Access Life Assistance Foundation is registered as a Section 8 company under the new companies act, 2013

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Since 3 Consecutive years

CONTENTS

- Founder’s Message: 4
- About Us: 5
- Management Team: 6
- Our Work: 8
- Annual Events: 14
- Our Journey So Far: 18
- Accesslife Impact: 20
- Case Studies & Testimonials: 21
- Highlights Of The Area: 24
- Way Forward: 26
- How Can You Help?: 28
When we started Access Life, five years ago, we had envisioned that every needy child who comes to Mumbai to undergo treatment for cancer would have access to a clean, safe, comfortable, caring and a cost-free accommodation - a home away from home, for both the child and his family. In such a nurturing environment, these little ones would have another opportunity to experience childhood, the way they ought to.

Keeping this in mind, we developed a model at one location, the successful framework of which could then be replicated elsewhere. Thus, we set up the first Access Life Center for Childhood Cancer Care at Chembur, in Mumbai, Maharashtra, in June 2014. The donation of a mini-van by a generous contributor has ensured a stress-free transport to and fro from hospitals for our children.

Along with meeting their physical needs, we have also addressed the psychological and social effects of cancer. Counselling, yoga, music, recreation, education and nutritional supplementation programs, have helped in giving the parents and children, the holistic support they need to tackle this challenging disease. As we grew over the years, we added four more centers for accommodating the children and their families and have received four vehicles that help us provide transportation for the children at our Centers. At present we have six centers - our Access Life Center -VI at Bandra, began its operations in November 2018 – taking our basic capacity to 57 accommodation units that serve the needs of over 170 individuals. Our 6 centers are operating at full capacity and we are looking forward to opening more. The driving force(s) behind all this are our volunteers; and our committed staff, who work selflessly.

We have also made a breakthrough by signing an MOU with TATA Hospital, where we offer nutritional counselling services to teens and young adults challenged with cancer. Our hygiene kit and personal hygiene awareness program are also being appreciated by Wadia, Sion and other hospitals.

But in this journey of trying to spread happiness, we have also faced a major challenge in the form of people unwilling to let out their properties for housing young, poor cancer patients. Creating more awareness on cancer should hopefully motivate more people to open their hearts and homes to these children.

and so our Mission continues...

Girish Nair
We Are....
A Home away from Home

Access Life Assistance Foundation (ALAF) is a not-for-profit organization setup in June 2014 and is registered as a section 8 company under the New Companies Act 2013.

Research indicates 70-90% of childhood cancers are curable, but the treatment can often be a long drawn one, lasting from anywhere between 5-12 months or sometimes even extending to 24 months. While Hospitals provide quality medical services, these treatments are often offered as out-patient visits where the patient has to visit the hospital on a regular basis.

Many families who come from remote places across India to Mumbai for their child’s cancer treatment have no place to stay during the course of the treatment. Some families end up living on footpaths or in unhygienic conditions due to lack of proper accommodation. When living in such an unhygienic environment without having proper nourishment, these kids start losing their battle against cancer very early on. Many poor families find themselves at crossroads for the want of a good, affordable and hygienic place to stay and have to often abandon treatment and return home.

Access Life was thus born to provide a loving and temporary home for the outstation children undergoing treatment for cancer and their parents or caretakers.

Philosophy

High quality and holistic healthcare facilities should be available for all, regardless of their economic status.

Vision

To create an environment where children have access to quality health care and holistic support and which allows families to face the weight of illness together.

Mission

To provide all the children from the age of 0-14 years coming to Mumbai for treatment of cancer, a clean, safe, comfortable, caring and cost-free accommodation, wherein their families are able to provide better comfort and support to and improved health them, while actively participating in their care.

Ankeet has over a decade of experience in Public Relations (PR) and Communications Management. He has worked for renowned PR Agencies, like Hanmer MS&L and Vaishnavi Communications servicing clients in the media and entertainment space as well as managed PR for celebrities. Currently he is a Social Media Consultant, a Limited Liability partnership firm.

Girish comes with over 15 years of rich experience in Finance Management and has worked in various industries like Aviation, Public Relations & Travel. He has been associated with several organizations, including Ethiopian Airlines, Malaysian Airlines, Neucum Consulting (PR Firm), SGS Enterprises & Nexus Travel Solutions. Currently he is a partner with SGS Enterprises & is also on the board of Directors of Nexus Travel Solutions Pvt. Ltd. He was awarded the Asia-Pacific Cancer Society’s Training Grant (APCASOT) for a training programme in Australia in 2016.

