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LATEST



Versatile Ajay turns 39



Once tipped as the 'action hero' of Indian cinema, versatile Bollywood actor Ajay Devgan, who turned

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Hospice Care in Mangalore - Caring and comfort at the end-of-life

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By Naveen D'Souza, USA

Mangalore, December 20: Most people hope to die at home, peacefully in their sleep. In the present times where more and more people are afflicted with a number of long-term as well as short-term debilitating conditions like stroke, heart disease, kidney failure, respiratory failure, dementia, cancer, or AIDS, the end-stage of the disease is often a painful process not only for the person suffering from the condition but also for the caregivers. When patients and families need to prepare emotionally and spiritually for the possibility of death, palliative care becomes a need of the hour for many.



Hospice/Palliative care is provided by a team of professionals and specially trained volunteers who address the medical, social, psychological and spiritual needs of the patient and the family. The emphasis is on alleviating pain and other symptoms that bring discomfort to the patient and increasing the person's quality of life. Fears about the future, anxiety about impending death, worries about family, loss of independence, hope and meaning are some of the psychological issues that surface in terminal patients who are in the last stages of their illness. Anger, shock and disbelief coupled with a feeling of hopelessness often bring about a spiritual crisis in some patients and it is therefore important to explore both psychological and spiritual concerns of patients and their loved ones and provide needed support.

Palliative care:

- Provides relief from suffering and debilitating pain
- Integrates the psychological and spiritual aspects of patient care;
- Offers a support system to help patients live as actively as possible until death;
- Offers a support system to help the family cope during the patients illness and in their own bereavement;
- Can be used in conjunction with other treatments like chemotherapy or radiation that are intended to prolong life.

Thus palliative care is applicable to a wide range of conditions in patients at varying stages of their illness. Care may range for example, from managing the physical symptoms in patients receiving active treatment for cancer like chemotherapy or radiation, to the comfort care of patients in their last days and hours. Patients with complex or severe physical, psychological, social and spiritual issues at any stage of the illness can be helped by palliative care.

Bringing hospice/palliative care to Mangalore

There are countless families struggling with the care of a loved-one diagnosed with a terminal condition in Mangalore and surrounding areas. Our hospitals are overcrowded with patients who suffer from acute conditions and the terminally ill are often denied care. Families are burdened with the care of their loved-ones in the final stages of an illness often under unsanitary and inhumane conditions. It is a shame that in our technologically advanced society, most of the deaths in the terminally ill occur due to infected pressure sores.

Ave Maria Center for Palliative Care

In response to the growing need for compassionate care in a serene, home-like environment, we are establishing a 15-bed residential palliative care facility in Vamanjoor, Mangalore as a unit of Center for Development, Studies and Education ®. The facility will be equipped with bath attached rooms, family rooms, chapel, kitchen and a laundry unit. There will be provision for family members to stay with the patient. Visits from loved ones (friends and family) will be allowed from 8AM until 8PM everyday. The facility will be open to people of all faiths.

The residential facility will be used to provide comfort care to needy patients and also to offer much needed respite to family caregivers on an emergency basis. We will also provide training to family caregivers to equip them with necessary skills to care for their loved ones at home. Caregivers will also be trained for in home placement wherever necessary. Medical, nursing and social work students will be trained in palliative care with the aim of replicating these services at the community level.

Our speaker will create history this year. You 18th 19th April '08

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Architect's view of building after completion

Hospice/palliative care on wheels

One of our future goals is to reach out to all the neighboring communities especially in the rural areas around Mangalore with mobile palliative care units on wheels to cater to the needs of those patients who choose to stay at home. This 'hospital on wheels' unit will be equipped with a state-of-the-art life support system and staffed by a physician, a nurse and palliative care assistants as needed. They will be available for basic nursing care, pain management and psychological support in the comforts of the patient's own home.

Role of CREST International Inc. in supporting this cause

Hospice/Palliative Care services are well-established in the developed world but in developing countries like India, the concept is still in its infancy. Human beings deserve respect and dignity until their last breath. It is imperative that everyone does their part in making life comfortable for those who are battling with life-threatening illnesses and in bringing solace to the loved-ones and caregivers. In order to address the needs of such patients and their families, CREST (Caring, Research, Education, Scholarship and Training) International, Inc was established in the summer of 2006.

