Dear Friends,
As we turned the pages of the calendar to 2014, the New Year ushered in a special landmark for SOFOSH—its Golden Jubilee Year! It was 50 years ago that a philanthropic group of residents of Pune got together to form a fraternity of friends to support the needs of the patients who visit the vast Sassoon General Hospitals in times of crisis. Fifty years later this friendship has embraced thousands of patients, families and vulnerable children by the multi-dimensional services offered by this humanitarian Trust, registered in August 1964, The Society Of Friends Of Sassoon Hospitals (SOFOSH). This fraternity of friendship has been kept alive and growing by those who have joined hands with us from far and near, organizations and individuals, whose contribution has enabled us to serve the most disadvantaged in our society. We extend our heartfelt thanks to each one of you and look forward to continuing this wonderful partnership by which we could transform tragedy into triumph and despair into hope. It would not have been possible without you....
At the beginning of the year SOFOSH paid tribute to those who have supported the organization in multiple ways. On the 9th of February the Annual Volunteers Meet was held and attended by a large number of our well wishers and volunteers. Prominent among them was the 'Hug Therapy Group' led by Sarah Rockler and her team of dedicated volunteers. The members of Sparsh group were felicitated as well as many staff members of SOFOSH in recognition of their services. Volunteers from BNY Mellon who have actively assisted Sofosh, were also present among the large group along with many individual volunteers. Dr. Mona's musical group TARANGINI kept the audience delighted and had the staff of SOFOSH on the dance floor helping them to release the stress of their challenging jobs at Sofosh!

TARANGINI GROUP performance

SOFOSH Chairperson Mr. Shyam Mehendale and other dignitaries handed out prizes and certificates.

But the highlight of the morning was the song and dance numbers performed by the little stars at Shreevatsa who stole the show!
The child care center “Shreevatsa” was buzzing with excitement and activities in the first quarter of 2014.

On the 4th January, the children were taken to Sambhaji Park in auto rickshaws. The kids lined up and went inside the green and refreshing atmosphere of the vast garden and played with each other.

Later, they went to the aquarium inside the park where they saw multi-coloured fish. They were overjoyed seeing the fish and they eagerly touched the glass walls trying to get closer to catch the fish. Afterwards, they ran outside to see a mud fort made by some other children. They had a picnic and then came back home after a hectic day.

Giving the children an experience of life outside the child care center is important for their development and it is our endeavour to expose them to simple experiences they have been deprived of. About 11 of the bigger children of Shreevatsa visited the biggest vegetable and fruit market in Pune called “Mandaee”. The children were taken by auto rickshaw to the vegetable market. On the way, they saw the bustling traffic on the roads. They were given some instructions before entering the market. They looked at each vegetable in wonder. On seeing their glee, the vegetable vendors too were happy and started introducing their vegetables and handing out carrots and cucumbers to the delighted kids! The group roamed around the entire market, all the while learning the names of each fruit and vegetable they came across.

Later, the children visited the historical fort of Shaniwar Wada which is a landmark of Pune. While entering inside, they were amazed to see the huge door and its nails. Inside, the children played around in the fort. They ate and then were shown the entire fort.

On Saturday, 1st February, the children were delighted to visit the Rajiv Gandhi Animal Park. They wore nice clothes, shoes and sun hats as they set out to interact with the animals which inhabit our world.

They saw monkeys, alligators, and pythons, all kinds of snakes, small turtles and crocodiles. They talked endlessly about all they saw. After an exhausting morning they sat down to have lunch under the trees. Later, they went to see the tiger, cheetah, deer, wolves, bears, elephants, Sāmbhar deer, bison, cows and buffaloes. The kids were overjoyed seeing the animals. They were told the names, sounds, shapes, sizes and colours of each animal. It was a most exciting day!

On the occasion of Maha Shivratri on 27th February, the children were taken to the temple dedicated to Shiva in the Sassoon hospital campus. The children were
explained the importance of Mahashivratri. They were told that a fast is maintained on this day and only certain foods maybe eaten.

Pune has become a city of shopping malls. In order to give our children an experience of a mall, a volunteer group organized an unforgettable outing. On 9th March, 8 children visited the Season’s Mall in Hadapsar to watch a movie. The children got ready amidst endless questions regarding how and where they were going. A car came to pick them up and took them to the theatre. It was an animated movie and everyone was given 3D glasses to watch the movie. Watching a 3D movie wearing glasses was a truly delightful experience. They enjoyed eating popcorn during the movie and throwing it at each other!