Preethi holds a Master’s Degree in Social Work and comes with eight years of professional experience with organizations like the Family Planning Association of India, The Institute of Applied Dermatology and the Freedom Foundation. Her commitment towards the causes she has been working for, education of masses on HIV/AIDS, reflects the remarkable role she has essayed in all her assignments.

Suresh is a Mumbai University topper in both, his Diploma in Public Health and his MD, Community Medicine Degree. He has trained in Primary Health Care, Rural Management and Human Resources Development at international organizations. Suresh has over three decades of teaching, public health and consultancy experience with USAID, UNICEF, Aga Khan Development Network, as well as medical colleges and national and International NGOs. Suresh is also the parent of a Hodgkins Lymphoma and Bone Marrow Transplant survivor.

Ms. Kala Sundarvedha joined Access Life as the General Manager in December 2018. Along with a Master of Science in Mathematics, she is qualified with a Masters in Disability Studies from Australia. She comes with over two decades of working experience in the social sector across different countries.

She believes that every individual has a right to equal opportunities that would enable him/her to maximize their potential. Individuals with disabilities or disadvantages have to be provided the support to ensure a level playing field.
2018-2019
AT A GLANCE

324 Children served
Total 6 Centers
972 Lives changed
From 15 States
5th Donated vehicle for transportation
930+ Activities conducted under Emotional & Phycho-Social support

Access Life engages in serving through its 6 childhood cancer care centers - 5 in Mumbai and 1 in Thane, Maharashtra, India. Our 6 centers are located as below:

Access Life (Main Center) - Jolly Land CHS, Bungalow No 6, Ghatla Village, Chembur East, Mumbai
- In 2014, Access Life’s first center was launched in Chembur, Mumbai, with a mission to minimize some of the challenges faced by these kids and their families. Our office is situated at this center and is equipped to support 4 kids and their families at any point of time.

Access Life (Center II) - 46, Hill Garden Rows CHS, Chitalsar, Manpada, Thane West
- In 2016, our second center began in Thane which is equipped to support 12 kids and their families.

Access Life (Center III) - Flat E 11, Sukhdayak Society, JB Nagar, Andheri East, Mumbai
- In 2016, our third center was set up at Andheri, Mumbai which houses 3 kids and their families and is dedicated specifically to accommodating children who have undergone bone marrow transplant.

Access Life (Center IV) - 1st Floor, Guru Nanak Niwas, Sion Trombay Road, Chembur East, Mumbai
- In 2017, we began our fourth center in Chembur, Mumbai, serving 12 kids and their families.

Access Life (Center V) - 2nd Floor, Plot No. 403/J, Su Swagatam 2, Sion Trombay Road, Chembur East, Mumbai
- In 2018, we started our fifth center in Chembur, Mumbai, which supports 12 kids and their families.

Access Life (Center VI) - Gharaonda building, National College lane, Bandra West, Mumbai
- In 2018, we started our sixth center in Bandra, Mumbai, which serves 14 kids and their families.

Keeping our vision in mind since we started Access Life in Year 2014, at present, 57 underprivileged cancer afflicted children reside along with their guardians, in the above 6 centers.
2. NUTRITION

A well balanced nutrition is very crucial for the optimum development of children. This requirement is further exaggerated in cases where children are being treated for cancer. Cancer itself can be debilitating. Furthermore, treatments like chemotherapy and radiation can cause loss of appetite, inability to eat food because of various side effects like nausea, vomiting, mouth ulcers, change of taste, and inability to retain nutrients from food. If the children are malnourished during the course of their treatments, they will be unable to respond well. Moreover, the impoverished state of the families of these brave hearts and their inability to afford nourishment during the treatment process made it necessary for Access Life to step in to provide nutrition and accommodation. We at Access Life ensure that the children staying at our centers get appropriate nutrition through the provision of food grains and nutritional supplements required by the children. Additionally, considering the multi-diversity of families staying at Access Life, each family is given a separate stove, groceries and other cooking facilities at their accommodation.

3. TRANSPORTATION

An average of 3-4 trips a week to the hospitals has to be taken by each family for tests and treatment. Due to the weak immune system of the children, public transport exposes them to further risk of infections. Easily accessible and stress-free transportation forms an essential part of a supportive care system that is provided by Access Life. At present, we have 5 donated vans and a 26 seater bus, to transport the children to the hospital.

