

A SHOT OF HOPE

Fighting for own life, he is saving hundreds

IN THESE GLOOMY TIMES, STORIES THAT GIVE US A SHOT OF HOPE

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New Delhi:

Vikrant Vig was diagnosed with stage 4 Hodgkin's lymphoma, or cancer of the lymphatic system, earlier this year. When he began his treatment at Safdarjung Hospital, over the numerous visits for chemotherapy, the 41-year-old carried lunch packets for fellow cancer patients and their kin who attended on them.

On one such visit, Vig idly looked around and was struck by the number of patients and their attendants. He wondered how they managed their meals amid the crush at the hospital. The lunch packets he carried, he knew, wouldn't feed so many of them.

Vig shared his thoughts with his family. His younger brother, Abhishek, recalled for **TOI**, "Our father suggested we should start an NGO to help the miserable attendants. However, because of Covid and the restrictions due to it, we put off the idea till the situation normalised." And yet, as Abhishek himself conceded, "Who knew what God had intended for us. On April 12, our father passed away of a cardiac arrest. As the NGO was the last wish he expressed to us, his kids, we decided to start work without further delay."

Apurva Charitable Organisation — the Helping Hand, thus, came into being, the NGO named after Vig's daughter, Apurva, for whom the cancer-stricken single father wanted to do something knowing fully well how uncertain his life was.

Abhishek's wife, Nitu Vig, said, "We kicked off the feeding programme with donations collected within the family. When we posted information about the activities on social media, we started getting donations from others and we felt encouraged to do more."

Under the guidance of Vikrant, the group now has six people, all of them professionals, some with multinationals and others in retail and ecommerce, to handle the feeding scheme. Nitu takes care of the planning for meals and ensuring hygienic preparation of food, while the younger brother himself is in charge of social media alongside managing the finances. Sachin Kumar, Rajkamal Kumawat and Rishabh Channa oversee the distribution operations and procure equipment like PPE suits, hand sanitisers and face masks for both the volunteers and the hospital patients and their attendants.

“We are now able to feed over 300 people twice a week. On Wednesdays, we provide dinner and on Sundays, lunch,” informed Abhishek, fully living up to the group’s motto of “ Deh Siva bar mohe eh, hey subh karman te kabhu na taro”, or ‘God, grant that I may never deviate from doing good’.

Anindya Chattopadhyay



The NGO started by Vikrant Vig (in blue T-shirt) and his family feeds 300 twice a week