

Oldham Temple Partners with Hospice to Tackle Care Stigma.

Oldham's iconic temple has joined forces with Dr Kershaw's Hospice as its chosen charity in a new drive to tackle stigma around end-of-life care in the Asian community. The partnership was launched at this year's Diwali celebrations on Wednesday 22nd October.

Shree Swaminarayan Mandir has long been at the heart of the town's social and spiritual life for the local Hindu population.

Over the years it has combined worship with community service, from food drives to mental health workshops.

The partnership with Dr Kershaw's addresses the low use of hospice care among South Asian families in the UK, a topic often avoided due to cultural expectations around caring for elders at home.

Within South Asian families, caring for loved ones at home is often seen as both a duty and a source of pride. While those values are deeply respected, they can mean hospice services are misunderstood or avoided.

Temple committee member Anil Kara said: "At Shree Swaminarayan Mandir, we believe caring for our elders and vulnerable is sacred, just like a lot of people within the South Asian community of all faiths do. But we also recognise that hospice care can offer invaluable support at times families feel most vulnerable.

"Our aim is to open hearts and minds and show our community that support does not replace love and duty, it enhances it."

Last year, the temple teamed up with Manchester charity Saheli to collect essentials for BAME women affected by domestic abuse. More than 176kg of food, clothing, toys and appliances were donated and distributed within weeks.

This latest partnership will see the temple and hospice run educational workshops, awareness sessions and fundraisers to encourage people to discuss end-of-life wishes. Families will also be able to meet hospice staff in informal settings at the temple.

Lindsey Harper, Director of Clinical Services at Dr Kershaw's Hospice, said: "It is a privilege to partner with the temple to reach communities where hospice care can often be misunderstood.

"Together, we strive to ensure that families know the hospice is a compassionate partner in care and not something to be feared.

"As a hospice, our values include inclusiveness, compassion, dignity, and respect. We are honoured to care for people of all religions and walks of life.

"Dr Kershaw's is committed to ensuring that end-of-life care aligns with the values and beliefs of each person we care for."

For some in the congregation, the benefits of hospice care are already deeply personal. Temple member Vilas Bhudia, whose son Sanjay spent their final weeks at Dr Kershaw's, said:

"Our family always believed it was our duty to look after Sanjay at home, and we did everything we could. But when they needed specialist care, the hospice staff treated him like family. They gave him dignity, comfort and love, and they supported us too. The help they gave him and myself I cannot describe in words."

As part of the partnership, the temple also aims to raise crucial funds for the hospice to support its specialist services. Fundraising events will be announced in the coming weeks, with organisers promising activities that will bring the whole community together.

Diwali celebrations this year took place over 5 days and on Wednesday the temple has over 1500 people come through the doors and visit the temple where there was variety of food and annukut on display.

Just on the day of the launch the temple had donations over of over £2,000 in 1 one day, Manisha Kalyan a lead within the events and charity committee added “with number of local and international events and activities planned to raise further funds and raise awareness around the amazing work the charity does.”

Both organisations hope the initiative will bridge the gap between cultural traditions and professional care, showing that seeking help is not a sign of neglect but of love.

-ENDS-

About Shree Swaminarayan Mandir:

- Shree Swaminarayan Mandir is a prominent Hindu temple located in Oldham, England.
- The temple, which cost £7m and funded entirely by volunteers, is known for hosting various religious and cultural events throughout the year, including Diwali and other Hindu festivals.
- Located at Copster Hill Road, Oldham, OL8 1QB
- www.oldhamandir.fai

Media contact: For press enquiries please email press@inkedpr.com