



sparsh hospice
a serene and dignified departure



**Rotary Club of
Banjara Hills
Charitable Trust**
(Reg No.139/2011)



ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021

A serene and dignified departure



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PRESIDENT'S NOTE



Rtn. Savida Naidu
President RCBH

As the President of the Rotary Club of Banjara Hills Charitable Trust, it gives me great joy to open this year's annual report on a positive note. Due to the relentless hard work and dedication of the Board of Trustees, Governing Body members, we are looking to launch our state-of-the-art hospice facility in Khajaguda at any moment now. With construction having resumed full speed this year despite the lockdown, we are glad that the building is nearly at the finish line and ready for us to move in.

Despite the challenging circumstances, we were also able to execute two major fundraising activities this year with our Diwali and Honey fundraisers – with the latter receiving an overwhelmingly positive response from the community due to its health-related impact.

I am also proud to bring to the attention of our readers that Sparsh was awarded the Telangana NGO Leadership Award for excellence in healthcare by R.L. Bhatia Foundation and World CSR Day. Sparsh has also received the official confirmation from the Sakshi group that we are the recipient of the prestigious Sakshi Excellence Award this year – both of which are ultimately reflections of the great job that our care team is doing day in and out.

It is no secret that the frontline workers at Sparsh are our biggest strength and through their selfless service we continue to touch more lives every year.

Wishing you a wonderful year ahead.

Wishing you a wonderful year ahead,

Savida Naidu

President, Rotary Club of Banjara Hills

FROM TRUSTEE'S DESK

Rtn. Mr. Suresh Reddy

Long-term Trustee and
Governing Board Member, RCBHCT



As a long-term Trustee and Member of RCBHCT, I would like to primarily acknowledge the incredible support that was extended towards our flagship project Sparsh Hospice by several esteemed organizations during this financial year. SBI Cards – for their steadfast faith in our mission and supporting us through a sizeable grant, which has equipped us with the capacity and tools to magnify our reach in the communities we serve.

On behalf of the board, I would like to thank Phoenix Foundation who were kind enough to undertake construction of the new facility and support a major portion of the cost under their CSR programmes.

I would also like to express my gratitude towards other corporate donors such as Virtusa Consulting Services Pvt. Ltd., Deloitte India, APT Online Pvt. Ltd., Shriram Housing Finance Ltd., Arka Media Works Pvt. Ltd., Premier Energies Ltd., Schindler, Phoenix Group, as well as individual philanthropists such as Shri Gopala Reddy Chennurugaru, Shri Ponamgi Prabhakara Rao garu, and Smt. Ponamgi Kusuma garu and others for their generous monetary contributions during this quarter towards the hospice.

A noteworthy mention also goes to the New Building Committee under the leadership of our member and past president, Shri Manohar Reddy & Spectra Constructions, which has been tirelessly working around the clock, notwithstanding the dreaded pandemic in the air, to ensure our new hospice facility at Khajaguda, Hyderabad, reaches the finishing line.

Most importantly I need to thank and express my personal gratitude to our CEO, Shri Ram Mohan Rao Garu and the entire team at Sparsh for their selfless and relentless service during these challenging pandemic times with utmost work ethics. The team has put in their best efforts not only inpatient care but also in meeting the quality and due diligence requirements of many existing and new donors respectively – thus ensuring that the support kept flowing and help us in relieving the pain from patients and adding more smiles to their families.

I once again sincerely express my appreciation and gratitude to all the contributors, both in cash and kind, without which this service would not have been possible. We have great hopes for the future spread of palliative care in both the Telugu states – and we are ready to make a difference on a larger scale and take it to the doorstep of the suffering.

Wishing you success and good health.

Suresh Reddy

Long-term Trustee,
Rotary Club of Banjara Hills Charitable Trust

FROM CEO'S DESK

Ram Mohan Rao Yarrapothu
CEO - Sparsh Hospice



Warm Greetings from Sparsh!

I bring this year's Annual Report to you with great pleasure. A challenging year filled with several losses and triumphs – both on a personal and global scale – and yet Sparsh has thrived. Beginning this financial year on a bittersweet note and lots of uncertainties, we had to learn and adapt quickly to the prevailing circumstances while also never losing sight of our mission. I am incredibly proud to say that due to the wonderful cooperation from both the Board and the Staff, we never once closed our doors to our patients so far, despite several lockdowns and restrictions.

I must take this opportunity to extend my gratitude towards SBI Cards & Payment Services Limited and Deloitte India – among several other major donors – who have steadfastly supported us during the most challenging year of our service. Their faith in our mission and vision has helped us hit several milestones and reach more numbers of people than we had envisioned this year. Our occupancy levels remained between 90 to 100% on average, with a constant waiting list during the winter months and unlock phases.

I also find it imperative to highlight the Sparsh team, who have gone above and beyond their usual levels of dedication to make this year an absolute success. The regular testimonials sent in by our patients and gestures of appreciation from families have given us a renewed sense of duty towards our community. It is due to the frontline team's hard work that we are able to give comfort care of the highest standard to our patients. We have continued to follow COVID-appropriate healthcare protocols across all areas of our service, prioritising both our patients, their families, and the wellbeing of the Sparsh staff. At this junction I also thank the countless volunteers and patrons who have continued to contribute to our cause despite challenging personal circumstances.

A final and heartfelt word of thanks goes towards the Board of Trustees and Governors, as they have crucially supported us not only with the existing facility but also worked tirelessly for the launch of our new 82-bedded hospice facility in Khajaguda, Hyderabad. We anticipate to move into this space by the 1st of July and begin a new journey from there.

As always, on behalf of our entire team I wish you good health and prosperity.

