

Inspira



A LILA POONAWALLA FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

Vol. No. 28 / Sept. 2009

FROM MY HEART

My Dear Lila Fellows,

I write this message to you from **Alaska, USA**. I have just visited the **North Pole**, and crossed the **Arctic Circle**. What an unbelievable magnitude of God's creation, breath-taking panorama, scenic beauty, nature's bounty, all reflecting joy and peace! This nature's vastness and abundance, like anyone else, makes me reflect on life and its meaning. I think of you all and your well being. With all my friends still in my thoughts I felt this particular message should be specially addressed to you, **My Lila Fellows**, who mean so much to me.

The 14th award function just concluded. **53 new members joined the family**, each a reflection of determination, courage and conviction of making a difference in their lives. Thanks to "*Robin Hood and His merry girls*" the function was a memorable event. A big thank you also to **our Chief Guest, renowned Padmabhushan Dr. R. A. Mashelkar** who truly conveyed his **motivational message 'From His Heart'**, sharing his own life's experiences and inspiring one and all. Do read all about this unique event in this issue.

The scholarship is only the beginning of a **lifetime relationship**. You, Lila Fellows are like **our own children** and the bonding that develops through years is unbreakable. What do I expect from you? Nothing and yet everything! You all must co-operate with the Foundation to make fine, refined and quality citizens out of yourselves. The Foundation would like to mould you into achieving your dreams. To convey this to the new members of the family an introductory program was arranged. All trustees participated and communicated with the girls the **goodness of relationships, the necessity of discipline in ones life, the importance of participation and the basic need of continuous**

communication with the Foundation to ensure that every member of the LPF is updated about each of the LFs, with the main goal of sharing your joys and supporting you in the your of need. **This is not only for the new members of the Lila Family but applies to every LF right from the 1st batch of 1996 to 2009.**



Mrs. Maya Thadhani conducted an awareness program for the new batch of LFs going overseas. She shared her experiences and knowledge of overseas travel, basic etiquette and minute details of how to adjust to new cultures. What was unique was that one of our own **LF Amruta Prakash**, who had been to UK for her PG, interacted with the girls as well and was able to clear many a question of the enthusiastic LFs.

The **LPF family celebrated 'Dad's' (Mr. Firoz Poonawalla) birthday** with a lot of enthusiasm and joy. At this event, the 27th issue of Inspira was released amidst a wonderful fun filled evening of **bonding and building relationships**.

It was quite a task to select the 2nd batch of LFs for the **Wholesome Leadership Training Program to be held in UK in collaboration with ASHA FOUNDATION**. I was not so sure whether we will be able to arrange enough funds to make this Peace Ambassador's (PA) program possible. **But LFs came to the rescue**. The first batch of PAs, together with other very enterprising LFs arranged a **fund raising program called 'SAMAGAM - a cultural confluence of Lila Fellows'**. What a fabulous event it was! All those who attended as well as all those who sponsored this event praised

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FROM MY HEART

the performance of each LF. We certainly are thankful to all our sponsors and above all, to all the LFs who made this possible. I really would like to put on record my appreciation of the efforts of each LF volunteer (special thanks to **Samina Deokar and Smita Acharya**), **Mrs. Jayshree Shahade and 'Dad'**, for making this a successful event and enabling me to take the decision of sponsoring the 2nd batch of PAs. I am sure with this type of **unique initiatives from LFs we will not only be able to continue sending a new batch to UK each year, but also be able to increase the number of scholarships that we give each year.** In return the Foundation arranged a special thanksgiving party for those who volunteered to actively participate in **SAMAGAM**. Each LF was given a small token of appreciation and **a personal individual hand written note from me**, including Mrs. Shahade and 'Dad'.

Thanks to **Mrs. Maya Thadhani, Mrs. Shernaaz Edibam and Manjusha Gupte** (who accompanies the current batch of PAs as the Manager of the group), a special session was organized for the selected PAs about to go to UK. In this session they were explained the cultural differences and the basic etiquette required while staying in a group at an Institute. The importance of working together in teams, supporting each other and learning to share

and accommodate each other's negatives and positives was stressed upon. And so was the need to record the daily learning by completing the journals provided, so that on return the same can be shared with other LFs. I am sure these inputs will make the UK trip a useful, thrilling and a joyful experience to the PAs.

We had yet another unique program. A Diamond Awareness Workshop conducted by '**Creations-The Society of Design and Technology**', which is an educational society and a public trust. 'Creations' specializes in educational programs and services related to design and allied fields, with keen interests in the fields of Fashion, Jewellery and Interior Designing. The LFs really enjoyed knowing this art of jewellery designing as a hobby as well as a profession.

I am really looking forward to **more committed participation** by the **Lila Fellows in the continuous development of self and the Foundation.**

Good luck and happy days!



Lila Poonawalla

MELTING POT

It is amazing to know that conventional subjects which were once considered mundane have branched into newer promising applications with social relevance and economic advancement. Inspira speaks to three LFs who have visualized the unusual in the usual.



