



## Every setback is a setup for a comeback!

- Joel Osteen

The first quarter of 2019 was rather slow for Let's Live as we were struggling to find a place for our dream project - The Half way Café. We had low funds and could not afford a place that would be suitable to run the project. We checked out a few properties one of which was ideal for the café. It was an old house near Shanghumugham beach in Trivandrum - but most part of that huge heritage building was left unoccupied which made us think about the safety of our young beneficiaries who might be coming to visit us alone. So we had to let go of that space. A few other spaces we checked out were in the middle of the city but were mostly residential type and even the ask for rent was unaffordable (20,000 INR per month). The setback in funds did affect the pace of our activities in the beginning of 2019.

### **Walk With The Scholar Programme, 12 January 2019, University College, Trivandrum**

As part of Walk with the Scholar programme, we had an interactive discussion with an enthusiastic group of about 20 students from University College who were toppers in their 12th standard. A rather diverse group of youngsters ranging from those who've never contemplated about suicide to those who have gone through such thoughts but found the strength to fight back and evolve much more stronger sat face to face and discussed openly about their thoughts on suicide. The session ended with everyone signing the No Suicide Contract with Let's Live.

### **Let's Live Foundation Day Event - If only- 13 February 2019 , The Reading Room, Trivandrum**

Let's Live celebrated its foundation day on 13 February 2019. A workshop was conducted named *If Only* which saw Suicide Survivors facing Suicide Attempt Survivors for the first time ever. Those who lost someone to suicide had a lot of questions like if only they knew beforehand, if only they could save the life, etc. Those who've attempted suicide had a lot of

answers for that. Bringing them face to face and providing them with an opportunity to question each other in a healthy way was a fulfilling experience in itself.

### **Monsoon Café- Schizophrenia Awareness Week - 25 May 2019, kanthari campus, Vellayani, Trivandrum**

Monsoon Café Day 1 held on 25 May 2019 was focused on spreading awareness about Schizophrenia. We shared our personal experiences about schizophrenia and the importance of cutting down the stigma associated with mental health issues.

Let's Live's Monsoon Café is run by Kanthari participants/ social change makers from different countries who introduces various exotic dishes from their native places and is aimed at bringing mental health awareness via food and services.

### **Monsoon Café- Building Better Relationships - 01 June 2019, kanthari campus, Vellayani, Trivandrum**

Our second Monsoon café this year focussed on building better relationships. The café saw 20+ energetic young girls from Nirbhaya. We spoke about various relationships - Family, friends, acquaintances and romantic relationships.

Role plays on conflict and conflict management on each of these settings were performed with so much of zeal . We discussed about the significance of communication in any relationships. Once they were equipped with knowledge, they interacted with the multi-cultural environment at Kanthari where they had fun singing, dancing and interacting with the crowd over coffee and snacks served by Team Jugnu who run the cafe.

### **Monsoon Café- Breaking the myths on Depression & Suicide - 09 June 2019, kanthari campus, Vellayani, Trivandrum**

Last session of Monsoon café held on 9 June 2019 was about breaking the myths around mental health with special focus on depression and suicide and how each of us can help our beloved ones by identifying warning signs and reaching out.

The cafe run by kanthari participants saw various sumptuous items like Empanada , Banana cake, etc. in the backdrops of keyboard , music and monsoon rain.

## **Media Focus - A cup of hope to dispel stigma**

The article written by Aathira Haridas on The New Indian Express on 30 May 2019 focussed on Let's Live project - Monsoon Café 2019 held at kanthari campus on 25 May 2019.

● **Aathira Haridas**

# A cup of hope to dispel stigma

**S**herin Noordheen has started this monsoon season with an intense resolve to create awareness on mental health and dispel the stigma associated with it. She has floated the second edition of 'Monsoon Cafe', a dedicated platform to deliberate, discuss and share issues associated with mental health. "You can come and drink a cup of hope," says Sherin. Launched last year, the Monsoon Cafe is a venue to talk openly about mental health. To make the conversations interesting, a cafe will also work on the sidelines. The focus is to cut down the stigma associated with mental health.

The Monsoon Cafe is being organised jointly by 'Let's Live', a non-profit launched by Sherin and Kanthari. The cafe was launched first during the last monsoon season.

The sessions last year delved on generating awareness about mental health and suicide prevention in the community. "The session focussed on the residents in Vellayani. We had focus groups and the sessions were tailored according to the needs of the community," she says.

This year's Monsoon Cafe started on May 25 wherein the focus was on imparting knowledge about schizophrenia. The next two sessions will be on building better interpersonal relationships and creating a general awareness of mental health which will be held on June 1 and June 9.



Participants of the session held on May 25

"The session on June 1 is for the inmates of Nirbhaya home. Since the slot has been filled, we may not be able to take anyone for the session. But they can drop in at the cafe. The session on June 9 is an open one wherein the discussions will be centred around mental health," says Sherin. The cafe is being run by the participants of Kanthari. "The participants who have a background similar to the theme of the sessions run the cafe. They also bring their thoughts to the table," she says.

The Monsoon Cafe is being run at the Kanthari campus. "Dishes are named based on the various mental health conditions. This is to generate

awareness about mental health issues through coffee and food," she says. Open discussions and sharing experiences will be held. "The plan is to hold this session annually here in Kanthari. Apart from being a platform for addressing the mental health issues in the community, the cafe also offers a venue for the new participants of Kanthari to ideate, participate and understand the working of a social enterprise at close quarters," says Sherin.

## NEW SESSIONS

This year's Monsoon Cafe started on May 25 wherein the focus was on imparting knowledge about schizophrenia. The next two sessions will be on building better interpersonal relationships and creating a general awareness of mental health which will be held on June 1 and June 9. The session on June 1 is fully booked while the one on June 9 is open.

**“Dishes are named based on the various mental health conditions to generate awareness about mental health issues through food – Sherin, founder**

## Opening Soon: The Orange Room @ Trivandrum

We are setting up The Orange Room for you. It's a space to spread the Mental Health Culture.

The Orange Room is a mini version of our dream project - The Halfway Café. The inauguration is scheduled for 1 July 2019. We welcome all of you to this small space filled with lot of energy and positivity. Let's Live!

Sherin Noordheen

Founder-Director

24 June 2019

Trivandrum, Kerala