



PURPOSE
PASSION
PERSEVERANCE

50 years

Blood Bank Society, Chandigarh.



If you are a Blood Donor...
you are a HERO to someone, somewhere;
who has received your
GRACIOUS GIFT of LIFE.

The glow of candles carries the message of Blood Donation...



This book is dedicated to all the people who played a key role in dispelling the darkness associated with blood donation and to the millions of Voluntary Blood Donors who have saved countless lives.



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PROLOGUE

A life not lived for others is not a life.

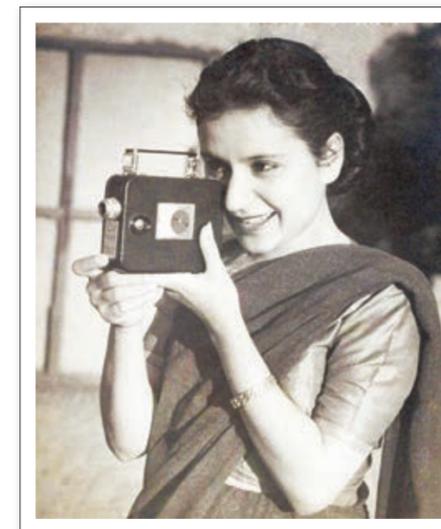
- Mother Teresa



Life in the 60's was arduous and demanding, especially for those living in north-India. While the scars of foreign domination and the aftermath of partition had begun to fade, a vast majority was faced with a multitude of problems.

Chandigarh was conceived as independent India's first planned city to rehabilitate the industrious Punjabi community displaced from Western-Punjab during the partition.

Le Corbusier, a French architect was invited to prepare its preliminary master plan. During the 60's it was no more than a large rural hamlet, where roads, government buildings, housing colonies, markets, commercial centres and several other public amenities were being constructed at a ferocious pace. Amongst this vast paraphernalia a vital national institution known as the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGI), Chandigarh, was coming up which would house a blood bank.



On February 7, 1929 a government servant Rai Bahadur Vishan Bhagwan was blessed with a pretty little girl. A bright student at school, Kanta Bhagwan completed her matriculation with a scholarship and was married to Saroop Krishen soon thereafter. In 1956, Kanta Saroop Krishen moved to Chandigarh with her husband, an Indian Civil Service Officer, deputed to serve with the Government of Punjab.



In 1962 China invaded India. The general mood of the nation which by then had only partially-erased painful memories of the partition, once again turned gloomy and despairing. Chandigarh being a key transit-point for troops moving to and from border locations, was forced to bear testimony to several tragic sights of war, manifested through its wounded or martyred soldiers.

The timing of the conflict fuelled Kanta's desire to do something more meaningful with her life.

This book narrates the story of not one, but two institutions.

Though initially the intent of this book was to document key milestones of the Blood Bank Society, Chandigarh; but when we embarked upon the task we realized that it is virtually impossible to separate the story of the Blood Bank Society from the life of its charismatic founder who in her individual capacity, is perhaps *a much taller institution*.

Being a brand-new habitat, Chandigarh was a rather sparsely populated city in the sixties. A bulk of its habitants being refugees displaced by the partition, were busy rebuilding their lives. Besides local administration and government servants, other significant citizenry of the town included businessmen, professionals and those employed in educational institutions.

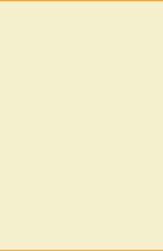
'The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step'.

On a hot and humid summer morning of 1963, after packing-off her children to school, Kanta Krishen who for thirty-four years had enjoyed a rather privileged and protected life - first under the shadow of her father and thereafter her husband, decided to head for the PGI Chandigarh hoping that perhaps its corridors would point her towards a direction that she could not identify on her own.

Her first visit took her to a room where doctors and nursing-staff gathered for their mid-morning break, where she expressed a desire to utilise her spare time gainfully. After realizing that she was the wife of a senior civil-servant, the doctors preferred to play safe and besides offering her a cup of coffee, asked her if she would be willing to take charge of the hospitality services at their mess! *This crashed Kanta's hopes of doing something worthwhile and meaningful with her time.*



The couple's government accommodation in Chandigarh.
Pierre Jeanneret, the architect lived next door.



PURPOSE

*The purpose of human life is to serve, to show
compassion and the will to help others.*

- Albert Schweitzer



Dr. J. G. Jolly.

It is interesting to discover how a rather innocuous trip to the PGI, merely driven by a desire to ‘keep busy’, would in subsequent days manifest itself as a life changing opportunity.

Not to be demotivated by her first debacle, Kanta made several subsequent visits to the PGI with a view to acquaint herself with problems that she could identify, and which would perhaps lead to some meaningful engagement for her.

Within three months of her first trip to the PGI, seeking a voluntary service role, an opportunity manifested itself! Her life was about to change when a call came from Dr. J. G. Jolly, who was assigned the role of setting up a Blood Bank at the PGI. Being a principled man, Dr. Jolly did not want to fall in line with the blood collection system that was prevalent elsewhere in the country.

He therefore resolved that the blood issued from the PGI would have to be safe and of the best quality. He wanted to completely eliminate the practice of obtaining it from those who sold it to make a living.

Kanta was told that blood for transfusion wasn't always or freely available at the hospital. Patients had to bring someone known to them to donate equal or more quantity in exchange for what they required.

In those days, due to lack of education and general awareness several myths, misgivings, rumours and half-truths were associated with blood donation. Even amongst the

educated class there existed extreme discomfort or worse, open resistance. People would come-up with some of the most absurd reasons to avoid donating blood. For patients who did not have access to local friends, family or acquaintances, buying blood from paid donors was the only option.

Kanta discovered that under the guise of relatives, paid blood donors would be available for donation virtually every week! Sometimes they would even donate on shorter durations. *But each time for a price!*

Though initially hesitant to accept the rather daunting responsibility of mobilizing voluntary blood donors in an ecosystem which was not only corrupted by malpractices, but also mired in a dirty-cobweb of myths and half-truths, Kanta was ultimately convinced by Dr. Jolly that the opportunity offered by him was perhaps the culmination of her search and yearning to serve others.

Thus augured the advent of the voluntary blood donation movement in North India. In subsequent years her perseverance helped build an organisation of global repute, which today is also considered as the pride of Chandigarh.



Mr. Saroop Krishen donates at a camp at the Secretariat, while Kanta looks on; 1973.



Dr. Chuttani at a Blood Bank Society Seminar.

As she stepped out of Dr. Jolly's room, 'on that pleasant afternoon of October in 1963', Kanta's conscience softly-whispered that she had perhaps found the purpose of her life. However, what neither she nor Dr. Jolly had even imagined was that Kanta's eventual *Karma-Bhumi* would not be limited within the boundary-walls of the PGI Chandigarh or the municipal limits of the city- beautiful. Only destiny knew on that afternoon that Kanta had embarked on a journey that would transcend far beyond anyone's wildest dreams, and she would often be forced to quote Robert Frost's famous lines, *'I have miles to go before I sleep'!*

Today when the 89 year *young-at-heart-and-spirit*, Kanta reflects upon her 54 year long journey as a voluntary worker, her reminiscences and memories mirror mixed feelings. Despite her age-related limitations she happily shares countless anecdotes, experiences, incidents and even some life changing moments from the rich-repository of her memory. At times, her exuberance can put teenagers to shame.

A true embodiment of Mother Teresa's reflection of *'a life lived for others'!*



Mr. Saroop Krishen, Dr. S. S. Anand, Mrs. Kanta Krishen, Governor Mr. B. N. Chakraborty, Mrs. Anand, Mrs. Chakraborty & Mrs. Shamsher Bahadur.

A new city with a new concept of Safe Blood. Dr. Jolly had taken upon himself to ensure that the task entrusted upon him was duly implemented with full determination and complete honesty. This landmark decision marked the genesis of the Blood Bank Society, Chandigarh.

The very concept of donating blood for complete strangers or of the Blood-Bank itself was alien at that point of time. Fears and misgivings were aplenty. The Blood Bank Society had a hard task ahead which it set out to perform, armed only with its grit and determination.

The first-step that Kanta and Dr. Jolly undertook was to mobilise the support of homemakers, who would act as facilitators and motivators to those around them. The idea was that if the homemaker was convinced, it would be easier to break taboos and barriers associated with blood donation. In addition to time they also exuded compassion and empathy, a key asset required to convince others on sensitive issues.



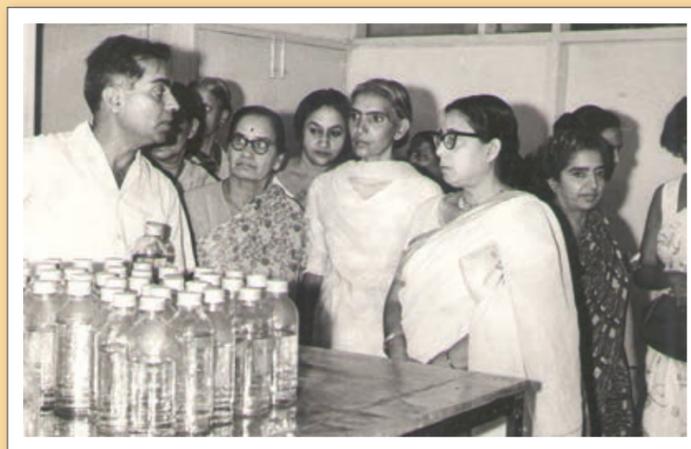
1st meeting of the Blood Bank Society, 1964. L-R: Dr. Jolly, Mrs. Indira Chakraborty, Mrs. Shamsher Bahadur, Mrs. Bhalla, Mrs. Kanta Krishen & Mrs. Rasal Dutt.

“A nostalgic Kanta reminisces; *“The initial days of my journey were not easy at all. In fact, they were rather disturbing and even petrifying at times. The fact that I had been fortunate to lead a rather privileged life thus far also revealed that I hadn’t been exposed to the harsh realities that existed in our society, particularly in the blood donation arena.*

“For many, blood represents a gory sight. The same was true of me, at least in the initial days. It was therefore natural to get perturbed, especially when one is continuously exposed to the pain, distress, misery and helplessness from close quarters. It reduces your confidence.

“I was however very fortunate to have a mentor, teacher, guide and a true friend in my husband. Our age difference and his vast practical experience slowly became my strength to overcome each adversity that I encountered.

Besides, Dr. Jolly was a man of vision. He not only guided me at every stage but his unwavering support and encouragement also added to my resolve.



“I would often notice several poor people including rickshaw-pullers, labourers, petty workers, at times accompanied by their families waiting outside the PGI Blood Bank. While some were there by choice, many others were enticed by the lure of easy money, under the garb of being relatives. And, each of those poor and impoverished persons were risking their lives for a measly amount of 15 or 20 rupees per unit. Not once in a while, but practically everyday!

“My first task was to educate, motivate and eventually convince such donors not to embark on such risky-misadventures. While some got convinced, others would turn a blind-eye and a few would even become hostile, as they saw my role as a direct threat to their livelihood. I also had to face the wrath of people for whose friends or relatives these donors had assembled. It’s none of your business to interfere, they’d say. Sometimes the situation would even turn ugly. However I wasn’t daunted by the enormity of the task I was undertaking.

“Mrs. Usha Saboo a close friend was the first to join me and a few others followed suit. They were my founding-partners as some would say, and helped me add several other friends from within their respective circles and vicinities. Slowly this helped us create a significant chain of people, initially most of whom were complete strangers, but later became an integral part of our mission.

“Homemakers and their friends would gather at convenient locations in their vicinity and then split into smaller-groups to visit nearby offices, colleges, factories, clubs, etc. with the aim of sensitizing people about their life-saving cause and persuade them to organise blood donation camps or visit the PGI’s Blood Bank to make voluntary donations.

“The general shortage of blood had created a vicious cycle. People would openly refuse to cooperate or donate to a common pool because they had been refused blood when they needed it, which in turn caused even more shortage. It wasn’t easy. We would invariably hit obstacles that needed to be overcome by only one technique - determination.”

The early band of the Blood Bank Society, Chandigarh volunteers did not take much time to realize that mere convincing of individuals would not work for long and they would need to devise mass-scale public awareness programmes to get due attention for their cause.

The first step therefore was to allay fears and misgivings about donating blood through public awareness programmes. Thus, was born the idea of establishing another group of volunteers who would disseminate information to generate the required attitude amongst people in general. *“Though the task sounded simple, we soon realized that we not only needed to arm them with the relevant and accurate information, but also make them confident to take-on questions and clear doubts”*, recalls Kanta.

Today’s readers may perhaps not even be able to imagine how difficult in the sixties, this task actually was! *The task of effectively training public-facing volunteers was indeed challenging!*

“We organised numerous orientation programmes, some running over several days. We would take the volunteers to the PGI laboratory to brief them on how to tackle possible questions. Not everyone found



L - R Standing: Mrs. Amrit Sharma, Mrs. Usha Suri, Mrs. Jitie Sodhi, Dr. J. G. Jolly, Mrs. Usha Talwar, Mrs. Malati Chibber & Mrs. Sabita Bhattacharji.

L - R Sitting: Mrs. Anjali Soni, Mrs. Usha Saboo, Mrs. Indira Chakraborty, Mrs. Shamsher Bahadur & Mrs. Kanta Krishen.



Orientation Programme

it really appealing or exciting to handle gory details associated with blood”, mentions Kanta with a cautious mirth in her tone.

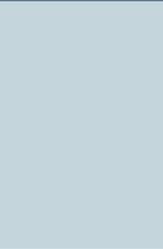
In August 1964, barely ten months after Dr. Jolly’s decision to get rid of the ills that had plagued and ailed the blood donation process till that point of time, and largely due to the efforts of Kanta and her devoted band of volunteers, the Blood Bank Society, Chandigarh was formally instituted. Three months later, on November 14, 1964, to celebrate the 75th birth anniversary of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the Blood Bank Society even managed to organise its first Mass Blood Donation Camp.



Chief Guest Governor Mr. B. N. Chakraborty at ‘Spring Time’; a fete in 1971.



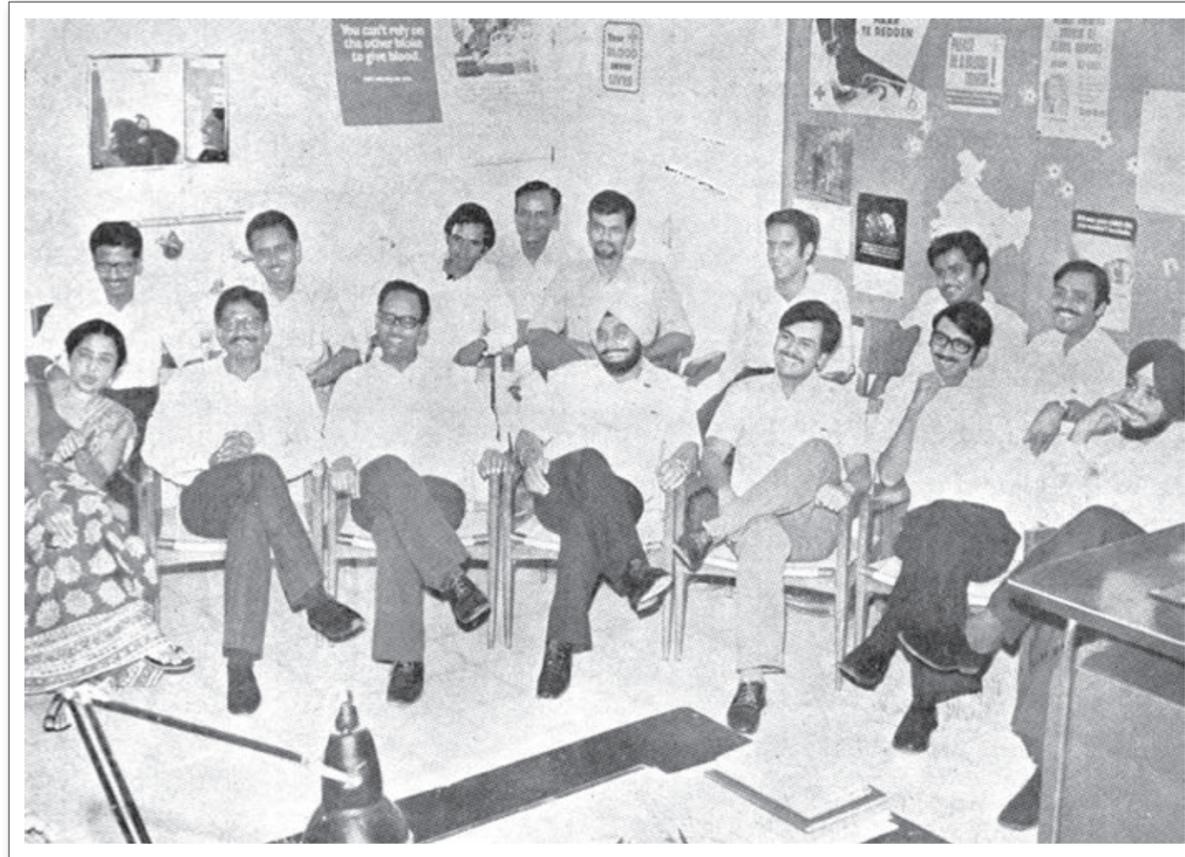
Mr. B. S. Ojha, Mrs. Kanta Krishen & Mrs. Usha Saboo encourage donors.



PASSION

*Every great dream begins with a dreamer.
Always remember, you have within you the
strength, the patience, and the passion to
reach for the stars to change the world.*

- Harriet Tubman

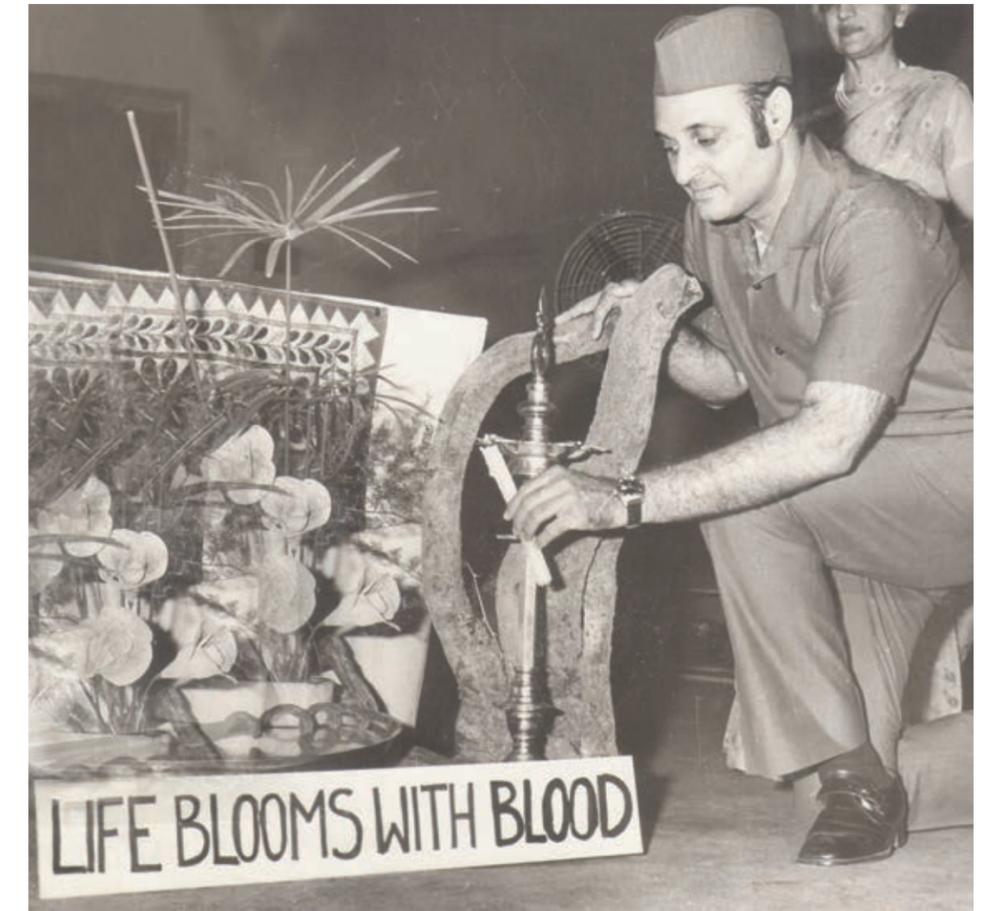


Joy on the faces of a group of motivators who had not only succeeded in motivating large numbers of people to participate in the blood donation movement but had themselves donated blood over and over again, through the years. Teachers, doctors, lawyers, businessmen and students represented a cross-section of the community.

As one begins to discover the story of the Blood Bank Society, Chandigarh one cannot help admiring the sheer grit, determination, single minded focus and devotion to the cause of hundreds of unsung heroes who, perhaps at that point of time did not even realize how deep and far their initial efforts will percolate, to build a deep and strong foundation for the future.

Life is a simple arithmetic of give and get. If we do not give, how do we expect to receive? This logic is most appropriate and true of *Blood*. It becomes available when our loved ones need it only because there are good people out there who donate it without expecting anything in return.

The question we need to ask is, 'Are we among those good people? Do we want to create a kind and caring community? How much are we contributing towards it?'



A lamp is lit, symbolizing the happiness that is restored in thousands of homes through blood transfusions, by Dr. Karan Singh, former Union Minister for Health and Family Planning; 1974.

Although they say that charity begins at home, readers will now perhaps appreciate the fact even more that both for Mr. Saroop Krishen and Mrs. Kanta Krishen the definition *home and family* extended far beyond the accepted norms, and the couple's deeds other than being exemplary in every sense of the word, have also been way ahead of the times.

For anyone coming in contact with Mrs. Kanta Krishen or a Blood Bank Society, Chandigarh volunteer from the days of its inception, it is only natural to be truly amazed to discover that even during an era of limited communication, transportation and financial resources, how merely within a span of thirteen months a small group of dedicated volunteers, could bring about a radical change in the thinking of a conservative society; that too, on a rather sensitive issue.

Even the most astute marketing gurus today would be amazed to discover the originality and ingenuity adopted by the Blood Bank Society, Chandigarh volunteers during its formative years. Recalling some such instances, its founder becomes nostalgic.



Children spread the message, 'Blood Donors Have Hearts of Gold'; 1982.



Annual Function in the early 70's.



Spring Time; a fete organised by the Blood Bank Society.



Motivator Mrs. Santosh Manchanda.



Delegates at a seminar at the PGI in the early 70s.



Mrs. Champa Mangat Rai (*extreme right*) with blood donors at the Haryana Raj Bhawan.



Delegates at a seminar at the PGI in early 60's.

“We decided to divide ourselves in small groups to implement different tasks.

“Some of us would assimilate information on global Voluntary Blood Donation practices, from within the few public libraries that existed in those days or through doctors at the PGI.



L - R Standing: Mrs. Santosh Jolly, Mrs. Verma, Dr. J. G. Jolly, Mrs. Amrit Sharma, Mrs. Swaran Sethi, Mrs. Mann, Mrs. Achreja, Mrs. Pandit, Mrs. Rama Bhanot & Mrs. Shakuntla Rasal Dutt.

L - R Sitting: Mrs. Maini, Mrs. Jitie Sodhi, Mrs. Indira Chakraborty, Mrs. Shamsher Bahadur, Mrs. Dulari Bhalla & Mrs. Kanta Krishen.

