैं उगम हम उगम

जीवन की आशा को
प्यार की भाषा से
अब तो महकाना है
खुशियों को लाना है
बढ़ते ही जाना है.... उगम
बिखरे उन सपनों को
फिरसे उठाना है
बढ़ते ही जाना है.... उगम

चल दिए हम लेकर अपना कारवाँ



THE UGAM FAMILY



ICS S&R Team, Mumbai

Front row (Left to right)- Ms. Revathi Rajgopal, Dr. Vandana Dhamankar, Dr. Purna Kurkure, Mrs. Bhairavi Gawde, Ms. Preeti Phad.
Back row (left to right)- Dr. Bhumika Rathod, Dr. Neha Joshi, Mrs. Anita Ramsinghani, Mr. Kunal Kedar, Mr. Keshav Jha, Ms. Lynette Francis, Mr. Kiran Shinde, Mr. Deepak Sawant