4. EMOTIONAL & PSYCHO-SOCIAL SUPPORT

Access Life believes in adopting a holistic approach to help these kids and their families to fight the dreaded disease. Besides meeting the primary needs of accommodation, nutrition & transportation, Access Life also offers a whole range of support services to the families living at our centers. Therefore, along with providing the children educational sessions, so that they can join school once they return home, and offering parents certain skills to take back home, we offer a gamut of services from yoga, storytelling, art and craft, music and dance, to various recreational activities.

4.1 COUNSELLING

The act of venting out has proved itself to be very helpful and therapeutic. Counseling services have been an integral part of Access Life. The impact observed in the lives of children and parents is high. Budhrani Charitable Trust had deputed counselors who volunteered their services for the families at our centers. The counselors have done a profiling of the families and are providing need based interventions—both individual and group sessions. Counseling can help one to cope with Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and with many issues faced during and after the cancer diagnosis and treatment. Different counseling therapies and interventions help heal and put across a clear vision of the purpose of living with motivation and encouragement.
When the children are in Mumbai during the course of their treatment, they tend to miss out on regular school. Hence efforts are made to keep them mentally engaged through non-formal educational sessions in order to create a bridge for them when they go back to their hometown and rejoin school. Informal education activities continuously stimulate the curious minds of our kids.

4.3.1. ACCESS LIFE ARTS & GAANA (ALAG)

ALAG is our call to connect to cancer in a supportive way. The idea behind ALAG is to draw people into a conversation about cancer in a non-intimidating way. The language of music and arts has the power to transform a painful, arduous and depressing journey of cancer into a hopeful and inspiring one.

ALAG also serves as a platform to raise awareness about childhood cancer. It addresses bigger issues like misconceptions about the disease and collectively focuses on cancer coping mechanism.

4.3.2. SKILL TRAINING ACTIVITY FOR PARENTS

Giving up on earning a livelihood for the sake of one’s children is tough, hence efforts are made to be able to equip these parents with certain skills to keep them engaged in meaningful activities during their stay at our Centers. The Brave heart Collection - a line of hand crafted products created by the parents of the children, was launched in 2015. Till date, Access Life has sold products like Rakhis, Diyas and Torans, the sales proceeds though modest, gives a sense of fulfillment to the parents. Product making at our centers - gives roots and wings to parents.

4.3.3. ART AND CRAFT ACTIVITY

Art empowers in finding the inner talents in one’s own self.

Art based therapy is an expressive form of therapy that uses the creative medium of Music, Dance Movement, Painting and Craft to improve a person’s physical, mental and emotional well-being. We have experts in these fields offering their voluntary services at our centers, for the children and their families.

4.3.4. RECREATION

With the help of generous donors, we have equipped the centers with television sets, music systems, books, toys and games to keep the children and their families engaged. Also different recreational activities like musical shows, film screenings, storytelling sessions and magic shows are organized for them on a regular basis.

We also encourage people to come and celebrate their birthdays or special days at our centers with the children and their families.
4.3.5. HYGIENE KIT

The Access Life Clean and Care Kit is one of our initiatives towards promoting hygienic living amongst families with children fighting cancer. This is in collaboration with Wadia Children’s and other Hospitals, where each child is provided with a bag containing a hygiene kit.

Access Life offers nutritional counseling and support for teens and young adults undergoing cancer at Tata Hospital. In collaboration with Tata hospital, we provide assistance by supplying resources for a balanced diet. Our nutritionists are trained at the best institutes, they are carefully chosen for their knowledge, empathy, and ability to work with TYA and survive in tough conditions. They are then trained in Oncology by some of the best oncologists in the country at TATA memorial hospital.

We are delighted and proud to mention that within a short span of initiating our nutritional assessment, awareness and support project at Tata Memorial hospital, we have reached out to support 285 newly diagnosed Teens & Young adult (TYA) patients.

Several follow-up assessments and group counseling sessions / diet demonstrations have been conducted so far for the TYA patients.

These efforts will go a long way in helping these brave hearts, tide over the challenges during treatment and thereby facilitate their recovery.
DISHOOM TO CANCER

Dishoom to Cancer is synonymous with Access Life. It started as a campaign in 2016 to create awareness about childhood cancer. People are encouraged to post a video of themselves on social media along with children suffering from cancer saying ‘Dishoom to Cancer’.

On a bright Saturday, the 8th of September, 2018 at 7:30 PM, began the evening for a fight to cancer-dancing entertaining event titled “Dancer fights Cancer”. This event was an initiative taken by Access Life and the Huddles. The beautifully done event was held to spread awareness and it took place at the YB Chavan Auditorium Mumbai. September, being International Childhood Cancer Awareness month various super talented choreographers from the city came together under one roof to perform, entertain and dance like it has never been seen before.