“Some groups were tasked to visit institutions and large organisations to introduce Voluntary Blood Donation to their leadership and secure their role in providing succour and a fresh lease of life to families facing despondency.

“We created separate teams to make arrangements for blood collection, both at the PGI and at our camps in different parts of the city. Volunteers had to arrange for vehicles, refreshments, token gifts, etc.; tasks that were virtually alien to most of us. Gradually, and motivated by the selfless and unrelenting efforts of our volunteers, other enlightened citizens of Chandigarh opened their hearts, to part with the life-saving fluid and also help out in our other activities.

“Maintaining a transparent and credible financial system was an important task that the early volunteers had not foreseen. As the Blood Bank Society, Chandigarh grew in its size and stature, and appeals to individuals, offices, business houses and charitable organisations started delivering results, appropriate systems to manage growing funding, besides checks and balances had to be instituted. The earnestness on the part of the volunteers and the trust of the citizenry eased our efforts,” recalls Kanta.



With WHO officials.

“The W.H.O. will soon be in a position to extend full support to the voluntary blood donation programme in India”, said Dr. G. S. Tawil, Regional Adviser, W.H.O., while addressing the Blood Bank Society members at Chandigarh. He commended the contribution of the Indian Society of Blood Transfusion and Immunohematology (ISBTI) and Blood Bank Society in spreading the message of the voluntary giving of blood in the country.



Dr. Chuttani, Mrs. Indira Chakraborty & Mrs. Kanta Krishen.

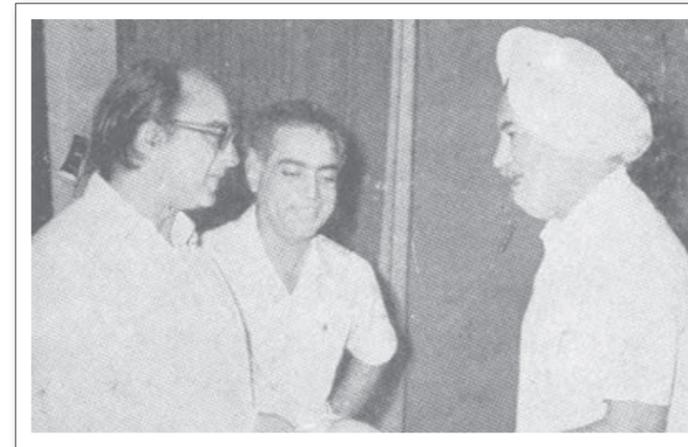
“We organised regular functions where VIP’s would honour voluntary blood donors. We sought support from eminent people like Mr. Giani Zail Singh, Mr. Morarji Desai, Mr. I. K. Gujral, Mr. V. P. Singh, Mr. Khushwant Singh, Mr. Dara Singh, Mr. Mukesh, Dr. Karan Singh, Ms. Ambika Soni, Mr. Amjad Ali Khan, Mr. Kapil Dev, etc. amongst many others,” remembers Kanta.



Mrs. Kanta Krishen, Mrs. Usha Saboo, Mr. H. S. Brar, with former Prime Minister Mr. Morarji Desai.



With former Prime Minister Mr. V. P. Singh.



Former Prime Minister Mr. I. K. Gujral presents an award to Mr. M. S. Sodhi for donating blood 25 times.



Mr. Bansi Lal, former Chief Minister of Haryana, donating blood.



Mr. Khushwant Singh, Editor - Illustrated Weekly of India, during his visit to the Blood Bank, Chandigarh, shares a joke with distinguished donor Mac Sarin.



Donors Mr. N. Khosla and Mr. Dara Singh encouraged by Blood Bank Society members.



Governor Mr. Surinder Nath, Mrs. Kanta Krishen, Mr. Mac Sarin, Mr. Arvind Mehan, Mrs. Nirmal Mahendroo & Mr. Baleshwar Rai at the Punjab Raj Bhawan.



Mrs. Chakraborty chairs a meeting at the Haryana Raj Bhawan.



Mr. Amjad Ali Khan, *The Sarod Maestro* is examined by Dr. J. G. Jolly, when he offered to donate blood before a public performance.



Mrs. Ambika Soni, President, Youth Congress, at a special camp in which members of the Youth Congress donated. 'Give me blood donor cards in place of bouquets of flowers', she told them; 1977.



Noted singer Mr. Mukesh donating blood.



Mr. Mukesh at the Blood Bank.



Governor Dr. Pavate felicitates Mr. Mac Sarin, a star donor.



Governor, Mr. J. L. Hathi with star donor Mr. T. S. Anand.



A force to reckon with; Volunteers of the Blood Bank Society, in 1970.



Governor Dr. Pavate, Mrs. Kanta Krishen, Rai Bahadur Vishan Bhagwan (Kanta's father) and Dr. Jolly interacting with a star donor.

Volunteers persuaded both the Raj Bhawans in Chandigarh to host tea parties for donors. Some years later even incumbent Governors inaugurated such camps by donating blood themselves. People donating-blood four times in a year were presented HMT watches, a prized possession then! In those days Chandigarh was predominantly



Students enjoying refreshments after donating blood.



Young scouts who helped in the arrangements meeting Governor J. L. Hathi.

a student city; hence after a few years motivated donors would migrate to other places in search of jobs. But, for Blood Bank Society, Chandigarh volunteers there was no letting-up on motivation, which continued unabated to cover the new students each year.



(left) Some of the outstanding blood donors of Chandigarh with 25 to 75 donations, who jointly contributed their effort in the *Shramdan* (free-service) project for de-silting the Sukhna Lake of Chandigarh. (right) Dr. Jolly and Mr. Mac Sarin at the *Shramdaan*.



Former Chief Minister of Jammu & Kashmir, Mr. Sheikh Abdullah, wholeheartedly supported a 100% voluntary blood transfusion service in his State and Dr. Jolly was invited to help set up such a service. The Chief Minister inaugurated an exhibition cum blood donation camp organised in Srinagar on the occasion of the Assembly of the Rotary District 310.

In time, volunteers also acquainted members of social clubs like Rotary and Lions with their work and urged them to include Voluntary Blood Donation (VBD) within the purview of their activities.



Mr. N. C. Chopra, Divisional Manager, Union Bank of India, donates blood; 1977.



On the occasion of their District meet in Chandigarh, Rotarians resolve to help the voluntary blood donation programme by donating blood.



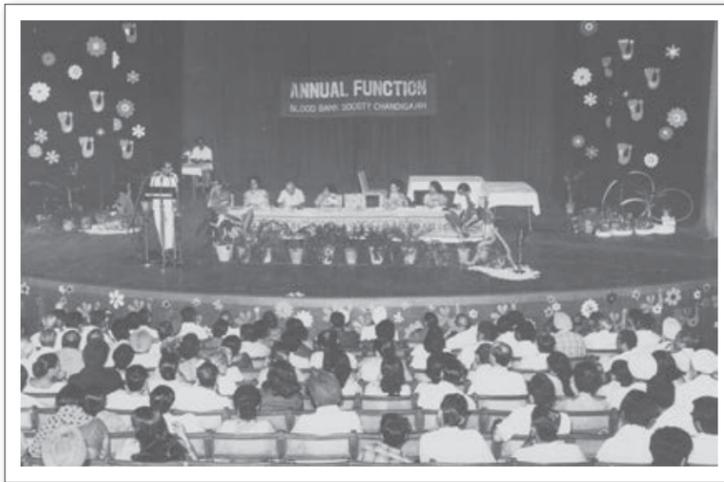
The Rotary G. S. E. Team in South Australia with the *Blood Mobile* donated by Rotarians of then RI District 250, in 1977.



Dr. S. K. Agnihotri Head, Dept. of Transfusion Medicine & Mrs. Kanta Krishen receiving a van gifted by Rotary Club Chandigarh Mid Town.



Delegates of an International Symposium in Chandigarh; 1980.



Annual Function in the early 70s.



Poster display at the ISBTI Conference in Delhi; 1996.

Besides holding an Annual Function and several event related meets in Chandigarh, the society also disseminated information about its work in other parts of the country.

The Blood Bank Society members would regularly present papers at appropriate conferences, put up exhibitions and poster-displays at National and International meets.



Saying it with flowers in Jakarta, Indonesia.



A cheerful team of housewives who ran the Blood Bank Society, Chandigarh in the 70s including Mrs. Hans, Mrs. Santosh Jolly, Mrs. Guddo Thakur, Mrs. Anjali Soni, Mrs. Kanta Krishen, Mrs. Amar Kulwant Singh, Mrs. Jitie Sodhi, Mrs. Usha Suri, Mrs. Maan, Mrs. Sabita Bhattacharji & Mrs. Usha Saboo.

Late President, A. P. J. Abdul Kalam had said; *'If four things are followed - having a great aim, acquiring knowledge, hard work and perseverance - then anything can be achieved'.*

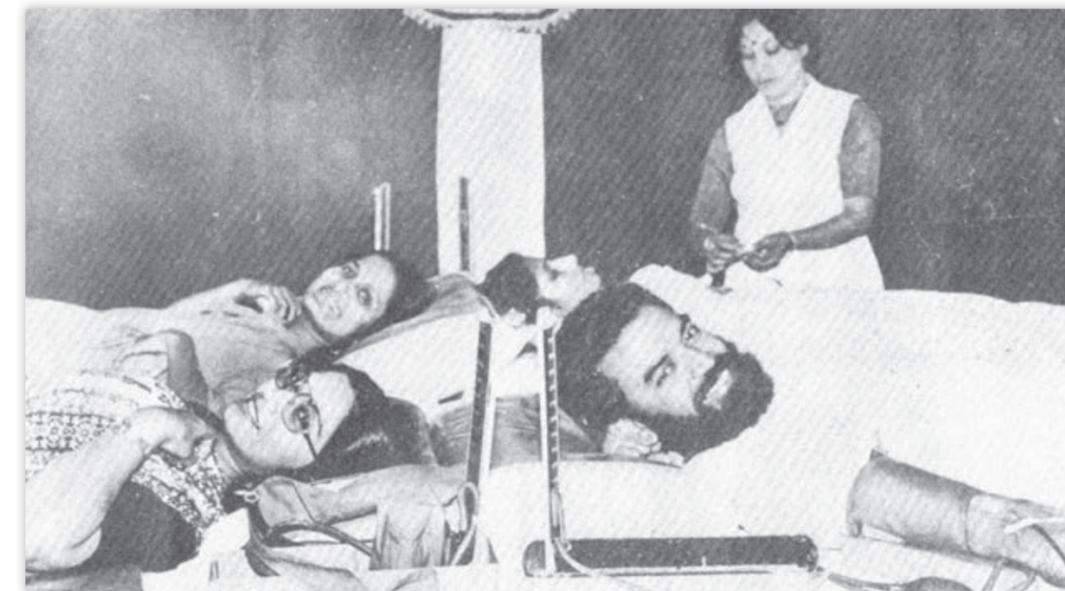
During the initial days of the Blood Bank Society each day resembled a milestone. Its volunteers had to make gigantic efforts to achieve tasks that may sound mundane today.

Therefore, the Blood Bank Society, Chandigarh wishes to highlight some key events as a mark of gratitude to its early torch-bearers.

Be it war or peace, the Army helps save precious lives.
Gen. A. M. Vohra inaugurates an Army Camp by donating blood while others await their turn.



Star Donor, Mr. P. S. Nagpal who had not only made several donations of blood, but for 8 years had also volunteered to take fortnightly injections for the production of valuable Rh-Sera.



Newspaper personnel believe in reporting as well as donating blood.

Key Milestones

- **October 1963:** Dr. J. G. Jolly entrusted the task of establishing a voluntary service of blood transfusion at the PGI, Chandigarh.
- **August 1964:** Formation of the Blood Bank Society of Chandigarh.
- **November 1964:** First Mass Blood Donation Camp organised by the Blood Bank Society.
- **August 1966:** Blood Insurance Scheme introduced to assure supply of blood to individual voluntary donors, their families and institutions when required.
- **1967:** Launch of 'House to House Donor Enrolment Campaign'; *A Donor from Every Family!*
- **February 1968:** First 'Blood Bank Week', supported by a Seminar, Poster Exhibition, etc.
- **March 1969:** 'Spring Time', a fete supported by a handicrafts exhibition to collect funds.
- **November 1971:** 'Blood Bank Grid' established across a large region comprising of Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir and Chandigarh to meet requirements of blood for the armed forces and civilians during national emergencies. This achievement was in response to Government of India's Defence Council meeting in 1965, which urged responsible citizens to create plans for supply of large-scale blood requirements during national emergencies.

1971 & 1972 were very significant milestones of the Blood Bank Society's journey...

Mrs. Kanta Krishen was conferred the coveted *Padma Shri* by the Hon'ble President of India Shri V. V. Giri for her inspiring leadership in promoting the cause of Voluntary Blood Donation in India in 1971.





L - R: Mrs. Usha Saboo, Mrs. Vij, Governor Mr. B. N. Chakraborty, Dr. Jolly, Mrs. Kanta Krishen, Mrs. Niti Sarin & Ms. Harmala Sodhi.

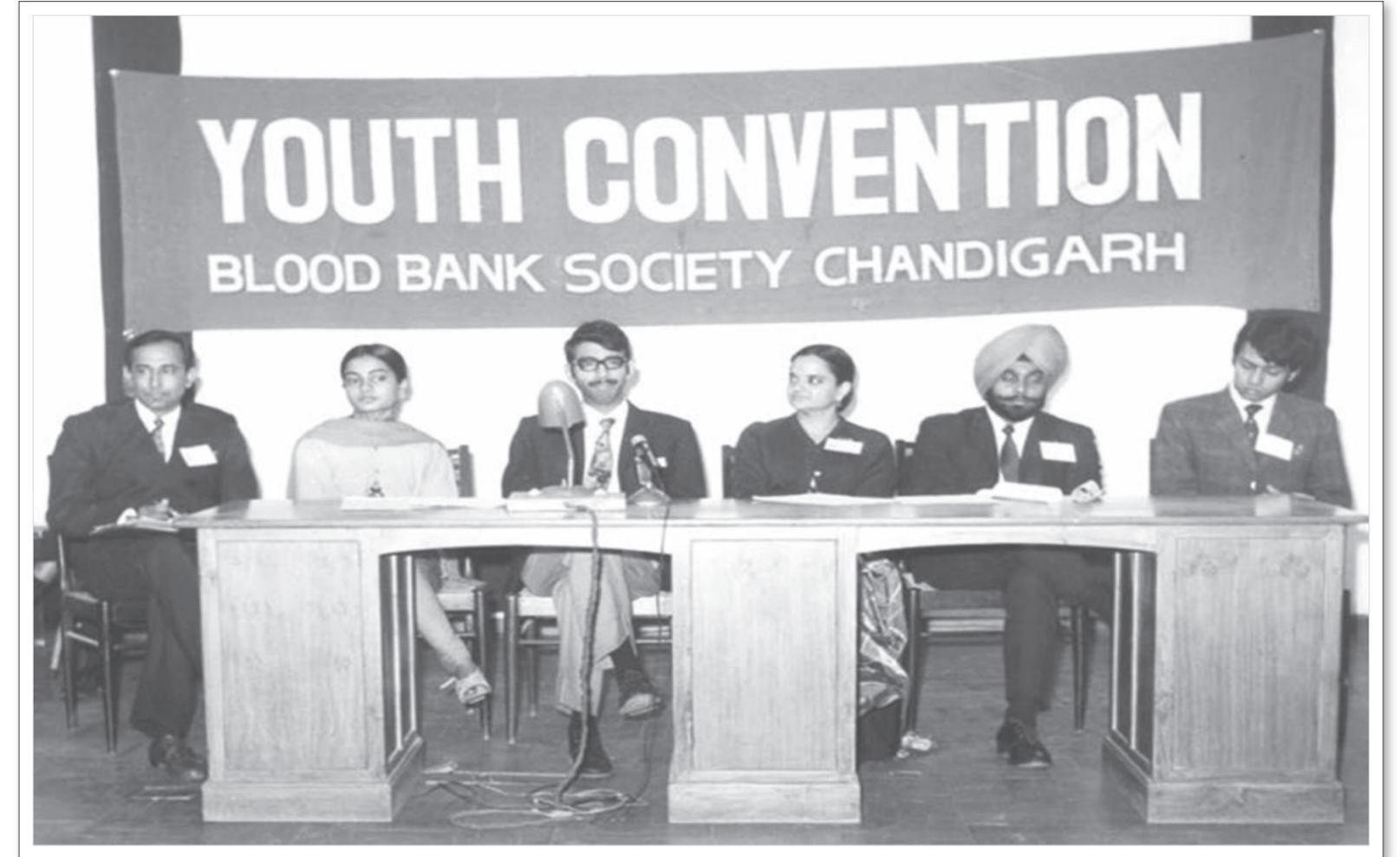
In October 1972, the Blood Bank Society, convened the 'First All India Conference on Voluntary Blood Donation (VBD)' in Chandigarh, with a congregation of over 150 blood-bankers at a single location. The most significant outcome of this conference was the formation of an All India Body known as the 'Indian Society of Blood Transfusion and Immunohematology', of which Mrs. Kanta Krishen served as its Secretary General for 24 years, until the year 1995.

Indian Society of Blood Transfusion and Immunohematology Conferences 1972 - 1995

	Place	Year	President Elected	Secretary
1 st	Chandigarh	1972	Dr. J. G. Jolly	Mrs. Kanta Krishen
2 nd	Ahmedabad	1973	Dr. J. G. Jolly	Mrs. Kanta Krishen
3 rd	Bombay	1975	Mrs. L. Moolgaokar	Mrs. Kanta Krishen
4 th	Madurai	1976	Brig. R.N. Dutta	Mrs. Kanta Krishen
5 th	Calcutta	1977	Dr. P. C. Mitra	Mrs. Kanta Krishen
6 th	Berhampur	1978	Dr. T. Subramanian	Mrs. Kanta Krishen
7 th	Chandigarh	1980	Dr. K. H. Bharucha	Mrs. Kanta Krishen
8 th	Madras	1981	Brig. M. Bose	Mrs. Kanta Krishen
9 th	Patna	1982	Col. A. K. Dutta	Mrs. Kanta Krishen
10 th	Rohtak	1983	Dr. C. Prakash	Mrs. Kanta Krishen
11 th	Hyderabad	1984	Dr. (Mrs.) K. Rajyalakshmi	Mrs. Kanta Krishen
12 th	Bangalore	1986	Dr. T. Prabhu	Mrs. Kanta Krishen
13 th	Jaipur	1987	Dr. M. L. Sharma	Mrs. Kanta Krishen
14 th	Pune	1988	Dr. R. V. Agrawal	Mrs. Kanta Krishen
15 th	Indore	1989	Brig. Sasi Kumar	Mrs. Kanta Krishen
16 th	Madurai	1991	Dr. P. Sivraj	Mrs. Kanta Krishen
17 th	Bombay	1992	Dr. (Mrs.) Zarin Bharucha	Mrs. Kanta Krishen
18 th	Jamshedpur	1993	Mr. H. P. Bodhanwala	Mrs. Kanta Krishen
19 th	Trivandrum	1994	Mr. H. P. Bodhanwala	Mrs. Kanta Krishen
20 th	Madras	1995	Dr. K. M. Radhakrishnan	Mrs. Kanta Krishen



The year ended with a 'Youth Convention' in December, 1972 organised to promote the cause.



Ms. Neelam Jolly, Mr. Mac Sarin, Ms. Usha Talwar & Mr. D. P. Singh amongst others.



On World Red Cross Day an inter-school declamation contest was organised. The theme was 'Give Blood Save Life'. Mr. Neeraj Jolly and Mr. Dinesh Kumar of Sr. Model School were awarded the shield by Mrs. Indira Chakraborty. Also seen are Ms. Karam Singh, Principal and participants.



M. L. N. College celebrate Founder's Day with a blood donation *mela*. Principal Mr. T. N. Chadha is the moving spirit who entuses students to volunteer in large numbers. Dr. J. G. Jolly addresses the students. Mrs. Chadha, Mrs. Usha Suri & Mrs. Usha Johar are also seen.

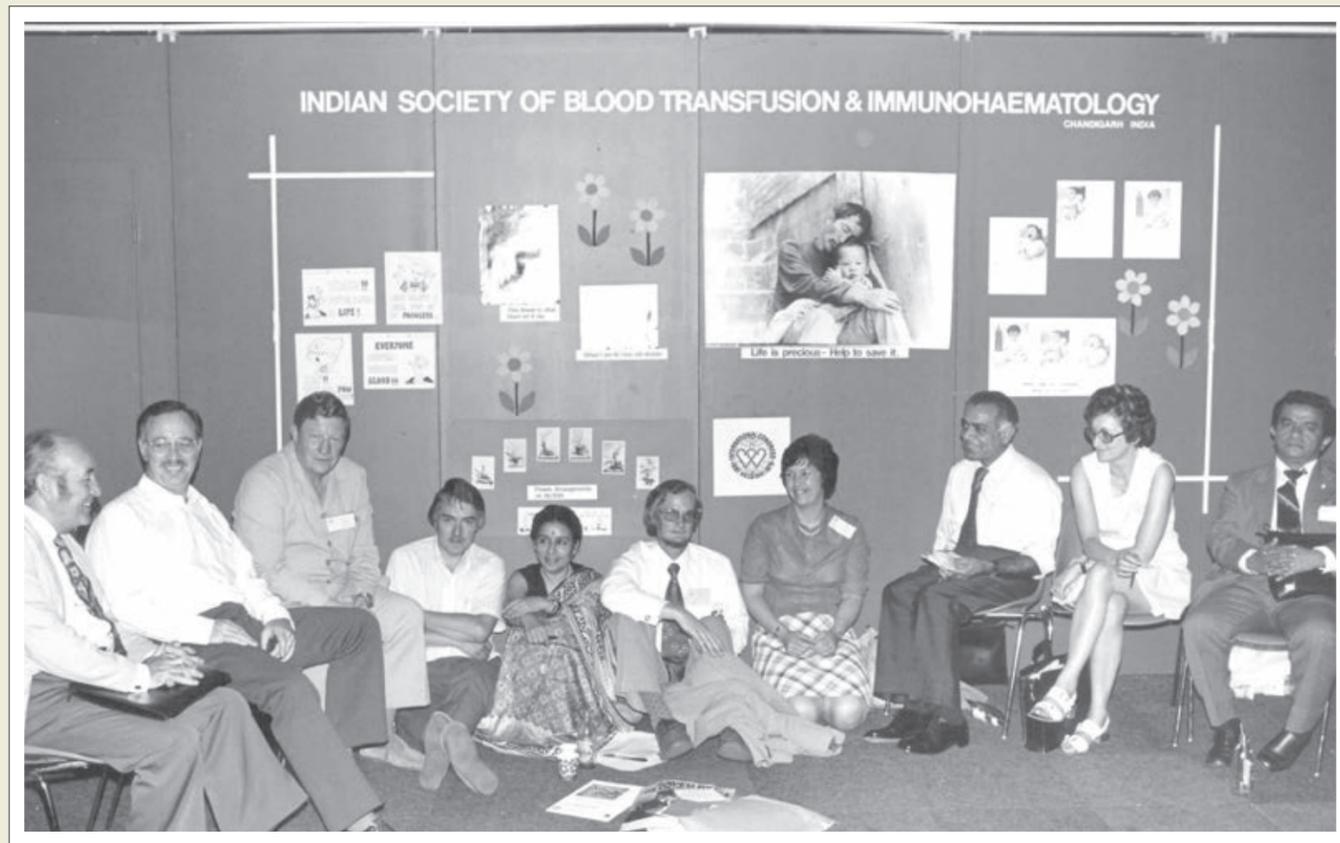


Indian Air Force officers and men donating blood during their 41st Anniversary celebrations in Chandigarh. Sq. Ldr. Dr. Bhutani donates while Gp. Capt. M. N. Sundaresan awaits his turn.