Ram Mohan Rao Yarrapothu
CEO, Sparsh Hospice

OUR VISION & MISSION

Sparsh Hospice, established in September 2011 is an initiative of Rotary Club of Banjara Hills (District RI 3150) under a separately constituted Trust named as Rotary Club of Banjara Hills Charitable Trust. Sparsh takes care of end of life (terminally ill) patients. Sparsh is a non-profit that provides pain and symptom management, psychological and spiritual counselling, as well as food for these patients; striving to make their end comfortable. At present, Sparsh is functional from a 14-bedded premise nestled in the tranquil by-lanes of Banjara Hills, Hyderabad.

The multidisciplinary team comprising of doctors, nurses, social workers, volunteers, and counsellors who offer the necessary medical, emotional, and moral support in preparing for the inevitable. Our services include inpatient, outpatient, and home care (including night home care and Sunday home care). We are serving about 150-160 patients at any given point under the Sparsh banner.

Our philosophy is simple: to give our service users a "serene and dignified departure".

Since pioneering this charitable and non-profit project, Sparsh has seen the growth of palliative care from the stage of very minimal patients in 2011 to a point where a waiting list is maintained for admissions. Breaking the stereotype that palliative care is only meant for cancer patients, Sparsh is now proudly catering to people with life-limiting conditions like dementia, paralysis, neurological conditions, and so on – even in the comfort of their homes.

Today, we are reaching 1000 direct beneficiaries (patients) and indirect beneficiaries (families) annually – with 70% of them coming from below-poverty-line status.

Our long term vision is to be able to continue to provide exceptional palliative care services, free of cost, to terminally ill patients hailing from all sections of the society.

GOVERNING BOARD

The Trust is supported by a Governing Board comprising of 6 members. The Board members come from different backgrounds and are eminent in their own fields. They lay down guidelines for the functioning of Sparsh. Their rich experience has helped smoothen the functioning of a complex facility like a hospice.



Shri M Mahender Reddy
DGP Telangana Police



Swati Kantamani
Director
Head of NATCO Trust



Shri Jayesh Ranjan
IAS



Padma Bhushan
Shri K Vara Prasad Reddy
Chairman
Shantha Biotech



Dr. P Vijay Anand Reddy
Director
Apollo Cancer Center



Shri Vinod Agrawal
IAS (Retd.)

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

All our Trustees are members of the Rotary Club of Banjara Hills (District RI3150) which came into existence on June 8th 2010 (The Charter Day). Some of them are specialist doctors and others are eminent businessmen. The Board comprises of 8 members and has sweeping powers as follows:



Savida Naidu
President
Correspondent GVN School



Durga Prasad
Secretary
Exe. Director - CorpOne DPO



Dr. Subrahmanyam Maddirala
Long-Term Trustee
MD, DNB, DA(UK), Head of Department
Anesthesia Rainbow Hospitals



Suresh Reddy
Long-Term Trustee
MD – Pride Honda



Ram Mohan Rao Yarrapothu
CEO & Long-Term Trustee
HR Consultant



Dr. Pranathi Reddy
Doctor - Clinical Director:
Maternal-Fetal Medicine
Rainbow Hospital for Women and Children



Vikas Ranka
Director
Avni Tech Ventures Pvt. Ltd.



Tanvi Pamnani
Partner – R&D Wafers

STATISTICS

Inpatient Statistics for the period of April '20 - March '21

A brief summary of our patient statistics across the three areas we operate in. Inpatients are patients admitted to the hospice, who are taken care of in the facility itself. For all areas, our multi disciplinary team offers video and audio consultations, counselling, regular follow-ups, and bereavement visits to the families throughout their journey.

MONTH	ADMISSIONS			DEATHS			DISCHARGES		
	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
APRIL	3	5	8	5	3	8	1	0	1
MAY	9	19	28	6	8	14	3	7	10
JUNE	5	11	16	4	8	12	2	3	5
JULY	16	13	29	7	11	18	4	3	7
AUGUST	7	11	18	3	9	12	5	2	7
SEPTEMBER	7	12	19	6	10	16	2	3	5
OCTOBER	5	12	17	6	7	13	1	2	3
NOVEMBER	7	7	12	2	10	12	1	2	3
DECEMBER	5	9	14	3	4	7	3	1	4
JANUARY – '21	8	10	18	7	5	12	1	4	5
FEBRUARY – '21	11	7	18	8	4	12	3	7	8
MARCH – '21	5	17	22	3	7	10	2	10	10
GRAND TOTAL			376			235			148

Home Care & Outpatient Statistics

Outpatients visit us intermittently for palliative and comfort care (eg: wound dressings, medication, counseling and so on). Patients who prefer to receive palliative and end of life care in the comfort of their homes come under home care. Our three home care teams consist of a social worker, nurse, and driver – who make home visits to this category of patients.

MONTH	HOME CARE VISITS				OUT PATIENTS
	NEW VISTS	REVISITS	TOTAL	BEREAVEMENT VISITS	NEW OP
APRIL	1	10	11	0	17
MAY	15	39	54	1	18
JUNE	24	115	139	4	8
JULY	31	138	169	3	12
AUGUST	27	127	154	5	12
SEPTEMBER	41	97	138	10	10
OCTOBER	39	86	125	5	4
NOVEMBER	50	211	261	1	9
DECEMBER	44	252	296	5	7
JANUARY – '21	46	224	270	9	11
FEBRUARY – '21	50	134	184	9	12
MARCH – '21	36	233	269	21	8
TOTAL	404	1,666	2,070	73	128

Cumulative number of patients served from inception to 31st March, 2021 : 3,519

Out of which, total patients served in FY '20 to '21 across all three areas: 701

INPATIENT CARE

We have a highly interdisciplinary team with multiple professionals like doctors, nurses, social workers and counsellors. Through our individual professional strengths, we attend to our patients' symptomatic care, pain management and emotional support needs at the hospice.

