PRESS RELEASE FOR

MARCH 4TH, 2018

International Childhood Cancer Day Celebrations

Surat, Gujarat

In Memory of Priyanka -

Parents launch Change for Childhood Cancer in Surat

Together with Cankids Kidscan - National Society for Childhood Cancer

March 4th, 2018

Priyanka Jariwala would have turned 23 today. Sadly she didn’t survive her battle against blood cancer and passed away last May 2017. Diagnosed with ALL – Acute Lymphocytic Leukemia, in May 2016, she relapsed before the maintenance phase of her treatment could start in April 2017. She was being treated in the Kaiser Permanente Hospital in Walnut Creek California, close to home, where she lived with her 3 other sisters and parents. Sandip and Archana had moved from Surat to USA in 1987 and run a hotel in Alameda, California.

ALL is a cancer of the blood — specifically of the white blood cells. Typically those cells work with the immune system to fight infection and protect the body against disease, but in children with ALL, an uncontrollable proliferation of cancerous white blood cells upsets the delicate constitution of the bloodstream, crowding out normal white blood cells, as well as red blood cells and platelets. This makes it impossible for the body to properly fight infection, absorb oxygen, or heal wounds.

Acute lymphoblastic leukemia is the most common form of cancer in children. Its survival outcomes in the developed Western world is as high as 90% - and even in India – in the best of cancer centers 70-80%.

Says Sandip Jariwala, “Priyanka understood that she was getting the best cancer treatment that anyone could possibly get today. Whether it was chemotherapy or immunotherapy, psychological support or palliative care, she knew that all options were being used to cure her disease and care for her and her family. As a family we were together all the time caring and supporting each other. She also knew that there were many children and their families back home in India, that are simply not receiving that type of care because of financial and other hardships.”

“She was helping a mother with a baby that had cancer, by communicating with her through Instagram. All through the last year, we were helping other children with cancer through online crowdfunding platforms. She made all of us promise to continue the support even after she died, “adds a grief stricken and still fragile mother, Archana.

Making good that promise, the Jariwalas have set up Relief from Cancer, a 501C3 charity in USA that held its first fund raiser Golf tournament in September 2017, and a Priyanka Jariwala Memorial Foundation (PJMF) registered in Surat, where the family originally hails from. They have tied up with Cankids KidsCan – National Society for Change for Childhood Cancer in India. And today – on Priyanka’s 23rd birthday – this tie up is resulting in launching an all-out effort to work towards enabling best treatment, care and support for children with cancer and their families in Surat.

Sonal Sharma, Co-Founder Cankids, herself the parent of ALL Survivor Shubhangi said, “Sandip and Archana visited our Pediatric Palliative Care Center, on their way to Allahabad to immerse their daughter’s ashes. We dedicated our monthly Memorial service to Priyanka, along with other children who had died that month. We salute the Jariwalas for honoring their daughter’s wishes, for their immense commitment to making a difference to the lives of kids with cancer in India, and for beginning with the city where they come from – Surat.”

Explained retired Civil Servant, Mukul Marwah, Vice Chairman Cankids, also the Honorary Regional Director of Cankids Western region. “We have come together as NGO Partners to Strengthen pediatric oncology in Surat covering nearing districts of Surat i.e. Bharuch, Dang, Navsari and Valsad from Gujarat, Dhule, Jalgaon, Nandurbar from North Maharashtra and Alirajpur, Barwani districts of Madhya Pradesh. Together we are partnering with Tejani Cancer Institute – a day care and Radiotherapy center started as Lion’s Cancer Detection Center in 1968, and affiliate Institution of Government Medical College, Surat. The aim is to increase the numbers of children being treated at TCI and to grow it into a center of excellence with outpatient and ip patient facilities for pediatric oncology in South Gujarat. “

Bharatbhai V Shah, Hony Secretary TCI clarified, “We are currently seeing about 150 new cases of childhood cancer each year. Many come in through the Civil Hospital. TCI and NGOs like Chanyando provide support for drugs and diagnostics. We need an in-patient Ward, and holistic support for the child and the family. In the immediate context, together with the NGO partners, we are partnering with Mahavir Hospital for inpatient services. “

Chintan Jariwala, Trustee Priyanka Jariwala Memorial Foundation, and Sandips brother, a business man based in Surat, expanded further, “We are also partnering with Saatchi Children’s Hospital, which sees 50 – 60 new cases of children with cancer each year. IT is vital that we build up the services in Surat itself. Many of the children from Surat and adjoining districts are all referred to Gujarat Cancer Research Institute or even outside the State. The absence of facilities for kids with cancer and their families in Gujarat is very sad. “

Poonam Bagai, Founder Chairman Cankids Kidscan, herself a Cancer Survivor outlined “Our aim is to truly make a Change for Childhood Cancer in South Gujarat. What that means is better access to care, referral pathways, better standards of treatment, better protocols, drug support, supportive care, financial support and complete holistic care. For that family in Surat, what is important is – did they get the right information, did they know where to go, did their child get diagnosed in time, did someone hold their hand through their cancer journey, did they get good treatment and did they get the support they needed and when they needed it.”

