



The best way to predict the future is to create it

- Peter Drucker

*Let's Live* was registered as a Public charitable Trust for General Public Utility in January 2018. One year down the lane we've tested the waters and have gained a better clarity on what we want to do going forward and how to do it. The last quarter of 2018 paved a significant way for it.

**Merchants of Madness- 01,02 September 2018, Antisocial, Hauskhaz- New Delhi**

Thanks to *Paul* and *Sabriye*, my mentors and the co-founders of *Kanthari*, I was fortunate to get in touch with *Val Resh*, the founder of the *The Red Door*, a creative platform to spread awareness of mental health issues. We could connect easily on our first meeting because of the similarity of the projects that we work for and the cause that we were so passionate about. Before I knew, I was invited to be part of the Merchants of Madness program - an event where madness was celebrated. The event that was held in New Delhi saw famous activists from across the country living with various mental health conditions sharing their experiences about the so called "madness" and how the madness creatively transformed their lives. The event was organised by *Bhor Foundation*, another NGO working in the field of mental health in collaboration with *The Red Door*. *Let's Live* offered its support to this creative and innovative concept, which they wanted to bring to Kerala at some point of time in the future.



**Breaking the Myths - 09 September 2018, The Reading Room, Kowdiar, Trivandrum**

World Mental Health Day is celebrated on 10 September every year to spread Mental Health awareness. As part of this initiative, *Let's Live* organised an awareness program called - *Breaking the Myths*- for the general public with a special focus on breaking the myths surrounding Depression and Suicide and how each one of us can offer help to those who suffer from Depression and Suicidal ideation.



### A Beautiful Mind - 09 October 2018, The Reading Room, Kowdiar, Trivandrum

World Suicide Prevention Day is celebrated on 10 October every year to spread awareness on how we can prevent suicide. As part of this initiative, *Let's Live* organised an awareness program called - *A Beautiful Mind*- for the general public with a special focus on how mental health is portrayed in movies followed by an open discussion on why people commit suicide. This session saw experience sharing and peer support of all those who participated.



### MH Warriors - 10 October 2018, The Muffin House, Pattom, Trivandrum

World Mental Health Day 2018 focuses on Young People and Mental Health in a Changing World. As part of this, *Let's Live* conducted a series of awareness programs for the youngsters in October. The first one was *MH Warriors* - an Intercollegiate Competition between Govt. Law College Trivandrum and Govt. Engineering College Barton Hill, Trivandrum which saw the selection of *Mental Health Warriors* from both colleges. These students who act as mental health volunteers for their respective colleges will be first point of contact for any student suffering from mental/emotional health issues to reach out for further help. The event which was held to establish peer support groups in colleges was sponsored by *The Muffin House* in Trivandrum.



**MH Champions - 24-25 October 2018, NUALS, Kalamassery, Kochi**

As part of Mental Health Awareness Month, an awareness program was organized by NSS unit of NUALS Kalamassery, Kochi which was conducted by Let's Live. The event saw intercollegiate competition between NUALS and CUSAT SLS. Mental health awareness was given to students of both colleges and 20+ volunteers were selected. The volunteers also signed the No Suicide Agreement with Let's Live.



**Social Enterprise Exhibition - 2 December 2018, YMCA Hall, Trivandrum**

Social Enterprise Exhibition organized by Dviti Foundation saw 20+ NGOs working in the city for various causes networking and connecting with each other. It was a venue for connecting various NGOs with the youth who wanted to volunteer with these NGOs.



## Media Focus - Please Listen & A Pillar of Support

The article written by Liza George - Please Listen - was published in the English daily *The Hindu* on 08 September 2018.

**PLEASE LISTEN**

**Sherin Noordheen, who battled through depression, lends an ear to those around her**

**Life skills are as important as Mathematics and Science and should be taught in schools**

**Emotional health**

According to Sherin, the rise in the number of suicides amongst youngsters is because the focus still remains on maintaining the confidentiality of the issue in anything related to mental and emotional illnesses. And although there is a labyrinth of issues that lead to youngsters entering a state of depression, one of the

**STATE PROVISIONS**

The film 'Civil Internship' is based on writer Susanna Kalyani's account of her 18-month stay at a mental hospital after being diagnosed with borderline personality disorder.

**A MAD EVENT**

Sherin hopes to bring Delhi-based Merchants' Madhouse, an event that celebrates madness, neurodiversity and mental health rights to the city next year. "The programme brings together voices that stress to stigmatisation and reclaim

**Emotionally healthy children**

cus remains primarily aspects like getting good jobs... and not to become man beings. "Also, while to a group of teenage boys Monsoon Café session, I did teenage boys lack understanding from parents, give us pressure and are unable to stressful life situations. For girls, sexual abuse is a reason for suicide."