Below are a few snapshots of our inpatient care during this financial year.



EMOTIONAL & SPIRITUAL CARE

Besides our regular palliative care activities, we also ensure that the patients are given a “human touch” by improving their overall emotional and spiritual wellbeing. Despite COVID, with limited groups and social distancing norms during the Unlock phase, we organized various caregiver meetings, celebrated birthdays & important occasions for our patients in the facility and in home care, arranged alternate therapy sessions like Dance Therapy through one of our volunteers and conducted short trips in the city for leisure, and occasionally accompanied patients to places of religious significance like temples upon their request.



HOME CARE

With three cars covering a radius of 40 km (and beyond) in Hyderabad and Secunderabad each, our three home care teams provide care where the patient is most comfortable: **at home**.



Accompanied by a social worker and a driver, our home care nurses provide symptomatic care, wound management and dressings, pain management, and instrumental support.

With the generosity of our volunteers and donors, we are also able to provide essential supplies like medicine, food, air cots, diapers, and other material to our patients who are in dire need. As 70% of our patient base hails from below-poverty-line status, this is one of our major functions.



Our social workers assess the patient and family's overall situation bring to our attention the specific pain points (whether emotional, psychospiritual, social or financial) that we can address. Constant counselling and supportive care is an essential part of their duty.

OUTPATIENT SERVICES

In any healthcare service, outpatients are often the blindspot. At Sparsh we make sure that our outpatients receive the same quality of care that we give to our inpatients and their families. Medical consultations with the doctor and nurses, wound management, individual and family counselling, and medicine supply are among the many things we provide, free-of-cost to our outpatients.



A “TABOO” TOPIC

By Sarada Lingaraju

Sarada Lingaraju

Hospice Administrator @SparsH



In Indian culture, the concept of death, though introduced early on in life, through personal experiences (informal education), we are a death-denying society. Though philosophical phrases like, “what’s born has to die”, “We all are going to die eventually,” We do not carry anything with us when we die” and many more such are thrown casually in our way many a time, we all would like to quarantine death in order to live out our lives. Many of us refuse to talk about topics related to death, with the strong personally ingrained belief that it is a bad omen to talk about it. Many even consider the topic morbid or depressing.

We, as a society, accept death and deny death simultaneously. We are taught through our rich Sanathana Dharma that death is inevitable and that we all travel through the cycle of death and rebirth. But at the same time, through our western education and advancement of medicine, most of us would want to postpone it or few of us even consider it as a failure of the medical system.

These contradicting emotions, without a hint of situational reality, either make us give up on life very early on at even a hint of health complexities or fight tooth and nail till the end to postpone death.

Striking a balance between truth and reality seems to be the guiding factor to achieve optimum acceptance of death. Acceptance of death means discussing the issues relating to it more openly and seek help or guidance when the situation demands it. It also means to be more realistic about what can be done and what can’t be. It means to accept it and embrace the emotions associated with it with a better understanding.

Acceptance of hospice care or even palliative care by communities cannot be achieved without optimum acceptance of death. It is our collective responsibility to develop a culture of discussing death and related issues through formal education. Our tendency is to value the knowledge that is imparted through formal education rather than through the collective wisdom of our culture, religion, or society. This is all the more reason to include terminal illness/hospice care/dying/death /grief/bereavement / in our formal education. This will give us an insight into what to expect in the event of death, how to handle it and how to cope with death-related challenges.

We need to work on how to go about introducing these topics as a formal component of subjects like biology, nursing, psychology, philosophy, nursing, paramedical specialties, or even religious studies. We need to bring change at the policy level.

Professionals working in this field should be made to involve in this subject in schools, colleges, and even universities. Our goal would be to create a society or a generation that accepts death as a natural component of life and works towards owning hospice care when the time comes. Though death and fear go hand in hand, this type of formal education will create a sense of preparedness in handling death and dying in a practical way and help in healthy coping of this fear.

Understanding life with death included in it helps in having a better perspective of living it.

FESTIVALS

Bringing the “human touch” to palliative care is our main goal for the patients, which means that we strive to make their time with us as beautiful as possible. This means celebrating life through festivals and special occasions, and enjoying the sense of community that they get from the Sparsh family.



Raksha Bandhan celebration
with home care patient



Independence Day Celebrations with staff,
patients, and Rotary Club dignitaries at Sparsh Hospice



Vinayaka Chavithi Celebration



Dussehra Celebration



"Say No to Plastic"
campaign was advocated by
RCBH by distributing cloth bags, masks
and stickers to the staff with the
Honorable DG and ADG of Rotary District 3150



Dussehra Celebration



Christmas Day Celebration



New Year 2021 Celebration



Sankranti Celebration



Ugadi Celebration



Sri Rama Navami Celebration

NOTEWORTHY EVENTS@SPARSH

A panorama of special occasions at Sparsh Hospice this year.



Tree plantation by Board of Trustees and Sparsh Team at our new facility as a symbol of growth and success.

Teacher's Day



Teacher's Day Celebrations



10th Inception Day Celebrations





Farewell to
Shri S. P. Balasubrahmanyam
who was an ardent supporter of
Sparsh for many years



Republic Day Flag Hoisting



World Hospice and Palliative Care Day with performances and speeches by staff.



Women's Day Celebration with the
wonderful women of Sparsh and RCBH.