Cankids KidsCan and Priyanka Jariwala Memorial Foundation have launched Change for Childhood Cancer in Surat this 17th International Childhood Cancer Day (ICCD) at an ICCD celebration at TCI this morning. Child cancer patients and survivors and their families gathered with the treating doctors and Management of TCI. The Chief Guest was Mr. Ashokbhai Kanungo, Vice Chairman – TCI, Mr. Kamlesh Yagnik, ERG Director and first Chief Resilience Officer of India appointed by Surat Municipal Corporation, Mr. Zawareh Wadia, TCI Trustee and Structural Civil Engineer, Mr. Babubhai Patel, TCI Trustee were felicitated by Mr. Chintan Poonawala from Priyanka Jeriwala Memorial Foundation (PJMF) with the Canvas paintings prepared by children under treatment of Cancer at CanKids Canshala – a formal school for Cancer Patients.

Apart from this other guests present for the event were – Dr. K.C.Shah, Dr. Jayesh Bramhbhatt – Dean, Government Medical College and Civil Hospital Surat, Mr. RohitBhai – Chamber of Commerce, Dr. Naik – Abha Laboratories and Parents of Jeriwala, family members, friends and well-wishers.

(AMPLIFY program at TCI and quote by Dr Sanjay Nadeshwar, Medical Director TCI)

February 15th is celebrated worldwide as International Childhood Cancer Day – aimed at creating awareness and advocating for childhood cancer as much for honoring the bravery and courage of children fighting cancer in our State, country and worldwide.

Internationally Childhood Cancer Day is spearheaded by Childhood Cancer International – an umbrella organization of 188 parent, survivor and social support organizations like Cankids, in collaboration with SIOP (International Society of Pediatric Oncologists). <http://www.cankidsindia.org/iccd-2018.html>)

*CanKids…KidsCan, is a not-for-profit National Society, dedicated to a Change for Childhood Cancer in India. It enables best standards of treatment care and support for children with cancer and their families from moment of diagnosis, through treatment and after.      Presently Cankids is working in 51 cancer centers across the country providing holistic care and support to children with cancer and their families through its YANA – you are not an alone model, providing a range of 25 social support services, Care Centers and social support teams, through its Cankids Hospital Support Units.    It partners with treating cancer centers, national and international organizations and State Governments to build capacities, promote quality care, research and impact and facilitate stakeholder engagement and patient, family and civil society engagement, thereby enabling best standards of treatment, care and support. Through its Go Gold India campaign it advocates for childhood cancer to be a child health priority in India.*

*Globally, childhood and adolescent cancer is threatening to overtake infectious diseases, as one of the highest causes of disease-related mortality in children. It is a day when we come together to continue the work to “Advance Cures and Transform Care” and to make childhood cancer a national and global child health priority.*

*Much work remains to be done. According to IARC (2015), the reported worldwide incidence of childhood cancer is increasing, from 165,000 new cases annually to 215,000 cases for children 14 years and younger and 85,000 new cases for 15-19 year-olds. Many more remain uncounted and unreported due to a lack of childhood cancer registries in a large number of countries. While the number of children with cancer is much less compared to global incidence of adult cancers, the number of lives saved is significantly higher; survival rates in high-income countries reach an average of 84% and are steadily improving even in less-resourced areas of the world where there is local and international support.*

*ICCD 2018 campaign’s ultimate goal and unified message is “Advance Cures and Transform Care”. This message spotlights the inequities and glaring disparity of access to care in most low- and middle-income countries where 80% of children with cancer live. Children and adolescents in Africa, Asia and Latin America and in parts of Eastern and Southern Europe do not yet have access to appropriate treatment including essential medicines and specialized care. Currently, where one lives often determines one’s ability to survive childhood cancer.*

*The 188 member organizations of Childhood Cancer International (CCI) in 96 countries as the largest non-profit patient support organization for childhood cancer and the 1000 healthcare professionals from 110 countries who are members of the International Society of Pediatric Oncology (SIOP) ask everyone to come together in solidarity to make sure children and adolescents everywhere have the chance to survive cancer and live long, productive and meaningful lives.*