The inspirational force behind the program is Dr. Lavina Noronha, who worked as a Professor at a Catholic University in San Antonio, Texas. While visiting family and friends in India, Dr. Noronha became acutely aware of the lack of resources available for terminally ill patients and their families. Upon her return to the States, she was compelled to find ways to promote end-of-life care and education in developing communities, starting with her home town of Mangalore in India. After prayerful consideration and extensive research, Dr. Noronha was able to garner active support from various professionals in the San Antonio community. This effort culminated in the formation of CREST International, Inc.

CREST's Mission

CREST International, Inc. is a non-profit organization created to help establish palliative and end-of-life care programs in developing communities worldwide. Services include end-of-life care for patients, training for family members, community education, professional research, scholarship and cross-cultural internship opportunities focused on end-of-life care. Ave Maria center for Palliative care in Mangalore is the first project that CREST International Inc. proudly supports and wants to make it a great success in serving the Mangalorean community. CREST will also promote similar projects for this cause in other developing communities in India in the future.

CREST has the following as its objectives:

- Establishing and operating residential end-of-life care centers in developing communities.
- Training personnel for in-home-care of the terminally ill with medical, psychosocial and spiritual needs.
- Sponsoring cross-cultural research on end-of-life issues to promote awareness and enhanced services for the terminally ill and their families.
- Enhancing education on chronic global health issues including Cancer, HIV/AIDS, and Dementia.

The Board of Directors

CREST has on its board a small group of dedicated professionals from diverse fields who are determined to make a difference in the developing world. As mentioned earlier, Dr. Lavina Noronha is the founder president of CREST International Inc. Since its inception during the summer of 2006, several key members have enthusiastically contributed in forging ahead with the mission of the organization. Currently, Harold D'Souza, (also known as Naveen) an Information Technology professional based in Washington DC serves as the president of the CREST board. Sujata Venkateswar, a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) based in San Antonio, Texas, serves as the treasurer. CREST International hit a great stride during the October 2007, when the long awaited tax exemption status was awarded to it by the Internal Revenue Services of the US Government. This achievement could not have been possible without the persistent efforts of Sujata. Also, Dr. Goutham Menon, an Associate Professor of Social Work at the University of Texas at San Antonio serves on the CREST board.



Dr. Lavina Noronha, Harold D'Souza, Sujata Venkateswar, Dr. Goutham Menon

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More details about the background of the board of directors can be found at <http://www.crestinternational.org/board.htm>

All board members serve on a voluntary basis with the sole purpose of serving the community. So, there are no administrative costs involved in running CREST as an organization. All the donor contributions go directly towards building and managing the facility in Mangalore.



CREST needs you to reach out to the community in Mangalore

CREST has an on-going commitment to financially support the establishment and operation of Ave Maria Centre for Palliative Care in Mangalore, India. The construction of a 15-bed residential unit which was begun in February, 2007 is nearing completion. The facility is scheduled to be open and ready for service by April, 2008. Only with the help of generous donors will their dream become a reality.



(PIC)State of construction as of Oct 2007

You can use one of the following options to donate to this worthy cause:

You can use our online donation option by clicking on <http://www.crestinternational.org/donate.htm> and use your credit card for payment.

Make checks payable to **CREST International, Inc** and Mail your contributions to:
1667 Hawks Tree Lane,
San Antonio, Texas- 78248. U.S.A.

CREST International, Inc is a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization and all donations are tax deductible (in the U.S.) All contributions will be acknowledged with a receipt for your records.

If you would like contact us regarding donations, please e-mail us at crestdonations@gmail.com

Alternatively, direct donations in Rupees can be made to **CDSE-Ave Maria** and mailed to:

Ave Maria Centre for Palliative Care
Mangala Nagara,
Kudupu, Vamanjoor P.O.
Mangalore- 575028. India.

If you would like more information about this centre, you can e-mail ampalliativecare@yahoo.com.

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