



USAP News

United Seniors Association of Pittsburgh

www.usaofpittsburgh.org

Volume 6 Issue 4

FALL ISSUE

October 2024

Since the Summer Issue of this Newsletter, we all have grown three months in age. This growth in USAP members is also reflected in the growth of USAP activities. The Chrysanthemum Project was a new activity for 2024 led by Dr. Rajnikant Popat. The small saplings with which we started have now grown tall and the mums are in full bloom. Although, the weather shows some cooling in Fall and the Summer blooms begin to fade, these mums have taken over and continue to supply the cheer in the decks and the gardens in Fall with their profuse blooms and vibrant colors.



To keep the seniors moving and the joints agile, Shakuntala Shinde, a professional dance teacher gave the group a few dance lessons in tune with Bollywood music. That was exercise with lots of fun.

Music is another hobby that many seniors had always wanted to learn but never got the opportunity or an incentive to get started. If there is the desire, its never too late to learn anything. Age is just a number and not a deterrent. USAP has arranged with Keerti Gulati, a college professor and renowned music instructor, to give us lessons in music for the beginners. This is a great opportunity for members to get involved if you ever wanted to learn music.

This is a good time also to remind the four-year members to upgrade your membership and become a Charter (Life) member. This is a must for all seniors to belong to an organization for seniors, the older you get, the more important it becomes to belong. It's like a physician must belong to a physician organization of his specialty, so does the lawyer, engineer, or any profession one may belong to. For seniors, it is membership in USAP and it's where you belong!

READERS WRITE

Homeopathy

Dr. Girija Rajagopal's presentation on Homeopathy was very informative. The minimum dose approach that homeopaths take made me think of a similar approach taken in my practice of ophthalmology. The chemical prostaglandins was used to lower the eye pressure in glaucoma but also caused iritis and redness of the eye. Taking a clue from homeopathy, scientists found that decreasing strength of prostaglandins would lower the eye pressure and treat glaucoma, but did not cause iritis. Now a commercially available drug called Latanoprost contains 0.005% strength of the chemical and is the main drug used to treat glaucoma. Thus, allopathy joined hands with homeopathy in treating glaucoma.

Homeopathy is a complementary medicine to other approaches in keeping the body healthy.

Juginder Luthra, MD

Mums Project



Mums Project was new at USAP in 2024 led by Dr Rajnikant Popat. We started with tiny baby saplings in Spring, and they grew into full bloom baskets of beautiful flowers in late Summer. We all had lots of fun learning about preparing the

soil, and fertilizer to use and how to pot them. The final result is nothing but elegant, fragrant beauty. Growing mums has been a wonderful experience. Hope Dr Popat will start a new project in 2025.

Bhavna Mehta

Humanitarian Services

It was encouraging to read the letter that Prof. Balwant Dixit wrote in the recent Readers Write column regarding the humanitarian needs of the ageing population. The government has certain programs in place to take care of their medical, housekeeping and transportation needs. However, elderly people often feel lonely when their family is far away and they are dependent on certain daily living chores. One organization in Pittsburgh has an “**Adopt a Student**” program for students from India who have come to USA for higher studies. It’s like a “**Home away from Home**”, where the host family provides social and moral support. They even provide transportation to social community events, shopping or other help as needed.

USAP could plan a similar “**Adopt a Parent**” kind of program on similar principle, where in one volunteering family could take care of one elderly couple or individual, for their social, emotional and any other forms of assistance needed. They can take care of the senior’s activities outside the home such as medical appointments, shopping, social events, home cooked nutritious meals, etc.

Shakuntala Shinde

Editorial Committee

Please keep writing. Your feedback is important to us.