*"The chance for a cure, the chance to live, should not be an accident of geography. There is nothing scarier than realizing that your child has cancer. However, there is nothing more tragic than knowing that treatment and cure does exist for your particular child’s cancer and with excellent outcomes, BUT… that it is not available for your child. Why? Because your child happens to live in the wrong hemisphere! It is time to take action to stop this cruel atrocity… make your voices heard on International Childhood Cancer Day and demand from world leaders to ACT and HELP SAVE ALL CHILDREN regardless of where they live!" (HRH Princess Dina Mired, mother of childhood cancer survivor, President-elect, UICC).*

Every year Cankids Kidscan, National Society for Change for Childhood Cancer, and member of Childhood Cancer International (CCI) celebrates ICCD across the country. Last year, 1580 children with cancer from 21 cities across India attended the ICCD celebrations. Children at all centers visited a monument of the city to celebrate ICCD and teachers educated children about the monument and how it symbolizes victory in some battle. The “We Are One” Childhood Cancer solidarity song was translated into regional languages and sung by children in different cities.

This February 15th, 2018 happy to inform you that this year we are doing it in a much bigger and grander way together with many other NGO partners and childhood cancer treating centers.

Our theme for ICCD is **Go Gold India – *Mera Haq, Mera Bachpan, Mera Jeevan – I Deserve My Childhood My Life. Families will participate in “I Deserve competitions and w***e will have kite making activities at the Learning activity Clinics in OPD and Wards, where children will make kites and together with their families write their prayers and messages. Children will be taken for an outing to a park where they can fly kites. The messages on the kite will reflect our theme and advocate to the governments that “Childhood Cancer should be a Child Health Priority in India”. We will be celebrating ICCD at all our 51 centers as well as those of our partners, across India.

Childhood Cancer is the low hanging fruit for a country’s cancer control program. In 2015 Cankids…KidsCan Launched The Go Gold India- Survivor Led Advocacy Campaign with 8 demands – To make Childhood Cancer Child Health Priority in India- a clear childhood cancer control plan and policy, more and dedicated pediatric oncology cancer centers, better and qualified manpower and health professionals, affordable but quality treatment and drugs, focused interventions for specific childhood cancers that are highly curable like Hodgkins Lymphoma, Retinoblastoma (eye cancer) and Wilms Tumor (kidney cancer), acceptance of the age of childhood cancer upto 18 years of age, and family and civil society engagement**.**

**TO know more and for ICCD information, awareness kit and graphics please log in to**

[**http://www.cankidsindia.org/iccd-2018.html**](http://www.cankidsindia.org/iccd-2018.html)

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**CHILDHOOD CANCER FACTSHEET**

* Cancer incidence - developing countries not well known, because there has been fewer population-based cancer registries (PBCRs) with adequate completeness. (Source: NRCP - National Cancer Registry Program)
* Boys are around 20% more likely to develop cancer than girls but this male to female - This suggests a gender bias in diagnosing and registering cases in some developing countries. (Source: NRCP - National Cancer Registry Program)
* The reported incidence of childhood cancer in India in males is higher than in females in almost all population based cancer registries Gender bias in seeking healthcare, including treatment of cancer, is one possible explanation. (Source: NRCP - National Cancer Registry Program)
* 3 most common cancers in childhood comprise leukemia, brain tumours and lymphoma. (Source: IACR - International Agency for Research on Cancer)
* This improvement of survival reported from developed countries has resulted from increasing use of intensive chemotherapy combined with other modalities of treatment, improved generalised supportive management, application of results of clinical trials and centralisation of care permitting each patient to benefit from the best of the multidisciplinary expertise and technology available for these rare conditions. (Source: IACR - International Agency for Research on Cancer)
* The less favourable outcome in the developing countries can be attributed to late diagnosis, unavailability of treatment, therapy abandonment, prior undernourishment, inadequate supportive therapy and unsuccessful follow-up. All these factors relate to lack of financial resources to support efficient health care system for childhood cancer patients. (Source: NRCP - National Cancer Registry Program)
* The causes of majority of childhood cancers are unknown. (Source: IACR - International Agency for Research on Cancer
* Each year more than 3,00,000 (Age: 0-19yr) Children and adolescents are diagnosed with one of 16 forms of childhood cancer-cancers. (Source: IACR - International Agency for Research on Cancer)
* Out of the above mentioned numbers 40,000-50,000 (Age: 0-15yrs) are diagnosed in India. (Source: NRCP - National Cancer Registry Program)