In the afternoon of 21st March the older children visited ‘O’ Hotel where one of the volunteers had arranged for them to have fun in the swimming pool. As soon as they reached all the staff there welcomed the children.

An exciting outing at the O Hotel

They took the kids up on the terrace of the Hotel for a swim. The children enjoyed swimming in their pool. They did not want to stop and had to be reluctantly pulled out! Afterwards they wholeheartedly thanked the volunteer and the hotel staff. The kids sang some songs much to the delight and appreciation of their audience.

On the 22nd of March 16 children went for a picnic to Jijamata Garden in Pimple Gurav. Once inside, the children saw trees in the shapes of various animals, which fascinated them. They played on the swings and
slides and enjoyed themselves. After strolling in the garden, they visited SOFOSHs Tara centre for challenged children which is very close by.

As TARA was quiet and unfamiliar, the children hesitantly went inside. After seeing the entire centre, they sat in the play therapy room. Drinking juice, the children rested awhile. Then they were taken to swim, and they played in the water to their hearts’ content. This was followed by a wholesome lunch lovingly prepared by the care givers at TARA.

Laxmibai Park in Camp. In the Park, they were asked to sit under a tree, but seeing swings and slides around, the kids ran off to play.

They attempted to catch the pigeons that flew away into the trees. And as the hot summer evening came to an end it was time for the little ones to return to “Shreevatsa”, wash up, eat and climb into their cribs…. the end of another exciting day

The children thanked everyone there, bid them goodbye and returned to their familiar home, Shreevatsa.

The following Saturday i.e. the 29th of March, the children went to Rani
India is a land of festivals! The first quarter of the year is packed with festivals which are celebrated with gusto at Shreevatsa.

Makar Sankranti

On the 14th and 24th of January, the “Tanishka” group of women and everyone in the institution organized a ‘Bornhaan’ ceremony for the children. The kids were showered with a mixture of chocolates, biscuits, candy and puffed rice. Whilst being showered with these goodies, the kids were eating everything they could lay their hands on and keeping some in their pockets for later!

Republic Day

Holi

The festival of holi and Dhulivandan brought a huge splash of colour into the lives of the children at Shreevatsa.

The children dressed in new clothes. A Holi Fire was lit just outside Shreevatsa, a feast of Puran Poli laid on and a Puja conducted. The children were shown the essential materials for lighting the bonfire. They were also explained the meaning of this festival. On the following day a big drum filled with coloured water was placed outside Shreevatsa. The children were given water pistons to play with. They sprayed each other with water and even jumped in the drum of water. They were fully engrossed in play and eventually had to be told to stop!

The bonfire

On 26th January 2014, India’s 65th Republic Day, all the children were dressed in white. Later, Shri Vasant - Panhalkar from among the guests hoisted the flag. Everyone sang the national anthem and the children danced to the song ‘Desh Rangeela’. Some guests from the ‘Get United’ group sang patriotic songs and everyone enjoyed the snacks that followed.
Rangpanchami

On the 5th day of Holi Rangpanchami is celebrated. The children were very excited to celebrate Ranga Panchmi, knowing that they would get to play in water again, which keeps them cool in the hot summer months.

Gudi Padwa

The festival of Gudi Padwa ushers in the New Year for Maharashtrians. On this special day of celebration, a beautiful Rangoli design was made in front of the door. The children were dressed in new clothes.

The Gudi was decorated in a pretty saree, adorned with flowers. The staff and the children got together and performed the puja. Sugar garlands were given to everyone. All the children and the adults ate a ‘Prasad’ of jaggery. They all ate a hearty meal of Puran Poli and were explained the importance of this festival.
As scheduled every quarter, the pre-adoption meeting was held on 20th of March. About 17 couples and 2 single parents attended this meeting which prepares aspiring adoptive parents for the adoption journey.

The sessions included topics related to admission of children in child care centers, legal aspects of adoption, the process of adoption and health assessment of children. After these information based topics, the resource persons dealt with actual parenting topics such as preparation for receiving a child at home, positive parenting, sharing the fact of adoption etc.

The last leg of the workshop was the interface between older adoptees, some adoptive parents and the prospective parents. As always it was an emotionally charged session, touching the hearts of everyone present.