USAP TOTAL MEMBERSHIP (AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2024)

TOTAL Members : 404

Charter Members : 217

4 Year Members : 186

Annual Members : 1

WELCOME TO NEW CHARTER (LIFE) MEMBERS

Pranay & Jyoti Amin
Veena Bhide
Vasanth Guntur
Hiroo Patel
Pandu & Rama Tadikamalla
Sampath & Santhi Ramanavarapu
Prabhanand & Ramani Yedla

WELCOMETO NEW/RENEWAL 4-YEARS MEMBERS

Subash & Anita Arora
Surendra & Prabha Bansal
Arun & Lata Dave
Jayesh & Jagruti Desai
Sunil Desai
Visalam Dharmarajan
Satish & Madhu Duggal
Arathi Gowda
Mohinder & Anita Gupta
Anil Manocha
Lalji & Chandrawati Mishra
Mehul Mody
Hasmukh & Saroj Patel
Sampath & Santhi Ramanavarapu
Milind & Madhura Ranade
Datar Singh
Shailesh & Kalpana Vora
Shiban & Nanna Warikoo

HAPPY BIRTHDAYS TO SPECIAL USAP MEMBERS

October: Navin Kadakia, Pankaj Desai, Madhu Duggal, Sudha Dixit, Shantha Balu, Hasnukh Patel, Dina & Pravin Vakharia, Smita Shah, Manisha Mittal, Sushil Jain, Urvashi Surti, Harilal Patel, Ashtosh & Wimi Ganjoo, Chandrakant Pujara, Harbhajan Rohela, Ashok Sahai, Dilip Shinde, Surinder Aneja, Sadhana Gupta, Anita Rustagi, Sheela Swarup, Veena Agarwal, Nilufer Daruwala, Mohan Nama

November: Leena Ladani, Bharati Shah, Kamlesh Aggarwal, Bharati Parikh, Jamnadas Thakkar, Visalam Dharmarajan, Vaishali Patil, Rekha Mehta, Bakula Patel, Venkatram Dharmarajan, Neelam Katyal, Ranjana Sahai, Nilima Badlani, Vipin Mehta, Jyoti Soneji, Mananda Bhende, Manoj Patel, Binu Advani, Amit Mukherjee, Damini Parikh, Jasmin Tamboli, Rajesh Mehta

December: Chetan Ladani, Rita Patel, Dilip Desai, Rashmi Shah, Ardeshir Tamboli, Vasu Malepati, Ravi Kant, Rajnikant Popat, Pratap Doshi, Vasant Germanwala, Som Sharma, Leena Thakar, Narsinhbhai Ghelani, PJ Prabhu, Hemal Purohit, Pritam Advani, Vikram Asher, Ravish Gandhi, Minnie Mahajan, Madhavi Patel





USAP Presents

VOCAL MUSIC WORKSHOP



**Allow your hidden talent to come out and
Let's learn & enjoy the singing.**

We are excited to announce a new activity for all of us. On October 13th, we are going to introduce a music class with **Prof. Keerti Gulati**, a renowned music instructor. As we know music has power to reduce stress and anxiety. It enhances mood and helps you relax. No previous experience is necessary. Please join us and enjoy.

Keerti ji, a tenured Professor and Head of Chemistry Department at CCAC, received music instructions from Pt. Jasrajji, and also trained under the guidance of Shri Ramgopal ji Dangi. She completed her Sangeet Visharad from Akhil Bharatiya Gandharva Mahavidyalaya, which is a Bachelor's in Indian Classical Vocal Music. She was also a part of Pt. Tripti Mukherjee's monthly vocal classes.

Keerti ji has taught classical music at Hindu Jain Temple, Monroeville for some years and had given lecture demonstration on the same, at Slippery Rock University. She has led the India Day Parade in Oakland, and has been an integral part of India Day celebrations in Pittsburgh for past several years. She has supported local charities with her Bollywood performances in the musical group Sahana for many years.

Currently, Keerti ji is running a music school, following the Gandharva Mahavidyalaya curriculum with examinations at Archana Joglekar's Academy, NJ. Keerti ji plans to continue offering her services to the Greater Pittsburgh Area.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2024 AT 10:00 am

Indian Community Center, 205 Mary St, Carnegie, PA

Admission: Free RSVP: By Friday, October 11, 2024

Masala Tea and delicious lunch will be served

RSVP is strongly recommended, for proper food arrangement.

