



Covid help desk at Xavier's

**SUBHANKAR
CHOWDHURY**

Calcutta: The St Xavier's College Alumni Association, in collaboration with the college, has opened a Covid help desk on the campus to help families who have tested positive, especially those from economically weaker sections.

The volunteers managing the help desk will arrange oxygen concentrators, oxygen cylinders, pulse oximeters, PPE kits, hand sanitisers and other essential commodities and provide the items to those unable to procure them.

The help desk number that became operational on Wednesday is 7439955182.

Father Dominic Savio, the principal of the college and the president of the alumni association, said: "We cannot remain quiet in this difficult situation and will have to engage ourselves in extending these services, as the main principle of our (Jesuit) education system is to act as men and women for others and this is the time to prove it."

A member of the help desk "SXCCAAhelp" said the initiative will include helping people get hospital beds, safe homes, ambulances, Covid tests, oxygen, delivery of medicines, blood and plasma donations.

Sanjib Koner, the honorary secretary of the alumni association, said they received

42 calls from people seeking help on Wednesday.

"We had internally circulated the number among our members and others who have engaged in humanitarian drives previously. So many calls in a day shows how serious the situation is," Koner said.

He said the family members of the patients are going to the Park Street campus to receive the aid. "If the situation demands delivery at their doorsteps, our volunteers will do that," he said. For now, deliveries will be restricted to the vicinity of the college.

An appeal from Father Savio is being sent to all alumni in India and abroad. A coordinated and comprehensive initiative called SXCCAAhelp Lifetime Lifeline project is being planned.

"We need a lot of resources so that we can help as many as possible. Since economic activities have been restricted as a precaution against Covid, the financial distress is increasing among families. The poor are not in a position to bear the medical expenses," Father Savio said.

He said they were also working on a plan to turn the college's Raghampur campus into an isolation centre for the college students and their families who test positive for Covid.

"We have plans to open the isolation centre to outsiders as well, later," Father Savio said.