In this quarter 1 January 2014 to 31 March 2014 SOFOSH adoption statistics were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>ADOPTION</th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>INDIAN ADOPTION</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>INTER-COUNTRY ADOPTION</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After a long wait many happy couples walked away with a bundle of joy in their arms!
As mentioned in the previous newsletter, the Make a Wish Foundation had met about 25 Children Living With HIV/AIDS and asked their wishes. The program to fulfill their wishes by giving away these gifts was organized in January 2014. Mr. Deepak Bhatia, CEO of Make a Wish Foundation and Mr. Prakash Chaphalkar, head of the Pune Division were present for this program. Also present were Social Workers of the Foundation Ms. Mitali and Ms. Akhila. On behalf of SOFOSH, Mrs. Abhyankar, Director, and the 3 Patient Welfare Social Workers – Asha, Purva and Ratan were present. Thirteen children along with their parents attended this program in which their dreams came true!

The Chief Guest gave a brief introduction about their organization, while Mrs. Abhyankar briefly enumerated the activities of SOFOSH. Each child was presented with the gift of his/her choice. Ten children were gifted bicycles, two were given video games and one was given a doll. There were several other gifts distributed. The children were extremely happy with their gifts and enjoyed the program thoroughly.

Make a wish...

PATIENT WELFARE CASES

Shalan, a forty year old woman is from a very poor family. She is a housewife. Her husband is a daily wage worker and her son is studying in the 12th standard. She had multiple exploratory laparotomies with uterine fibroids adenosis with hypothyroidism abdominal pain and bleeding for 7 to 8 months. She had been to several hospitals and spent a lot on the treatment. Then, she came to Sassoon Hospital. A doctor at Sassoon advised her to take MIRENA IUOC which costs Rs. 7200 which was beyond her means. SOFOSH has helped this patient to buy MIRENA IUOC. The doctor has operated on this patient and sent her back home. The patient came for a follow up and met the social worker after one month; she is well on the way to recovery. SOFOSH is keeping a track on her follow up treatment.

Forty year old Balu, suffered facial injuries during an accident. Balu has no family and worked on a farm as a farm worker. His employer had sent him for some work to Baramati when he met with an accident. He does not remember how it happened and he also lost his diary, mobile and money and injured his eyes. The police brought him to SGH for treatment. He was admitted to the
Plastic Surgery Ward. Doctors and relatives of other patients were taking care of him as he had no family. SOFOSH was contacted for assistance.

The SOFOSH Social Worker provided him with clothes and procured medicines for him. She also tried to locate his employer’s address as Balu wanted to go back to him. The Social Worker extended emotional support to him so that he could cope with the crisis as he was very traumatized. Once his employer was located SOFOSH arranged an ambulance to drop him home. Balu is now doing well he keeps the social workers informed about his recovery and well being and remains very thankful for all the assistance given to him.

Diabetes

Increase in stressful routines, change in lifestyle and heredity are the common reasons for the huge occurrence of diabetes. Most patients are not aware about diabetes before it gets detected. There are more female patients than male mainly because of obesity, lack of exercise and heredity. There is need for stress management, diet control and awareness in the prevention of diabetes. The SOFOSH Social Worker gives health talks to patients about the disease, symptoms, reasons, diet, exercise, regular check up, foot care, hypoglycemia and other complications of diabetes. The statistics of cases handled by SOFOSH in this quarter are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Patients of Diabetes</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Counseling services to Diabetes patients: 216

It is interesting to note that Insulin independent patients are more than Insulin dependent patients in Sassoon Hospitals.

Cancer

There is an increase in cancer patients day by day. More male patients are found probably due to the habit of tobacco chewing, alcoholism. They can’t afford costly treatment due to their poor economic condition. Added to that they postpone treatment. Cancer patients are counseled about treatment, side effects of treatment and palliative care. SOFOSH extends emotional, psychological as well as economic assistance to them. For prevention and early detection of cancer, information is imparted to the relatives of cancer patients. The statistics of Cancer patients handled by Sofosh in this quarter are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Patients</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help given for medicine</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help from other NGOs through Sofoshs efforts</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group sessions with relatives of patients</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Burns:

Managing burns is painful and can result in disfiguring and disability. Burn injuries can be complicated by shock, infection, multiple organ dysfunction syndrome, electrolyte imbalance, and respiratory distress. Burns can be fatal but modern treatments developed in the last 60 years have significantly improved the prognosis of such burns especially in children and young adults. Counselling helps fight both depression and anxiety. SOFOSH has an intensive program to counsel and support burns patients and their families and rehabilitate survivors.