Contact for more information:

Chetan Patel

412-908-1711

Bhavna Mehta

412-443-0959

Kiran Bakshi

412-841-2718

Vasanti Majmudar

412-855-5072

Subash Ahuja

412-216-8135

Shakuntala Shinde

412-215-0814

USAP Presents
Grand Annual Gala
Diwali Dinner
Live Musical Concert



Tickets:

\$65 – Regular
\$70 – V.I.P.
\$75 – V.V.I.P.
per person

VIP Seats –
First Two Rows

VVIP Seats –
Middle two tables
of first row

Saturday, October 26th, 2024 starting
at 5:00 pm at
Indian Community Center (ICC)

5:00 – 6:45 pm : Social hour & Mouth watering Appetizers

6:45 pm - Midnight : Musical Concert & delicious Dinner

Contact for tickets and more information

Chetan Patel	412-908-1711	Bhavna Mehta	412-443-0959
Subash Ahuja	412-216-8135	Chetan Ladani	412-519-9024
Kiran Bakshi	412-841-2718	Vasanti M	412-855-5072
Shakuntala S	412-215-0814	Ved Kaushik	724-816-9818
Sudhir Patel	412-580-5450	Khozem Mogri	724-494-6888

HEALTH CARE PROXY AND LIVING WILL

Indian Circle for Caring (ICC)

By Kiran Bakshi



Girish Mehta, CEO of ICC, from Boston, MA, gave us a very enlightening live presentation on the subject of Health Care Proxy at a program arranged by USAP on September 29, 2024. ICC provides Family Support Services, Planning support for critical life events and Lifestyle programs in 17 states on a nonprofit volunteer basis.

Girish Mehta shared extremely valuable information and individual documents for all participants on Health Care Proxy and Living Will, based on **Five Wishes** which is a legal document accepted across all over the US. It has been used by over 40 million people. Even those who already had an existing Living Will, found the Five Wishes Proxy and Living Will to be extremely easy, detailed and very comprehensive to update our Living Will.

Five Wishes covers areas of designating Proxy individuals, the kind of Medical Care, Comfort Care and the overall treatment you wish to have when a need arises, and you may not be in a position to make that decision. This is an extremely valuable and necessary document for every adult over 18 years of age. USAP participants found it very helpful and took home extra copies for their adult family members.

Those who could not participate and wish to download, free of charge, the Five Wishes document for themselves or family members, may do so by visiting their website: www.ouricc.org.

We encourage everyone to visit this website for more detailed and useful information.



WHAT IS HOMEOPATHY?

By Girija Rajagopal



Two centuries ago, German physician Samuel Hahnemann developed the principles of homeopathy—**Like Cures Like**, **Totality of Symptoms**, and **Minimum Dose**—into a system of medicine that works to relieve symptoms and restore overall health. Millions of people seeking a natural health option use homeopathy for acute and chronic conditions.

Homeopathic medicines are from natural sources. All medicines are prepared according to the rules laid down by pharmacopoeia.

Like Cures Like - is based on the notion that a substance given in a large dose produces symptoms of an illness, but cures when given in small doses. For example, cutting an onion often causes watery eyes, sneezing, and a runny nose. A Homeopathic remedy made from onion, known as *Allium Cepa*, helps relieve the symptoms and can also heal similar conditions, such as cold and hay fever symptoms.

Totality of the Symptoms (Individualization) - Two people with the same illness may not need the same remedy because everyone has different characteristics and may show different symptoms for the same disease. Therefore, the medicine will be unique for each person. A Homeopath treats the person holistically. A sick person is just not sick in one part or one organ, but the whole being (body, mind and spirit) is sick. A Homeopath treats a person as a whole and not the disease. Hence, the Individualization and holistic consideration, and a single remedy is prescribed to the patient.

Minimum Dose - Less is truly more with Homeopathic remedy dosing. A person needs just enough homeopathic remedy to stimulate a healing response. When they start feeling better, it is time to stop taking the remedy. If the symptoms return, they can repeat the remedy or see their homeopath for further consultation.