Archana Gandhe (Damale) (LF-1998) who has been a Pune University Top Ranker during both her Bachelors and Masters degrees has recently been awarded the prestigious 'Young Scientist Award' by Indian National Science

Academy (INSA), New Delhi for her PhD research. She would be receiving this award in December. Having pursued Microbiology from Garware College Pune, she went on to do a PhD in Biotechnology from Center for DNA Fingerprinting

and Diagnostics, Hyderabad. She had cleared the CSIR-UGC examination and was getting a UGC fellowship during her PhD. Her PhD dealt with the study of immune mechanisms in silkworms. She explains "*Silkworms as we all know are important economically as they are reared by farmers for silk. However, every year owing to diseases in silkworms huge losses are incurred. Hence with a view to develop better strategies for disease management in silkworms, I studied their immune mechanisms. After completing my doctorate, I worked at the R&D centre of Invitrogen Biosciences in Bangalore for almost a year where I carried out transgenic expression of some human*

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MELTING POT

proteins in insect cells. I have three international publications relating to my research work and have also presented my work at two international conferences. I plan to continue with my research and am currently looking for post doctoral positions in Bangalore." Archana is now settled in Bangalore with her husband Sunil Gandhe (a business development manager with SAP India) and 10-month old daughter, Anaya. She says, "I am what I am today because of my parents and wouldn't have been able to pursue a demanding course like PhD post marriage if it were not for my understanding husband".

She has a penchant for English classics, Harry Potter and Sherlock Holmes and cooking. About enriching experiences she shares... "I never left home as long as I was in Pune until marriage. Halfway through our marriage, my husband shifted from Hyderabad to Bangalore for his job. I was then halfway through my PhD and so for almost the following 2½ years we had to stay apart. We both went through a difficult phase. Many times I thought of giving up my doctoral studies. However, Sunil encouraged me to continue and never pressurized me to leave my career for him. Living alone taught me a lot!"

Archana told us "I read about the LPF scholarship in the newspaper and was interested as it was the first of its kind offering scholarships for post graduate studies to women. Besides, Lila madam herself was an inspirational figure which prompted me to apply. It was a significant achievement to be selected for this prestigious scholarship amongst many other deserving candidates. The success stories of Lila madam herself and so many other Lila fellows have been an inspiration for me and have been instrumental in shaping my career. **I think the Foundation is already carrying out a lot of activities for the girls. The 'Ambassadors of Peace' and 'Samagam' are great initiatives. The Inspira team is doing a great job!** I too have social goals. As an LFI feel responsible to give back to the society. Till now, apart from some monetary donations I have not been able to. However, in future I would love to actively work for a social cause. I like teaching and wish to teach under-privileged children."

A university rank holder throughout her Bachelor's program in COEP, **Gayatri Keskar (LF-2003)** bagged the gold medal in Metallurgical Engineering in 2002. She recently received her PhD in Materials Science Engineering at Clemson

University and she shares, "The smiling faces of my parents on my graduation day last year were definitely worth all the hardships and pain and made me believe 'Everything happens for the good'. In the pursuit of knowledge, I have always adopted a rigorous approach in order to gain an in-depth



understanding of the subject at hand. My final year engineering project at National Chemical Laboratory opened a new avenue for me and introduced me to the research world. This opportunity made me realize my interest in the field of materials, particularly in Nanotechnology and confirmed my choice to enter this emerging field to contribute towards the development of novel nano-materials. I was fortunate enough to receive the LPF scholarship to pursue my masters in Materials Science and Engineering at Clemson University. This scholarship was very important for me and it definitely helped me in fulfilling my dreams by providing me the financial support at the right time when I needed it the most. I chose Clemson because it has superior research facilities especially in nanotechnology along with the experienced faculty and well designed course structure which was congruent with my aspirations." She is currently working as a senior scientist in a Nanotechnology based small scale company. She would like to explore the tremendous potential of nanotechnology based R&D to make significant contribution towards understanding and creating improved novel materials, devices and systems that exploit these new properties.

One particular incidence in her life has reinforced the righteousness and faith in her. She shares: "Three years back on a Friday night, I was waiting at the signal to cross the street with my friend. Here, in US, you have to wait for the walk signal to cross the street. So when I saw the walk signal flashing, I started walking. Suddenly the car in the right-most lane took the right turn and hit me. It happened in fraction of a second and before I could understand anything I was on the ground lying on my back. The driver was drunk. After he saw me on the ground he stopped for couple of seconds. But as soon as he realized his mistake he left. But one young lady from the crowd came forward and helped me to get up and offered help as she was staying close by. I will never ever forget

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MELTING POT

what she said. She said, "Please don't think that we (Americans) are all the same; we do want you to be here in US. I have noted down his car number and I will be more than happy to help you with the police investigation as a witness. Just give me a call whenever you need me". I was really touched with her sweet and kind gesture. It really made me believe that be good to people and you will get the same in return."

