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Celebrating living monuments

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As Chennai is engrossed in the festivities of Madras Week celebrations throughout this week, there was celebration of a different sort in the city. 'Living Monuments' of the city - not the stone and the mortar variety, but the real and sprightly sort - were the topic of discussion at this event. To put it simpler, it was a celebration of the senior citizens of Chennai.

This event was organised by the Indo-American Association, led by its President P Murari. It was intended to discuss some of the challenges that we, as a society, deal with in terms of the increasing senior citizenship in the city.

Murari said, "Senior citizens are the living monuments of the city. They need loving care. The speed in which our life is going and with the joint family safety net breaking up, I think gated communities for senior citizens will be a favourable option for the future."

S Muthiah, writer and columnist, reminded the senior citizens to take forward the message of heritage of Madras by being more participative and also by being a part of the Madras story.

He said, "It is very tragic to note that most people in Madras don't know its history. How many knew that Madras is the oldest municipality in the world. Madras Week, which has almost turned into Madras Month, is an effort to tell the story and heritage of Madras to the people of the city."

Vandana Gopikumar of The Banyan, an NGO that works with mentally-ill women, said she had bounced the idea of spreading the message of 'kindness', which people seem to forget most often than not. Facilities like soup kitchens during Madras Week were some of the suggestions provided by her.

The Indo-American Association also released a directory of facilities and services that are available in and around Chennai, to take care of the senior .

Col Sridharan from Serene Retirement Communities, and Ranvir Shah from the Pratham Hospice Trust also participated.

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