Key Milestones *(continued)*

- **November 1973:** Public Blood Donation Camp at Sector 17, Chandigarh.
- **December 1973:** 2nd All India Conference on Voluntary Blood Donation in Ahmedabad.
- **April 1974:** 300 officers and men of the Indian Air Force donate blood to commemorate their 41st anniversary.
- **May 1974:** World Red Cross Day celebrated with a seminar on 'Blood, the Lifeline of Humanity'.
- **September 1974:** 10th anniversary celebration of the Blood Bank Society, Chandigarh, presided by Dr. Karan Singh, Union Health Minister, marking crossing of 50,000 donors.
- **October 1974:** Launch of 'All India Voluntary Blood Donation Day' (AIVBD) on October 1 of every year. The Blood Bank Society and members of ISBTI take a pledge to organise special *awareness* events on the day. What began as a small local service in 1964, assumed nationwide proportions with several independent centres operating completely voluntary blood collection programmes.
- **March 1979:** Second Edition of 'Spring Time' fete organised at the Cricket Stadium.
- **1980:** International Symposium held in Chandigarh to learn best practices and experiences from other countries on promoting voluntary blood donation.

International Presence



India at the International Forum. The ISBTI now has affiliation with the International Society of Blood Transfusion and was represented at its 14th Congress held in Helsinki in 1975 by Dr. J. G. Jolly and Mrs. Kanta Krishen. Pictures show the ISBTI display at the Congress.



Resource Person Mrs. Niti Sarin, General Secretary of the Blood Bank Society, Chandigarh seen with other delegates at the 1st Asian meet on Voluntary Blood Donation, International Federation of Blood Donor Organisations (FIODS) at Chennai in 2007.



Blood Bank Society poster display at Beijing. L - R: Mrs. Niti Sarin, Mr. Mac Sarin & Mrs. Vanita Sahni; 2004.



International Society of Blood Transfusion Conference at Macau, 2008.

The Givers of Life

10th Anniversary Milestone; 1974.

Reproduced in this segment is the speech that was delivered by Mrs. Kanta Krishen, in 1975 in her capacity as the Secretary General, Indian Society of Blood Transfusion & Immunohematology. It rather poignantly captures her dual emotions of ‘anguish and determination’, of highlighting and eradicating the menace of paid blood sellers.



L - R: Mrs. Indira Chakraborty, Mr. Mac Sarin, Mr. Singh, Dr. P. N. Chautani, Dr. Karan Singh, Health Minister, Mr. Zail Singh, Chief Minister, Punjab, Mr. Bansi Lal, Chief Minister, Haryana, Mrs. Kanta Krishen & Dr. J. G. Jolly.

“A decade of success ought to be ample proof that a system is workable. This is exactly what our pilot-project, ‘Blood Bank Society, Chandigarh’ has demonstrated.

“Exactly 11 years ago, the people of Chandigarh decided to introduce a new trend in blood donation, that of providing blood only from healthy people so that the sick and injured obtain the life sustaining fluid in its purest form. Today, they have fully succeeded in their objective.

“Thanks to thousands of donors, Chandigarh has not only taken the national lead in this programme, but like a loving mother, it has also created several offshoots in other parts of the country. Today, practically in every state, sincere efforts are underway to set up services based on the voluntary pattern. We however have a long way, a very long way to go before we can reach anywhere near our final destination. Although I was generally aware of this fact, this realization occurred to me when colleagues and I had an occasion to visit half a dozen cities last year. It would be an understatement to say that all of us were deeply shocked.

“What confronted us at many places, had to be seen to be believed. In fact it was difficult to imagine that such conditions could exist. There are clusters of wretched, poor, filthy and disease ridden human beings hanging around almost every hospital, called in for selling blood. Some are alcoholics, others drug addicts. Their hair is matted with dirt, their eyes bloodshot. The only

semblance of clothing they wear is a shredded sack and when any of them sticks out his arm, it tells you that he has been selling blood twice or thrice a week. These are living tragedies, for by giving blood so often they are themselves available for life spans of only a few years.

“How useful or harmful is this blood? The answer is given by the example of the countries around the world which have banned this source of blood completely because of the havoc it created for the health of the recipients. Disease ridden blood from such professionals has caused untold damage to recipient patients.



L - R: Dr. B. N. S. Walia, Mrs. Kanta Krishen, Dr. Manmohan Kaur, Mrs. Usha Saboo, Governor, Gen. Jacob, Vice Chancellor Dr. Pathak & Mrs. G. K. Brar; 2001.

“In one year alone there were as many as 18,000 cases of Hepatitis in USA, which were attributable to blood transfusion obtained from the professional sources. It is this consideration that has compelled US authorities to adopt the policy of 100% voluntary blood donation. Several other countries have introduced strict legislations to stop buying and selling of blood.

“You might ask, ‘Why is blood not tested before transfusion, of persons who may appear to be infected with Hepatitis and hence excluded from donating?’ The reason is simple. There is no known test which can detect the virus with certainty. The only reliable way of screening out jaundice is the donor’s own admission. And, for obvious

reasons a voluntary donor will give the right answer, whereas a professional will not.

“To give you an idea of how much more distance we have to cover, allow me to share a few examples. Helsinki is a beautiful and clean city like Chandigarh, with a population of about 3-4 lakhs. There the average number of healthy donors, per day are 300. In Chandigarh which has a population of about 2.5-3 lakhs, the number is 30. Frankfurt organizes blood collection camps twelve times a week. We do it once a week. London has four collection teams that bring in about a thousand units per day. Our collection team feels pleased when it brings in 100 units in a week.



October 1, All India Blood Donation Day, Mrs. Usha Saboo pins a flag on Mr. J. L. Hathi, Governor of Punjab; 1977.

“America has a couple of ‘10 Gallon Donor Clubs’ which restricts their membership to those who have given 10 gallons of blood, which in our terms means about 150 units of blood.



Mrs. Niti Sarin, addressing the audience at the Annual Function organised for blood donors; 2009.

“There is so much blood out there that there is enough to spare for everyone who needs it. Surplus stocks are converted into plasma and half a dozen other elements, which play a very important role in saving lives.

“The general position in our country I am afraid is disappointing. Although we are generally known to be a compassionate society, but I wonder what happens to that compassion when it comes to offering blood for

a friend or a family member. A husband will endanger his wife’s life, a father his child’s and so on, because while they expect the blood bank to produce their requirement, many often refuse to give their own in return.

“Let us for a minute, ponder over this. ‘How does a blood service function?’ It functions entirely on the strength of the support it receives from the community. A blood bank is like any other bank. People have first got to make a deposit before they can draw on it. A blood bank must therefore

receive blood before it can issue it. The quality of service it can render is directly in proportion to the help it receives from people. The community gets the kind of service that it deserves. The more it gives the more it receives.

“Some people do give their best to the blood bank. When supplies are diminishing and demands are pressing or emergency calls are sent out, they rise to the occasion magnificently. These good people have left their jobs, homes and activities to come to the blood bank for persons whom they don’t even know. To all of them we offer a salute, not just from the Blood Bank but from the entire community.



Dr. S. Bambah, Mr. Pradip Mehra, Advisor to the Administrator,
Mrs. Kanta Krishen & Mr. Mac Sarin; 2008.

“To those who waver on the brink of indecision or those who hesitate to give on account of fear I have only one thing to say: ‘If there was any risk involved would thousands of people donate repeatedly?’ They have made their lives a pattern of selfless giving. Their blood gifts have made this service possible. But the responsibility is being realized by only a few, even though there is a huge population that can be eligible for donation. If only 4 per cent of the population were to give blood regularly there would be no shortage.

“As a result of the effort of the Indian Society of Blood Transfusion and Immunohematology a move has been initiated by the authorities to introduce the voluntary concept of blood donation. The Red Cross and other voluntary organisations also are beginning to make the switch-over to the voluntary programme.

“The All India Voluntary Blood Donation Day on October 1 was celebrated enthusiastically in several parts of India. Shri Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, President of India in his message issued on the day said, “In our country we are depending largely on paid blood donors and the sooner we do away with commercialisation in blood the better it will be. I offer my congratulations to the Blood Bank Society, Chandigarh on the pioneering work they have done for popularizing voluntary blood donation.”



Mrs. Shamsher Bahadur, Mrs. Indira Chakraborty, Mrs. Champa Mangat Rai & Mrs. Kanta Krishen.

“Our Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi said, “What can give greater satisfaction than to save a life. And it is so easy for the average healthy individual. The donation of blood is a civilised and useful way of expressing our commitment to society and to our fellow human beings. Our hospitals are always short of blood, yet we seem to be inhibited by taboos and prejudice and the misgiving that the donation of blood is weakening, though this has been disproved in other countries which have no shortage of volunteers.”

“While we urge people to conquer unreasonable and groundless fear we also appeal to the authorities to give full support to the movement. To provide an adequate health service for its citizens the authorities must ensure that the blood used for transfusion is safe. The cause is deserving and its requirements are modest.”



Poster release by Mr. Pradip Mehra, Advisor to the Administrator, 2010.



Release of IEC material by Mr. Lalit Sharma, Advisor to the Administrator; 2004.



Mrs. Asha Hooda, wife of Chief Minister of Haryana, with members of the Blood Bank Society, Chandigarh; 2006.

*When you give blood
you give another birthday,
another anniversary,
another day at the beach,
another night under the stars,
another talk with a friend,
another hug,
another chance to live.*



PERSEVERANCE

*Success is no accident. It is hard work,
perseverance, learning, studying,
sacrifice and most of all, love for
what you are doing or learning to do.*

- Pele

**BLOOD DONORS
SAVE LIVES & WIN HEARTS**



**JOIN THE MOVEMENT
DONATE BLOOD**
Blood Bank Society, Chandigarh

**SOME BONDS ARE CREATED BY BIRTH
OTHERS BY BLOOD
CREATE A BOND - DONATE BLOOD**



**JOIN THE MOVEMENT
DONATE BLOOD**
Blood Bank Society, Chandigarh

The Miracle of Blood

“In the maternity ward of the hospital lay a woman in her mid-thirties with a pretty face but tragedy written on it. She was in the ninth month of pregnancy and her looks betrayed more despair than hope. She had already lost eight babies; some full term, others earlier. This one was her last hope because her husband had died a couple of months ago. The incompatibility of the wife’s blood with her husband’s had been responsible for the tragedies, but this time she was admitted into a leading hospital and the doctors were hopeful of saving the baby. The miracle medicine would be blood. The baby would need a complete exchange transfusion.

“A message was splashed by the blood bank on All India Radio and the local newspapers asking for donors of that particular blood group. Explaining details of the case special appeals were made to women’s colleges. Moved by the tragic circumstances of the case a group of college girls responded to the call and promptly reported to the blood bank. The child was saved. Tears of joy and relief trickled down the cheeks of the mother, her face glowing in the pride of motherhood. It was all thanks to this supreme act of generosity on the part of several young donors, whose own sense of thrill was no less.

“Thousands of babies all over the world who are born with such a problem are like-wise saved every day mainly because some compassionate person somewhere comes forward willingly to part with a little quantity of his or her blood. The Rh-factor and its importance in blood therapy was discovered in 1941 by Karl Landsteiner. It got its name from the ‘Rhesus monkey’ in whose blood it is found. The Rh-factor has a special significance when a Rh-negative mother is carrying a Rh-positive baby. The positive cells from the baby’s blood produce antibodies in the mother’s blood which travel to the baby and start destroying its red cells. The result is jaundice which in its severe form can be fatal to the baby. Such situations can be effectively overcome by giving blood transfusions to the baby at birth or even before birth by intra-uterine transfusion.”

(Narrated by Mrs. Kanta Krishen).

What is Thalassemia?

Thalassemia is a genetic blood disease. People born with this disease cannot make normal hemoglobin which is needed to produce healthy red blood cells. Thalassemia is not infectious and cannot be passed from one individual to another by personal contact.

The combination of one defective gene from the mother and one from the father, who carry the 'trait' leads to three different types of thalassemia: Thalassemia Minor, Thalassemia Intermedia or Thalassemia Major.

Treatment

Regular blood transfusions are the only treatment available to patients with thalassemia. It allows thalassemia patients to live relatively normal lives. Most thalassemia major patients require transfusions every 2-4 weeks, depending on the severity of the disorder. While regular transfusions greatly contribute to the quality and length of life of thalassemia major patients, they also leave patients with an excess of iron in their bodies. This dangerous side effect is known as iron overload.



Poster release by Mrs. Kirron Kher & Mrs. Anuradha Gupta, Secretary - Health, Government of India.



Ms. Sukh Brar who walked through Punjab spreading awareness about Thalassemia, being welcomed in Chandigarh; 2014.



The Governor's wife Mrs. Jean Rodrigues with Thalassemic Children; 2006.

It is necessary that this excess iron be removed, or chelated, otherwise it gets stored in the vital organs of the body, such as the heart and liver. There is no cure for Thalassemia - only prevention. Get yourself tested for the Thalassemia Trait.

On May 24 and 25, 1988, all roads in Chandigarh seemed to lead to the PGI Blood Bank. The Thalassemia Children's Welfare Association which was formed in April, 1988 by people whose children or wards suffered from Thalassemia had organised a two-day blood donation camp. Educated, encouraged and guided by the activities of the Blood Bank Society, donors began to arrive in a steady stream from early morning, which by noon grew into a torrent.

People came from far and wide, representing all possible socio-economic and occupational groups. The donors included not only members of the association but also relatives, friends, and even friends of friends. Over 150 donations were received at this unique-camp.



Volunteers line up to welcome the guests to an Annual Function; 2001.



Stalwarts Mrs. Meena Kashyap, Mrs. Kanta Krishen & Dr. Saudamini Bambah make a charming reception committee; 2006.

A Helping Hand

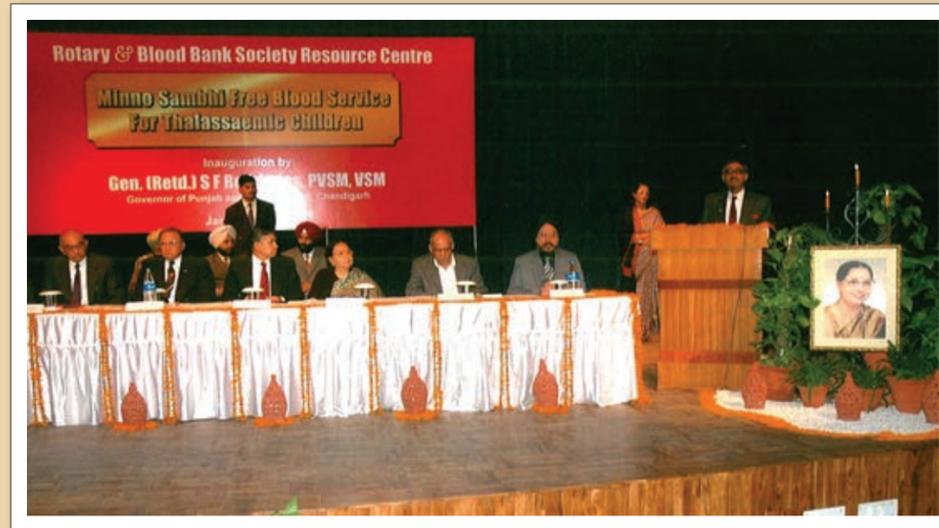
Remembering his wife Minno's lifelong commitment towards children, Dr. Mo Sambhi of the U.S. recognized the Blood Bank Society, Chandigarh as the perfect medium through which to perpetuate her memory. As a result thereof, the Minno Sambhi Free Blood Service for Thalassemic Children was established in 2006.

Message from Dr. Mo Sambhi:

“Ladies, Gentlemen and Dear Children,

Minno loved children. She devoted herself by choice to the care of children with disabilities. She called them God's chosen children, blessed with talents despite disabilities. God takes with one hand and gives with another.

“Minno is watching from above, giving her fond approval of the programme



Launch of the Minno Sambhi Service for Thalassemia Children by Governor, Gen. S. F. Rodrigues; 2006.

and I am full of gratification and gratitude that the programme has been established in Minno's loving memory and will operate for a long time to come.

“The concept for the programme was born when one fateful morning in Chandigarh Mrs. Kanta Krishen told me, deep down from her heart, that there was a dire need for supply of blood free of cost to Thalassemic Children. Simultaneously, I heard a message from Minno in my heart. I said, I will see what I can do. Mac and Niti Sarin followed through with their characteristic selfless zeal and the programme was born.

“I wish to pay a tribute to the dedication of the two families, Krishens and Sarins, that became my inspiration. I feel blessed with their warm affectionate friendship and am proud to be a small part of their selfless labor of love.

“I also want to join every one present in expressing gratitude to His Excellency the Governor of Punjab, Gen. Rodrigues, for gracing the occasion, and to the physicians and the hospitals who have agreed to operate the programme and make it a success.

“To the children, I want to give my best wishes and say *‘remember Minno's words you are chosen by God for his blessings. May you all fulfil the purpose in your precious lives to its fullest’*.

“I am humbled to be a part of all this noble effort, and sincerely wish I could have attended the function in person.

“On behalf of Minno and myself I wish the best to all present and to the programme.”



Mr. Mac Sarin, Dr. Mo Sambhi, Ms. Katherin & Sunil Khilnani.

- Mo Sambhi



On October 1, 1988, Dr. Jolly is bid farewell with flowers by the staff.



Members of the Blood Bank Society with Dr. & Mrs. Jolly on the day he relinquished charge at the PGI.

20 Years of 'Selfless-Service'

20th Anniversary Milestone; 1984.



Inauguration of the 20th Anniversary celebration by Governor Mr. B. D. Pande and Chief Commissioner Mr. K. Bannerji; 1984.

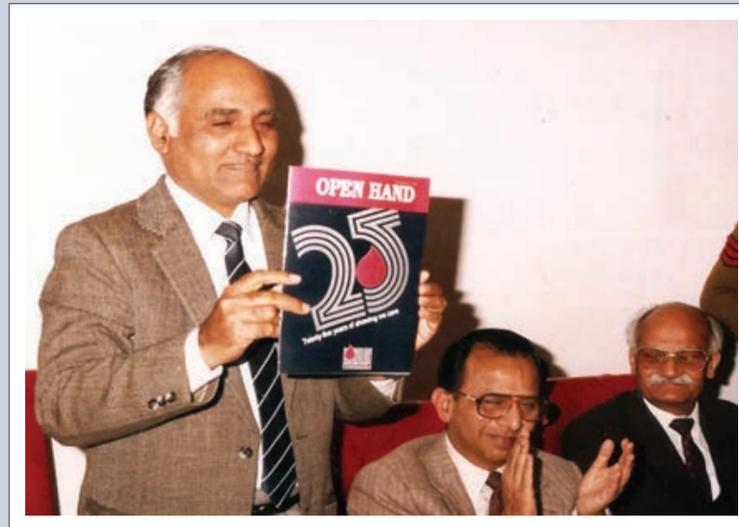
25 Years of showing 'We Care'

25th Anniversary Milestone; 1989.

Reproduced in this segment are some excerpts from a speech by Mrs. Kanta Krishen, delivered in 1989 while celebrating the 25th Anniversary of The Blood Bank Society, Chandigarh. The reflection of confidence in her expression is a summation of the hard work and enormous effort that the Blood Bank Society volunteers had invested over the years; however there is a tone of disappointment as despite exhibiting the success of the Voluntary Blood Donation system to leaders from the Government of India and the State of Punjab as well as Haryana, neither the executive nor the

legislature was willing to bring about a law to prevent the setting-up of professional Blood Banks in the country or the City Beautiful.

"We have gathered here to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of the Blood Bank Society, Chandigarh. Our society is India's first to run a 100% voluntary blood service that collects and issues the safest and healthiest quality of blood, available only from volunteers and relatives. This has been possible only because of the effort of the honorary members of the Blood Bank Society who have worked tirelessly now for 25 years!"



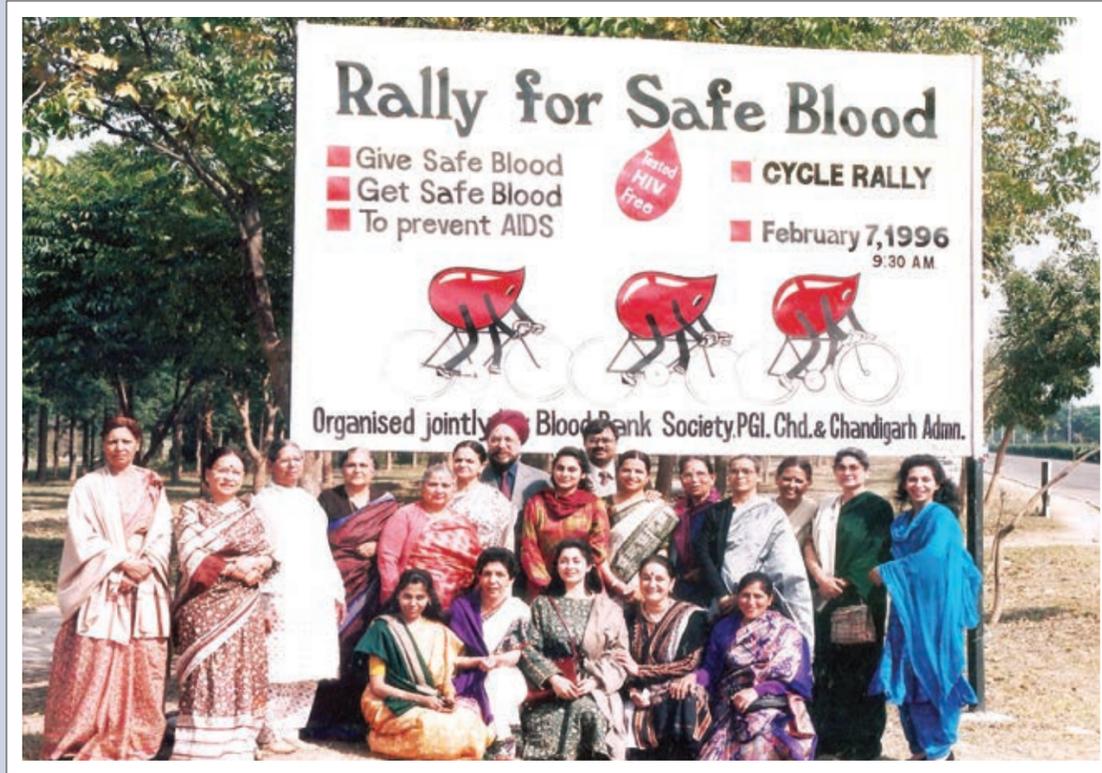
Mr. Baleshwar Rai, Mr. R. K. Saboo & Mr. N. Khosla at the 25th Anniversary 1989.

