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## Magsaysay awardee recalls Baba's words of wisdom

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**Pune:** On a stage in Kothrud, where three Ramon Magsaysay Award winners were present, there were countless stories of inspiration, perspiration and quite a bit of emotion too, as psychiatrist Bharat Vatwani was introduced by his friends and mentors Prakash and Manda Amte.

Vatwani heads the Shraddha Foundation, along with his wife Smita, also a psychiatrist. Together, along with their staff, they have picked up nearly 7,000 mentally ill people from the streets, treated and housed them, and have also reunited them with their families.

Amte introduced Vatwani as a person who reminded him of his father Baba Amte due to shared values and their aims.

"My father studied the value of compassion in real life and studied many holy books to find out what it means



Mandar Deshpande

Ramon Magsaysay awardee Bharat Vatwani felicitated at the hands of Prakash Amte

street dwellers, he and his wife have also adopted children who had been orphaned," he told the crowd.

Vatwani, on the other hand, credits the inspiration he received from Baba Amte because of which his organisation is a respected name in the field of mental health and rehabilitation. "I had a 20-bed centre at Dahisar. Then I came

Anandvan in a huge setup. He was the one who told me that I must dream big and do more good because there is no end to it. So I invested my savings, my wife sold or pawned her jewellery and we set up a new centre at Karjat, where about 120 to 130 patients are treated now. Baba wanted to inaugurate the centre but his ill health kept him from coming," he recounted.