**Total Patients:** 183

- Male: 55
- Female: 108
- Children: 20
- Counselling: 116
- Group sessions on prevention of burns: 15

There are more female patients than males due to domestic violence, marital conflict, alcoholic and suspicious husbands and sometimes due to dowry expectations from in-laws. Alcoholic males sometimes attempt suicide under the influence of alcohol. Children mostly have accidental burns due to carelessness of parents.

A CASE HANDLED BY SOFOSH : CHILD RESTORATION TO BIRTH FAMILY

Mr. and Mrs. Kadam, a middle aged married couple aged 49 yrs and 42 years, with a 22 year old biological daughter approached SOFOSH when they realized that Mrs. Kadam was pregnant the second time. With age Mrs. Kadam had mild diabetes and had undergone a minor heart surgery. As she was gaining weight the couple visited a Gynecologist. They were shocked to learn that Mrs. Kadam was in an advanced stage of pregnancy. Mrs. Kadam went through feelings of guilt, shame and depression. They were very embarrassed about how their daughter’s friends would react to this. They insisted on abortion but the doctors refused and referred them to SOFOSH.

The couple was counseled to keep the child, however they were firm about relinquishing the child. In fact they did not want to even see the face of the child nor know the gender of the child. After the birth of their daughter the couple relinquished her to SOFOSH immediately. The baby girl was admitted to Shreevatsa. The birth parents did not even want to give her a name. However, 3 days later Mr. and Mrs. Kadam shared this with their families. The whole family decided to support the couple to bring back home the child. Mrs. Kadam was not ready emotionally and had several doubts whether they would be able to take care of such a small child and whether the child would be medically fit. The Social Worker counseled Mrs. Kadam intensively and put her fears to rest. Mr. Kadam finally gave her consent to take home her second daughter, and the little infant was restored to her birth family. The family is now really happy about their decision and most thankful for the role played by SOFOSH to keep them together.
Activities at TARA

FLAG HOISTING

On the 26th of January 2014, India’s Republic Day was celebrated for the very first time in TARA. The flag hoisting was done at the hands of the children at TARA. All the staff was present for the hoisting. The children were given balloons of the three colours in the flag and they happily flew them. A volunteer had brought a tri-colour cake and the children cut it. The children had great fun on this day.

On 4th of February, a dental check up of all the children was conducted by Dr. Anand Swami and Dr. Aarti Swami through the Dhyas Foundation. Seven children needed further treatment and the follow up will done as required.

SMILE PLEASE! DENTAL CHECK UP AT TARA

Although we were looking for a suitable organization where some of our children could be transferred, the opportunity came rather suddenly. The Child Welfare Committee referred an NGO from Solapur, to transfer the children from TARA. The officials of this NGO visited TARA and identified the children they wished to transfer to their
organization. There were 6 girls in the age group of 6-14 yrs. This NGO has residential facility as well as a school attached to it. The very next day was fixed for transferring these girls. This did not give us enough time to prepare the girls for this transit and huge change in their life. The travel to the NGO which is about 5 hours by road from TARA, was quite unsettling for the children and the care givers who had been lovingly caring for them at TARA. But sometimes such practical decisions have to be taken, specially because so many challenged children are in need of care homes.

After the departure of the children TARA became rather quiet, as all the active and boisterous ones left. The staff members felt this void everyday and missed the children as much as probably the children missed them. The staff continues to keep in touch with the children and call up practically every day to see how the children are. We all understand they will take time to adjust and hope that someday they will be completely settled there.

Two more boys have been transferred in February to another NGO in Dhule district. This NGO also has school facilities attached to the home.

On the occasion of the 175th birth anniversary of Jamshedji Tata, founder of the Tata Industries, two groups of TATA Motors, Maval Foundry, visited TARA on 6th March and 14th March. The first group painted all the beds and planted several flower and show plants. They brought with them all the material required for the painting and brought uncommon and exclusive plants. The second group painted all the play things in the campus and donated two swings and clothes for the children. Both groups were very enthusiastic and enjoyed participating in all the activities. Needless to say it is a great boost to our centre when caring volunteers assist us in practical and wonderful ways.

SPECIAL TIME WITH SPECIAL CHILDREN

A group of students, about 8 of them, from the Indira Global Business School, Pune visited TARA on 3 consecutive Thursdays i.e. 6th, 13th and 20th of March. On the first Thursday they helped the TATA Motors volunteers with painting the beds. On the next Thursday they helped with gardening and on the last Thursday they spent a lot of time with the children, baked a cake for them and later took them for a small outing to the nearby Dinosaur Park.