RIDE FOR AWARENESS

This is an initiative taken by a group of enthusiastic Harley - Davidson Bikers, where in the riders rode from our Bandra center at 7:30 am on the 10th of February and reached Chembur at 10:30am. The bikers spent great time with the children and cheered them up in an enormous way. The people attending and onlookers witnessed the roaring engines of this grandly displayed bike & enjoyed the whole event tremendously, concurrently spreading awareness.
One big leap this year was participating in the TATA Mumbai Marathon. We are grateful to all our supporters, participants especially the employees of L&T who encouraged us to take this step. L&T, an organization known for building bridges and ports is also currently building the countries social infrastructure. We at Access Life are fortunate to have entered into a CSR tie up with them in 2018. This tie up saw the opening up of a fully sponsored center at Bandra that houses 14 families. This is one of our biggest centers and is now fully operational. The employees of this organization are equally passionate towards social causes and volunteering and it is with their effort in the Tata Mumbai Marathon that Access Life procured its first 26 seater bus in 2018.

Newly crowned Miss Diva Universe 2018, Nehal Chudasama celebrated her grand win and part of homecoming with our children at Access Life. She spent the evening enjoying ramp walk by our cute children, she cut her winning cake & took loads of pictures with them. She has been associated with #AccessLifeIndia as a volunteer for a long period. She was also present at the recent Access Life event as a special guest where the heritage building Chattrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus was lit up in gold to celebrate September-International Childhood Cancer awareness month.

TATA MUMBAI MARATHON

We had the cheerful, bubbly and the gorgeous Jacqueline Fernandez who came to Access Life to celebrate Christmas Eve with us. We all were awed by her gesture and energy. Jacqueline Fernandez not only met and took selfies with everyone but also danced with kids.
OUR JOURNEY SO FAR...

- **June 2014**: Access Life Center 1 Set-up At Chembur
- **September 2015**: Acquired First Vehicle For Transport
- **June 2016**: Access Life Center 2 Set-up At Thane
- **August 2016**: Access Life Center 3 Set-up At Andheri
- **August 2016**: Acquired Second Vehicle For Transport
- **August 2016**: Access Life Center 4 Set-up At Chembur
- **August 2017**: Acquired Third Vehicle For Transport
- **February 2018**: Access Life Center 5 Set-up At Chembur
- **March 2018**: Acquired Fourth Vehicle For Transport
- **May 2018**: Start up of clean & care hygienic kit program
- **November 2018**: Access Life Center 6 Set-up At Bandra
- **December 2018**: Acquired Fifth Vehicle For Transport
State Wise Distribution Of 324 CHILDREN In a Span of 5 Yrs

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Case Study

Sumit Mandal (Born on 25 August, 2005), is the first child to come to Access Life center in 2014. He was a 11 year old then, when he started to have regular bouts of fever and a drop in his weight. After local consultations, the family went to the hospital in Kolkata. After spending some time there, they found that there was no improvement in the condition of the child and decided that they should go to Mumbai for further treatment. Once in Mumbai, they approached their relatives and with their help, went to Tata Memorial Hospital. They stayed with their relatives for a month and then got referred to Access Life which had just opened up their first Center in Chembur. They were very relieved when they moved here and for the initial two months they managed by using public transport, by which time Access Life had arranged their own transport for the patients. They have come for almost 11-12 follow ups since their 1st discharge and have always stayed with Access Life. He is a healthy kid now and is doing well in school too. He has a three year old sister. The family is happy and have a deep connect with Access Life and make it a point to come here every time they visit Mumbai. His father does floor tiling in different projects and is employed now suitably. Sumit is one of the earliest success stories of Access Life and it gives us great happiness to see him on every visit.

Rajveer Ghogare (Born on 9 July 2012), is the only child of his parents. He was a happy, healthy and energetic boy who suddenly developed frequent stomach aches in early 2018. The parents noticed that he had a swelling in his abdomen and went to local doctors for consultation. After few consultations, they approached the Government Hospital at Pune for further tests. There, they did a biopsy and was suspected to have a malignant tumour. He was advised to go to Tata Memorial Hospital. The parents immediately came to Mumbai with the child and fortunately got referred to Access Life. They neither had the money or a place to stay since the father had given up his job of a Factory helper. The child had to go through an extended process of 8 chemos, one surgery and 28 radiation sessions. Though it was a very painful journey of 7 months, it was a happy moment when he recovered and went back home in December 2018. He has had three follow up visits since then and each time, has come back to stay in Access Life. Rajveer is now an energetic and happy 7 year old who loves playing with his friends. The family has moved to Aurangabad where the father has a new job in a nearby factory and Rajveer is going to the school close by. His next follow up visit is in May 2020.
**Testimonials**