Recognition of Sparsh Social Workers
on Social Workers Day by
Chief Guest Mr. Adhurs Anand



The Rotary Club of Banjara Hills' event (District Governor Official Visit) on 16th December, 2020 saw the felicitations of three Sparsh members– CEO Mr. Ram Mohan Rao Yarrapothu, Medical Officer Dr. Anjaneyulu Konda and Hospice Administrator Mrs. Sarada Lingaraju. Sparsh team members also enacted an entertaining home-care skit and a moving performance on the theme and logo of "My Care, My Comfort" for the honourable DG, ADG, and attendees.

AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS



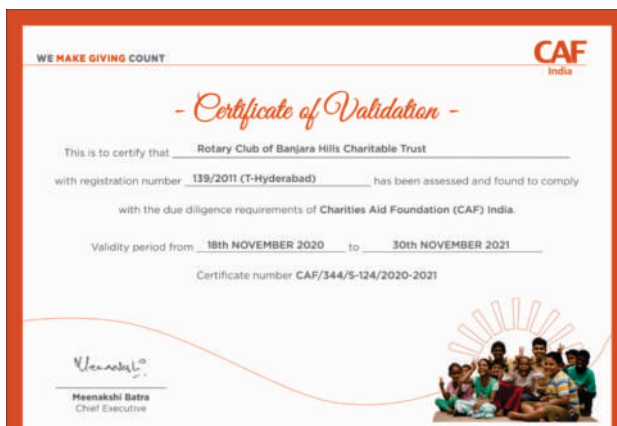
Sparsh Hospice received the Telangana NGO Leadership Award by Dr. R. L. Bhatia Foundation and World CSR Day's Awarding Committee.



Coverage in Sakshi Newspaper.



Telangana Green Cross Society felicitated the team with certificates of appreciation for their outstanding support and humanitarian work during the critical period of COVID-19 in 2020



Certified by Charities Aid Foundation, India for transparency, diligence, and accountability for yet another year.

MILESTONES

Despite the many challenges due to the pandemic this year, with the blessings of our patrons and supporters we were able to reach significant milestones.



Offering rural home care has always been on our agenda for a long time, and a step in this direction was taken. The Sparsh home care team journeyed 134 kilometers from Hyderabad to provide comfort care to Mr. Mybu, a young man with cancer who was battling the illness in his final days.



We launched our night home care team (working from 5pm to 12am) and Sunday home care teams to bridge the gap of care for our patients during times when access to healthcare resources is very limited.



Our home care team journeying to Siddipetthanda (90 kms from Hyderabad) to provide care to 19-year-old battling cancer.



Our entire care team was vaccinated on priority basis as frontline workers.

FUNDRAISING

Although we could not conduct our annual event “SparshNite” due to the pandemic this year, we executed need of the hour fundraising activity of Honey gift hampers.. We are grateful for each and every person who stepped up and supported us with these events by contributing to the cause.



Organic honey hamper fundraiser to improve immunity and health in these trying times.

GENDER INFLUENCES ON PALLIATIVE CARE

Rachana Konda

Program Manager @Sparsh



It is a well-known fact that the impact of gender in healthcare systems is widely prevalent. From lack of access to basic medication to devastating medical neglect in more serious conditions, gender is a key factor that determines the kind of quality of healthcare a person receives in their lifetime. Unconscious gender bias, a shocking lack of primary education for women and young girls, discriminatory behaviour towards transgender and other non-heteronormative people – not to mention financial inequalities and class divisions, have increasingly compounded this problem in healthcare.

This is even more so the case in palliative care, which has an uncomfortable “taboo” blanket over it at all times despite being considered as essential healthcare by the WHO. While the rates of cancer and other life-limiting illnesses are skyrocketing in India and many other countries, we must assess why males overwhelmingly receive end-of-life support as others get left behind. For women, especially, it is a mix of sociocultural factors and lack of access to money. Women are also taught to “serve the family” – sometimes even at the cost of their own health, instead of paying attention to their bodies and caring for them. Research shows that a vast majority of breast cancers could have been prevented from advancement with early intervention had they been detected sooner. Due to shame, a lack of societal openness and education, and limited finances, women are dying needlessly.

The situation is perhaps worse for the transgender and LGBTQIA+ communities, who face systemic discrimination, medical abuse even at the hand of the institutions that are meant to protect them, and likely a thin support system to care for them during their illness. Palliative care is, more than other fields of healthcare, a setting where trust and faith between the patient and the treating team is imperative for success – a condition that is often missing due to tensions between the two parties when the patient belongs to an ostracized group.

As palliative care gains more momentum in India, we must join hands to invest in research, advocacy, and training to understand and mitigate these gender-related problems. When we can give comfort care by recognizing these factors, we are one step closer to making their journey less painful and more dignified.

COMMUNITY AWARENESS

Reaching people at the grassroots levels is one of our main goals as an organization, and despite the pandemic we were able to adapt to the situation and conduct awareness programmes across the city and beyond.



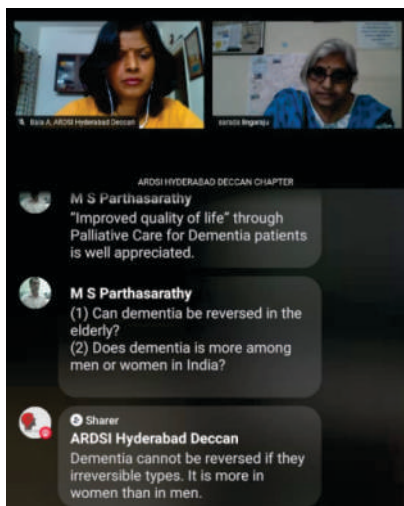
200-kms awareness drive spanning 6 nomadic tribe settlements across two districts in Telangana was executed over the course of two days in various "thandas" (tribe communities) in Rangareddy and Mahabubnagar districts.