Benefits of Homeopathy –

- Safe. Homeopathic medicines act as catalyst enhancing body's own healing power. Hence, does not disturb the natural functions in the body.
- No side effects. Hence, doesn't disturb the body's equilibrium.
- Homeopathy is safe for all individuals - from neonate to geriatrics.
- Homeopathy can be safely used alongside conventional medicines and will not interfere with the action of medications prescribed by your doctor. Because homeopathic medicines are non-toxic and highly diluted, there is a low risk of side effects or interaction with other medications. They are hence considered safe even for pregnant women and babies.

Homeopathically we can treat a wide range of health conditions - addiction, recurrent infections (cold, cough, tonsillitis, cystitis, allergies, hay fever, etc.). respiratory problems, mind and Stress related (anxiety, insomnia, depression, fears, low energy), musculoskeletal problems – arthritics, piles, fistula, fissures and other related problems. skin conditions, stomach problems (ingestion, vomiting, diarrhea, gas, acidity, heart burn, constipation, ulcer, urinary problems, UTI, women's problems, men's problems.

Girija Rajagopal can be reached at girija.raj@gmail.com; Mobile: 412 499 2841

YOGA AND NEUROPLASTICITY

The Many Benefits of Yoga on General Good Health

By Kiran Patil, MD (Neurologist)

(Bhavna Mehta and Dr. Kiran Patil gave a presentation on Yoga and Brain Health on February 11, 2024. The following is a brief summary of the talk given by Dr. Patil.)



Yoga is an ancient Hindu practice that provides physical, mental and emotional benefits. What Yoga has known for thousands of years, the modern field of neuroscience has validated for us through research and functional MRI studies. They have shown that several structural changes occur in different parts of the brain for these benefits to take place. We now know that the brain has the capacity to create new neural pathways throughout our entire life, throughout adulthood and into old age, and that the brain has amazing power of plasticity that can have a positive impact on our health, healing, and well-being.

Chronic stress response in our daily lives, for example, brings about structural changes in the frontal cortex, amygdala, hippocampus and other areas of the brain that help the body to cope appropriately. Yoga practitioners and meditators have been shown to have larger insular gray matter volume that helps regulate body temperature, maintain homeostasis and play a role in regulating the parasympathetic nervous system that makes us feel calmer and more relaxed. Various neurotransmitters and hormones (dopamine, oxytocin, serotonin, endorphins) are released that bring about positive emotions and make us feel good and happy. Dr. Sara Lazar in one of her studies has shown that the mindfulness group exhibited lower proactive interference error rates when compared with the control group. This was associated with a significant volume increase in the left hippocampus involved in learning and memory.

This is a very brief summary, a basic introduction to the understanding of how yoga and meditation and conscious breathing affect the mental and physical states of our body. We have a powerful pharmacy in our own system. Once we understand that, we can through our thought (intentionality), self regulate and help ourselves in healing on a physical, mental and emotional level. Yoga can be used as an adjunctive treatment of mental health problems such as anxiety and depression.

For more insight into this interesting topic, Dr. Patil can be reached at 914-316-0643.

USAP MEDICAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Please save the following reference list of physician specialists who have offered to provide advice and guidance to USAP members. Please know that such help is advisory only and should not be construed as treatment. The physician shall not be held liable in any manner whatsoever for offering such guidance.

ALLERGIST

ADI TAMBOLI, MD.
412-997-7007

CARDIOLOGISTS:

BRAHMA SHARMA, MD
412-708-9128
CHETAN LADANI, MD
412-519-9024

COLORECTAL SURGEON:

VED KAUSHIK, MD
724-816-9818

ENT SURGEON:

VASU MALEPATI, MD
724-344-3301

INFECTIOUS DISEASES:

USHA KARUMUDI, MD

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NEUROLOGIST:

KIRAN PATIL, MD
914-316-0643

OB GYN:

RAJNIKANT POPAT, MD
724-366-0867

OPHTHALMOLOGIST:

JUGINDER LUTHRA, MD
304-794-6336
MANOJ PATEL, MD
412-716-4565

PSYCHIATRIST:

RAVI KOLLI, MD
412-498-5098

United Seniors Association of Pittsburgh

is a tax-exempt charitable organization. Your support goes a long way in supporting free lunches and expanding our services to the senior citizens.