Gayatri voiced her views on the LPF and social responsibility – *"LPF is a great source of inspiration for all LFs and has motivated so many women to step ahead with confidence. It's doing a great job by organizing different events and seminars. Each LF should further publicize its valuable work in their circle of people, for the benefit of our Foundation. As a LF I feel it's my moral responsibility to help in continuing this effort to provide financial assistance to other deserving young girls by contributing in my own way. I would like to financially support a young deserving girl in her school and college education in India as a small token of my appreciation towards LPF and society."*



Shilpa Khekale Tikeker (LF-2001) has done B. Pharmacy from Pune University's Allana College of Pharmacy and M.S. in Industrial Pharmacy from St. John's University, New York. She is now pursuing PhD in Industrial Pharmacy at St. John's University on the topic

'Targeted Nanoparticle Formulation Development for Breast Cancer using Photodynamic Therapy'. She has interned in Forest Laboratories where she worked on several small research projects and has also been the Chair of the American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists (AAPS) - St. John's University Student Chapter in the year 2008.

When asked why pharmacy she answered- *"I always wanted to be a part of the health-care system and put my scientific thinking ability to a good cause with innovative formulations for faster therapeutic effect. I am interested in the formulation aspect of a drug i.e. whether it should be given as a solution or a tablet depending on the medical condition and the patient (pediatric/geriatric etc...)"*. Speaking about the scope of her chosen discipline, she explained, *"I plan to work as a Formulation Scientist/ Research*

Scientist and develop efficient ways to administer a particular drug to enhance its beneficial properties. In addition, I also plan to become a Professor and teach principles of Pharmaceutics. I have been teaching and conducting lab work for D. Pharma Students and intend to pursue that later in my life. I would like to mentor Graduate Pharmacy students in their chosen research field as well." She chose St. John's University, New York specifically because it is situated very close to New Jersey, both of which constitute the Pharmaceutical belt in the US offering rich opportunities, resources and research projects.

She heard about LPF scholarship from her friend, Koyel Ghosal, an older LF. She had then secured admission to St. John's University but had no financial assistance and did not want to miss the opportunity. Hence she applied for the LPF scholarship. *"It was important that I get this scholarship because without it, it was tough to support my studies, living in US"*. She misses the foundation! *"Lila Ma'am has been a tremendous source of inspiration to me and I wish more girls understand her and realize their dream. I love the way the Foundation organizes different activities and workshops. But all are in Pune. Sometimes I feel I miss all these opportunities being far away from Pune and I wish there were more such workshops over here in New York. I understand that it is tough to organize such things here; however Lila Ma'am and Maya Ma'am do make it a point to connect with us when they are here."*

She has also worked in a non-profit organization, namely Maharashtra Foundation raising money for underprivileged people in rural Maharashtra. About her philosophy in life- *"How to be patient is something that I learnt from my research work. No matter how much you rush, or plan so that things move ahead in life, some things happen at their own pace and you have to wait for the results and this has become the guiding principle of my life."*

Each time Inspira meets new LFs who are realizing their academic dreams, we realize how the magnitude of education brings about a wholesome change in young girls and empowers them to take over every walk of life! Support women's education... build a sound society!

■ **-Yogini Deshpande**
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EMPOWERED LILA FELLOWS...

Dr. Shilpa Chhadwa (LF-2008) is a medical practitioner at the Bharthi Homeopathy Hospital and is currently pursuing her MD, specializing in Diabetes. Neck deep into social service activities, she has had the honour of representing the National Social Service squad at the Republic Day Parade of 2004 and she went on to participate in the International Commonwealth Day 2004. This empowered LF tells us that "If one decides the height one wants to achieve, the path is automatically paved!"

Q. How does homeopathy work?

A. Homeopathy is based on the scientific principle 'similia similibus curentor' meaning 'the like cures like'. Homeopathic treatment targets the combination of the mind, body and soul of the individual and not just the disease symptoms. Thus before starting a treatment we scrutinize the patient from childhood to date with the help of a detailed questionnaire to know the nature and response of his/her body. In the end we prescribe one sweet pill which the patient enjoys popping in.

Q. What are the advantages of Homeopathy?

A. Allopathy comprises many drugs and for every ailment there is a different medication. However, Homeopathy prescribes only one single medication for a single or a combination of disorders.

Another disadvantage of allopathic medicines is that eventually, the human body develops a resistance for them (For eg. The human body has already developed resistance against Tamiflu, the most popular drug for Swine Flu). Thus drugs keep getting obsolete and newer technologies keep producing newer drugs. Instead, homeopathic medicines never develop resistance and are thus cost effective. Rather, it boosts immunity and reduces sensitivities. There were no side effects at all.

Q. What is the difference between Homeopathy, Allopathy and Ayurveda?

A. The difference is in the pharmacology i.e. the preparation and administration of the medicines. Ayurveda is based on traditional and natural

products for medication and again does not have side-effects. But it too has different remedies for different disorders, whilst homeopathy believes too many medicines at the same time confuses the body.

Q. Homeopathy cannot cure in acute conditions. In such conditions treatment goes futile if allopathic medicines are taken. Isn't this a very big disadvantage?

A. This is a myth. Homeopathy was actually invented for acute conditions only. High temperatures, asthma attacks, allergies they all have a treatment in Homeopathy. However, even in an emergency if allopathic medicines are taken, the homeopathic treatment is not ineffective; it only slows down. In allopathic treatments many times symptoms return after the end of the treatment. But homeopathy completely eradicates the problem.

