

## SOCIO-CULTURAL SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR SENIORS – AN UPDATE

Since the workshop at the 2016 North American Konkani Sannelan held in Atlanta in July 2016, we have been steadily developing projects that are of interest and benefit to our seniors. The goal of this program is to improve access of OKA seniors to social and cultural activities, provide community-based avenues for non-medical support, and increase knowledge about the practical aspects of retired living.

### OKA Senior's Activities conducted

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|--------------------|--|
| July 2016          | Workshop at the North American Konkani Sannelan                          |
| October 2016       | Brain Storming session sponsored by Manisha and Mahesh Nileshwar         |
| March 2017         | Seniors' Day sponsored by SVB  |
| April 2017         | Focus Group Meeting sponsored by Kumudimi and arun Deshpande             |
| June 2017          | Seniors' Lunch and Get Together  |
| Aug 2017           | Konkani Pioneers' Get Together sponsored by Minal and Hemanth Tallur     |
| December 2017      | OKA Seniors' Information Session   |
| May 2018           | Launch of the Technical Support System hosted by Nadini and Shiv Gangoly |
| August 25-26, 2018 | City Programs Intro by phone   |
| September 8, 2018  | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Technical Support Workshop hosted by Mahesh Nileshwar    |
| October 21, 2018   | Diabetes Management sponsored by SVBF                                    |
| December 16, 2018  | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Technical Support Workshop hosted by Ajay Rao            |
| March 3, 2019      | Emergency Preparedness Brainstorming Session hosted by Raghunath Kamath  |

### Upcoming OKA Senior's Activities

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|----------------|---|
| March 23, 2019 | 4 <sup>th</sup> Technical Workshop hosted by Ajay Rao                     |
| April 28, 2019 | SVBF/OKA Health Awareness Seminar - Alzheimer's, Dementia, Mental Health, |
| July 2019      | SVBF/OKA Health Awareness Discussion Session – Diabetes etc.              |
| October 2019   | SVBF/OKA Health Awareness Seminar   |
| December 2019  | SVBF/OKA Health Awareness Discussion Session                              |

### Projects Implemented

**Interactive forum OKA Aadhaar Chat** was launched in 2017. This Forum is ideal for sharing information, discussing issues and concerns. Currently only 58 have joined this Forum. A number of highly informative items have been already posted on this chat. Upcoming events are announced on this Chat. Shradha Pai is leading this initiative.

**Transportation/Carpool:** Ajay Rao has been coordinating this activity. With the help of a number of volunteers, we have been able to arrange rides to OKA events for a number of seniors.

**Information sessions/workshops/seminars:** Under the leadership of Sadanand Mankikar and his Team, we hope to hold at least 3-4 sessions every year to improve community knowledge on health, legal, financial planning and important services available for seniors from governments and communities.

**Social Activities:** Plan was to organize regular outings, networking opportunities, and regular club-style get-togethers for the seniors and soon to be seniors. A Seniors' Lunch was held in June 2017. The Committee is made up of Mahesh Nileshwar, Kash Nayak, Hemant Tallur, Ajay and Chitra Rao.

**Buddy system:** Some seniors may benefit from routine phone or in-person contact. A number of members have already started keeping in touch with seniors and provide help whenever needed. We hope to develop a "buddy" or contact point in the community. Shraddha Pai is keenly working on this project.

**Tech Support Program** is developed by Minakshi Pai with the input from various members of our community was launched on May 12, 2018. Seniors can learn how to navigate new and emerging technology i.e. computers, programs, smartphones, etc., from those more tech-savvy in the community. The project includes developing a Manual covering how to use and troubleshoot various devices.

**Emergency Preparedness:** Plan is to develop a medical and non-medical emergency kit with information on contacts within and outside the community. Jayesh Nayak with Murali Nayak and Suvarna Mankikar are leading this project. Sudhir Nayak (west end) and Shivdas Pai (east end) are appointed as Emergency Coordinators.

**In case of Eventuality:** We will be producing multicompartmental folders for individual use to store important information/documents that could be made easily available to self or legal heirs. Ashok and Amita Bhatt with the support of Raghunath Kamath are leading this initiative.

## **Intercommunity Activities**

**SVBF/Marathi Mandal:** From time to time we have lent hand and/or participated in the activities conducted by SVBF as well as Marathi Bhashik Mandal's Seniors Group.

**RetCom/Nirvana:** A group of a few like-minded friends is continuing to explore the possibility of a suitable community living for South East Asian seniors. The Group has communicated with managements of a few well-established Seniors' Residences including one in the U.S.A. They are also in touch with a reputed consulting firm which is experienced in developing business plans for community-based housing projects.

**Indus Community Services** has set up an Advisory Committee to develop a plan for Seniors' Residences for South East Asians. In addition to volunteers from various South East Asian Communities, Mahesh Nileshwar and Sadanand Mankikar are on this Committee.

**Scattering Ashes/Asthi Visarjan Project:** As part of Ontario Government's commitment to further support and facilitate the immersing of cremated remains, Forks of the Credit Provincial Park, Earl Rowe Provincial Park, Darlington Provincial Park, Bronte Creek Provincial Park, and Rideau River Provincial Park are designated for the installation of appropriate structures. Initially, Ontario Parks will establish a ceremonial shelter and other facilities at the Forks of the Credit site. An Advisory Committee consisting of members of the South East Asian Community including Pandit Roop Naraian Sharma of Shri Ram Mandir and Sadanand Mankikar of OKA has been set up.

## Other Activities

- Liberal Caucus –Indian Friendship Group Meeting conducted by the Minister of Seniors Affairs
- Healthy Aging in Diverse Ontario series conducted by the Minister of Seniors Affairs,
- 55+ SYMPOSIUM: SERVING BURLINGTON’S OLDER ADULT COMMUNITY – Organized by Federal Minister of Democratic Institutions.
- Survey and Round Table Discussion Sessions on Isolation amongst South Asian Seniors conducted by the Sheridan Centre for Elder Research
- Social Isolation and Loneliness Think Tank organized by the Sheridan Centre for Elder Research
- Round Table Sessions on Seniors Residences conducted by Ontario Minister, Seniors Affairs
- Aging with Confidence: Ontario's Action Plan for Seniors conducted by Minister, Seniors Affairs
- Aging Wisely Information Series conducted by CARP
- Mayor’s Inspire Burlington “New Vision on Aging” featuring Moses Znaimer