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USAP News is published quarterly by United Seniors Association of Pittsburgh to keep its members and subscribers informed and connected. Your comments and suggestions are welcome to improve the dialogue.

Editors:

Subash Ahuja, Chetan Patel

USAP TOUR 2025 – SPAIN and PORTUGAL

April / May 2025

USAP is organizing another exciting tour to Spain and Portugal in 2025 for 13 nights/14 days during end of April / beginning of May 2025 in two groups. The tour will start from Barcelona - Spain and end at Lisbon - Portugal.

We will share the tour cost and date in coming days.



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- Verifying your prescriptions are covered
- Reviewing your group/employer coverage vs. getting your own plan
- Helping with PA Health Exchange (Pennie)
- Seeing if you qualify for premium credits (lower premiums)
- Explaining access to doctors (Network Options)

Scott partners with Nayan Shah to help USAP members

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Contact Us For Your Life Insurance Needs:

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Halley-Dodson Insurance Advisors
123 Shafer Road Moon Township, PA 15108
Phone: 412-390-7576
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E-mail: slindstrom@halley-dodson.com

HELPS FIND THE LOWEST COST INSURANCE

USAP ANNUAL GENERAL BODY MEETING NOTICE FOR 2024

Dear Members of USAP,

The seventh Annual General Body Meeting will take place on:

**Sunday, November 10, 2024, 10:00 am at
Indian Community Center, 205 Mary Street, Carnegie, PA 15106**

MEETING AGENDA:

1. President's report
2. Treasurer's Report
3. Committee Chairs Report
4. Other

If any member wants to put any item of concern on the agenda, he/she may request so by informing the Secretary latest by 30th of October 2024.

Please make all effort to attend.

The AGM will start with Masala Tea and complete with delicious lunch.

Respectfully,

Subash

Subash Ahuja, Secretary

ALONE, BUT NOT LONELY

By Subash Ahuja



Alone is not Lonely! One can be alone and happy being with oneself whereas one can be on a cruise ship and yet feel lonely and unhappy.

Loneliness is emotional isolation, a sadness in your soul. Lonely people have no one to talk to or share their thoughts and experiences with. Loneliness is the want of intimacy and can occur when feelings of love cannot be given or received. That experience of loneliness is always there no matter what the surroundings. The alone are more vulnerable to loneliness when deprived of emotional and physical connectedness with fellow human beings.

Loneliness is so serious a social problem that the British government found it necessary to appoint a Minister for Loneliness, and the U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy to declare loneliness as an epidemic in the U.S. More than nine million people in the UK do not see or talk with a fellow human being for days and weeks in a row. An estimated 60 million people in the US are affected by loneliness. Loneliness is the sad reality of modern life and is prevalent in all societies all over the world.

The loneliness that one may feel from the solitude of an illness, or a breakup in a relationship, or the loss of a loved one, are of a temporary nature and can be easily overcome with time. But chronic loneliness could be more difficult to get rid of. It could be a symptom of underlying depression or other psychological problem.

It is important that we recognize loneliness for it could have a damaging effect on one's health. It is contagious because it is emotionally draining for the family and friends intimately involved with the chronically lonely people. It can affect the society at large, both socially and financially, hence the recognition of it as a social problem worldwide.

Now that we have recognized loneliness as a serious social problem, what can be done about it. Since it is the human connectedness that is missing in these people,

- We can provide opportunities where people can socially interact with one another, give a loving hug to your fellow human being, accept them the way they are, and not be judgmental or critical. People feel lonely and excluded when they are left out of a situation. So, we should be inclusive when we meet or organize such activities.
- The programs at USAP can be regarded as effective with the great social interactive opportunities it provides to its members.
- Pet therapy, what has been called animal-assisted-treatment, has shown to lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels. Thus, dogs, cats and rabbits and guinea pigs can help.
- Surprisingly, religion has not been found to be as helpful. Social relationships with family and friends have been found to be more effective than the social aspects of religiosity.

In short, it is trust and intimacy that the lonely seek. It is Love that's the true antidote to loneliness!