Addressing the Association of Nomadic Tribes of Telangana about palliative care.



Dr. Subrahmanyam, our Trustee, headed a webinar on palliative care for various Rotary Clubs of Twin Cities



Hospice Administrator Ms. Sarada Lingaraju as a speaker in a webinar conducted by ARDSI Hyderabad in conjunction with the Pain Relief and Palliative Care Society on "Palliative Care and Comfort for Persons living with Dementia".



Sparsh Hospice team in a discussion with the research fellows of Center for Cellular and Molecular Biology, Hyderabad who are working to bring innovations in healthcare and the social sector.

VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

Be it groceries, daily essentials, medicine, or healthcare equipment, or extending their services, our donors are ever-ready to lend their support to us graciously. Our 100-member-strong volunteer network is truly our pillar of strength. We are grateful for their faith and trust in us, and their continued commitment to support our cause.



Classical dance performance (on “Navarasas”, or 9 emotions), by the award-winning Bharatanatyam artiste Smt. Pushkala Gopal, for the patients at Sparsh Hospice.



Providing alternate livelihood means to our patient’s family, with the kind help from our long-term volunteer Mrs. Jagrati Saxena – who sponsored a sewing machine for them.



Mr. Hanumadri Srikanth, long-term volunteer, was instrumental in assisting our team during the 200-km palliative care awareness drive by connecting us to the villagers in tribal settlements and ensuring everything was conducted smoothly.



Blanket donation drive sponsored by a volunteer.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & CONTINUING EDUCATION

Our team is regularly given support and opportunities to continue their professional development in palliative care. Enrolling in relevant online courses, specialized textbooks, conducting demos and roleplays, regular meetings and quality checks, and team building activities are a few examples of the spectrum of professional education our team undertakes on a constant basis to keep our quality-of-care high.



Rtn. Durga Prasad conducting a wellbeing session on Stress Management for Sparsh staff.



Social Worker Mr. Eshwaranna attending an online course in Palliative Counselling conducted by IPM, Calicut



Team Building Activity



Care team in monthly topic session.

TRAINING & ADVOCACY



Five final-year students from the Integrated M.Sc. in Health Psychology programme at Hyderabad Central University during their an internship at Sparsh.



Sparsh also acted as mentors for newly-qualified nursing aides from another healthcare organization who sought training with us.



Sparsh Medical Officer Dr Anjaneyulu Konda taking a training programme for the home care team.

COVID-19 SAFETY

Our team adapted quickly to the “new normal” when the pandemic arrived in India, with safety measures such as full PPE kits, masking, sanitization of premises, face shields, hand sanitizers, and COVID-appropriate medical waste management at the hospice. These measures were followed across all three areas of our services – inpatient care, home care, as well as outpatient care.



A DATE WITH MY MOM IN HEAVEN!!!

Ananthananda Swami
(Yeluripati Venkata Raja Subramanyam)



"Is there a vacant bed in your hospital, doctor?", I asked a gynaecologist at a nursing Home, close to our house in Saidabad. "For whom?" she asked.

"For my mother, doctor. She is a terminally ill cancer patient. Her blood pressure and sugar levels are fluctuating frequently. I am not able to take care of her properly at home." I replied.

"Oh! Terminally ill? No problem. There is a facility called Sparsh Hospice, which caters to the needs of patients just like your mother. Here is the address." She gave me a piece of paper. Now this took me by surprise. I am a journalist by profession and I wondered how I never heard about a hospice care facility in Hyderabad before this.

However, I thanked her and left for Sparsh in Road no: 12, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad.

Upon reaching, the duty nurse welcomed me pleasantly. I did not realize that she was a 'sister' until she informed me because she wasn't in a nurse uniform. She wore a salwar. I understood nurses in hospice care need not wear a uniform. She gave me a confused look. The case file mentioned the patient's age as 76 and here I was looking too young to fit the description. She read the file further, noticed that the patient was a woman and then asked "Oh, is this regarding your mother?".

"Yes, Sister. I think I have some more time left before I come here." I smiled.

She laughed at my joke.

"I'll submit this file to the doctor and will get back to you tomorrow" she informed.

Sparsh was prompt in calling me back the next day to ask when I could bring my mother over. I politely told them that I would come there first and discuss. I had my doubts.

The location of the facility made me feel it was going to be out of my price range. Banjara Hills is the wealthy crowd's abode in Hyderabad.

When I met the doctor the next day, he asked "When can you bring your mother here?". This question stunned me. Over the course of my mother's treatment, I was never asked this question first at any hospital. It was always about the cost for the treatment.

So, I asked him "Sir, could you tell me about the fees for admission? And how do I go about it?".

His response surprised me further. He said "No payment required. Everything, including the cost for medication, is taken care by us. You have nothing to worry about."

It took me a while for this to sink in and I thought "Is it even possible for such noble places to exist in a world of commercial hospitals?!"

I took my mother there the next day. She was attended to, by nurses, aayas and doctors.

After three days of comfort, my mother asked me if this was an old-age home and if I was planning to leave here there. She did not know that she came to a hospice. That was the point of hospice care.

"This is kind of hospital, amma." I said. She then asked "Then why isn't our doctor coming?".

"Your doctors in this hospital are from USA." I replied.

All these doctors are trained in palliative care and geriatric care. This type of care is prevalent in America. They specialize in the treatment of terminally ill patients, I informed her.

My mother took an instant liking to a lady doctor. "She is a doctor!??", my mother asked, surprised. "She is so friendly and speaks to me like a daughter does to her mother."

