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25 years on, IIT alumni launches healthcare plan for retired faculty

On the occasion of Alumni Day, the Class of '84 chose three initiatives for a project that also includes a nature park

DIPTI SONAWALA

Yet another batch of IIT Bombay alumni – the Class of 1984 – have come together to give back to their alma mater, 25 years after they passed out of it. The batch is collecting money to introduce a healthcare plan for retired IIT-B faculty as part of their Legacy Project.

On Sunday, the batch presented a cheque of Rs 2 crore to IIT director, Prof Devang Khakhar, for the project on the occasion of their silver jubilee reunion and Alumni Day. New York-based Arvind Sanger, from the Class of '84, said, "We all have gained tremendously from the education IIT imparted. A large part of our success can be traced to the opportunities IIT education created for us. We have chosen three initiatives for the project, including a wellness plan, with the theme of 'Past, Present, Future'."

THE THREE INITIATIVES:

Retired Faculty Wellness Fund (Past)

Faculty members who retired before 2003 do not have any health coverage provided by IIT or the government. "Due to advanced age, most are ineligible for private insurance. This fund will set up a corpus to supplement medical coverage for those who retired prior to 2003," said an alumnus.

Soneri Baug (Present)

The project is to develop the 10 acre stretch, between the campus and Powai Lake, into a nature park on the lines of Mahim Nature Park. It will be developed under guidance from World Wildlife Fund.

New Faculty Sign-on Bonuses (Future)

This initiative was originally started by the 1982 batch, and supplemented by the 1983 batch. This will add funds to the existing corpus to fund sign-on bonuses for new faculty members.

Sanger added, "We have so far collected Rs 2.5 crore, of which over 75 per cent will go for the retired faculty wellness project."

Meanwhile, a group of 160 alumni from the 1975 to 1985 batches presented old mess workers with Rs 1 lakh each under "H4-HATS" or Hostel Alumni Team Stewardship – a programme aimed at paying back mess workers (current and past), improving infrastructure facilities at H4, and increasing interaction between alumni and students.

"We visited the hostel recently and found some old mess workers still there. We decided to offer them financial support. Our goal is to rekindle affinity among IIT-B alumni for their hostels. We will pledge Rs 50 lakh before the year is out, and will also improve infrastructure of the hostel," said Bakul Desai of the '82 batch who is co-ordinator of the H4-HATS committee.

On Saturday, 10 retired mess workers (including family of two deceased) who served 25 years and more at H4, were presented with Rs 1 lakh each. In addition, another 10 present mess workers who have completed 25 years, were

presented Rs 25,000 each. They will be paid another Rs 75,000 each on retirement.

THE LEGACY PROJECT

Different groups pledge support by donating a month's salary or one per cent of net worth to a project, or an activity, that benefits IIT-B and those associated with it.



In addition to the Rs 2 crore cheque presented to the IIT director, the alumni also presented cheques of Rs 1 lakh each to 10 retired mess workers