CARING FOR THE CARERS: Everyone likes to do charity in small or big ways! But prefer to donate for the direct benefit of the underprivileged. There are few who understand that in a specific setting like a child care center, having dedicated care givers is an absolute essential! To sustain their dedication the organization needs to take care of their needs by compensating them fairly.
Capmetrics Technology Solutions Pvt. Ltd. - a Pune based company had approached us towards the end of the year 2013 and offered to sponsor the salary of one staff for a full year as well as make an annual donation. Since January 2014 they have started sponsoring the salary of the Residential Coordinator of “Shreevatsa”. We truly appreciate this gesture!

We hope we have many more sponsors who will share the burden of salaries with SOFOSH so that funds can be used for many more activities.

PATIENT WELFARE CASES

Four year old Poonam, was diagnosed with Guilin Barry Syndrome. Her lower limb was paralyzed due to this syndrome. She was advised treatment (Intra venous immunoglobulin) I.V.I.G. 5Mg/Day which cost Rs.8,900/day. She required 25 mg costing Rs.44,500/- Her father is a construction laborer and mother house wife and has a younger sister 6 month old. Her father took loan from the labour contractor. With this money she was given the first two doses and SOFOSH provided the remaining three doses for this small child. Much to the family’s joy, at the time of discharge she went out walking on her own! When she returned after 15 days for follow up we were so overjoyed to see the transformation that this assistance had brought about.

Jyoti a 17 year old girl was referred to Sassoon Hospital for further treatment. She had been earlier admitted to Civil Hospital Satara for cold and fever. She had to take long treatment for the same condition. But she developed some problem in breathing and she would become breathless two to three times a day. Tracheotomy was done in civil hospital Satara. She was shifted onto a ventilator and she developed tracheal stenosis so civil hospital Satara sent this patient to Sassoon general Hospital for tube and laser treatment which cost Rs.29,000/- Her father is a farm laborer and mother also a farm laborer with 3 children. He collected some amount for Jyoti’s operation. SOFOSH met their requirement for Rs. 10,000/- which saved her life.

Timely assistance goes a long way!

HIV/AIDS PATIENTS support group meetings:

During the quarter six support group meetings were held and were attended by 206 patients.

January 2014– In first group Dr. Renuka Patil, Physiotherapist, doing Post graduation has undertaken research on “Effects of fitness training & improvement of Physiological parameters & quality of life in HIV positive Indian females’. She gave information about her study and from the group ten females showed
willingness to participate in this research.

In the second group there was a general discussion on ‘Anger’ and its effects on our psychological and physical health. Ms. Jaishree, counselor of NARI came as a resource person. She discussed about when and why we become angry and how it affects our health.

February 2014– Both groups had a general discussion on psychological health. Ms. Jaishree came in as the resource person.

March 2014–In the first group one male PLH shared his experience. When he came to know his Immuno-compromised Status, he thought of committing suicide along with his children. With counseling he changed his outlook. Now he is healthy and positive. He also discussed the government schemes for PLH.

In the second group the student social worker conducted some games and fun activities to lighten up the atmosphere.

This quarter statistics are as follows:

**T B Project**: Total number of cases handled by SOFOSH: 104

**HIV/AIDS Project**: 500 cases

---

**Visitors at SOFOSH**

As always SOFOSH/Shreevatsa had a stream of visitors. Among them were:

**Sakal Tanishka Group** visited SOFOSH on 14th January. They were very impressed with the upkeep of Shreevatsa and celebrated Makar Sankranti with the children.

**Shri Parimal Chaudhari**, Chairperson, Praj Foundation and his associate Shri Vinayak Kelkar visited on 6th March and were not only impressed by the care given to children but were moved by the work done by the staff and found it truly inspiring!

**Branch Managers of 3 branches of Corporation Bank** visited Shreevatsa on 12th March. They donated some of the requirements and were very impressed with the care given to all the children.

On 14th February, eight top officials of **BNY Mellon** visited SOFOSH to meet with the Director and Committee Members to discuss the continuation of the CSR activity to which their organization and staff had so wholeheartedly contributed.

**SOFOSH: The Society Of Friends Of Sassoon Hospitals**

Email: director@sofosh.org
Phone: +91 020 26124660
Website: www.sofosh.org

**SOFOSH’s services are entirely supported by voluntary donations and sponsorship by individuals and organizations. Donations to SOFOSH are exempted from income tax under Section 80G and 35AC of the IT Act 2000.**

Donation cheques may be made in favor of ‘SOFOSH’.