I know of a lot of cases of abscess, gall stones, kidney stones which have been completely cured without surgery! However, every *pathy* has its own limitations and obviously in very advanced stages of diseases like Cancer and AIDS where there has been prolonged and severe damage to the body, there is no alternative to Allopathy. But again in post-operative situations homeopathy is



**Dr. Shilpa Chhadwa
(LF-2008)**

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EMPOWERED LILA FELLOWS...

very effective in healing faster. Having a wholesome approach works wonders in boosting the emotional and mental health of the patient.

Q. Doesn't homeopathy lay a lot of difficult dietary restrictions on the patients?

A. That's again a myth! Patients can eat anything and everything. They are only advised not to eat or drink anything fifteen minutes prior to and after taking the medicines.

Q. What is the acceptability of this pathy amongst the public?

A. Tremendous! People are fed up of side effects of allopathy. With the changing lifestyles they are also getting more health conscious. So, more and more people are opting for homeopathy, which is safe in the long run and also increases their immunity.

Q. What is the future of this branch of medicine? Would you advise the youth of today to take it up?

A. Yes of course! Homeopathy has a bright future. As I told you, with the kind of current lifestyles, the need of homeopathic doctors is going to be tremendous five years down the line. People are recognizing the importance of this medicine. If not less expensive, it is surely not a more expensive option for patients. As for a profession, true, that the vacancies in Maharashtra for homeopathic doctors are less and the pay is not at par with the allopathic doctors, but we know that Homeopathy flourishes in South India. In North India, the vacancies and pay of homeopathic doctors is equal to if not more than that of allopathic doctors! It is the medicine of the future and more youngsters are going to see more opportunities in homeopathy very soon.

Q. How have you been able to combine Homeopathy and social service?

A. I have been into NSS (National Social Service Scheme) since Junior College. After qualifying as a doctor, it became easier and far reaching. I create awareness and conduct free medical camps. The common medical problems in villages and rural

areas are skin disorders, water-borne diseases, malnutrition, indigestion, goiter, etc. which I am able to treat. In association with the state NSS team every year we conduct free health checkups. Through NSS I have been able to build national and international social service groups where I am always available to provide medical help and counseling, which people ask for at every stage of life, be it exams, marriages.

Some general homeopathic drugs useful in routine life –

1. Swine flu preventive drug -
Influenzenum, Pulcetella, Camphora, etc.
2. Food poisoning –
Arsenic album, Nuxvomica, etc
3. Hairfall –
Arnica hair oil and shampoos
4. Dysmenorrhea –
Magsphos, Polocynth
5. Anxieties –
Gelesmium, Argentum nitricum
6. Headaches –
Beledona, Aconice, Spigelia

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NEWS FLASH

SAMAGAM – a cultural fundraising program was held on May 10, 2009 at the Yashwantrao Chavan Natyagruha, Pune. This event was truly by the Lila Fellows of the Lila Fellows and for the Lila Fellows. The main sponsors of the event were: IDBI Bank Ltd., KPIT Cummins Infosystems Ltd., Mother's Recipe – Desai Brothers Ltd., Biotor Industries, Jayvish Foundation, Birla Sunlife Insurance Company Ltd., Reliance Communication Ltd. and Axis Bank Ltd. We are happy that the funds raised by this event have helped in sending the second batch of Peace Ambassadors for leadership training to UK.

'From many small beginnings come great things' - such has been the journey of **SAMAGAM**. It all began as an idea to give back to the society and the Foundation what the LFs have so generously received from them; an idea to do something for the talented yet needy girls and help the noble cause of our very own LPF. When we started this journey our expectations were very small. But soon more LFs joined in. Under the able guidance of Firoz Sir and Jayashree Ma'am, we started to dream big and set even bigger targets for our fundraising program.

There were endless meetings, brainstorming sessions and e-mails exchanged in which the LFs came up with new ideas and suggestions to make this program a success. There were times when we felt we would never be able to pull this off and at other times we knew we could achieve much more. At times it was quite chaotic as none of the participating LFs had any experience in organizing an event of this magnitude. But we learned from our mistakes and moved on. There were those anxious times when we were not able to rope in a single sponsor and then the ecstatic moment when we got our first sponsorship cheque! When we began, we never thought we would be able to get so many sponsors. But once we got the positive feedback from them in spite of the recession period, we knew this was just the beginning.

All the performing LFs made great efforts and gave their best to completely mesmerize the audience. The very important success of this event was that so many Lila Fellows from different fields and backgrounds came together only with the purpose of doing something for the society and for women's education – **SAMAGAM** – a confluence of LFs indeed! Being a part of **SAMAGAM** has made us better persons. Quoting a LF, "We have now become event managers"! It has been a learning experience; a memorable one for us to cherish for a long time to come.

■ - **Samina Deokar**
(LF-1998)



AWARD FUNCTION

Lila Poonawalla Foundation celebrated its 14th Award Function on 29th July, '09 at the Taj Blue Diamond. This year the Foundation awarded 53 girls, which is the highest number of scholarships in a year so far, giving it a total of 483 scholarships till date. A very warm welcome from the Inspira Team to all the new girls who received scholarship this year! Welcome to the LPF family!!! Prachi Divekar (Harkare) recapitulates the big event!