**Gayatri Nair:**

When I first read about Access Life online, I wasn’t sure how genuine it will be. Yet one day I decided to visit their Thane Center along with my family. Since then it has been 4 years of association with Access Life and their inspiring team, each of our visit has been a humbling and learning experience for me and my family. This whole initiative plays such a critical role for the needy families as they come to Mumbai for their kids’ cancer treatment leaving behind everything, their home, jobs, income, family. With the support of Access Life, the parents are mentally and emotionally able to support their kids in the journey without worrying about a clean accommodation, nutritional food and transportation to the hospitals. The amazingly positive intent of the whole team and all those who support this cause, helps them sail through these rough days somewhat peacefully. Everything is so organized and well taken care by Access Life. Highly recommend all to visit Access Life centers, understand their efforts. Let this goodness keep growing. God bless.

**Samiksha Patil** (Born on 12 Dec 2012), is a 6 year old girl child from Jalgaon who was admitted at Access Life in March 2019. She had been diagnosed with Medulla Blastoma (brain tumor). She is undergoing treatment at Tata Memorial Hospital. When little girl Samiksha came to Mumbai she was unable to walk and did not have strength in her hands. Initially her parents had observed her left eye drooping and they were told by the doctor in Pune that it was because the muscles of her eyelids had weakened. Unexpectedly, she had a paralytic attack and could not move her left hand and leg. She was rushed for treatment in Jalgaon, Jalna and Pune before finally coming to Mumbai. Her parents hope and wish to see their child healthy and back home. She was all cheerful and playful when she arrived at Mumbai until her 1st chemotherapy cycle started that hit her bad consequently, resulting in her motor activity being effected due to which she couldn’t walk or stand without support. In the past five months, there is a tremendous change in her health condition, thanks to her regular physio sessions, constant effort from her parents, counseling and of course her positive approach. Today she stands on her toes and making others behind her too because she has begun to being normal. In fact, she loves to dance and enjoys the dance sessions at our centre the most. She is tolerating her chemo well now & has quite a few cycles more to complete. Little Samiksha is very friendly and she loves most things that children of her age love like singing, colouring & playing with dolls.
IN THE NEWS

Good Samaritans offer shelter to families of cancer-stricken kids

Way forward

CSR FUNDING

During the course of last year, we have managed to make a headway with corporate donors who have evinced interest to support. Our efforts will be to continue and upscale in this direction thereby enabling Access Life to reach out to and support many more children, over the years.

SCALING UP THE QUALITY OF SERVICES -

The collaboration with hospitals for distribution of ‘AL Clean and Care kits’ has met with a lot of positive response. Both the parents and the child battling cancer have found this kit to be extremely beneficial. Plans are to widen the scope of this initiative bringing in more children and families from other hospitals, into the distribution gambit.

TEEN AND YOUNG ADULTS WITH CANCER

Our collaborative initiative with Tata Memorial Hospital in providing the much needed nutritional intervention for ‘Teens and Young Adults’ with cancer has positively impacted large number of patients. We would upscale activities to cover more TYAs in Tata and other hospitals in the ensuing years.

NETWORKING

We have been engaging with NGOs involved in similar causes, especially in the area of promoting awareness on cancer. Going forward, we will try and use these interactions to learn, contribute and adopt best practices at both and, for the betterment of cancer care and support.
HOW CAN YOU HELP?

ADVOCACY AND AWARENESS
- Spread the word about our work against childhood cancer
- Drop in with your family or friends to spend some quality time with the children
- Celebrate any special day or occasion with the children at any of our centers.
- Organize or invite us to a fund-raising event
- Join us to say ‘Dishoom to Cancer’
- Go GOLD- Light up your corporate office building to Glow Gold on Children’s Day or any day in September which is commemorated as International Childhood Cancer Awareness month.

JOIN US
Volunteer with us & share your skills, talents or expertise. You can engage the children in drawing, painting, craft, music, dance, yoga, or you can empower the parents with income generating skills like stitching, printing, envelopes or paper bag making.

DONATE
You can donate towards accommodation, CNG/fuel for transport, grocery. You can also contribute in kind or provide any materials required at the center.
Be an Access Life Meal Mate- Commemorate a special occasion like birthday, anniversary or any special milestone by sponsoring a meal.

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