Doctors in Sparsh do not necessarily wear a white coat.

"Yes, mother. She is an amazing doctor. She studied in America." I said. My mother was surprised at her simplicity.

My mother was very happy with the nurses, doctors and even the aayas.

Almost a month had passed, when one day, the doctor said to me "Today your mother is in a very bad shape. She may not have much time left. Maybe you can come in the evening and take her home for one last time."

That night I took her home. By the next morning, she had passed away.

Time moved on and so did I. Then, one day I received a SMS from Sparsh, inviting me to join them on October 14 to celebrate the World Hospice and Palliative Care Day. I received this invitation around ten days prior to the event.

This brought back memories of the last few days my mother spent at Sparsh.

I wanted to do something in her memory. So, I decided to write 9 articles on palliative care and Sparsh, on my Facebook blog 'AnanthaSahithi'. I completed that task with this article.

I went to Sparsh on October 14. I stood in front of the bed my mother used to sleep in. That was where she would look at me and smile and talk to me. The nurses would say "Look at how she smiles like a kid when she talks to you!"

This was the place where my mother wore a maxi for the first time in her life. I remembered a lot about my mother that day. I know that Sparsh invited me but I was clueless about the agenda for the day. I went when called but felt that I did not have the right to question them about anything. I felt deeply indebted to Sparsh. I was forced to leave my otherwise fierce personality right at the entrance of Sparsh before I went in.

I sat among others who lost their loved ones at Sparsh. We were also joined by the families of those currently being treated here.

I made friends with a young girl, full of life. I met with a father from Siddipet, who came to re-live the memories of his son. I came across an old couple who were there to remember their son. I also met a doctor from Mehboob Nagar, who came in the memory of her mother. Then there was a husband who came to remember his wife.

The event had started.

Sparsh team members lit the lamps. Then all of us were requested to light a lamp each and pay respect to our loved ones. Each of us lit the lamp and spoke about the ones we lost. A father who lost his son spoke about the difficulties he faced and how he started a wonderful service in the memory of his son. He started a service where he provides an ice box, to keep the dead body of a loved one after he/she passed away, to those people in his residential area who could not afford to do so. He helps people carry the dead body into the van to be taken to the cemetery. He fought against the social stigma of keeping an ice box at home. He was told repeatedly not to do so but kept going in the memory of his son. But he did get a separate door fixed for entry and exit into the room where the ice box was kept in his house.

There is no greater service than humanity. Lord Sarveswara himself lives in a cemetery. Varanasi, a place where bodies are cremated, is known as 'MahaNandanavanam'. So no importance needs to be given to these social stigmas. In a world where even deaths are commercialized, his new initiative was appreciated by everyone. Even his wife was applauded for standing by him against the society and helping him with his cause.

The event then continued with a speech given by the CEO of Sparsh, Mr. Ram Mohan Rao. He spoke about the Telangana government allotting land to Sparsh, where a bigger hospice facility will be

constructed. He also talked about Dr. Maddirala Subrahmanyam's visit to USA for fund raising. He informed that many donors have promised to help with the construction of the new facility. This facility is being constructed with a 'go-green' ideology.

The young friend I made spoke next and said that she was having a better time at Sparsh than she was at her home. Next it was my turn to light the lamp and speak a few words about my mother. Instead, I ended up taking a lot of time for my speech.

I shared the memory of witnessing Sparsh Hospice pay for the last rights of another patient from Mehboob Nagar, while my mother was still admitted there. I said that I never saw a hospital like Sparsh. I said that I considered Sparsh to be a temple of sorts. I told them that Sparsh is like a spiritual abode for patients and their families where they get to understand the bigger picture of life.

I expressed my awe and jealousy of the service and care provided by Sparsh to the patients admitted, bringing them a great deal of medical care and peace of mind. Only a blessing from another lifetime can give someone the opportunity to be of such a great service to people. I also said that all the people working at Sparsh, the management and the donors are blessed souls. I told them angels weren't from heaven but are special people who provide end-of-life service without expecting even a penny in return.

I also told them that angels are not those who grant boons but are those who provide divinity. I spoke, without hesitation, that they were providing this divine service without any caste, creed or regional discrimination. I said that by being a part of this, I was able to taste the divinity of the service. I confessed that, after witnessing the kind of treatment my mother received at Sparsh, I felt that she guided me towards my life-calling. Every man or woman born, dies. Death with dignity is what hospice care is about. Hospice care is end-of-life care.

I thank all my friends who have been reading my articles for the past 9 days. Generally, after Navaratri, people do not continue to talk about it. But, unfortunately, enough can't be said about palliative care. Our society has stooped to a stage where no one even knows what palliative care is about.

Palliative care is no new concept it is being carried from the times of Mahabharat, when Bheesma received the care and love from angels while lying on the bed of arrows in the battlefield, for 58 days, before dying. This is what called palliative care in today's world. In Mahabharat Bheesma got care from angels to protect his body from bacteria, bad odour, insects in the same way palliative care is taking care of terminal ill person to give them dignified departure.

For me Sparsh Hospice is as 'Dakshin Kashi', Kashi of South, where people get moksha.

NOTE: A Facebook post by Ananthananda Swami, Yeluripati Vankata Raja Subramanyam, whose mother was our inpatient. The post is originally in Telugu and has been translated in English. This post originally reached more than 14 lakhs people.

PROFILE: Ananthananda Swami (Yeluripati Venkata Raja Subramanyam) is a prominent Hyderabad-based journalist. In the span of 25 years of journalism career he has worked with recognised Telugu news organisations such as Andhra Jyothi, Vartha, Andhra Bhoomi, CVR News, HMTV. The septuagenarian is now advocating for our palliative care services and aware people about the need of it.