Trustee Ms. Shaheen Patel (LF - 1996) compered the event. Mrs Lila Poonawalla welcomed all the guests. She formally introduced the Chief Guest, the renowned Padmashri and Padmabhushan Dr. Raghunath A. Mashelkar, the former Director General of Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). Shaheen then invited the chief guest and all the trustees to light the lamp and thereby inaugurate the award function. Three LFs, Ms. Rupali Soni (LF-2001), Deepa Krishnamurthy (LF-2005) and Ayesha Shaikh (LF-2006) expressed their experiences with the foundation and narrated how in different ways the foundation has touched their lives. Then Mr. Firoz Poonawalla announced and acknowledged the contribution and support from donors and well wishers of the foundation.



Chief Guest Dr. R.A. Mashelkar inaugurates the award ceremony as the LPF trustees look on

Then came the most awaited part of the function- the announcement of this year's scholarships! 53 scholarships were awarded this year to girls pursuing their post-graduation in different disciplines, in India and abroad. Trustee Mrs. Maya Thadani introduced the new batch of the girls pursuing their further education overseas. Trustee Mrs. Vasantha Ramaswamy introduced the scholarships in the Indian category where the girls come from both, rural and urban areas. The special category awards were then announced by Senior Trustee, Mrs. Shernaz Edibam. 19 girls who were awarded who come from a poor financial background but have a common trait- the zeal to



The new Batch of LFs with the Chief Guest and Trustees

gain education and reach the top! Lila Fellow of the year, Prajakta Rane was from this category. In spite of not having both her palms right from birth, she has successfully completed her Bachelor's in Pharmacy and will now pursue MBA in Finance. So far she has never taken the help of a writer and has written all her exams on her own! She also works part time at Kamla Nehru Hospital to support her family financially. She didn't only deserve to be the Lila Fellow of the year, but became the source of inspiration to all those present at the gathering!

The second batch of the 'Ambassadors of Peace' was then announced. These 13 girls together with Trustee and LF Manjusha Gupte were awarded the unique opportunity to undergo Wholesome Leadership Training under the collaborative initiative between LPF and ASHA Foundation, UK, to be conducted in UK for a period of 3 weeks in September 2009.



Second Batch of Peace Ambassadors with Chief Guest and Trustees

AWARD FUNCTION

Last came Dr. Mashelkar's talk for which the LPF Family as well as guests were equally anxious. Dr. Mashelkar is known to be a very good orator and even this time he did not disappoint them. He firstly congratulated all the scholarship awardees and narrated how difficult was the path to his success today, on which he had set out with his mother's inspiration alone. He recollected the issue of Women in India about which he spoke at the Indian Science Congress in the year 2000 held at the University of Pune. He had put forth the idea of the 'New Panchsheel of the New Millennium' which included the concept of a woman centered family. He spoke about the importance of women's education. "I totally believe in what someone has said- 'I think only of the future because that is where I am going to be for the rest of my life' and that's what you should be doing. I am happy that you girls and your parents have recognized that higher education is the key towards achieving success and will not only give you financial support but also the freedom of thought, freedom of action and that is where India's future will essentially lie."

He appreciated the work done by LPF not only in terms of imparting financial aid but also in terms of mentoring and grooming girls by organizing various programs. He further continued by sharing a beautiful quote by a friend- "Apart from everything else you become, you should become a great mother. A mother represents morality, excellence and equality in terms of practicing these values. Out of all the experiences in management areas, mothers are the best managers". Opining over certain issues, he stated "Everyone these days says that India's future is in IT. Yes I agree it is in IT but not in terms of Information Technology but in terms of Indian Talent! We must realize the population and talent ratio that India has".

He concluded with the message, "There is no limit to human endurance. It's the matter of achieving. The Everest was initially considered as impossible to conquer but today even the handicapped have conquered it! You also need to conquer such an Everest, you can define your own Everest. Whether you want to be Mother Teresa or Kiran Bedi is your choice, but remember... nothing is impossible". Finally, He also gave his views about the future of India and dedicated the afternoon to Prajakta Rane for her endurance and exceptional achievement. The function ended with a felicitation of the Chief Guest and all the trustees. Congratulations to all the new Lila Fellows!

■ - **Prachi Divekar - Harkare**
prachiharkare@gmail.com

The 'Ambassadors of Peace (2009)'

- ★ Jyoti Otegiri
- ★ Rupali Soni
- ★ Harshada Nagar
- ★ Prachi Divekar
- ★ Nikhat Memon
- ★ Devika Daftardar
- ★ Gauri Swakul
- ★ Arpita Chanda
- ★ Sujata Pailwan
- ★ Nisha Pandya
- ★ Majusha Dole
- ★ Madhavi Prabhumirashi
- ★ Dr. Sarika Deore

Trustee and Lila Fellow
Dr. Manjusha Gupte will also be traveling to UK as group leader and a coordinator with these thirteen ambassadors.