"The Rotaract Club Chandigarh, a band of young, enterprising collegiate undertook a motivation campaign to remove wrong notions that existed in the minds of people. Their campaign was divided into three parts. An 'amateur photography' contest on the theme 'Gift of Life', sponsored by a local photo-studio, a 'slogan writing contest' in which nearly 500 slogans were entered and a very novel idea of 'paint-your-T-shirt competition'. 800 shirts were available at pre-arranged points for competitors who painted and wore them and walked around the popular market of Sector 17. Much ingenuity was on display with young-ones, students and grown-ups having used their own interpretation about Blood. Awards were presented by the Inner Wheel Club of Chandigarh, at a specially organised function where the prize-winning T-shirts were also exhibited.

A unique feature of the silver jubilee celebrations was a 'Blood-Walk' in which 47 institutions and social clubs participated. Almost 10,000 children, youth and adults assembled carrying posters, banners, wearing caps, sashes and fancy-dresses, each proclaiming the message of Blood. The event created a sensation in the city.



Over 800 people from all walks of life participated in the paint your T-shirt competition. Seen above are Mrs. Manju Suri, Mr. Sandeep Suri, Ms. Satvika Saboo & Mrs. Anu Saboo; 1989.



Rally for safe blood. L - R Standing: Mrs. Nirmal Mahendroo, Mrs. Kanta Krishen, Dr. Manmohan Kaur, Mrs. Usha Johar, Mrs. Savitri Bhambri, Mrs. Usha Talwar, Dr. B. N. S. Walia, Mrs. Nita Pachnanda, Mr. Keshav Malhotra, Mrs. Neelam Dewan, Mrs. Kamna Sharma, Dr. S. K. Agnihotri, Mrs. Kulwant Bedi, Mrs. Leena Bhangoo & Mrs. Vanita Sahni.
L - R Sitting: Mrs. Aprna Khaitan, Mrs. Subhadra Jhina, Mrs. Ritu H. Singh, Mrs. Niti Sarin & Mrs. Vanita Talwar.

Commission (UGC) to telecast films on Blood during their daily transmission service. A film, 'Gift of Red Gold' was made by the Technical Teachers Training Institute, Chandigarh, as a service to the community."

"The festival season in Chandigarh saw a new series of greeting cards. Issued in different designs the cards had six telling slogans like, 'Blood bridges all gaps', 'Blood Donors bring Sunshine', 'Let's be Blood Buddies' and 'The best offering - Blood'. The Blood Bank Society also made an attempt to convey the message of blood-donation through the language of flowers, since Chandigarh is also known as the Garden-City. The greeting cards have sold very well and have served a double purpose, one of taking our message to thousands of people and the other of generating income for the Society.

"The Blood Bank Society approached the University Grants

30 Years of 'Spreading Happiness'

30th Anniversary Milestone; 1994.



There is no substitute for blood.
It only comes from generous donors.

After years of relentless efforts, Blood Bank services in India are eventually taking the shape that international bodies like WHO, Federation of Red Cross Societies and International Society of Blood Transfusion have been urging countries to adopt i.e. safe blood from 100% voluntary donors.



Umbrella walk on December 1, 'World AIDS Day'. L - R: Mrs. Anu Vala, Mrs. Niti Sarin, Ms. Harman Sibia, Mrs. Vanita Sahni & Mrs. Neelam Dewan; 2009.

- 1996 was another watershed year in the Blood Bank Society's journey. That year the Hon'ble Supreme Court banned the sale of blood in India.
- It paved the way of the formation of NBTC (National Blood Transfusion Council) and SBTCs (National Blood Transfusion Councils).
- India adopted the 'National Blood Policy' to ensure transfusion of Safe Blood.



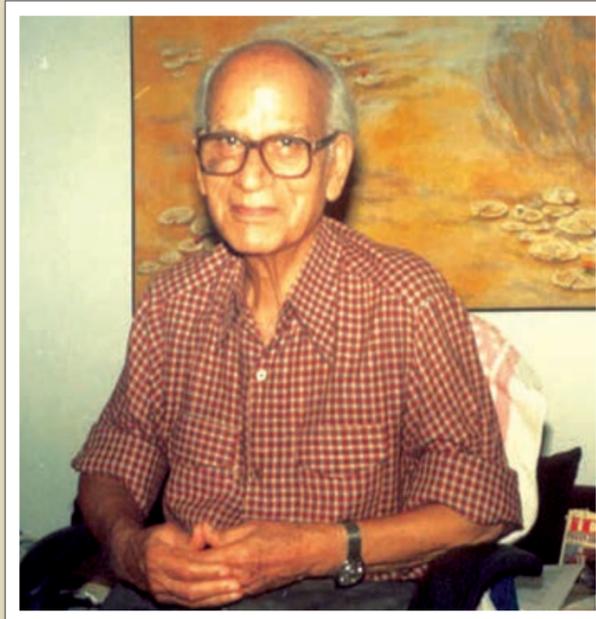
Creating awareness at the Punjab University Rose Festival; 2015.

H. D. Shourie

As the Government was not willing to legislate to ban the trade in blood, on the ground that there were not adequate Voluntary Blood Donors in the country to meet the demand, the Blood Bank Society had to turn to the judiciary for help. In 1992, the Blood Bank Society approached Mr. H. D. Shourie of Common Cause to file a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) against selling and buying of blood. It was primarily through the efforts of Dr.

Manmohan Kaur and Mrs. Kanta Krishen that the litigants were able to present a water-tight case by presenting facts and evidence collected from throughout the country to expose prevailing malpractices.

When the Blood Bank Society was growing in its domain and dimension creating its legacy leaf-by-leaf, its persistence-of-purpose often led them to certain people and organisations who created new opportunities, lent greater salience and created new milestones. Although Mrs. Kanta Krishen, was generally aware about an NGO known as ‘Common Cause’, she hadn’t evaluated their work deeply until she needed judicial/legislative guidance, support and help in dealing with rampant malpractices in the blood donation arena. Kanta recalls, “On making initial enquiries I was told that it was headed by a well-known activist Mr. Shourie, a name



Mr. H. D. Shourie of Common Cause.

that rang a bell. I wasn’t however sure whether he would still carry memories of having visited my father in Amritsar, when I was just seven!

“When I called him, he surprised me by saying, *Of course I do! You were a school girl then.*” When Kanta apprised him of her issue, he asked her to send her a full report, immediately. It took Kanta and her associate Dr. Manmohan Kaur over a year to gather the relevant information from blood banks across the country. A distressing picture emerged; of poor and diseased people selling their blood every week instead of once in three months, and of outdated and diluted blood being issued to patients. As expected, Mr. Shourie was both shocked and moved. He decided to meet concerned experts, government officials, consulted Red Cross authorities and finally prepared the case that was the foundation of a PIL filed in the Supreme Court in 1993. Even though he was touching eighty at that time, the gravity of the matter convinced him to personally argue the case, which stretched on for 3 years. Eventually on January 4, 1996 the Supreme Court decreed that all professional blood banks must be shut-down within two years. “A vital and significant outcome of the judgment and our subsequent meeting with



Mr. H. D. Shourie seen with Centurion Blood Donors; 1996.

the then Prime Minister Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee was the adoption of a National Blood Policy and the formation of a National Blood Transfusion Council, supported by State Councils in every state,” concludes Kanta, reminiscing perhaps the most significant milestone of her life. The Blood Bank Society firmly believes that it is largely due to the conviction and untiring effort of Mr. Shourie that India has set itself on the right path. What many others could not achieve over the decades, was made possible by an 84-year-old man. The Blood Bank Society extends its deepest gratitude to him. This then is a homage to a greatness called Shourie. An award has been instituted by FBDOI to perpetuate his memory.

Memorandum presented to The Prime Minister

On October 29, 2001 a delegation of the Indian Society of Blood Transfusion and Immunohematology met Prime Minister, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee regarding the highly unsatisfactory state of the blood transfusion service in India. The following members comprised the delegation.

- Dr. P. L. Dhand, President, ISBTI.
- Mr. Apurba Ghosh, Secretary General, ISBTI.
- Dr. Manmohan Kaur, Deputy President, ISBTI.
- Mr. M. L. (Mac) Sarin, Senior Advocate, Honorary Legal Advisor, ISBTI - Former Advocate General Punjab and Haryana.
- Mrs. Kanta Krishen, Founder Secretary General, ISBTI.



ISBTI delegation meets Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee on August 29, 2001 to urge him to implement the National Blood Policy.

- Four members of Parliament from West Bengal - Mr. Tarit Baran Topder, Dr. Ranjit Kumar Panja, Mr. Shomik Lahiri and Mr. Anil Basu.

Despite the fact that in January 1996 the Supreme Court of India had ordered a ban on professional blood donations throughout India with effect from January 1, 1998, the practice of buying and selling of blood continued unabated in several parts of the country.

A draft of the National Blood Policy was prepared by the Ministry of Health, Government of India. It was widely discussed and debated across several Government Departments, besides being circulated amongst appropriate NGOs.

At the same time a group of NGOs had also created their own version, which was shared with the Ministry. Unfortunately, even after the expiry of three years, the Bill had not even been placed before the Parliament. The process of legislating and notifying a National Blood Policy, had therefore been delayed inordinately.

The delegation therefore impressed upon the Prime Minister to expedite the process, and submitted a memorandum providing suggestions that could either

be implemented immediately or incorporated within the policy framework.

- An immediate and complete ban on setting-up of new private Blood Banks.
- Proclaiming buying and selling of blood as a criminal offence.
- Utilisation of government media to spread the message of safe blood, including instructions to Doordarshan and other television channels to include issue related messages under the public interest category.
- Making testing of blood before issuance, mandatory.
- Providing financial support from Central Government to NGOs devoted to the cause and making the process of getting such grants simplified.
- Providing 100% tax-rebate to NGO's doing genuine and exemplary work to spread awareness.
- Waiving customs duty on import of equipment needed for safe blood transfusion.

The National Blood Policy was finally adopted in April 2002.

Blood Banker's Legal Handbook



Mrs. Sushma Swaraj, Union Health Minister of India, seen along with Mr. M. L. Sarin, Sr. Advocate releasing the Handbook; 2003.

The first ever book covering legal aspects of blood-banking, authored by Mr. M. L. Sarin, a Centurion donor and co-authored by Mr. Harpreet Singh Giani Bar-at-law, regular blood donor was released by Union Health Minister, Mrs. Sushma Swaraj, in March 2003.

An old adage goes, *'the way to a man's heart is through his stomach'*. The man in question here, M. L. Sarin (or Mac), as we all fondly know him, discovered that the way to his lady-love, Niti's heart was through voluntary blood donation. On meeting Mrs. Kanta Krishen, Niti's mother, he realized that by donating blood he could win over two people with one heroic deed. *'Bulls Eye' - the smitten Mac became a blood donor and*

went on to reach a century and today has 115 donations to his distinguished credit.

Talking about his achievements, this three time Advocate General of both states of Punjab and Haryana, does not limit himself to the national level only. He is also the recipient of two awards from the French Government - 'Chevalier de Palmes Academique' in 1999 and the 2nd highest award given to a private citizen by the French Government called the 'Chevalier de Order National du Merit', in 2016.

It would be no exaggeration if we were to give him the title of *'Champion of the Champions'* of the voluntary blood donation movement. His contribution has not been limited to a 115 blood donations only, but he has also donated huge amounts of funds that are the life source of any NGO. He has been a true benefactor of the Society by involving his extended family and friends, also, to contribute to this life saving cause. Mac has freely shared his legal acumen with the Blood Bank Society thus helping it to achieve transparent functioning for which it is recognized. He went a step forward when he helped

the Society to file a case against buying and selling of blood, which was later taken to its victorious conclusion by Mr. H. D. Shourie of Common Cause. Realizing the difficulties faced by the blood bankers nationwide, Mac not only wrote but funded a book, **The Blood Bankers Legal Handbook**. This book was highly appreciated by all concerned. The cause benefited immensely by this magnanimous gesture of distributing the book free of cost. Mac's unflinching optimism and his ability to always *'look at the bigger picture'* has stood the Society in good stead especially when it is at cross roads.

When the Society embarked upon a journey into uncharted territory, of setting up Chandigarh's first stand alone Blood Bank, Mac was the guiding light. His affiliations to various national and international organisations always managed to bring in financial help which was the life line for the upcoming project. His professionalism was instrumental in helping the society to ease into the new partnership with Rotary.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that, Frank Sinatra's famous song *'I Did It My Way'* personifies Mac's style of life.

40 Years of 'Community Service'

40th Anniversary Milestone; 2004.

In 2004 the Blood Bank Society, Chandigarh completed 40 years of its illustrious journey.

While promoting Voluntary Blood Donation was not an easy task by any measure of comparison in a society that was largely driven by selfish needs or reasons, yet by the turn of the millennium, the Blood Bank Society had elevated Chandigarh amongst the foremost cities in the country in terms of the quality it collected. According to National AIDS Control Organisation reports this is considered to be the safest source of blood.

Right from its inception, the Blood Bank Society has been functioning and expanding its reach on funds raised purely through donations. With the active support of volunteers and the general public it has created a mark for itself in serving the community, rather untiringly. The literal meaning of *Perseverance* is, 'persistence in doing something despite difficulty or delay in achieving success'. As any individual, society, organisation or mission grows in stature, so does its responsibility and sphere of influence.



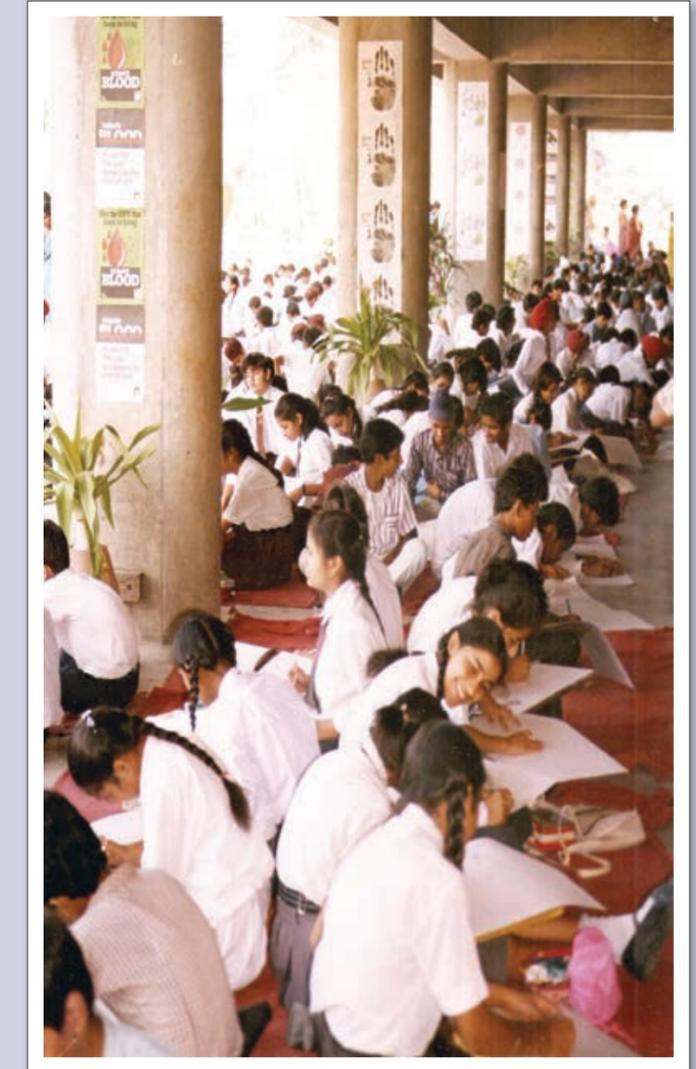
Mrs. Niti Sarin receives an award by the U. T. Administration at the Republic Day function; 2014.

From an activity that started as a rather small, part time, feel-good, voluntary service of an individual, ably supported by her friends and family in 1963, it had grown into an organisation of enormous dimension and influence by the year 2004.

Kanta turned seventy-five that year. Although her spirit was still young, her body was naturally ageing with time. Her younger daughter Niti, wife of Chandigarh's famous Advocate Manmohan Lal (Mac) Sarin had been assisting her mother in almost every aspect of her 'noble-activities' since high school. In 2007, Niti took over the responsibility of Secretary of the Blood Bank Society in a seamless transition.



Students at Youth Motivation Workshop; 2006.



Painting competition on 'Safe Blood' in which over 2000 students took part.



Dr. Vanita Gupta, Project Director, SACS, seen along with Dr. Naresh Bhatia at the 8th FBDIOI conference organised by the Blood Bank Society.



Dr. S. Bambah, Mrs. Malati Chibber, Mr. Apurba Ghosh, Mr. Rajan Kashyap, Mr. Krishan Mohan, Dr. Debasish Gupta, Dr. B. N. S. Walia, Dr. Manmohan Kaur, & Dr. Shah; 2006.

In 2006 an all India body called the Federation of Blood Donor Organisations of India (FBDIOI), was formed to empower motivators. To further its cause and effectiveness the Blood Bank Society organised seminars and workshops with village headmen (*Panches & Sarpanches*) across the length and breadth of Punjab, Haryana and parts of Himachal Pradesh. As an extension exercise of the same objective, it also held 'Youth Motivation Workshops' in colleges, schools, offices and even villages to sensitise the young.

By this time, the Blood Bank Society members were regularly invited as 'Resource Persons' at several national level meetings and events. The year also witnessed, India's 1st National Meet on, 'Eradication of Thalassemia'.



Mr. Pradip Mehra, Advisor U. T. Administration flags off the Candlelight Walk on October 1, 2008.



Candle Light March.



Students of Dev Samaj College of Education participating in Candle Light Walk at the lake on October 1, 2007.



Youth Motivation Seminar being addressed by Mrs. Vanita Sahni at MCMDAV College; 2010.

Since 2007, the Blood Bank Society has been consistently enhancing the scope of its work and influence.

Having earned the trust and support of the people of Chandigarh and beyond, in a period of over four decades, its volunteers have been pushing the envelope to include even more diversity and ingenuity in their promotional activities to increase the impact of their noble-mission.

For reasons of limited space, we are enumerating only a few key activities and events...

- **Education of Youth:** through 'Youth Motivation Camps' in colleges and offices; over 53 camps organised between 2007-2009.
- **Mass Awareness Rallies:** 'Candlelight Walks' were held regularly on October 1 of each year to commemorate the 'National Blood Donation Day'. These were usually flagged-off by the Governor of Haryana, the Advisor to the U. T. Administration or a similar eminent personality.



Mrs. Kanta Krishen and Dr. S. Bambah interacting with Mr. S. K. Setia, DPI, Dept. of Education Chandigarh; 2007.



A seminar to sensitize teachers; 2007.

- **Umbrella Walks:** on December 1, 2009 on the request of Chandigarh State AIDS Control Society (SACS) and on September 30, 2009 on the eve of the National Blood Donation Day.
- **Seminars for School Teachers:** for involving them to spread the message amongst children. Three Seminars held on March 15, 2007, April 7 & 26, 2007 targeted all government and private school teachers of Chandigarh.
- **Designing and printing of IEC material** in the form of posters, information-booklets, pamphlets, stickers, etc. which are used extensively and also sent to blood banks all over the country. For this purpose, poster designing competitions were held where the general public, school and college children participated in large numbers.
- **Memorabilia:** designing and making key-chains, book marks, stickers, pens, certificates and other such incentives for blood donors and as giveaways for the general public.



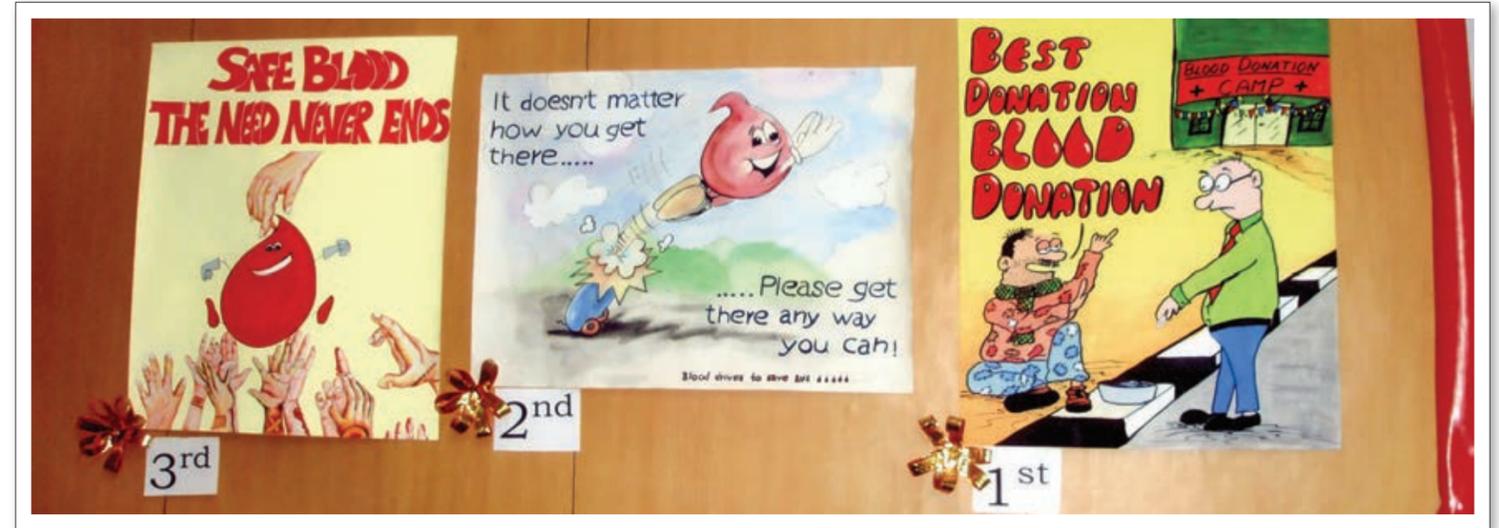
Members of the Blood Bank Society.

L - R Back Row: Mrs. Alka Khanna, Mrs. Neelam Dewan, Ms. Harman Sibia, Mrs. Vanita Sahni, Mrs. Niti Sarin, Mrs. Rupa S. Singh, Mrs. Mridula Oberoi & Mrs. Chand Nehru.

L - R Front Row: Ms. Soni Bagai, Mrs. Meena Kashyap, Mrs. Daya Gupta, Mrs. Brij Bala Gupta, Mrs. Kamna Sharma, Dr. S. Bambah, Mrs. Nirmal Mahendroo, Mrs. Kanta Krishen & Dr. Manmohan Kaur; 2009.



Prize winners with Chief Guest, Mr. Vivek Atrey; 2007.



The Winning Posters!



Visitors viewing the posters.



World Blood Donor Day, June 14, seen are: Mr. Hira Lal, Mr. Man Kumar, Mr. Arjun & Mr. Pawan Sharma; 2007.



Young students donating blood at the Blood Donation Camp at the International Health Expo.



Seen at the International Health Expo. are Col. Shah, Mrs. Anu Vala, Dr. Suchet Sachdeva & Mr. Vijay Sudan; 2009.