Thirty-five-year-old she has left her job at Kanthari for a space to start Half. "I am meeting people someone they can share with at public places. I hopefully find a spot to start soon," says Sherin, who speaking on 'Suicide: Break the Silence' on September 9 at Rooms, Jawahar Nagar, in connection with World Suicide Prevention Day. "The theme this year is 'Working together to prevent suicide.' The programme starts at 3.30 pm. Contact 8078944613

**STATING THE FACTS**

According to Sherin, suicide is among the top three causes of death amongst youngsters under the age of 25, globally. In the city, where the population of 10 million people, over 300 suicide cases reported each year. "And those are just reported cases. Many more go unreported. I hide the fact that I loved one died by suicide due to the stigma associated with it," says Sherin, who lost her father to suicide at the age of 17 and had to live with the stigma.

**A friend in need**

Sherin says, "It is essential to recognise the warning signs and know how to help. (Below) Sherin Noordheen - a pillar of support."

**SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT**

**HelpAge India** fighting poverty

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The article written by Gautham S Kumar - A Pillar of Support - was published in the English daily *Deccan Chronicle* on 18 September 2018.

**Sherin Noordheen's Let's Live aims to address suicide prevention among youngsters**

# A pillar of support



Let's Live at Kanthari for Monsoon Cafe session

young adults. Suicide is a very impulsive thing. It can happen due to breakups, depression, etc. If someone is there to listen or help out, this can be easily prevented," she explains.

That led to the launch of her non-profit organisation Let's Live earlier this year. She underwent a 7-month course at Kanthari on how an NGO is run. "The plan is having early intervention to prevent suicide. Someone with suicidal thoughts should have the space to express his/her thoughts and there the listener shouldn't be judgmental," says Sherin.

She's currently getting ready to launch her project 'Halfway Cafe'. "It's a space for people undergoing emotional and mental trauma. They can come and express themselves freely, without getting judged. They can talk, draw, sit alone, etc. over a cup of coffee."

Let's Live conducted an open discussion at The Reading Room on September 9, which is observed as World Suicide Prevention Day. "Breaking the Myths" was all about the myths around suicide, how to identify the warning signs of suicide, how to begin a conversation with a person having suicidal thoughts and what all we can do to save lives. On October 10, World Mental Health Day, they will be focusing on 'Young People and Mental Health in a Changing World'. It will also be an open discussion for youngsters on the importance of understanding life skills and positive psychology, which are essential for a smooth sail while handling the stressful situations in this competitive world.

**S**uicide enters as an unexpected villain in the lives of many people. As per the latest reports, the general suicide rate in Kerala has come down. However, the suicide rate has increased among youngsters. The reasons may range from mental illness to financial problems, breakups, depression, substance abuse, etc. This is where Let's Live, a non-profit organisation started by Sherin Noordheen which aims at suicide prevention, becomes very relevant. The organisation intends to put off suicide among children and young adults in Kerala.

Sherin, when at 25 was facing depression due to a relationship breakup, had thought of suicide then. Her father had committed suicide when she was six and that really affected her life. "As per statistics, if the family has a

us committing suicide are more. Fortunately, my friend was there to listen and I overcame it," she says. She is an engineering graduate and was working in the corporate field for 10 years in India and Europe. Later, she came back to India and did PG in Journalism. She moved to Delhi with the aim of getting into mainstream journalism, but it was in vain. Then the thought of reaching out to people made her do MSW. "I was making good money but wasn't happy," she adds.

It was while she was in Delhi that she went into depression again and had to get it clinically diagnosed. The psychiatrist asked her to master 'Life Skills' and she says it was the first time she came across that term. "These are the skills we need to have a happy and healthy life. We need to master how to handle stress, understand what's peace and

and cope with examination stress. It was a turning point in my life. I started mastering these skills through reading, traveling, etc. It really healed me. For society, happiness is all about getting a good degree, job, marriage and children. There's more to it. Helping others from my experiences is what I started doing."

That is when the thought of starting an NGO came to her mind. But she was not aware of the workings of an NGO. "On completion of the MSW, I had my practicals at Thiruvananthapuram Mental Health Centre. That's where I came to know how an institution is run and what the challenges are. Suicide prevention came naturally to my mind as I had such a case in my family and personally had such thoughts so many times. I thought to focus on preventing



Sherin Noordheen

## Coming Soon...The Halfway Café @ Trivandrum

We are trying to finalize the space for setting up The Halfway Café - the first café in Trivandrum to offer mental and emotional support to young adults suffering from depression and other emotional/ mental health issues. As we complete one year, we extend our gratitude to all our supporters and well-wishers who have supported us in all possible ways - especially our friends who trusted in us and made initial donations. We could not have done it without each one of you. Thank you for the support.

*Let's Live* wishes all of you a very happy and peaceful new year.

**Sherin Noordheen**

09 January 2019

Founder-Director

Trivandrum, Kerala