An SMS to Mrs. Poonawalla on the 1st Anniversary of the Wholesome Leadership Program

8th Aug. 09; 18:31 Hrs. IST

"Dear Lila Mom & Firoz Dad,

Today is the day when we all left for UK. It's been a year. Time has passed away so quickly leaving behind those golden moments I have ever spent in my life with u all. They are all evergreen in my heart & 2day I wish to thank ASHA Foundation and specially you for nurturing me & giving me a wonderful experience of being a young Peace Ambassador. It has given me the right pace at a right age along with never ending aspirations to fulfill my dreams in life and become a better human being.

- With lots n lots of love, from Priyanka Khopkar
(PA-2008)

CLIP BOARD

On January 24, 2009, a group of 40 activists proclaiming themselves the 'moral police' attacked girls in a pub in Mangalore. They barged into the pub "Amnesia — The Lounge" and beat up a group of young women and men, claiming the women were violating traditional Indian values. Two of the women were hospitalized. Following this, there spread a state of insecurity and panic in society about the free existence of the women of the 21st Century. In response, Inspira had stirred up a new topic for discussion-

"What is the need of the hour to stop moral policing that women face in their normal walk of life in society?"

Society should accept the woman as an individual first and then as a woman to stop moral policing. For this, today's young generation should be made aware that before a woman's femininity comes her individuality. This can be achieved by giving due respect to the women in the house which itself is an example for the kids. So these 'sanskar' would be inculcated in them. Also women should have the self discipline that they will not misuse their femininity to exploit favors by virtue of gender bias.

Madhura Dhoka (LF-1998)

Indeed moral policing is very harmful for the growth of women in India. Indian culture is open to all foreign influences. Yet, I don't think any 'outside' influence can blow us away. Indian women have a remarkable ability to absorb and assimilate different outside influences into our rich social and cultural ethos. Individual freedom needs to be respected."

Sonali Patwe (LF-2009)

Women should be considered equal to men. Moral policing agents are men who are chauvinistic or women who have wrongly accepted male chauvinism & superiority. Morality should be expected equally from men & women. Different standards for women just go to show the society's view on gender based discrimination. One effective way to stop this is women's self-empowerment. Women should respect themselves and decide to treat themselves equal to men. Start the change within yourself.

Neha Gurikar (LF-2006)

Today the need is to ensure economic independence for women through education. They should be motivated to develop themselves through education, employment and participating in various social organization to help mostly rural women who mostly face many domestic and social problems.

Madhura Kanade (LF-2008)

I feel it is very important and essential that some steps be taken to stop moral policing. Like we have political parties supporting religious freedom there should be political parties supporting personal freedom. We have the freedom to adopt cultures and values which we like. When certain activities like drinking or smoking or books are banned, there is a greater urge on the part of the younger generation to indulge in that activity... Smoking has been restricted in public areas but if the same nicotine is consumed in the form of *gutkha*, it becomes a legal issue!!!

Neha Gupta (LF-2009)

LIVING LIFE WITH A DIFFERENCE

The human body is a precious gift of God to mankind. Each organ has its functions of which the eyes are extremely vital. Imagine life which cannot witness the beauty of the rising sun and other joys of nature! The Poona School and Home for the blind has brought light in the lives of many visually impaired. No they do not promise them eyes, but do promise them a vision to make themselves self reliant and financially independent.

The Poona Blind School located at Kothrud does not only provide formal education but also vocational training in jewellery making, stitching etc. to the blind. Apart from these traditional courses one unique course has been recently initiated for the visually challenged girls/women; they are trained in the art of massage by a trained doctor, Dr Sharmila. The girls are taught the techniques and strokes of massaging with respect to direction and application of pressure. They are given guidelines about the standards of hygiene to be maintained. They are also taught the use of different kinds of oils and creams and their benefits. Dr Sharmila says "Since they are blind their other senses are very strong. Just by the feel of the skin texture of the person who is about to receive massage, the girls can judge the kind of oil that needs to be used. Many times they can themselves suggest the treatment." Since the massage institute is dependent on the NGO, financial institutions such as Bank of Maharashtra and State Bank of India are coming forward to fund some amount.



from Rs. 50 to Rs. 150 (For eg. Body massage/head massage/facial massage, etc). Generally the masseurs are between 18 to 35 years of age with different educational qualifications; while some have completed their 10th grade, some are graduates while some are even school dropouts. The School has provided these girls the necessary infrastructure such as hot water geysers, perfumes for aroma therapy, different types of oils, powders and related cosmetics, etc. Going a step ahead the institute provides them with cell-phones as well! This helps them to reach to the client's place for a massage appointment. In this way they not only become independent but also more confident. The mobile-phone also helps in keeping a track of the girls. So their family members as well as the teachers at the institute are comfortable about them traveling in and around places in Pune.



Thus a group of trained female masseurs now run a massage center set up in the serene localities of Kothrud, under the auspices of the Poona Blind School. They offer Swedish massage to female clients only, at very affordable prices. The price differs according to the type of massage and range

The Headmistress Mrs. Chougule and another staff member Mrs. Pratibha Kapre briefed us about the plans of the Poona School and Home for the Blind upgrading its courses and training in the near future. According to them, the scope and demand for masseurs is large. Thus, they will soon launch a diploma course with Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth (TMV) in massage for the girls, which will include 3 months of practical training and 3 months of theoretical education. At present they have permission to train 50 girls, but are able to train only

Contd...