- **Setting up Information Booths** at Health Expositions, the annual Chandigarh Rose Festival, the Punjab University festivals and other important fairs to spread awareness.
- **Producing Video-Clips** to be used at Youth Motivation camps, Blood Donation Camps and other public places. Special thanks to Mrs. Veena Kapoor and The Teachers Technical Training Institute for making movies for us, to Mrs. Alka Pandey for her voice-over and Mrs. Primila Puri for producing music cassettes on Blood Donation.
- **Banners** to be used at Youth Motivation camps, Blood Donation Camps and on buses.
- **Celebration of World Blood Donor Day - June 14** by holding awareness campaigns at public places, offering free movies for blood donors, SMS campaigns, inserts in the newspapers and by distributing souvenirs and potted plants as reminders to donate blood.
- **Honouring Blood Donors** by organizing regular functions where important city, state or national personalities award the donors.
- **Advertising;** in co-ordination with *'The Tribune'* through a full-page feature on every October 1, (All India Blood Donation Day) highlighting activities of Blood Bank Society and the importance of Voluntary Blood Donation. This tradition was started when Mr. S.D. Bhambri was the General Manager of *The Tribune*.



Teacher's Day Seminar to sensitise school teachers on Voluntary Blood Donation. Mrs. Kamna Sharma at the mike; 2008.



Seminar *'Safe Blood The Need Never Ends'*. At the registration table - Mrs. Neelam Dewan, Mrs. Alka Khanna & Ms. Soni Bagai; 2006.



'Chain of Life', an event involving students to spread awareness on 'Safe Blood'; 1989.



Mrs. Neelam Dewan & Mrs. Mridula Oberoi at the Candlelight Walk; 2008.

- **Catch Them Young programme;** to educate and sensitise school children, followed by camps at schools for their parents and teachers.



Cricketer Kapil Dev donating blood; 1988 (left) & 2005 (right).



Harvesting the success of the school programme 'Catch Them Young' saw the first batch of young motivators turn into blood donors. The excitement of stepping into adulthood is visibly apparent of their bright young faces.



VIPs releasing red and white balloons to inaugurate the Annual Function; 2013.



Dr. R. C. Sobti, Vice-Chancellor of Punjab University, Mr. Pradip Mehra, Advisor to Chandigarh Administrator & Mr. D. S. Babla going through the newsletter at the Annual Function; 2011.



Star Donors Mr. J. S. Benipal, Mr. Yogesh Sood, Mr. Parveen Punj, Mr. Ajay Malhotra & Mr. Mac Sarin alongwith grand-daughter Kismet.



Mrs. Sukrita Singh welcoming Dr. A. K. Grover, Vice Chancellor of Punjab University at the Annual Function; 2012.



Charming volunteers of the Blood Bank Society eagerly waiting for guests to arrive at the Annual Function; 2012.



Star Blood Donors at the Annual Function; 2012.



Mrs. Anuradha Gupta, Secretary - Health addressing guests at Annual Function; 2012.



Chandigarh MP Mrs. Kirron Kher with star donors after the award ceremony; 2012.



Mrs. Kanta Krishen thanking donors and guests with her special warmth; 2012.



Cutting the ribbon simultaneously at the Annual Function 2011, L - R: Dr. Sobti, Mr. Babla, Mr. Pradip Mehra, Adviser (U. T.), Mr. Sanjay Tandon, Mr. Rajan Kashyap & Mr. Anton Reinfelder.



Mrs. Kirron Kher at the inauguration of Annual Function; 2012.



Mrs. Kirron Kher & Dr. A. K. Grover, (Vice Chancellor - Punjab University), with other VIP guests at the Annual Function; 2012.



Awardees at Annual Function; 2012.



Mr. Sudarshan Aggarwal, Governor of Uttarakhand, presents the "Outstanding Motivator Award" to Mrs. Kanta Krishen; 2007.



Dr. P. L. Dhand awarding Mrs. Kanta Krishen at the All Indian Voluntary Blood Donation Day in Kolkata; 2007.

- Blood Bank Society, Chandigarh also participated in National and International Conferences where its members acted as Resource Persons.

The Blood Bank Society is represented on:

- National Blood Transfusion Council
- State Blood Transfusion Council, U. T. Chandigarh
- State Blood Transfusion Council, Haryana
- NACO Technical Resource Group
- Federation of Blood Donor Organisations of India (FBDOI)
- Indian Society of Blood Transfusion and Immunohematology



Award for Mrs. Kamna Sharma, Mrs. Nirmal Mahendroo & Mrs. Usha Talwar at the 8th FBDOI Conference; 2008.



Chief Guest, Mrs. Kirron Kher, planting a sapling to inaugurate the 11th FBDOI Conference: "Like Plants Blood Donors Nurture Life"; 2015.



Ms. Nalini Singh at the FBDOI Conference in Delhi; 2009.



Mrs. Kirron Kher, giving the inaugural address at the FBDOI Conference.



L-R: Poster release by Dr. Debasish Gupta President, FBDOI, Mrs. Kirron Kher, Dr. Manmohan Kaur, Mr. Apurba Ghosh Secretary, FBDOI & Mrs. Niti Sarin.



Delegates attending the 11th FBDOI Conference; 2015.



Umbrella Walk, at the Sukhna Lake, during the FBDOI Conference; 2010.



Advisor Mr. Pradip Mehra takes part in the umbrella walk.



Citizens of Chandigarh participating with great enthusiasm.



A New Era Dawns: A state of the art Blood Resource Centre is established

When the Blood Bank Society started to gain momentum, donors and recipients began to face certain problems associated with the PGI's immense popularity as the city's most sought after medical facility. During the 90's Chandigarh had begun to emerge as a small, yet fast-growing metropolis, hence issues like overcrowding, lack of parking space, limitations of reaching the Blood Bank *which was situated on the 3rd floor of the PGI*, need

of replacement donors and restrictive timings became huge disincentives for both donors and patients.

Thus, emerged the idea of an ideal, public friendly Blood Bank! Yet another, forward-looking concept of Mrs. Kanta Krishen.

In the mid-90's, Mr. Sudhir Bhagwan, prominent citizen of Portland, USA and the younger brother of Mrs.



The *Bhoomi Poojan* ceremony; 2001.



Mr. Sudhir Bhagwan's wife Sarita and daughter Sonia performing the *Bhoomi Poojan*; 2001.



On obtaining the licence for the new Blood Centre, priests of 4 religions invoke the Almighty's blessings, before the first blood donation on June 26, 2004.

Kanta Krishen, who was already inspired by his sister's efforts in popularizing Voluntary Blood Donation throughout the country, had expressed his desire to do something for the city where he had spent his childhood. He therefore offered a handsome amount of Rs. 50 lakhs to the Blood Bank Society to immortalize the memory of their late father Rai Bahadur Vishan Bhagwan. This single act of the brother, gave both stimulus and shape to the sister's dream!

The Blood Bank Society immediately began working to create its next dream project - a brand new; state-of-the-art Blood Centre in Chandigarh. After many repeated attempts, which included approaching political big-wigs such as the Deputy Prime Minister and convincing them of the usefulness and necessity of a modern Blood Centre, the Union Territory Administration of Chandigarh agreed to provide land in Sector 37, a central location of the city, on a 99 year lease to the Blood Bank Society.

Special thanks are due to the efforts of Mr. Karan Avtar Singh, Secretary - Finance, (U. T.), Mrs. G. K. Brar & Gen. J. F. R. Jacob.



The Rotary Club was requested to partner with the Blood Bank Society in the ambitious project. After being convinced of the feasibility of the project, they offered to become partners in this massive four crore venture and agreed to supply the latest equipment required for a blood bank. Eventually, in the beginning of 2001 the venture started to take



The Team that runs the Blood Centre; 2018.

shape. Soon after the licence was obtained in June 2004 it started functioning, exactly 40 years after the formation of the Blood Bank Society, formally known as the Rotary and Blood Bank Society Resource Centre. On 29th November 2004 the Union Health Minister Mr. Anbumani Ramadoss and the President of Rotary International Mr. Glen E. Estess officially inaugurated the Blood Centre, thus taking Chandigarh a step further up in the list of cities offering such advanced medical facilities. Envisioned as a stand-alone State of the Art facility, 'for the people and by the people', today the Blood Centre - 37, as it is popularly known, runs entirely on the concept of 100% voluntary blood donations, via indoor or outdoor blood donation camps. The Centre provides round the clock service for blood and blood components to patients in and around Chandigarh. The Centre is an NGO-run charitable organisation licensed by the Drug Controller of India and recognized by State Blood Transfusion Council Chandigarh UT and works in co-ordination with National AIDS control Organisation through the Chandigarh State AIDS Control Society.



Mr. R. K. Saboo, Mr. Rajan Kashyap, Mr. A. Ramadoss, Union Health Minister & Mr. G. E. Estess unveiling Blood Centre's plaque; 2004.



Mr. Vivek Sood donates blood, flanked by Col. Shah, Mr. A. Ramadoss & Mrs. Kanta Krishen; 2004.



Mr. A. Ramadoss signing the visitor's book. Director, Col. R. S. Shah looks on; 2004.



Mr. & Mrs. Sudhir Bhagwan being welcomed at the Blood Centre; 2015.



Inaugural function of Rotary & Blood Bank Society Resource Centre on November 29, 2004.



Lighting the lamp at the inauguration of the *Component Section* of the Blood Centre; 2005.

In April 2005, the *Component Section* was inaugurated by the Union Health Secretary, Mr. P. K. Hota and now the Blood Centre offers components of blood, as well. Awareness about the use of components is also periodically communicated to the public.

Having completed a decade of existence, *'this temple of life'* (as some people call it), is a God-sent gift for thousands of people in and around Chandigarh. It has recently surpassed 1 lakh donations. As a grateful visitor remarked in its visitor's book; *'the Blood Centre is actually fulfilling the duty of the government'*.

The Blood Bank Society expresses its deepest gratitude to architects Mrs. Anu Ganju, (Kanta's daughter) and to Late Charanjit Chandoke for designing the building project as a service to the community, and to the then Member of Parliament Mr. P. K. Bansal for giving the Blood Centre a grant of Rs. 10 lacs from his MP's fund. A big thanks to all those who contributed in cash or kind to make this dream a reality.

The Sant Nirankari Mission

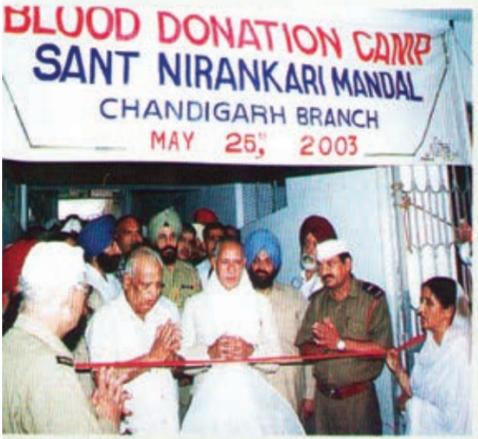
NIRANKARI

"The Nirankari donors of blood are rendering a yeoman service to mankind which is worth emulating. Donation of blood is donation of life, often timely supply of blood saves life", said Justice O.P. Verma Governor of Punjab.

Blood donation is already a mass movement with the Nirankaris in India and they are also the richest source of safe blood.

Seeing God in all and all in God, they do not shed others' blood but donate their own. When transfused in human veins, blood knows no religion, caste or nationality and symbolizes the organic and natural unity of mankind. "By donating blood we are doing our fundamental duty to help cement human bonds and to prove that we are all blood brothers." Since 1987, 1.75 lakh devotees have donated blood.

The Mission believes that blood donation is a great leveller, a great equalizer and an occasion for creating permanent blood relations in the world. Let this feeling of altruism become the sheet anchor of global blood donation.



Justice O.P. Verma, Governor Punjab, who inaugurated a Blood Donation Camp at Nirankari Bhawan, was visibly moved by the high level of Nirankaris' self-motivation.

The Sant Nirankari Mission, also known as Universal Brotherhood Mission is a spiritual organisation.

It identifies itself as 'neither a new religion nor a sect of an existing religion, but an all-embracing spiritual movement dedicated to human welfare'. Established in 1929 by Baba Buta Singh, today the Mission has more than 3000 centers and millions of followers across the world.

The Blood Bank Society was truly fortunate to have received their support and Babaji personally led hundreds of Nirankari followers to voluntarily donate blood.

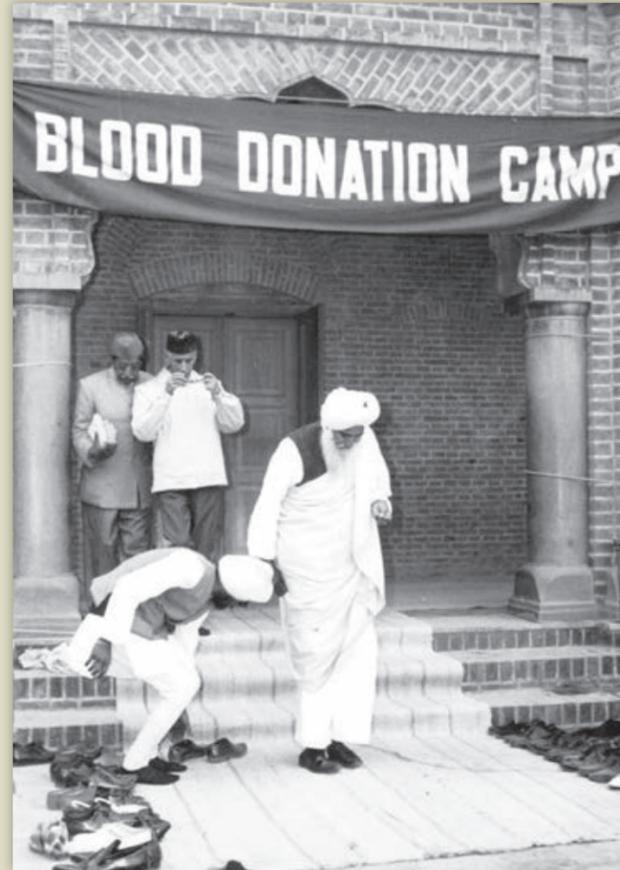
That kind of discipline witnessed at that camp is a rarity. Hundreds of Nirankari



followers gathered to participate in the humanitarian cause of giving blood. They sat on the floor in rows; not an inch out of line, and not one person uttering an unnecessary word. They had even appointed their own *Sewadars* to garland every volunteer who finished the donation process. No fuss, no delay, each volunteer would lie-down on the donation table. Within barely a few minutes, batches of 20 men or women would get off the tables and head straight to the refreshment area. They even had a separate batch of *Sewadars* who offered light refreshments while the next batch donated.

Over 250 volunteers accomplished their task within just 2 hours. At the end of the exercise, a token of gratitude was presented by the Blood Bank Society to Mr. Kesho Ram, Pradhan. By the end of the day, the Blood Bank Society was enriched with an immense amount of blood and pride; giving hundreds of men, women and children new hope.

Radha Soami Satsang Beas



Radha Soami Satsang was one of the first few institutions in the early 60's that supported the effort of the Blood Bank Society in promoting, 'Blood through voluntary donors'. The involvement of the Radha Swami Satsang, was invaluable for the Blood Bank Society, as they could reach out to a much larger number of donors. In the following years, they held regular camps, thus propagating the movement and increasing the donor base.



An endless stream of devotees wait to donate.



Maharaj Charan Singhji gets his Hb tested.



Maharaj Charan Singhji at the camp.

The Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB)



Mrs. Kumar & Maj. Gen. B. N. Kumar, donating blood at the blood donation camp at BBMB, Chandigarh on 1st August 1987.

Amongst the crowd was a couple that stood out from the rest. A smartly dressed lady and a confident officer in uniform. Their demeanour and confidence made Kanta inquire of their details, to which the lady replied, 'My husband is the Chairman'.

The Blood Bank Society shared a special relationship with the management and staff of BBMB, the genesis of which dates back to the 60's.

One afternoon, Kanta noticed a group of people waiting to donate blood at the PGI Chandigarh. Some were in deep thought wondering what the experience would be like, few quietly reading the day's newspaper. Some were nervous, others relaxed. When Kanta enquired what had brought them to the Blood Bank, she discovered that they were all employees of BBMB and had gathered there to donate blood for two of their colleagues admitted in the hospital.



Dr. Sondhi, D. H. S., donating blood at a camp.

That very moment an idea struck Kanta. She realized he was the boss of a very important organisation, which had hundreds of employees. Somewhat hesitantly she asked the officer, 'If we give blood for your men from the pool instead of from you, would you consider organizing a blood donation camp in BBMB?' A prompt and immediate *'yes certainly'*, brought joy to her heart, and thus began an enriching relationship with a huge organisation that has lived up to its word.

The officer Kanta met that afternoon was Maj. Gen. B. N. Kumar. BBMB, which is engaged in the task of regulating water for irrigation and distribution of power, has also been involved in saving countless human lives through its annual donation camps in Chandigarh, Talwara, Sunder Nagar and Nangal.

Unfortunately, Gen. B. N. Kumar was assassinated by terrorists during the Punjab insurgency. However, his successors have continued the tradition and Mrs. Kumar has preserved the relationship. Since 1987, the BBMB camps are held in the memory of Gen. Kumar where over 2500 units of blood are donated by the BBMB family every year.

Punjab and Haryana High Court



The Punjab and Haryana High Court blood donation camp comes alive with the sentiment of altruism. L - R: Mr. Behl, Mr. Chopra, Mr. Jolly & Mr. Walia.

From the 60s to the present has been an amazing transformation in the mind-set of the legal fraternity. The 1st camp held in the 60's yielded, zero donors, to protest against blood not being available when needed, since blood banking was in its infancy.

Zooming into the present at least 3 camps are held each year, yielding more than 300 donors.

The atmosphere is charged with joie-de-vivre which is palpable



Chief Justice Mr. Sanjay Kaul donating blood; 2013.



Chief Justice Mr. S. J. Vazifdar encouraging donors; 2015.

from the start to the end of the camp. Infact sometimes eager donors have to be requested to wait for the next camp, since blood has a limited shelf life and this precious resource must not be wasted by collecting more than is required.

This evolution could not have been possible without the joint effort of all branches of the Punjab & Haryana High Court. The incumbent Chief Justice inaugurates each camp encouraging Judges, Lawyers, Employees, Clerks and clients alike and honours star blood donors at an Annual Function organised by the Blood Contributors Club, which was formed in 2006.



Mr. Lokesh Sinhal, Justice Malik, Justice A. G. Masih & Mr. Vikas Suri after donating blood enjoying refreshments.

St. John's High School



Members of the St. John's Old Boys Association at their blood donation camp.

The success story of the 'Catch Them Young Programme' is very apparent from the St. John's High School experience.

Going from class to class giving age appropriate, customized talks, members of the Blood Bank Society got the young motivators charged with enthusiasm. In turn they motivated their parents and families to donate blood at the school camp, becoming our young ambassadors.

The involvement of the St. John's Old Boys Association (SJOBA), greatly enhanced the success of each camp by their personal effort, taking care of every organisational aspect from contacting members through facebook and SMS messages to providing refreshments etc.

The Blood Bank Society gives stickers saying, 'My Mom is a Blood Donor' and 'My Dad is a Blood Donor' which are highly prized and sought after. Seeing the overwhelming response at the camps, the principal decided to hold two camps each year. The camp always begins with the Principal Mrs. Kavita Das, who leads from the front by being the first donor.



Another view of the St. John's School and SJOBA camp.

The highlight after each camp are the gleeful faces of the children at the pizza-party offered to each child who has mobilized a donor!

The school has also successfully incorporated voluntary blood donation in their 'Outreach Programme', for students of class 8.

The cherry on the cake was when the first batch of the *Catch Them Young* motivators donated blood in their school on completing 18 years of age!

Raj Bhawan

50th Anniversary Milestone; 2014.



Members of the Blood Bank Society with the Governor of Haryana.

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Blood Bank Society, Haryana Governor K. S. Solanki was requested to host a function at the Raj Bhawan where 250 donors of the region, with over 50 blood donations were honoured. He graciously agreed saying, 'Blood donors do God's work on earth'. They were presented specially designed certificates with pictures of themselves receiving the award from the Governor, which were printed on the spot.

The Blood Bank Society is extremely grateful to Tejee's Studio 17 for this excellent facility that they provided, free of cost and for their ever positive response to calls for help from the Blood Bank Society!

A lavish tea was served and a group photograph taken with the Governor. The donors felt very honoured to be recognized at the Raj Bhawan. A stamp to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Blood Bank Society was issued and released by the Governor Kaptan Singh Solanki at the Raj Bhawan. Our grateful thanks to Mr. Rakesh Walia for enabling this endeavour.



Governor of Haryana Mr. Kaptan Singh Solanki honouring Blood Donors of the tri-city with over 50 donations at Haryana Raj Bhawan; 2014.



Mr. M. L. (Mac) Sarin receiving the personalized certificate given to every donor, 2014.



Col. R. D. Singh being awarded.



Governor Mr. Kaptan Singh Solanki releasing a stamp for the Golden Anniversary of the Blood Bank Society, Chandigarh. Dr. B. N. S. Walia and Mr. Rakesh Walia look on.



Release of a stamp to commemorate 50 years of the Blood Bank Society, Chandigarh.



Dr. Pankaj Kaul being awarded.

Spreading Hope. Saving Lives



In 2014, the Blood Bank Society covered a long distance and reached its 50th milestone. Looking back, although the setbacks have been there, the positives have by far been predominant. This long journey with its achievements has been the result of a joint coming together of volunteers, medical experts, social, religious, educational institutions and the U. T. Administration.

Golden Jubilee Candlelight Walk, Sector 17

Spelling out '50', 3 rows of brightly colored candles provided sparkle to the evening dusk, catching the eye of thousands in Sector 17 that day. A crowd gathered, forming a human wall many feet deep. It was a stunning display with rows and rows of red, yellow and green candles. Although within the reach of bystanders, not one candle was displaced. It was a never-to-be-forgotten display highlighting the golden jubilee of the Blood Bank Society.





Golden Jubilee Cycle Rally

As part of its 50th anniversary celebration the Blood Bank Society and Chandigarh Amateur Cycling Association organised a Cycle Rally to create awareness about two important social causes.

At the crack of dawn on the 19th April 2014, 300 spirited young people pedalled their way through Chandigarh on their brightly decorated bicycles. Specially designed T-shirts highlighted Thalassemia awareness, and voluntary blood donation.

A fifty year long flashback...

A journey of innovative ideas, grit and determination since 1964.

Over the past 54 years, the Blood Bank Society has implemented or conceived just about every traditional or ‘out-of-the-box’ idea to collect each drop of blood, albeit voluntarily. Although it is not possible to recollect each and every

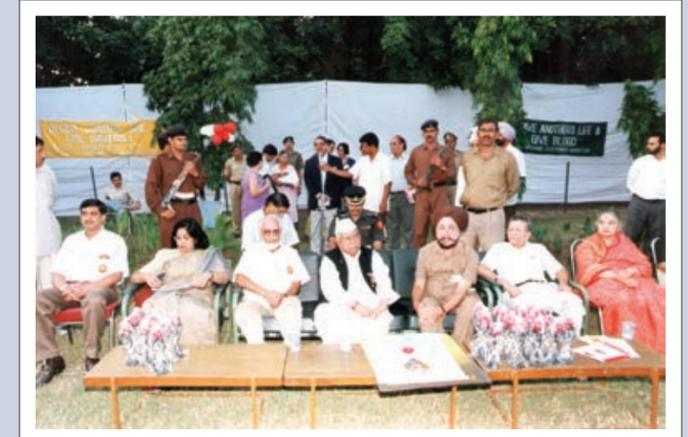
project or activity, we wish to share a ‘top-of-the-mind’ glossary for the benefit of any individual, group or organisation, who could benefit by any of our ideas. We hope that this list would help them take forward the cause that Mrs. Kanta Krishen espoused in 1964.