TESTIMONIALS

At Sparsh we have always believed that no better way to measure the impact of our services than direct testimonials from the patients' families themselves.

Here are some of the reviews we received about the “Sparsh Signature Care” during this financial year.


Sparsh Hospice - Center for Palliative Care 8 Oct at 4:59 pm

The care team at [#SparshHospice](#) is honoured to have served Smt. Janaki gaaru in her final days. We thank [Karunya](#) for acknowledging our service and motivating us to reach more people in due time.

[#palliativecare](#) [#hospicecare](#)

Karunya 3 Sep at 7:58 pm

Namaskaaram
My mother Smt.Paluri Janaki, passed away on 29th of August 2020,at 4:15 AM, at the age of 64.She was battling cancer for sometime.She has... See More




Vijay Kona 4 d

My mother Smt.Subhadra, passed away on 13th of October 2020,at 4:30 AM, at the age of 58.She was battling cancer from November 2019.Amma struggled a lot with unbearable pain in her last days,Neither doctors nor Ayurvedic medicine couldn't ease her pain.

Sparsh Hospice NGO Center helped us with their pain management services, I would like to thank Sharada Madam, Kalpana Madam and Mayuri Madam for their help to ease my mother pain to some level, They do provide home service and tele services and even we can admit cancer patients at their Center and they do charge nothing . As my mother wanted to stay at native in her last days, we couldn't admit her in Sparsh Hospice.

Sparsh Hospice - Center for Palliative Care for the pain-management medication they provided.If someone you know is suffering from painful end-stage cancer,then please contact them.

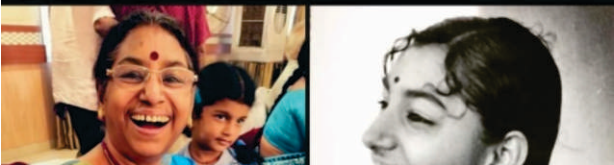


Special heartfelt thanks to the angels of [Sparsh Hospice - Center for Palliative Care](#) for the pain-management medication they provided.If someone you know is suffering from painful end-stage cancer,then please contact them.They are a godsend.

గమనిక:

మా అమ్మ నిర్వాణం పుణ్యవతిగా, భార్యపద శుక్ల ఏకాదశి నాడు,బ్రహ్మముహూర్త కాలంలో,పూర్వాషాఢ నక్షత్రంలో,జరిగింది.

ఇకనుంచీ ప్రతి ఏకాదశి నాకు అమ్మని గుర్తుచేసి రోజే. తనని తీసుకెళ్ళిపోయిన ఆ మాయదారి కాన్సర్ ను నివారించే ఏకాదశి ఉపవాసాన్ని నేను ఇంకా నిష్ఠగా ఎప్పటికీ ఆచరించేలా, వెళ్ళిపోతూ కూడా మంచి పాఠాన్ని నేర్చుకనే నేర్చిన ఆ మహాతల్లికి జన్మించినందుకు పులకరించిపోతూ మీ అందరి కారుణ్య



Hari Kunnath Local Guide · 14 reviews · 18 photos

★★★★★ 3 months ago

Angels, we heard exist in fantasy world. But we have seen them in person and they also have names – Narmada, Vahini & Eshwar to name some of them. They not only provide Selfless and unconditional support with zero cost but also bring hope and smile on the patients face when they visit. Even during Covid lockdown, they made sure they visit the patient without worrying about their own safety. May God bless them with happiness, prosperity and good health. 🙏🙏🙏



Ritu Samuel

1 review



★★★★★ a month ago

We cant thank everyone at Sparsh enough for the help we received. We came to know of Sparsh just in time for when we needed it the most for my dada. It was possible for my dada to pass in peace at home in between his loved ones only because of the angels who work their in disguise. There are no words to express how grateful we r to the entire team who made us feel like they were a part of our family and guided us with what needs to be done. They were always just a call away. We would like to especially thank Vahini and Rohit for being there for us when my dada was in need. Rohit told me all the time call me anytime even if it is in the middle of the night if we needed any help. May God bless you all and your families. Like I mentioned earlier you all are angels in disguise and once again Thank you so much from the bottom of our hearts for being there for us.



srinivas Gaurav

2 reviews

★★★★★ a month ago

My mother left her last breath here, the life of cancer patient becomes tuff and unimaginable when they are in there final stages/ palliative care is suggest. So we though think we support them with food n medication and take care of there every need but still there suffering sustains with in them and we can't manage it. Sparsh does a wonderful job here, don't you think we deserve a peaceful good bye/living during our final day's though we know we that we can't take what we earned with us. I regret that I came to know about it when my mother M. Umadevi a cancer patient N. E. T multiple metastatic was in her final days, but still the support I received was heart touching. I pray that sparsh will spread itself and help many families that can't support financially as there service is free. I would also like to thank all the staff and management for there efforts with zero expectations , super heroes exist only in fiction/imagination but in real life you are hero's.



pavani adada

1 review

★★★★★ 3 months ago

Heartfully we wish, God should bless sparsh team and strengthen them with good health to help many more who are in last stages of cancer.

My mother expired with cancer in the month of April in sparsh hospice. We approached sparsh for my mother's last days treatment in the month of March-20. The team came to home with just a call. They asked us shift my mother to hospice for better treatment. But we hesitated, on the next day lockdown started. They can't do home treatment, even though they support very well over phone through audio and video calls. Even we used to call mid nights around 2am, they have answered all our calls and provided very good support politely. During lockdown period as a special case they allowed to admit my mother in hospice. This is a great help to us. In the hospice they have provided very good treatment, good food, medicine and most importantly moral support to my mother, father and to us. They have done all these things without taking a penny. Thank you so much sparsh team. Special thanks to Saradha madam, Narmadha madam and to all the team.