LIVING LIFE WITH A DIFFERENCE



10 every 3 months. TMV will arrange lectures on aroma therapy and physiology of the body. The students will also be taught Thai and Chinese massages and will be awarded formal diploma certificates. This will be helpful for the girls to find jobs at beauty parlours, five star hotels and massage centers. They also plan advance courses in ayurvedic massage as well.

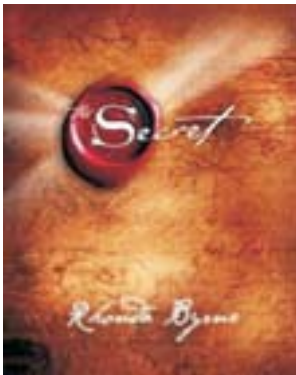
This has been a long journey for the institute. Sometimes the parents of girls do not allow them to take up such courses. But speaking to the girls made us realize that the art of massage had empowered them not only financially but had done wonders to their self-confidence! We were able to meet two masseurs in person- Mandakini Mane, a 30- year old Arts graduate from Purandar and Savita Eklande, a third year Arts student from Ahmednagar. Mandakini has mastered the art of head massage and hair massage while Savita who travels to nearby places to administer massages has an in-depth knowledge about oils and powders used in massages. The efforts taken by this school to enable the visually challenged seems to be a boon to our society. No wonder they say there is light at the end of tunnel!

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BOOK REVIEW



Name of the book :
The Secret

Author :
Rhonda Byrne

The 2006 best-seller, **The Secret** is a book on new age self-help and spirituality by Rhonda Byrne. The tenet of the book is that an individual's

focused positive thinking can result in life-changing results such as increased wealth, health, happiness and more.

Fragments of the 'Great Secret' have been found in the oral traditions, literature, religions and philosophies through the centuries. For the first time, all the pieces of this secret come together in an incredible revelation that could be life-transforming for all who experience it.

A centuries-old technique of the Law of Attraction, which in essence is the power of an individual's positive thinking to change and

influence the outcomes in his life, is the central theme of the book. The 'Laws of Attraction' are the 'secret' that the title of the book suggests to the readers.

In this book, you'll learn how to use **The Secret** in every aspect of your life - money, health, relationships, happiness, and in every interaction you have in the world. You'll begin to discover the hidden, untapped power that's within you, and this revelation can bring joy to every aspect of your life.

The book contains wisdom from modern-day teachers... men and women who have used it to achieve health, wealth and happiness. By applying this knowledge of **The Secret**, they bring to light compelling stories of eradicating disease, acquiring massive wealth, overcoming obstacles, and achieving what many would regard as impossible. So if you want to rediscover your own self and use your hidden potentials for your own betterment, "**The Secret**" is a book you must read.

■ - **Priyanka Khopkar**
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HEALTH CAPSULE

"SWINE FLU" does this term bring up a hidden fear? Does it relate in any way to a "Social Stigma"? What has actually led to the havoc situation in a fearless city like Pune? These questions often come to my mind when I read about the current health status in our city. Being a biotechnologist, I very well understand the facts and myths associated with this FLU. I thus make an attempt to put forth a few facts to help us all fight this supposedly but not so deadly virus.

History: The situation in Pune and other parts of India reminds me of the 1918 flu pandemic, where pigs and humans became sick at the same time. Nearly 50 to 100 million people were killed worldwide in the 1918 pandemic which was associated with H1N1 virus. Amazingly some reports suggest that in 1918 pigs caught the disease from humans!

The virus: Influenza viruses the causative agents are mainly classified as Type A, B and C where type A causes infection in human, birds, swine, horses and dogs. These viruses may or may not be very harmful which depends on their ability to undergo re-assortment of their genes. The major Influenza A subtypes are H1N1, H1N2, H3N1, H3N2 and H2N3. As pigs can be infected with viruses that infect humans and swine, they primarily act as hosts for the assortment of genes. Centre for Disease Control (CDC) reports that swine flu cases worldwide have been mild so far and most hospitalizations and deaths have been of persons who also had underlying conditions such as asthma, diabetes, obesity, heart disease, or a weakened immune system. International health organizations recommend that those with flu symptoms should stay home for seven days, and those who are sick longer shouldn't socialize until 24 hours after symptoms completely subside.

Symptoms: Fever, cough, sore throat, body ache, headache, chills and fatigue which could be associated with diarrhea and vomiting, pain in the chest or abdomen and sudden dizziness or confusion. The most common cause of death could be respiratory failure, pneumonia, high fever, dehydration and electrolyte imbalance. In children, symptoms include blue lips and skin, dehydration, rapid breathing, excessive sleeping, seizures and lack of desire to be held.