The Candlelight March in progress; 2008.

Annual Function

They eagerly wait for that one day in the year when their contribution will be highlighted in the presence of a vast crowd. The university grounds are the location of the Annual Award Function organised by the Blood Bank Society, every year. An exciting atmosphere created by banners, balloons, colored matting and large leafed palms greets them. 20 VIPs of the city take their positions, ready to release balloons simultaneously. The compere comes with a list of awardees. One by one, they walk up to the VIP and collect their award. A tempting high-tea laid out awaits! Excitement is palpable as their vital role in donating blood over and over again has been publicly acknowledged in the presence of many.



Annual Function: L - R: Mr. Rakesh Singh, Mrs. Vanita Rai, Dr. Puri, Governor Kidwai, Dr. B. N. S. Walia, Mr. & Mrs. Bhambri; 2000.

Candlelight Walk

A march-past not with bayonets on their shoulders but brightly lit candles in each hand - 700 of them. Students in their respective school uniforms, a candle in each hand started off to spell out a humanitarian message – on this All India Blood Donation Day (October 1). Flagged off by the Governor of the State and accompanied by banner-holders they head towards the famous Sukhna Lake where they were welcomed by smiling members of the Blood Bank Society.



Members of the Blood Bank Society at the welcome counter; 2011.

Awareness: Children as Motivators

A new experience with promise; 1983:

The Blood Bank Society, Chandigarh tried out a novel experiment to reach out to a new section of the population. A camp was held in St. Stephens High School, not for the children but for their parents. This was an experiment in developing 'Blood Donors' from the unorganised groups of citizens inter-connected with each other through the medium of a school. The day was a working day and the weather was miserable with high winds and rain, and yet over 50 parents braved these obstacles and came by rickshaws, scooter and cycle to keep up their promise to their child and to make their donation of blood. The child motivated the parents and seeing them donate, him-self got motivated to become a blood donor when eligible. Excellent cooperation by the Principal, Mr. Harold Carver, resulted in a very successful blood donation camp.



Bulletin-Board competition; 2016.



Poster-making

Catch them young; and we the future donors:

It was felt that many young people are perfectly willing to come forward to do anything within their means for their child in school. In a small family particularly, the child influences the parental decision very much. In this case many children turned efficient motivators and brought their otherwise reluctant parents, to the blood donation camp.

It was very interesting to meet this diverse group of traders, entrepreneurs, self-employed people, doctors and lawyers and to find from them that the children themselves had been inspired by the members of the Blood Bank Society.



Mrs. Gulshan Sharma & Mrs. Vinod Trehan with award winners of Vivek High School; 2017.



Mrs. Sneh Popli & Mrs. Daman Dugal with award winners of the 'School Power-Point making Competition' from the Tribune Public School; 2017.



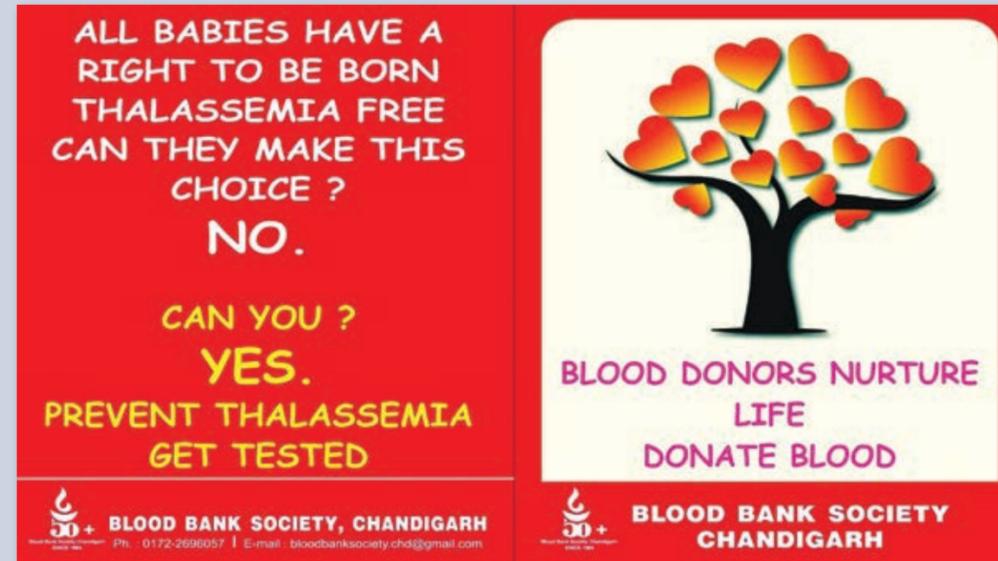
Cycle Rally

School camps have now become a regular feature. Competitions are held to involve as many children as possible in various activities related to blood donation. Bulletin-Board display, Power-Point presentation making, street plays, slogan writing, helping at blood donation camps, visits to the blood bank to see what happen to donated blood, helping in awareness creating activities are all undertaken with the children, with the aim of preparing future donors.

June 14 - World Blood Donor Day

Creating awareness through distribution of plants:

A unique and innovative idea for World Blood Donor Day was the slogan - BLOOD DONORS NURTURE LIFE!



Calendar Diary

red and white placard that expressed the theme were a sight to behold! Camps were set up at - The Sukhna Lake,

In April members of the Blood Bank Society personally planted about 1000 pots with saplings which were then nurtured with a lot of care, considering summer had set in with full force.

By the 14th of June all the saplings had flourished into beautiful and healthy plants. These green gestures of gratitude with a vibrant



Blood Donors being thanked on 'World Blood Donor Day', June 14th by members of the Blood Bank Society Ms. Harman Sibia & Mrs. Anu Vala, along with student volunteers at the Sector 17, Plaza.



Mr. Vishw Bandhu Shukla & Mr. Pawan Sharma at the Lake; 2015.

Sector 17 Plaza and the Elante Mall to interact with as many people as possible.

Each and every person, blood donor or not, were truly delighted to receive these living gifts and promised to nurture the plant and become a member of this life saving cause in any way they could! Huge banners thanking blood donors were also put up at a large number of petrol pumps of the city. As the sun came down on June the 14th, the mission of the Blood Bank Society was accomplished very successfully!

Over the years various other tokens like pocket sized calendar dairies, key rings, book marks, pens etc. are



Mrs. Shubha Nehra at Sukhna Lake; 2015.

distributed on this day. Our special thanks to Uniroyal Textiles for graciously supporting the cause.

Kite-Flying with the Message of Blood Donation

In a pale blue sky on a bright winter day, the birds and clouds soared in unusual company... *hope*. The Blood Bank Society in its untiring efforts to sensitise the citizens of the city beautiful had another ace up its sleeve - A unique kite flying festival!

Cloaked in perky red and optimistic white, small squares of paper fluttered strong and high in the chilly breeze, lighting up the horizon with a special and heart-warming message – voluntary blood donation and Thalassemia eradication. Some several hundred feet below, more than 200 committed students of UIET stood on Mother Earth, eagerly holding on to strings that kept their kites flying high.

Similarly across the city of Chandigarh students of KBDVA Senior Secondary School, Millennium School, Shemrock School, Aurobindo School, and Lawrence School also participated in this one of its kind, kite-flying in their respective schools.

On the auspicious occasion of *Basant Panchami*, these specially designed kites provided by Mr. Vijay Khanna spoke to the citizens of Chandigarh in unison - to come forth and donate blood voluntarily.

Hope floats, they say. Well, in this case, it soared!





Free Mela (Carnival) for Blood Donors and their Families

October 1, All India Blood Donation Day was celebrated differently. A free Carnival was organised for blood donors of the Tri-City and their families, to thank them for their valuable contribution to society. The role of a blood donor is of paramount importance.

Some of the attractions at the Carnival were camel rides, lots of food stalls, games of skill, *Mehndi* and tattoo artists, *gol-gappas* of 5 different flavours, stalls of pop corn, candy floss and ice cream. Everything was free for them.



There were lots of prizes to be won in rounds of tombola, *Guess the Price* and the 'Best Slogan' competition.

Local NGOs were invited to put up their stalls. A blood donation camp was held at the venue where over 40 people donated blood. It is our continued endeavour to spread awareness about these 2 social causes: Blood Donation and Thalassemia Prevention.

Rural Outreach - Fruit Tree Planting Drive

Deeply concerned about the rapidly deteriorating environment, the Blood Bank Society launched a new project in villages surrounding Chandigarh.

‘LIKE PLANTS, BLOOD DONORS NURTURE LIFE..... DONATE BLOOD’ was the theme of a tree planting drive undertaken in 12 villages under the U. T. Administration.

The saplings procured were of fruit trees so as to also provide nourishment.

Blood donors of the village, along with members of the Blood Bank Society and the *panchayat* undertook the planting. Specially made information boards were put up at prominent spots along with addressing the residents about how this disorder can be prevented. Caring for the planet and its resources has always been an important concern for the Blood Bank Society and the entire blood donor community.

This opportunity was also be used to create awareness about Thalassemia prevention to enable the villagers to protect themselves against this dreaded blood disorder that is prevalent in this region. Despite North India being in the Thalassemia-Belt the villagers were ignorant about this disorder or its prevention. This project was jointly sponsored by the Blood Bank Society and the Minno Sambhi Service for Thalassemic children in collaboration with the *Panchayats*.



An awareness session under a tree in Mauli Jagran; 2017.



Tree planting at Sarangpur.

Valentine's Day

It was a cold, wet day, but also a day to celebrate love. Love for a beloved, love for one's children, parents, and friends and above all love for fellow humans. Donating blood was the perfect Valentine's Day gift to humanity.

The live band courtesy St. Stephen's School greeted the blood donors in the lobby of the Blood Centre, playing lively and romantic songs from the seventies. The cheerful music set the perfect tune for the special day, along with the red hearts strung up everywhere.

After donating blood the donors had their refreshments. The fragrant, heady aroma from the steaming cups of coffee added to the warmth already engulfing the Blood Centre - brought in by the benevolence of the blood donors.

The donors also received a goody bag with heart shaped cup cakes provided by the Ms. Monica Sood and Ms. Nita Sukhija, red roses from Green House, Sector 9, and other charms from Jewells, Sector 11, as a modest thank-you gesture from the Blood Bank Society!

In spite of the rain-gods playing spoilsport, the generous spirit of the blood donors was not dampened in the least. This was evident from the steady stream of students, young men, women, couples that kept coming in, shaking the rain off of themselves while tapping their feet to the cheery music that welcomed them.

As romantics everywhere searched for the right gift for that special someone on Valentine's Day, patients who needed transfusions in the city beautiful were grateful for the gift from the heart, given by our magnanimous blood donors.



Getting the Donors

Youth Outreach & Rose Festival:

Over the years we have devised a multifaceted strategy to cover different segments of the Society. At present the main source of blood are the students, so motivation has to be aimed at what appeals to them.

Youth Motivation Workshops are held with the 18-25 years old where the importance of blood donation is stressed and the apprehensions associated with blood donation are addressed.

These are youth oriented sessions which are informative and educative while being friendly and interactive. This is followed by a blood donation camp in



Mrs. Sukrita Singh, Mrs. Vanita Sahni & Mrs. Niti Sarin at the Safe Blood Conference; 2006.





Volunteers after the Cycle Rally; 1996.

the institution and the results are very encouraging indeed. Social networking sites are the fad; Facebook, Twitter Orkut, My Space and other such sites, frequented by the youngsters are being used to promote and give information about voluntary blood donation.

FM Radio announcements have proved very effective as you have a captive audience who listen to the radio as they drive to work! SMS messages are a terrific way to communicate with the youth. Cell phones have reached across the length and breadth of the country! The telecom subscriber base has crossed the 500 million mark. We use this medium to get our message to the masses.



Stall at the Rose Festival; 2015.



Stall at the Rose Festival; 2017.

A programme with Teachers:



Mr. Mehndiratta addressing the teachers; 1998.

In Safe Blood And AIDS Control' where the mayor was the chief guest. This was held on World Health Day.

The media can be a powerful ally for the movement. 'Donor Recruitment And The Media' was a seminar held targeting the press.

Seminars for various groups are organised to help carry the message across the entire social fabric of the population.

Teachers seminars to cover all the schools of the tri-city and to make them partners in spreading awareness amongst school children have been held. 'Safe Blood - Be The Link' and 'Developing A Scientific Attitude Amongst School Children For Voluntary Blood Donation' were organised.

To cover the rural population, the Panches and Sarpanches of the neighbouring villages were invited to a seminar 'Rural Involvement

Donor recruitment and the Media:



A seminar 'Donor Recruitment and the Media' was organised to mark 'World Health Day'; 2003.



To mark World Health Day 7th April 2005, a seminar on 'Rural Involvement in AIDS Control and Safe Blood' was organised in collaboration with SACS and ISBTI Chandigarh Chapter.

Seen L - R are: Dr. S. Bambah, Mrs. Anu Chatrath, Mayor & Dr. Manmohan Kaur; 2005.

Inspiring Stories

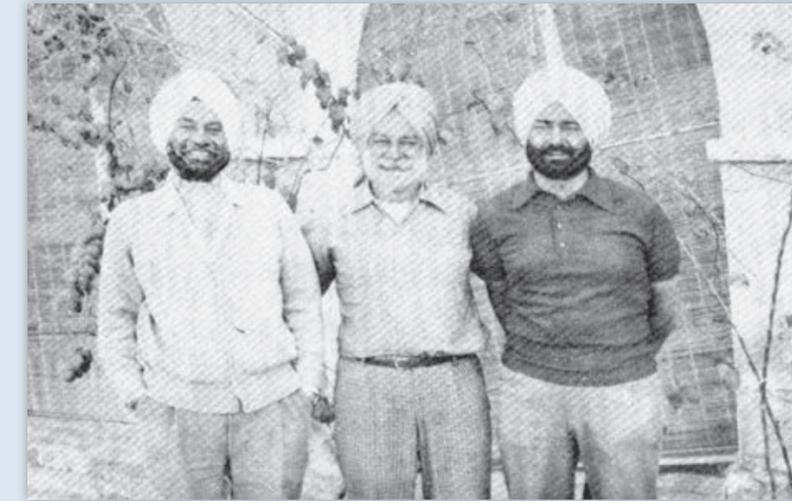
Stories of high-emotion and real-compassion abound in the Blood Bank Society, which has for over fifty years borne testimony to the sorrows and joys of millions of blood seekers and donors. Although we'd love to, it would be impossible to share even a fraction of such emotive accounts in the limited space of this book. Also, the central idea behind publishing this book is not to highlight grief or misery of unfortunate people, but to share inspiring narratives of 'Unsung Generals & Soldiers of a Mission called Blood Bank Society, Chandigarh'; so that its fundamental message can perhaps motivate or inspire others seeking a meaningful purpose in his or her life.

Family Bond

I narrate this not just as a committed blood donor but as a representative of a large clan, which has adopted blood donation as its chief hobby.

"Immediately after the establishment of the Blood Bank Society my brother and sister-in-law, Mr. Mehjit Singh and Ms. Jitie Sodhi of Chandigarh, became active donors and motivators. Mehjit donated-blood 51 times and stopped after attaining 65 years of age because he wasn't allowed to anymore. Jitie who has RH 'O negative' blood group, which is often required in emergencies and for new-born babies, is on the 'emergency-panel of donors' and has made more than 23 donations.

Another brother Mr. Justice S. S. Sodhi has also been a regular donor. Once his helper's relative needed blood but his family members were terrified of donating. Justice Sodhi volunteered instead, and thus provided inspiration to the helper's family, which in later years followed his example.



Brothers - Brig. H. S. Sodhi, Mr. M. S. Sodhi, & Justice S. S. Sodhi.



Two smiling sisters Mrs. Jitie Sodhi and Mrs. Gurbax Singh are regular donors of 'O Negative' blood which is particularly useful in the exchange of blood of new born babies suffering from severe jaundice.

I personally became interested in the movement when I was posted at Chandimandir Cantonment in 1973, and have thus so far donated 30 times. I have also organised numerous blood donation camps in cantonments at Sabathu, Chandimandir, Abohar and Ambala.

This spirit of 'service to humanity' has been imbibed by the next generation also. My son Jasbir Singh Sodhi and nephew Trilochan Singh Anand have also been star donors."

(Late Brig. H. S. Sodhi)

Differently-abled Heroes



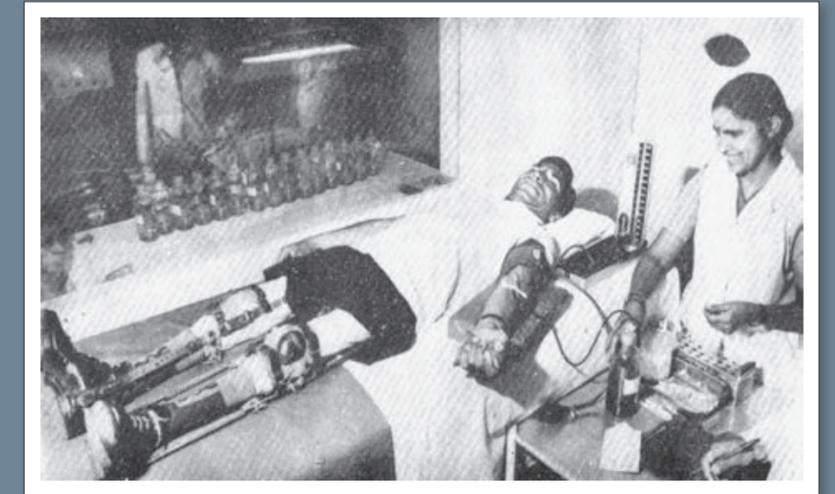
Seemingly a Saturday in April appeared to resemble any other day on the floor that housed the PGI Blood Bank. Some corners were filled with worried relatives that had come as replacement donors. Others with responsible citizens, who had presented themselves as voluntary donors.

That day, however unfolded an entirely different story. As time passed, the floor began to over-flow with hordes of 'special-people'; and their enthusiasm was virtually impossible to ignore.

People without limbs. Victims of road accidents; some without both legs, others without either arm. Persons afflicted with polio. They came on their own rickshaws, bicycles; by bus. Some had hired taxis. Some were walking on crutches; not accepting anyone's help or support. Others helped by their kith and kin, or friends. Each one, completely oblivious of their 'so-called disability'! But, brimming with enthusiasm, that would put even the healthiest sports-person to shame.

It turned out that 'The Association of the Physically Handicapped Persons of Punjab' had decided to organise a blood donation camp, that day! Each blood-donor had come with just one motive - *'To repay the kindness of those who had helped them when they needed blood'*. Now that they were rehabilitated they felt it was their moral duty to do whatever they could for others.

There was Tejinder Singh, who worked in a bank. He had lost both his legs in an accident. His polio-stricken wife was carrying their lovely baby in her arms. There was K. Adhikari from Andhra Pradesh, who ran a *Paan* shop in Sector 17. His legs were amputated due to an infection. Many came only on reading an announcement in that morning's newspaper. 'Almost 80 such beautiful-souls came that day. After carrying out their medical check-ups around 30 were given permission to donate. The saddest part of the day was to see the despair on the faces of those who weren't allowed to donate. Their enthusiasm had to be seen to be believed. It made me wonder why their able-bodied brothers couldn't follow the worthy example by donating regularly and in large numbers!', recalls Meenakshi Joshi a Blood Bank Society volunteer.



A Doctor's Agony

When I was fourteen, a neighbour's wife, who was in an advanced stage of pregnancy, suffered post-partum haemorrhage and bled profusely. Due to lack of proper blood transfusion facilities in our city, she eventually lost her life, leaving behind four young children. That incident left an indelible mark on my young mind.



When I was twenty-five, I was living in the campus of a reputed medical college-cum-hospital in Uttar Pradesh. The hospital ran a blood bank which collected blood from professional donors. It was an agonising sight to witness impoverished donors in rags and sunken eyes desperately waiting for their turn to sell their infectious and poor-quality blood for a few rupees. Actually, they came to the blood bank whenever they needed money.

When I moved to Chandigarh in the early seventies, I was delighted to find that the Blood Bank Society existed in the city. Disgusted by my earlier experiences I resolved to contribute my bit. I became a regular blood donor and over the years have donated 32 times.

I earnestly wish other towns and cities of the country would also follow suit by establishing Blood Bank Societies like the one in Chandigarh.

(As narrated by Dr. Yogendra Agnibotri, Husband of Dr. S. K. Agnibotri who headed the Department of Transfusion Medicine, PGI, from 1988-2003 when she retired).

Shruti

The darkness of a family's tragedy, can become a source of light for several others. A cute little 3-year-old Shruti, was the darling of her grandparents. Therefore, when they decided to spend their summer in Shimla, Shruti's parents happily agreed to let her accompany them.

The holiday turned out to be a boon for both generations, until one day the sky unleashed unprecedented rains, resulting in a massive landslide. The damage was enormous, and to the added horror of the grandparents, despite frantic searches the little girl could not be found. After several days, her body was discovered. The entire family's sorrow and despair was beyond comprehension or words.



That devastating incident however made her family take a decision which is unprecedented. Her death would be made a source of life for others! All eligible members of the family undertook an oath to donate blood each year on the day of the tragedy. Due to that single decision, Shruti continues to live and bring sunshine across countless families.

Memorial Camps

To turn a tragedy - the loss of a loved one, into something positive needs a very selfless soul. The trend of holding memorial camps started in the 70s.

Dr. Vikrant Gupta, a young doctor tragically killed in a car accident, Mr. Rajinder Singh an IAS officer, Mr. Shashi Bhushan Goyal and many others have been immortalized by their families who hold blood donation camps on their death anniversaries.

A Donor's Experience

One morning as I walked into the school premises I saw a group of ex-students telling staff-members about the blood donation camp that was to be organised in the school hall that very morning. Being 53 I considered my age. I hadn't had the experience before but I felt no fear. On the contrary, I wanted to be the first person to donate blood, thinking if anything went wrong the doctors would be there to attend to me. So, after a few minutes I was there, lying flat on the bed at the camp. I only felt a prick of the needle when it was inserted into my vein. Before I realized it was all over.

As I got off the bed I had no feeling of losing anything. Instead I thought it was a meaningful experience. A sense of achievement and satisfaction engulfed me. It was hardly any effort on my part but I knew that my blood would definitely save another life. I felt cheerful after an unusual day at school and forgot all about it by the evening. It was only the next morning that the little-sticking plaster on my forearm reminded me of the previous day. *It was a great feeling to donate blood, and I felt that one feels closer to one's kind.*



Champa

The Goyals of Chandigarh were preparing to celebrate their first Diwali after their son Rohit's wedding. They had stocked ample quantity of sweets, candles, *diyas* and fireworks to share with friends and relatives. A sumptuous feast awaited the guests.

Champa, Rohit's wife was at her best, adorning a new sari with shimmering jewellery. As the house started to fill-up with guests, the firework display began to mesmerise the young and the old, there was a loud blast. There was panic, as everyone started running. Champa soon realised that Rohit was not to be seen around and that's when she heard a painful cry for help.