AGING SUCCESSFULLY – THE FOUR PILLARS OF GOOD HEALTH

By Khozem Mogri



Golden Years are a period of enjoyment in good health, with sharp cognitive abilities to pursue one's interests, be part of a loving community, and have deep spiritual connection. Successful Aging therefore comprises of Physical, Intellectual, Social and Spiritual health aspects.

PHYSICAL HEALTH

Sound physical health means maintaining your current abilities, adapting as limitations arise, but always striving to do what is possible. Regular physical activity can slow down loss of muscle mass, help lose weight, manage pain, reduce the risk of falls, and help stave off heart disease.

Exercise as a group or individually can help to maintain and perform the routine activities of daily living besides offering the opportunity for social interaction.

INTELLECTUAL HEALTH

Our goal is to retain our current cognitive ability for as long as possible, shifting expectations with time; hence we need to challenge our brains. With age it is common that memory and cognitive function will show signs of slowing down. Most of the fleeting memory problems that we experience with age reflect normal changes in the structure and function of the brain. These changes can slow certain cognitive processes, making it a bit harder to learn new things quickly or screen out distractions that can interfere with memory and learning. Challenging our brains can be through puzzles and games like mind teasers and crossword puzzles, thought provoking conversation, reading, and much more. With reading in mind, joining a book club can come with the bonus of socializing, another key facet to retaining cognitive ability.

SOCIAL HEALTH

Humans are social beings; they thrive when offered social interaction. Throughout our life we spend time engaging with others in our community, our work, and our family. The damaging effects of isolation can be seen in the uptick of mental health crisis during and after the pandemic where socializing came to a halt. Active social life increases life span, strengthens the immune system, helps with stress management and improves cognitive health. Hence, it is important to continue socializing and engaging in a community.

However, seniors need to be careful in choosing friends by making sure that their social circle is made up of the right kinds of friends. Seniors should stay connected with friends who motivate them to adopt healthier habits. If people they interact with have bad habits such as smoking, heavy alcohol consumption, or even a bad attitude; that behavior can be contagious.

SPIRITUAL HEALTH

Spirituality can be defined as having a sense of purpose, striving to be a part of something bigger than us. There are many ways to achieve these including volunteering, teaching, and social activism, as well as faith-based practices. No matter the outlet, it is the pursuit and willingness to take time to focus on self-awareness that improves a sense of spirituality.

Besides focusing on the above 4 aspects for having a strong foundation of health, it is important that other aspects such as long-term care insurance, financial planning, and transportation are also addressed for Successful Aging.

A GARDEN DIVINE

By Shilpa Agarwal



We plant gardens to bring beauty into our lives or because we enjoy the process of coaxing seeds into plants and witnessing the fruits of our labors. But flowers, in our Hindu tradition – Vedic, Yogic, and Ayurvedic – are revered for more than their physical beauty; they are a form of Bhoomi Devi and contain within them a divinity that bestows healing and guidance.

It is known that every flower has its own vibratory essence, and indeed, each can be viewed as a kind of messenger from the celestial realms. Yogini Mother Mirra, spiritual consort of yogi Sri Aurobindo, gifted flowers to their disciples to help them become more conscious of their own spiritual journeys.

She said, “When I give flowers, it is an answer to the aspiration coming from the very depths of your being...It may fill a void, or else give you the impetus to progress, or it may help you to find the inner harmony to establish peace. I give you flowers so that you may develop the Divine qualities they symbolize.”

For example, Tulsi, which is often planted in front of homes or in central courtyards in India, has religious significance and is highly regarded in Ayurveda for its medicinal properties, but it also works at the vibratory level, easing mental stress and bringing about rejuvenation of one’s prana, or life force. About Tulsi, Mother Mirra says, “Modest and fragrant, it gives itself without seeking for anything in return,” thus symbolizing the concept of bhakti, the selfless devotion necessary for a seeker to reach the Ultimate.

The next time you spend time in a garden, don’t just look at the flowers or smell them for their fragrance. Sit down, get quiet in your body and mind, and open your heart. Invite the Divine in; for surely, she is already there with you.