

The Patron saint of Hope

Cancer is a great challenge in itself, but looking for a safe place to stay during the treatment makes it even more daunting for the victim and their family. Mr Nihal Kaviratne from Mumbai and his wife realised this, especially about people from rural areas, in an event he attended. They felt that they needed to do something about it. He says, "I made a promise that I would do something to assist the little ones and their families."

To make a difference, Mr Kaviratne and his wife founded St. Jude India ChildCare Centres in 2006 for children suffering from cancer who did not have a clean place to stay in the city. It initially started in Mumbai with eight children. Gradually, people started seeing their work and asked them to start this initiative elsewhere as well. Today, St. Jude provides quality care to more than 492 children and their families at 39 centres in nine cities in Mumbai, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Chennai, Vellore, Guwahati, Delhi, and Varanasi.

Mr Kaviratne and his wife launched a new vertical in 2020 to ensure that children who



A beacon of hope for the cancer stricken families

have won the battle against cancer are able to fulfil their potential. This vertical provides timely assistance to their alumni—referred to as Judians—to complete their education, maintain good health, and lead successful lives, thus becoming a role model for others too.

The couple states that this was possible only because of the support they received from people which includes doctors and their partner hospitals who provided guidance and encouragement at every stage, united by the purpose of helping children survive cancer.

They thank the Divine and are grateful to their donors, patrons, and well-wishers who have put their faith in them and supported them through the years, making the struggles of the children easier.

The two good Samaritans are happy to have done their best for these young fighters who need a lot of support and hope from society. The children would earlier struggle with their parents for a clean place to stay, but this has changed due to their efforts. They have shown all of us how to reach out to those who need support by providing all fighters with a loving space to make their fight a wee bit easier.

- By Jamuna Rangachari