Rohit's clothes had caught fire. Quickly a rug from the house was brought and fire was extinguished. Rohit was rushed to the hospital where his condition was declared to be very critical. He was unconscious as one-third of his body had been burnt. The doctor had to immediately arrange for plasma transfusion, to keep him alive for the next 36 hours.

While facing the horrible ordeal, Champa realised the value of a bottle of blood. She learnt that a single bottle (or unit, as commonly known) can be divided into three separate components: Plasma, Red Cells and Platelets. To get one bag of plasma, they needed blood from two donors. To replace the three bottles of plasma required for Rohit, six donors would be required. Rohit was lucky to have two very close friends in Sunit and Punit, who rose to the occasion and immediately replaced the blood issued by the hospital-bank. Two days later, Rohit's condition began to stabilize. Champa who had spent anxious hours broke-down on hearing the news. *My husband has been saved by the blood that you have donated so lovingly. Thank you, blood brothers; you have saved me from becoming a widow.*



Messages

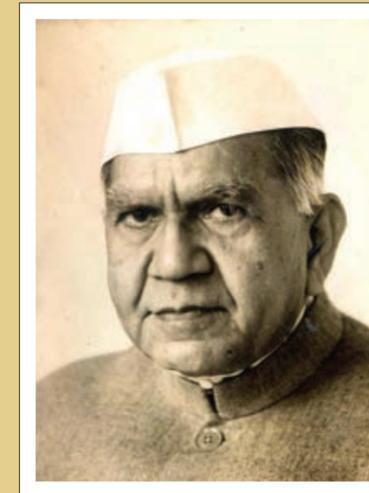


Since its inception, the Blood Bank Society has received thousands of messages from people of all kinds of backgrounds providing optimism, encouragement and motivation. While it would be impossible to even locate all of them, a few notable ones are reproduced in the next couple of pages.

God loves you for your generous and dedicated service of life and health. Through promoting blood donations, you give hope and joy to many sick and needy people. In serving those in need, you touch God himself who said, "Whatever you did to the least of My brothers, YOU DID IT TO ME". May the Lord Himself be your reward.

Let us all remember that God has created each one of us for greater things – to love and to be loved. To love, it is necessary to give; to give it is necessary to be free of selfishness. Let us pray that through donating their blood for the good of others, many people will come to know the joy of giving, the joy of loving. My special prayers are with you all. Let us pray. GOD BLESS YOU

Mother Teresa

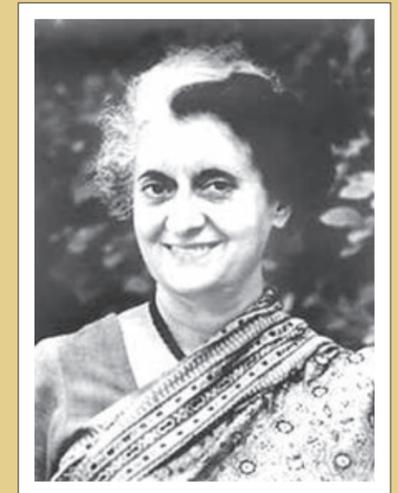


Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed
Former President of India

Blood donation is a true service to humanity and it is the bounden duty of social workers to create a consciousness among the people about the necessity and significance of voluntary blood donation.

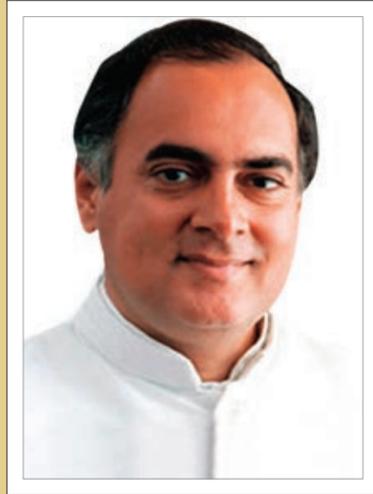
I offer my congratulations to the Blood Bank Society, Chandigarh on the laudable work it has been doing and wish its humanitarian endeavours all success.

Mrs. Indira Gandhi
Former Prime Minister
of India



The Blood Bank movement has been of tremendous help to our medical profession in saving lives and alleviating pain. A donation of blood should not become a commercial activity. We should like blood banks to depend primarily on voluntary donation. This is a fine cause which the people of India should encourage and sustain.

What can give greater satisfaction than to save a life? And it is so easy for the average healthy individual. The donation of blood is a civilised and useful way of expressing our commitment to society and to our fellow human beings. Our hospitals are always short of blood yet we seem to be inhibited by taboos and prejudice and the misgiving that the donation of blood is weakening, though this has been disproved in other countries which have no shortage of volunteers. October 1, is Blood Donation Day. I hope large number of volunteers will come forward to enrol as donors.



Mr. Rajiv Gandhi
Former Prime Minister
of India

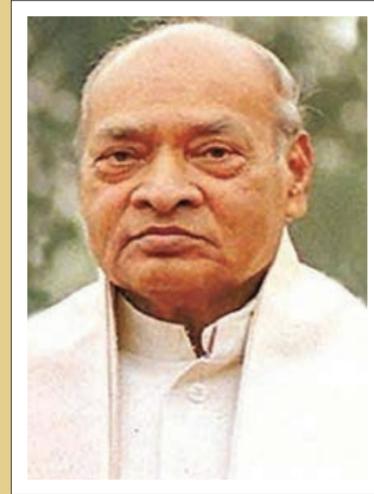
Voluntary blood donation is an act of signal service to those who suffer. In giving relief and sometimes a new lease of life to countless members of unfortunate people across the country, blood donors

contribute to a noble cause. This is a movement that knows no caste, creed or colour. To increase its effectiveness, we must put the programme on a more scientific footing. On the occasion of the All India Blood Donation Day I appeal to fellow citizens to come forward and contribute unstinting to this worthy cause.

Mr. P. V. Narsimha Rao
Former Prime Minister
of India

I am happy to know that Indian Society of Blood Transfusion and Immunohematology, Chandigarh, is celebrating All India Blood Donation Day on 1st October. Voluntary associations

have a greater role to play in motivation and education of the people to voluntarily donate blood. Innovative and effective propaganda would gradually eliminate professional blood donors and commercialisation in the field. I am sure that the Society would take a lead in this direction in augmenting voluntary blood collection. I wish all success to the organizers.



Blood is the most vital gift which a healthy person can donate to a patient, who is fighting for life. I am sure the Society's efforts will help to make voluntary blood donation a people's movement. This year the Blood Bank Society will complete 25 years of work! I feel very proud of belonging to this organisation, with which I have very strong bonds. I have no words to express my attachment and love for this. Even though I am not in Chandigarh yet my heart is always with this organisation.

Due to my personal tragedy, I had lost interest in life. Then a good friend of mine introduced me to Dr. Jolly and Mrs. Kanta Krishen. I am really very thankful to God to have come in contact with them. Whatever little service I could render towards this cause is only due to their able guidance, and co-operation. My outlook towards life changed altogether and I realized that life is not only meant for yourself and your family. Society also has a right. There is so much misery and suffering all around. The narrow boundaries of caste, creed and religion are all false. Man's true caste is Humanity and true religion is 'Love towards all human beings.'

Mr. H. A. Barari
Former Governor of Haryana

I recall the difficulties that the Society had to face in the early stages of its creation. People were generally reluctant to donate blood and even amongst the youth the fear of such a donation resulting in physical infirmity and weakness was entertained. There was much work to be done to convince people that it was the duty of the able-bodied to donate blood for those whose life could be saved only by blood transfusion. When the Society was in its early stages, I happened to be in Chandigarh for a short period as Governor of Punjab. It was a pleasure then to have come in contact with Mrs. Saroop Krishen and her dedicated bank of helpers who were at that time involved in setting up the Blood Bank Society. I am happy that the Society is now not only firmly established but has also become a trend-setter in the country."

Mr. Dharma Vira
Former Governor Punjab

The Blood Bank Society, Chandigarh has been a pace-setter in the country. It's pioneering effort has helped the social workers and experts to draw lessons and conclusions as to how the movement can be expanded and organised elsewhere on right lines. Enlightened collaboration with specialists and involvement of voluntary workers representing various sections of the society constitute a special working of the Blood Bank Society at Chandigarh. The wide-spread participation of the young and the old and the common people in general is very commendable. While working in my official capacity at Chandigarh, I had the opportunity to see the informal enthusiasm and dedication of the voluntary workers. The social awareness that the Blood Bank Society at Chandigarh has been able to generate bears testimony to hard work, imaginative planning and spirit of cooperative endeavour on the part of its office bearers who deserve all praise, support and gratitude.

Mr. T. N. Chaturvedi
Former Comptroller and Auditor General
of India
Former President, Blood Bank Society,
Chandigarh

When approached for funds, “I am also with a begging bowl. But I will try to help. The Blood Bank Society is doing very good work.

Gen. J. F. R. Jacob

Governor Punjab (May 2001)

The Blood Bank Society has for the last 25 years, been unwavering in its commitment to provide safe and healthy blood from voluntary donors only, to those in dire need. The Society which is a purely voluntary effort and organisation, has been extremely strict in maintaining exemplary standards of hygiene, conduct and competence. It is a model which, in truth, others can do well to emulate and it is entirely deserving of all our help and assistance. I earnestly appeal to everybody to help the Blood Bank Society in whatever form or shape they can.

Ms. Maya Ray, Wife of former Governor of Punjab Mr. S. S. Ray

Former Patron of Blood Bank Society, Chandigarh.

The availability of the right type of blood for transfusion is often a critical factor in saving life. Thus, in any modern hospital a Blood Bank is an essential element. It has been Government’s policy to shift the emphasis from paid donors to voluntary blood donations and in this sphere the Indian Society of Blood Transfusion and Immunohematology has done signal service. The voluntary blood donation movement is steadily growing and the day is perhaps not very far when it will be possible for the hospitals in the country to meet the major part of their requirement from this source. Government is actively assisting voluntary organisations all over the country involved in this movement. On the occasion of Voluntary Blood Donation Day, I send my felicitations to those all over the country who are engaged in this noble task.

Dr. Karan Singh

Former Union Minister of Health & Family Planning

That blood is a vital ingredient of life was feelingly demonstrated by the alacrity with which thousands lined up to offer blood for the victims of the Terrorist Attack on September 11 in USA. The devastating earthquake of Gujarat earlier this year too was an example of how readily people responded to the call for blood. The era of BLOOD has come to stay. Not just blood but SAFE BLOOD which comes only from voluntary donors. The authorities are urged to see that the Supreme Court directives are brought into effect, through proper legislation, immediately or else disasters and AIDS will play havoc with India’s population. I appeal to the men and women of our great country to make blood donation a way of life - for life is a privilege - to be shared with the less fortunate. Donating blood takes just a few minutes; it is totally harmless and helps save lives. The Chandigarh Blood Bank Society being a pioneer in the field of voluntary blood donation has done outstanding work in the last three and a half decades. I wish the Society and all its members every success in their noble venture.

Mr. Shatrughan Sinha

Member of Parliament & Former Union Health Minister



BBS members with Gen. J. R. F. Jacob & Mrs. Gurbinder Kaur Brar; 2003.

I know these women for many years. They have no self-interest- they want to render a community service. We must help them.

Mrs. Gurbinder Kaur Brar

(Wife of Ex- CM Punjab)

Aap to Devi hain!

You have really done a lot for the blood donation movement. There will be no difficulty getting funds for the Centre. Your functioning is completely transparent. People will definitely give.

Mr. R. S. Verma

Chief Secretary, Haryana

Blood Donation is one of the most important and foremost tasks of every citizen, particularly the youth of country and I am confident that this programme will not be confined to a day, week, a month or year, but it would be a continuous programme to help with blood those who are sick and dying. The Indian Youth Congress has already given a call to the Youth of our country to observe a blood donation week from 2nd to 8th October and I am confident that in response to this call the Society will play a vital role to make the programme a great success, in co-operation with local Youth Congress units.

Ms. Ambika Soni

Former President Indian Youth Congress

Mrs Saroop Krishen’s dedication is to be greatly admired. She thinks of the cause all the time - till it hurts! Vibrations from her, move all around her.

Ms. Neeru Nanda

Advisor to the Administrator, UT Chandigarh

Access to safe blood through Voluntary Blood Donation (VBD) has been a focus area in most of the activities planned at NACO and SACS. Our States are fast moving towards improving their targets and I am happy to see two inspiring case studies in this issue of NACO News. West Bengal achieved a 90% Voluntary Blood Donation (VBD) target and we have highlighted the steps that they took to achieve this. The other is a fascinating story of how one individual in Chandigarh got a complete region active in blood donation bringing in many innovations as also path breaking changes during the last five decades and in the process involving her entire family to become advocates of Voluntary Blood Donation (VBD). The Voluntary Blood Donation (VBD) drive is built on such stories and I do hope that we hear of many such examples of courage commitment and change.

Ms. K. Sujatha Rao

Former, Secretary Department of AIDS Control and Director General, NACO, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India

Blood Bank Society of Chandigarh has been rendering signal service to the community for the last 36 years by supplying safe blood to needy patients exclusively through voluntary blood donations. This has involved motivational work of gigantic proportions among the young and the old including school children in and around Chandigarh. All this has meant extremely hard work, no less hard than Herculean labours. With technical support for the great humanitarian service having been made available by the PGIMER, this pioneering endeavour owes its success solely to the stewardship of Mrs. Kanta Krishen and her inspired band of dedicated workers. Their example has served as a beacon light for many other States of the country to follow. I hope and pray that the Society proves equal to the tasks ahead.

Mr. S. D. Bhambri (IAS)

Former Chief Secretary of
Haryana & Former General Manager of
The Tribune January 14, 2002

I am very impressed with the kind of work you are doing. I have not seen this kind in my career. NGOs like yours are doing far more than we could. Citizens and NGOs of Chandigarh are contributing immensely to life. *When reminded about the request for land for the Blood Centre:* “We are definitely giving it. Not just for the Blood Bank Society but for Mrs. Saroop Krishen who has done such wonderful work for so many years.”

Mr. Jagdish Sagar

Advisor to the Administrator

The Blood Bank Society started the voluntary donation of blood for the first time in this region and Chandigarh became the first city to win this honour because of it. It is commendable that this hundred percent voluntary donation service continues to this day and with growing success. I wish the Society all success and pray for silver to turn to gold and on to diamond.

Mr. K. Banarji

Former Chief Commissioner, Chandigarh
Former President, Blood Bank Society,
Chandigarh

I am very glad that the Third All India Conference of the Indian Society of Blood Transfusion and Immunohematology will be held in Bombay on January 27 and 28. “Give Blood and Save Life” has been accepted by the League of Red Cross Societies as the lead slogan for the Red Cross all over the world for 1974. There could therefore no longer be any doubt about the importance of collecting blood, mainly from voluntary donors, and securing as efficient distribution system of blood so obtained. With the rapid increase in the pace of movement by vehicles, the number of accidents has also been on the increase and the availability of blood during such emergencies has added considerably to the demand that already exists during surgical intervention necessitated by various ailments which these days are amenable to surgical treatment. In addition to collecting blood and distributing it to sites where it is needed, considerable developments have taken place in research on Hematology which has now become a speciality by itself. In these circumstances, the co-existence of Blood Banks and research on immunohematology has become a matter of great importance. I wish the conference all success.

Mr. S. Ranganathan

Chairman, Indian Red Cross Society

It is a matter of gratification to the medical profession and a great relief to suffering humanity that the Third All India Conference will be discussing the important aspects of Voluntary Blood Donation simultaneously with the scientific problems involved. It is good to know that various representatives from different parts of the country devoted to this worthy cause are assembling in Bombay. I am sure this forum will contribute to two significant factors: (a) to standardize the techniques involved and (b) to exchange experiences and views on the types of research that are being carried out even in the remote corners in the rural areas.

Ms. Leela Moolgaokar

Chairman, Federation of Bombay Blood Banks

Honorary social workers of the Blood Bank Society are an important link in the whole process of the blood services. Growth and development of the volunteers is essential for ensuring maintenance of a Safe Blood donation service. The family of volunteers continues to grow and we are grateful to all of them for their devotion to the cause. I wish them still greater success in their efforts.

Dr. B. N. S. Walia

Director, PGIMER and President,
Blood Bank Society

Most NGOs aren't considered for aid because of dubious characters. The Blood Bank Society is a freak! I'm sure we can arrange finances.

Mr. Rajan Kashyap

Secretary Health, Punjab

We feel immensely delighted whenever we read news about the new Blood Bank. As someone said: “As one lamp lights another, nor grows less, So nobleness enkindle the nobleness.” Myriads of lamps of nobility and humanitarian service have been lit by you during nearly five decades of splendid service to the cause of Blood Donation Movement. I am sure Chirag - Life Lamp will acquire the status of Luminous - Lighthouse in a very short span under your dynamic and dedicated stewardship. Hats off to the entire band of dedicated workers of the Blood Centre. We are always at your beck and call for strengthening the Noble Movement of Humanitarian Service.

Mr. H. L. Bansal

Founder President, Blood Donors Council,
Rampura Phul



EPILOGUE

When I look back at my life I see pain and heartache. When I look into the mirror I see strength, learnt lessons and pride in myself.

- Anon

A sole woman's selfless journey has her entire family joining hands to give a fillip to one of the country's largest and most successful blood movements.



L - R standing: Mac Sarin, Niti Sarin, Anu Ganju & Purinder Ganju.
L - R sitting: Deepa Krishen, Kanta Krishen & Sanjiv Krishen.

In 1964 began a journey of motivational methods to get people involved. And 54 years later, despite the numerous obstacles and frustrations that come with any new, path breaking venture she remains at the helm of affairs. She now not only has unstained support from the entire family - son, daughters, sons & daughter-in-law, grandchildren, expat-relatives, extended family, but perhaps the entire



Admiring the President Gold Medal awarded to Mrs. Kanta Krishen are Mrs. Niti Sarin, Mr. Arjun Kashyap, Mrs. Anu Ganju & Mrs. Renu Khanna.



Mrs. Deepa Krishen (daughter-in-law), Mr. Sanjay Krishen, Ms. Anjali Krishen & Mr. Sanjiv Krishen (son).



Grandson Nikhil makes his 1st blood donation on Nani's birthday 1995.

city and much-beyond, which pitches in not just with donating blood and funding but in organizing an entire movement that has grown to build a strong culture of blood-donation, developed a valuable resource-bank of committed volunteers and brought unparalleled visibility to the basic tenets of non-remunerated Voluntary Blood Donation (VBD).

Sanjiv Krishen her son, is a constant and generous donor of funds and extends help whenever needed. He helped the Blood Bank Society step into the world of computerisation by providing technical and hardware support.



Some of the greeting cards designed by Mrs. Anu Ganju for the Blood Bank Society, Chandigarh.

Mrs. Anu Ganju her daughter is a gold medal winner in architecture and designed the building that houses the Blood Centre. Also an artist par excellence, she for years, gave the Blood Bank Society designs for greeting cards which always proved to be best sellers.

Both Anu, her husband Purinder and their children Kanika and Kunal are blood donors and also donate funds to the Blood Bank Society coffers regularly.

Blood Bank Society, Chandigarh dedicates this

book as a humble tribute to her lifetime efforts. When she decided to step out into the heat and dust of the streets of Chandigarh, little did she know that one day those streets would lead her to traverse not just the whole-country, but many other parts of the globe; while pursuing her mission to end the sufferings of millions of strangers, who she would never ever know; let alone meet.

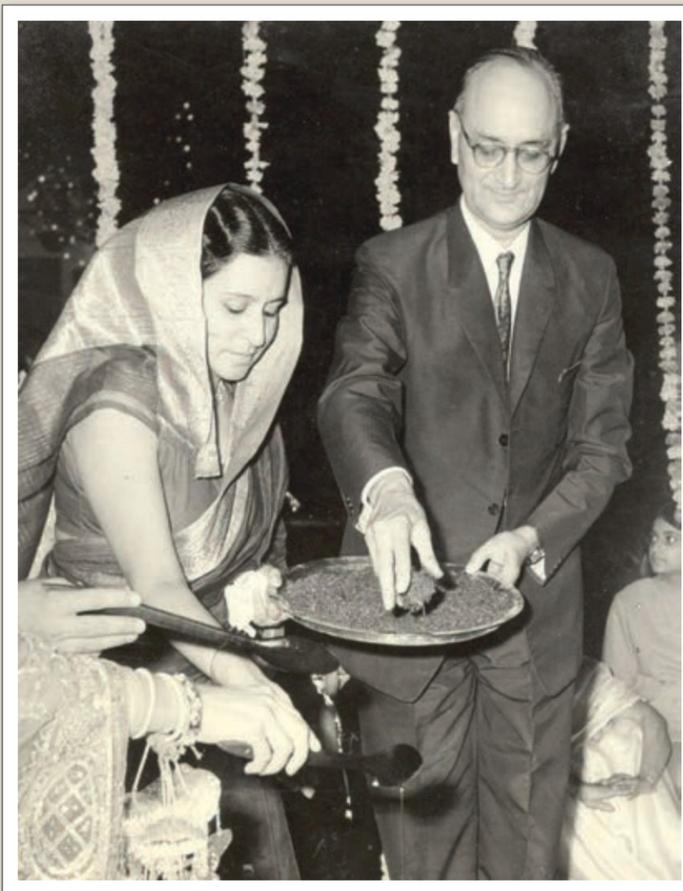
Today her pioneering, unwavering, unparalleled, path-breaking and some rather innovative efforts, have not only created a refreshingly positive mind-set towards voluntary blood donation, but set an outstanding example for others to emulate.



L - R: Mr. Christian Lang, Nicolas Lang, Mrs. Kanika Lang, Mrs. Anu Ganju (daughter), Sophia Lang & Mr. Purinder Ganju (son-in-law).



Mr. Kunal Ganju, Samaa Ganju & Mrs. Shradha Ganju.



Kanta and Saroop Krishen at their son's marriage.

“Reminiscing the time of her introduction to Mr. Saroop Krishen and their subsequent marriage she recalls, “*Mr. Saroop Krishen would often visit my father and soon he became close to the family. Often we would go riding, he on horseback, me on a cycle along the canal in Karnal. We got along famously. He was also my mentor for mathematics! I learnt much later that he had written a formal letter to my father, asking for my hand in marriage. One day after returning from school, my mother asked me to get ready hurriedly to receive some important visitors. Soon thereafter my father announced his decision.*

“We were married on November 21, 1945 in Karnal.

“By 1948 our eldest child - a son, Sanjiv was born; followed by two daughters, Anu in 1949 and Niti in 1951. When I decided to make my first trip to the PGI, seeking a voluntary service role my youngest child was almost a teenager.



Kanta Bhagwan was all of sixteen when she was married to Mr. Saroop Krishen, a 1939 batch Indian Civil Service officer. He was a little over 14 years older to her.

“As perhaps my parents had correctly judged, my husband proved to be a thorough gentleman. In fact the large-gap in our age also created a unique bond between us which is rather difficult to explain, but suffice it to say that besides being my teacher, mentor and guide, he always encouraged me to follow my heart. Therefore, when I shared the idea of doing some socially beneficial work to pass my spare time, he was actually the one who encouraged me the most.”