Ashwini Praveen

6 reviews

★★★★★ a month ago

A big shout out to Sparsh Hospice care. We contacted them for my mom in law who was diagnosed with brain cancer (suddenly with no/ less symptoms). The support and conditioning they provided to our family made us celebrate my mils life, celebrate the joyfull person she was. Sharada ma'am whom we first met, gave us so much of strength and positivity while no doctor supported us with our decision for palliative care at our home. I still remember me and my husband came out of sparsh with a big relief that we have someone supporting us. Myroon (nurse), Vahini (counselor) attended to us frequently and whenever we needed too. They supported/ counseled and educated us with our decision of Quality of life over sufferings. They patiently responded to our naive questions, may times repeated questions. They spoke openly and conditioned us with what can be expected. The best decision we have taken during these tough times was home Palliative care and Sparsh in specific. Life lesson learnt from their care and support that things that you don't have control on, you should let it process as designed by the nature. May the mother nature give positive strength to everyone providing care at Sparsh.



Nirmala Michael

1 review

★★★★★ a month ago

We were very grateful to have been introduced to an incredible service like Sparsh Hospice. Their compassionate team of doctors, nurses and advisors that seamlessly aid to struggling patients and their families are a blessing in disguise. I've never come across such a tremendous organisation that put forth a brilliant service to those in their most weakest time. Not only with their excellent medical attention they provide for their patients but also their guidance to their families that really gains the strength and knowledge on how to care for your loved ones while they are going through a very painful time. Being acquainted with Sparsh Hospice was a prayer answered by god.

NEW BUILDING UPDATES

Despite the pandemic blow and several delays in construction due to restrictions, work on our state-of-the-art hospice facility in Khajaguda, Hyderabad has proceeded full-speed post-lockdown and we envision moving into the new offices any moment now. Constructed on the land leased to us by the Government of Telangana, this bigger facility will be fitted with 82 beds, including a paediatric ward and a provision for patients with life-limiting illnesses other than cancer.

Our New Building Committee, construction and back-end staff, donors, trustees, volunteers, and other stakeholders are working around-the-clock to ensure that the doors are opened soon.



Construction Progress – Quarter 2



Construction Progress – Quarter 3



Construction Progress – Quarter 4

We anticipate to move into the new facility by July 1st of 2021 and begin a new era of Sparsh – serving more numbers of people than ever before.

BUILDING CONTRIBUTION OPTIONS TO DONORS

Donor Recognition Wall

There will be a “Donor Recognition Wall” at the new building premises placed aesthetically at a prominent place to recognize all the major donors who contribute towards the new facility at Khajaguda.

Donation Tiers

5 lakhs and above	-	SPARSH MITRA (Friend of Sparsh)
10 lakhs and above	-	BRONZE DONOR
25 lakhs and above	-	SILVER DONOR
50 lakhs and above	-	GOLD DONOR
75 lakhs and above	-	PLATINUM DONOR
100 lakhs to 400 lacs	-	WARD/BLOCK DONOR
400 lakhs and above	-	Co-Branding of Building

Tax Benefits

For all contributions in India, the donor will be entitled to claim deduction under Section 80G of the Income Tax Act 1961. We are registered as "Sparsh Palliative Care Services" under 501 (c) (3) in the USA. The registration enables US citizens and entitles them to claim tax benefits in the US.

Note: As per the new Government of India regulations, we now have renewed 12A & 80G certifications, Form CSR-1, and an operational FCRA account at SBI New Delhi branch.

CONTRIBUTION OPTIONS

INDIA & USA

INDIA

Monetary donations can be made by cheque payable to "Rotary Club of Banjara Hills Charitable Trust" or payable online through our website (sparshhospice.org/donation-form.php) using the PayU Money gateway.

FOR NEFT TRANSFER:

Bank Name : YES BANK
Account Name : Rotary Club of Banjara Hills Charitable Trust
Branch : Banjara Hills
A/C Number : 025094600000400
IFSC Code : YESB0000250

USA

Sparsh Palliative Care Services

A NJ Non Profit Corporation 0400640460
501(c)(3) Approved
IFSC Code: 46-497295

Monetary donations can be made by cheque payable to "Sparsh Palliative Care Services" or payable online through (sparshhospice.org/donation-form.php) using the PayPal gateway.

OR CONTACT OUR TRUSTEE:

Lax Gopisetty
41596 Bostonian Pl
Aldie, VA 20105
lax_gopisetty@gmail.com
Cell: 1-571-888-6010



"Where cure ends, Care begins."

SparshHospice is taking the palliative care movement forward by using social media platforms to educate, empower, and engage people.

We are presently active on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn, where we regularly post our true stories with patients, family experiences, critical concepts in palliative care, and other tidbits from the daily ongoing at our hospice.

To read more about palliative and hospice care, visit our **website:** sparshhospice.org

FOLLOW OUR SOCIAL MEDIA PAGES:

[instagram.com/sparshhospice](https://www.instagram.com/sparshhospice)

[facebook.com/sparshhospice](https://www.facebook.com/sparshhospice)

[linkedin.com/company/sparsh-hospice](https://www.linkedin.com/company/sparsh-hospice)

Like our pages, follow our posts and stay updated with the Sparsh mission.

Talk to your friends, family and loved ones about palliative care.

ENGAGE WITH US.

Remember, your support is only a click away.



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Contact: 9963504253 / 6301009833

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