Born on 18 January, 1915 at Ludhiana Mr. Saroop Krishen, was an extremely inspiring man. When he passed away on December 10, 2006 at the age of 91 in Chandigarh, *The Tribune* carried an obituary on the front page of all its editions; paying a truly remarkable homage to a truly remarkable man. *Full text of the published obituary is reproduced on the subsequent page.*

Saroop Krishen to Live beyond Death

He practised what he preached. As willed by him, the body of Mr. Saroop Krishen, the first Chief Secretary of Haryana, who died at his residence here last night, was sent to the PGI for research and other medical purposes. He was 91. Immediately after the body was brought to the PGI, the doctors removed his eyes for giving sight to a needy person.



A member of the Indian Civil Service (ICS), once known as the steel frame of the country, Mr. Krishen lived a life shorn of pretensions and full of selfless service. The decision to donate the body was taken on November 21, 2006, when Mr. Krishen and his wife, Mrs. Kanta Saroop Krishen, celebrated their 61st marriage anniversary. Both decided to donate their bodies to the PGI. After receiving consent from the PGI, Mr. Krishen wrote his *“first and last will in respect of my body”* on November 30, 2006. He had earlier prepared a will in respect of his property.

He wrote: *“I hereby declare that after my death, my body shall be placed at the disposal of the institute, which shall be at liberty to deal with or dispose off my body in any manner it likes and my heirs and relatives shall not have any objection to such manner of disposal of my body.”*

“If my death takes place at a place other than the institute, my heirs shall be responsible for informing the institute about my death and making my body available to the institute within the shortest time.”

“I have firm belief that putting of dead body at the disposal of the institute shall be better than consigning it to the flames. This is my earnest desire that this will, executed by me, is acted upon by all heirs without any reservation. My heirs will have no claim of any kind over my dead body.”

The will was witnessed by his son-in-law, Mr. Manmohan Lal (Mac) Sarin. An identical will was executed the same day by Mrs. Saroop Krishen also. Incidentally, she is the founder Secretary of the Chandigarh Blood Bank Society. She was awarded *Padmashri* in 1971 for voluntary service.

Mr. Krishen verbally directed members of his family that after his death no one should cry and no religious function should be held.

In deference to his wishes, a simple memorial meeting will be held at his residence, 83, Sector 8, Chandigarh, tomorrow. Mr. Mac Sarin has appealed to the admirers of Mr. Krishen to ‘come and light a candle’ in his memory between 12 noon and 1 PM.

The people of the region, Haryana in particular, have a lot to remember about Mr. Krishen. He showed brilliance right from

his childhood. After doing his masters in English, he did his L.L.B. Mr. Krishen topped the Indian Civil Service examination in 1939 and joined service in November 1940. After serving in various posts, he rose to become the Financial Commissioner (Planning) in joint-Punjab. After Haryana came into existence in November 1966, Mr. Krishen became its first Chief Secretary and continued in the post till his retirement in March 1973. Unlike today’s bureaucrats and politicians, Mr. Krishen meticulously followed the rules. When his younger daughter, Niti, was married to Mr. Mac Sarin, now a senior advocate and former Advocate-General of Haryana, Mr. Krishen told the boy’s family that since the Guest Control Act was in force, the marriage party should not exceed 50.

When their only son, Sanjiv, got married, the Krishens donated the money which they would have spent on hosting a reception to the Prime Minister’s Relief Fund. Mr. Krishen was a regular contributor to *The Tribune*. In fact, he was writing a piece for the newspaper when death came.

The donation of Mr. Krishen’s body was not without hitches. The PGI in its acceptance letter had given certain telephone numbers on which the information regarding his death could be conveyed. Last night it took Mr. Sarin about two hours to inform the PGI about the death. The telephone numbers given by the PGI remained unanswered in the night. *‘To encourage those who may like to emulate Mr. Krishen, the PGI should have a 24-hour telephone number for such cases’*, says Mr. Sarin.

Mac & Niti Sarin



Back row, L - R: Vivek Sood, Malini Sarin Sood, Divya Gupta Sarin, Nkhil Sarin, Mac Sarin, Niti Sarin, Nitin Sarin, Vera Sarin & Kismet Nakai Sarin.

Front row L - R: Samarth Sarin, Mihika Sarin, Kanta Krishen & Kismet Sood.

Niti is a 57-time donor and has been working as a volunteer in the Blood Bank Society, Chandigarh ever since she was in high-school. Completely devoted to this life saving cause, she has also been representing the Blood Bank Society at various conferences in India and abroad for over three decades now.

What started as a lark to impress young girls attending to donors at a college blood donation camp in 1968, escalated into an obsessive passion over the years', recalls Mac Sarin reminiscing his initial tryst with voluntary blood donation.

Greatly motivated by his mother-in-law who is fondly known as 'The mother of Voluntary Blood Donation' in India, Mac has an impressive 115 blood donations to his credit.

This zeal has percolated down to his entire family. His wife

After turning 18, their elder son Nikhil, waited for his grandmother's birthday to make his first blood donation - a befitting tribute to her.

Nitin, the youngest son, started his 18th birthday by donating blood and then headed out to get his driving license! He and his wife Kismet are regular blood donors.

Their daughter Malini helps to raise funds and mobilize donors. Her husband Vivek is a regular blood donor and together they help organise awareness campaigns through SMS quizzes, treasure hunts etc., and by producing IEC material for the Blood Bank Society.

Mac's donations do not stop at donating-blood. Over the years, he has personally contributed lacs to the Blood Bank Society-coffers, besides helping generate equally handsome amounts from his well-placed network of friends and clients.

All his goals, whether *personal* - Niti his true love, his three beautiful children and his bundles of joy - the grand children; whether *professional* - A much sought after legal luminary of Chandigarh, achieving the pinnacles

of success, even while upholding the ethical values of the legal profession, a rarity in today's world; whether *Philanthropic* - to pursue the humane cause of voluntary blood donation with earnestness, *thus touching millions of lives, were achieved on his own terms.*



Grand-daughter Kismet being introduced to Blood Donation by Nana Mac and Nani Niti.

He started celebrating his and Niti's birthday by parting with a pint of blood but soon made it a habit of ushering in all happy occasion - be it birthdays, anniversaries, his appointment as Advocate General, the New Year, etc. by a visit to the Blood Bank. It is his way of thanking the Almighty for the countless blessings showered upon him.

Nani

One of those few and special people that I've known and loved from the moment I was born, Mrs. Kanta Krishen, for me *Nani*, has always been an inspiration for anyone who's ever met her. Being with her makes you feel positive, happy and good about life. Never an unkind word heard from her, she always finds something nice and encouraging to say to everyone. Her eyes only see good in everything.

There is no relationship she hasn't maintained with perfection—wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, or friend, she has nurtured each bond with love and care.

A loving and caring daughter who was exceptionally close to and fond of her father.

A devoted wife always there to support her husband... from official get-togethers to evening balls, she made the perfect partner. And then when she decided to do more with her life by starting the blood donation movement it was the same kind of support and strength that she got from her husband.



An amazing mother... from stitching clothes to helping them in school, she was a mum who was a friend first and then a parent.

Then came the grandchildren... she's been a grandma par excellence! I cannot remember a moment spent with *Nani* when we were bored! We cooked together, we gardened together and made handicraft items taught by her. The summer holidays were not complete if we hadn't spent a large chunk of them at our grandparents house. Knitting, stitching, cooking, gardening, gift wrapping, painting, embroidery, candle making... you name it she made us do it !! Even going to the blood bank with her was always such a fun and educative experience. We were shown the entire process of blood donation from bleeding the donor, to testing and cross matching, to storing the blood. That's what made all of us feel that regular blood donation was such a normal part of life!

And then, the icing on the cake was the arrival of the great-grandchildren. Wow!! what an amazing great-grandmother she's been. She has personally knitted three or four sweaters, for each of her great-grandchildren! She was always ready with new and innovative homemade

toys for them. When my daughter Kismet was born pre-maturely, she was tiny and nothing would fit her. Overnight *Nani* would knit a new, made to size cardigan for her, every single day.

They've danced in the rain together, sat in the drive and fed the birds and squirrels and have made trees out of dried branches with paper butterflies hanging off them.

The annual visit of all the great-grandchildren is the highlight of the year for *Nani*. She plans special activities like climbing up trees and plucking oranges from her garden or pulling out radishes and carrots from the kitchen garden. The children just love the fun!

Besides the family, *Nani's* passion has always been the Blood Bank Society. The movement has become what it is today because of her dedication and devotion towards the cause. She literally lives, dreams and sleeps 'blood bank'! *Nani* has been involved in every aspect. Even today at the age of 89 *Nani* is actively involved with the Blood Bank Society in whatever way she can.

- Malini Sarin Sood

Biographical Sketch of Mrs. Kanta Krishen



Date of birth: February 7, 1929 Gujranwala (now Pakistan)

Husband: Mr. Saroop Krishen, ICS

Children: Mr. Sanjiv Krishen (son), Mrs. Anu Ganju and Mrs. Niti Sarin (Daughters).

- Founder Secretary, Blood Bank Society, Chandigarh for 40 years (1964-2004).
- President, Blood Bank Society since 2007.
- Founder Secretary General, Indian Society of Blood Transfusion & Immunohematology (ISBTI) for 24 years (1972-96).
- Founder Secretary, Rotary & Blood Bank Society Resource Centre since 2003.
- Chief Patron, Federation of Blood Donor Organisations of India since 2006.
- Founder Member and Patron, Indian National Theatre since 2004.
- **Member:** Red Cross Society, Punjab.
Haryana Red Cross Managing Body 1966-95.
Union Home Minister's Advisory Committee on Chandigarh in 1976-81.

- Represented ISBTI at International Congresses in Helsinki (Finland), Paris (France), Munich (Germany), Jakarta (Indonesia) and Macau.

Events Organised:

- Blood Walk of 10,000 participants to celebrate 25 years of voluntary service.
- Cycle Rally for safe Blood of 6000 cyclists 1996.
- Chain of Life with 40,000 children on 44 kms of roads 1991.
- Candlelight Walks with 500 walkers since 2006.

Awards:

- Certificates and Awards from Red Cross Punjab.
- Silver Medal from Governor of Punjab.
- Gold Medal from President of India.
- Padma Shri, 1971.
- Rotary, Paul Harris Award, 1992.
- Rajiv Gandhi National Award Kolkata, 1993.
- Republic Day Award, Chandigarh Administration, 1996.

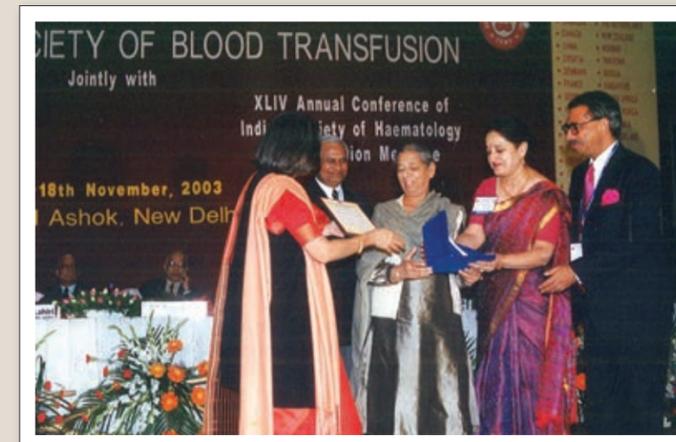
- Award for 24 years of Voluntary Service on 25th Anniversary of ISBTI, Kolkata 1997.
- Mother Teresa Award, by ISBTI Pinjore, 1998.
- ISBTI Lifetime Achievement Award, Kota, 2001.
- Karl Landsteiner Award, Kolkata, 2007.
- Sood Sabha Award, Chandigarh, February 2007.
- Dev Samaj College for Education International Women's Day Award, Chandigarh, March 8, 2007.
- International Women's Day Award by Senior Citizen's Council, Chandigarh, March 8, 2007.
- Outstanding Blood Motivator Award by HE Shri. Sudarshan Agarwal, Governor Uttarakhand, Dehradun, 2007.
- Senior Citizens Achievement Award by Rotary Club, Chandigarh, 2010.
- FBDOI H. D. Shourie Memorial Award, April 2011.
- Blood Bank Society Life Time Achievement Award, March 2011.
- "Change Maker" Award by Rotary International, Chandigarh, 2012.
- ISBTI Lifetime Achievement Award Patiala, 2014.
- The Life Time Achievement Golden Heart Award, by Rotary Club Chandigarh, June 2017.



Mrs. Kanta Krishen being awarded the President's Gold Medal by President Mr. V. V. Giri.



Mrs. Nalini Singh presenting the FBDOI H. D. Shourie Memorial Award to Mrs. Kanta Krishen; 2010.



Members of the ISBTI Chandigarh receiving the Best Chapter Award; 2003.



U. T. Administration Awards Blood Bank Society on Republic Day; 2008.

The Foundation of Blood Bank Society, Chandigarh

For any movement to be a success it has to have a strong foundation. While each person's effort has gone towards empowering the Blood Bank Society, these ladies are the 'stalwarts' whose contribution has been solid and unwavering over 50 years. They have always stood firm through thick and thin.

Mrs. Usha Saboo

The first time I heard of blood donation was during the Indo-China war in 1962. We were being asked to donate blood for our injured soldiers. I was wondering how will I do it? How much blood do I give? What happens to me after giving blood? What if I faint in the process? What if I die from weakness? *But after donating blood, I felt great and elated.*

When Dr. Jolly started the country's first voluntary blood bank society in Chandigarh I was one of the first few who joined the movement and started working with great zeal requesting, pleading, motivating people to come forward and donate blood. It was very tough, people were scared, they were willing to buy blood from poor, the diseased and famished people, even from drug addicts. But would not give blood themselves.

We worked hard to spread the message of voluntary blood donation. We visited institutions, offices, schools and colleges, held lectures, seminars and blood



donation camps where ever possible. Special functions were organised to felicitate and recognize the blood donors. To do all this funds were needed. So we organised musical evenings, held fetes and brought out special brochures to raise funds. We were always aware that we are working for a great cause. Blood Donation has now taken roots and has become a routine thing all over the country. *And who could be happier than us, a few of the old timers still around!*

Dr. Saudamini Bambah

Professor in the Punjab University, she was amongst the first to donate blood voluntarily in 1946 much before this concept was adopted. She stood tall amongst all of us for she was the real knight-angel who would be ever ready to move out, motivate people, organise camps and would keep in touch with donors. She was the one who would help and heal. She would visit and provided liberally whatever was needed by the patients. Dr. Bambah was an excellent ambassador of the Blood donation programme. Her legacy continues through the generous donations sent in her memory by Dr. R. P. Bambah (Retd.) Vice-Chancellor of Punjab University on her birthday and death anniversary, each year. She has been a troubleshooter with a solution to all problems in the Society.



Dr. Manmohan Kaur

One of the senior most members, she has been advisor, consultant and mentor to the Blood Bank Society since its inception. She is a store house of administrative knowledge, unparalleled in handling difficult situations. Being one of the pillars of the voluntary blood donation movement of our country, her wise counsel has been the guiding light that has enabled the promotion of this life saving cause.

Sentiments of a Colleague

It is not easy to write about a friend whom you have known for over fifty years. I can write nothing or write a whole book. In this confusion I pen-down in a rapid fire style, knowing that I am not doing justice to her lifelong work. The year 1964, Chandigarh is draped in its newness. A blood supply chain was necessary to meet the increasing demand of blood by a large hospital of the size of the PGI. In this atmosphere of something to do or something to create, a fertile brain could not be a spectator; hence an idea is born - Voluntary Blood Donation. A meeting is called of six or seven persons. I am invited. Waves of expectation seem to have gripped the room; all eyes are on the clock. On the dot of 10.00 AM a charming and beautiful woman walks in with some papers, posters and booklets. She elaborates the concept of voluntary blood donation which had been crystallized in Bombay by Dr. Mulgaonkar and tried successfully in Maharashtra.

The task was difficult and challenges unknown. Nothing deterred her. The Blood Bank Society was formed and Mrs. Kanta Krishen with whom the idea of voluntary blood donation was born, became the proud mother of the movement. She is a front rank leader ready to take the first assault. Her commitment to the cause has been complete. The passage was not easy as there were ups and downs, successes and failures, achievements and frustrations. Each failure strengthened her resolve. Chandigarh was a very small playing field for a farsighted player like Kanta, who dreamt of voluntary blood donation in the whole country. Mrs. Kanta Krishen has been a catalyst agent and as such visited the neighbouring



states, met the stakeholders and Heads of States to plead the cause of voluntary blood donation. Her innovative approach gave new strategies and motivational tools for the enrolment and retention of donors.

It was time to move forward. A conference was called to have an all India organisation to coordinate, set-standards and be a watchdog for maintaining a safe supply of blood and work for the elimination of paid or professional donors. The conference decided to establish the Indian Society of Blood Transfusion and Immunohematology (ISBTI) in 1972. Kanta became its Secretary General. This organisation provided an opportunity to meet every year, in different states, by turn. A number of members of ISBTI and local stakeholders attended these conferences. Consequently State Chapters were constituted to promote the cause. In spite of all these efforts, the malpractices in blood banking continued. The next task undertaken was to collect the material on these malpractices and approach *Common Cause*, an NGO, to file a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) in the Supreme Court which resulted in a landmark judgement in the entire ecosystem. Professional donations were banned. The National Blood Transfusion Council (NBTC) with its counterparts in the States were constituted. India also now had a National Policy for the Blood programme.

Patients and Nursing Homes did face difficulty to receive blood from hospitals. Sometimes the situation became critical. Complaints were constantly being received. Once again Kanta found a solution and resolved to have a blood bank which would be open 24 hours and seven days a week. Patients could have blood without replacement donors. The Blood Bank visualized was to be *State of The Art* and of high quality. She was able to get donations for the building. Land for the Blood Bank was leased by the Chandigarh Administration.

Mrs. Kanta Krishen is soft spoken, humble yet a very dignified personality with strong determination and diplomatic skills. These qualities enabled her to maintain a caring and friendly environment for her volunteers and donors. *Rain or shine she was always there to give a helping hand.* Kanta remains in touch with the Blood Bank volunteers even when they are not active anymore and do not come to the Blood Bank - a rare quality. We all cherish her friendship. Caste, creed, class, geographical locations etc. had no consideration for her. It was humanism in the human being that she valued. Beside the blood donation programme she excels in many other areas, i.e. classical music, handicrafts, gardening, writing, cooking, knitting etc. I am privileged to have been her close associate and have learnt a great deal from her.

- Dr. Manmohan Kaur



Executive Committee 2014-2017

Presidents of the Blood Bank Society, Chandigarh.

Mrs. Indira Chakraborty

Mr. T. N. Chaturvedi

Mr. B. S. Sarao

Mr. K. Banarji

Mr. N. Khosla

Dr. J. G. Jolly

Dr. B. N. S. Walia

Dr. V. K. Kak

Dr. B. N. S. Walia

Mr. Justice S. S. Sodhi

Mr. J. C. Agarwal

Mr. Ashok Pradhan

Mr. R. S. Verma

Mrs. Kanta Krishen

(L - R) 3rd row standing: Mr. Vikas Suri, Dr. Manish Rai, Mr. Munish Jauhar, Mrs. Promila P. Singh, Mrs. Sukrita Singh, Mrs. Sneh Popli, Mr. Subhash Bhaskar, Mrs. Ritu Hundal, Dr. Keshav Malhotra, Mrs. Nirmal Mehendroo & Mr. Harold Carver.

(L - R) 2nd row: Mr. M. L. Sarin, Mrs. Niti Sarin, Mrs. Kamna Sharma, Mrs. Kanta Krishen, Dr. Manmohan Kaur, Mrs. Gulshan Sharma & Mrs. Usha Talwar.

(L - R) 1st row sitting: Mrs. Mridula Oberai, Mrs. Neelam Dewan, Mrs. Bantab Singh, Mrs. Brij Bala Gupta & Mrs. Vanita Sahni.

Acknowledgements

Over the years hundreds of volunteers have been associated with the growth and development of the movement. It is not possible to name each one, however the Blood Bank Society thanks them most sincerely for their valuable contribution of time and effort that has brought Chandigarh on the international map of Blood Banking.

- Thanks are due to the Chandigarh Administration for their support over the years, which enabled the Blood Bank Society to take on various projects and to the Chandigarh State AIDS Control Society and the State Blood Transfusion Council for their unstinting support for their unstinting support.
- No movement can progress without financial resources. The Blood Bank Society thanks most profusely our very generous and committed friends who have stood by us over the years. Alchem International provides mobility to the Society by sponsoring the vehicle used every day and by supporting the Blood Centre through its CSR funds.
- Trident Group has sponsored gifts of world class towels for blood donors, since the inception of the Blood Centre in 2004. We are also thankful to Innovative Financial Management (IFM) and many other good souls who have helped over the years. These generous donations, whether in cash or kind took the movement to the heights it has reached.
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While we have tried to acknowledge everyone, who over the years have contributed to our cause and endeavour, we express our sincere apology if we have missed out any name, which is purely inadvertent.

S SARIN MEMORIAL **F** LEGAL AID FOUNDATION

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Ever since the inception of the Sarin Memorial Legal Aid Foundation in November 1995 it has been helping the Blood Bank Society in promoting voluntary blood donation by providing free legal services. In 2003 it had published the Blood Bankers Legal Handbook which was distributed free of cost in India and overseas. On July 21, 2013 by resolution No. 5 it had decided to help produce and fund a book recording the outstanding journey of the Blood Bank Society, a voluntary organisation, which has, through the passion and perseverance of its volunteers achieved the mammoth task of insuring the collection of safe blood from voluntary, non-remunerated, blood donors. This story is worth sharing with the whole world.

On a very personal note, I have to thank Mrs. Kanta Saroop Krishen not just for showing me the path to happiness by giving - by becoming a blood donor, but also for giving me her lovely daughter Niti, to love and to cherish and making everyone in my little family - blood donors.

Manmohan (Mac) Lal Sarin

Secretary General

Sarin Memorial Legal Aid Foundation

48, Sector 4, Chandigarh.



US Tennis Star of the 60's Billie Jean King had once said, ***'Create your legacy, and pass your baton...'***

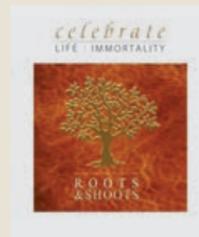
Kanta Saroop Krishen took the first step to create her legacy in 1963... In 2004, her daughter Niti Sarin formally took over her responsibilities... In 1997, Niti's daughter, Malini Sood began supporting her mother's endeavours... This picture shows Kanta (in her 90th year) holding her 1 month old great-grand-daughter Vera Sarin's hand (daughter of Nitin & Kismet) as a symbolic gesture of passing the baton to the fourth generation of her family!

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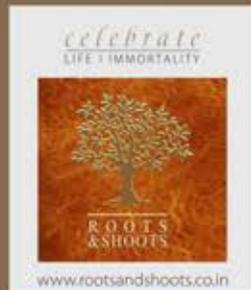
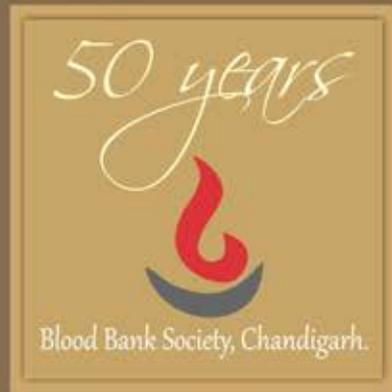
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