Treatment: CDC recommends the use of Tamiflu (oseltamivir) or Relenza (zanamivir) for the treatment and/or prevention of infection with swine influenza viruses. Antiviral drugs can reduce the severity of illness and also prevent serious flu complications. Diagnosis can be made by sending a

specimen, collected during the first five days for analysis. Antiviral drugs work best if started within 2 days of symptoms. Beside antiviral, care at home or in hospital, controlling fever, relieving pain and maintaining fluid balance can be of great help. Identification of any other medical problems is equally necessary to avoid complications.

Preventive measures: As proven over years "Prevention is better than cure". Preventive measures for swine flu include those which are taken to avoid the seasonal flu as well. Briefly, take vaccination if available, proper hand-washing, a balanced diet with fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains and protein, sufficient sleep, regular exercise and avoiding crowd can reduce the transmission and aid in treatment. The UK Health Protection Agency considers facial masks unnecessary for the general public and some experts feel it may lead to a false sense of security. A CDC briefing remarked, "20,000 people die from novel 2009-H1N1 and everybody wants to wear a mask. 9 million people die from AIDS and no one wants to wear a condom". As inappropriate disposal of masks create another threat, the use of clean handkerchiefs may be more appropriate for self-guard. Influenza spreads between humans through coughing or sneezing and people touching something with the virus on it and then touching their own nose or mouth. Swine flu cannot be spread by pork products, since the virus is not transmitted through food. The swine flu in humans is most contagious during the first five days of the illness although some people, most commonly children, can remain contagious for up to ten days. Chance of transmission is also reduced by disinfecting household surfaces, which can be done effectively with a diluted chlorine bleach solution.

So dear all, stay well informed, stay healthy and clean, take adequate rest, follow public health advice, be happy and deal with stress and anxiety. Spread your lovely smile, happiness and awareness not panic!

■ - **Dr. Neelu Nawani**
(LF-1997, Trustee LPF)



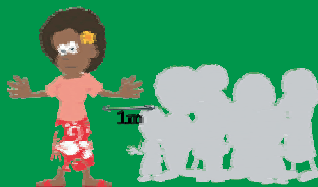
Beating H1N1 together

1. Wash



Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and water

2. Avoid



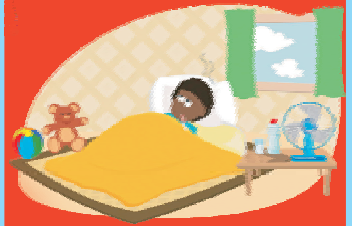
Avoid close contact with people coughing and sneezing

3. Cover



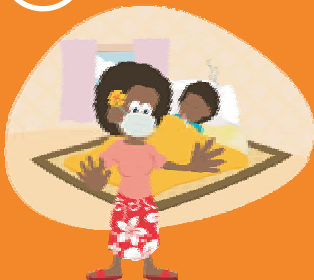
Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze. Wash your hands with soap

4. Stay



Stay at home if you are sick.

5. Care



Give a sick person a separate space at home and assign a single care giver. Monitor the patient regularly.

6. Ventilate



Ensure proper ventilation of your home every day by opening up doors and windows regularly.

7. Breast Feed



Mothers, even if sick, are the best carers for infants and young children who are still being breast-fed

8. Masks



If you are close to sick people, use a mask or cloth to cover your mouth or nose. Replace masks and cloths often for maximum protection

9. Recover



Persons with flu like symptoms should take plenty of fluids and keep warm and dry

10. Seek



Seek medical attention only if the patient's condition worsens dramatically

11. Danger



Danger signs are: weakness, lethargy, unconsciousness, convulsions, very difficult/obstructed breathing or shortness of breath, inability to drink fluids, dehydration and high fever

Keep up to date through the media and public information services to stay informed.

For further information contact:

Ministry of Health

Down Memory Lane... GLIMPSES



Amruta Prakash LF 2005 conducting orientation program for New batch 2009 Overseas LF going to UK.



Founder Trustee Mrs. Maya Thadhani conducting orientation program for New Batch 2009 Overseas LF going to USA.



Interaction with trustees at the introduction programme organized for new batch of LF's.



Release of 27th issue of Inspira by Mrs. Sheela Joshi and celebration of Mr. Firoz Poonawalla's birthday.



Diamond Awareness Workshop conducted by 'Creations' Mumbai.



Rupali Soni LF(2001) participating in Walkathon to save lives.



Mr. & Mrs. Poonawalla & PA's 2009 extend a send off party to Deepa Krishnamurthi (LF 2005) going to USA for higher studies.

The LPF Scholarship enables the girls to dream bigger. Further each of them wishes upon her own star and chooses the altitude she wants to climb! Listed here are a few of our LFs who are currently at the peak of their careers.



Francina Thyagarajan (LF-2004) is a qualified Clinical Psychologist. Having responded to an advertisement from the central government she works as a Counselor serving the leprosy

patients through the Leprosy Mission. Currently she is working in the semi-forested regions of Chattisgarh with her patients who suffer acutely psychologically. She was sent to Naini Hospital for the Orientation Course, then Dehradun to attend specialization. Her job includes surgery and physiotherapy.



Sonali Advani (LF-2005) after doing a Bachelor's in Microbiology did a Masters in International Journalism from Cardiff University and a Postgraduate Diploma in Mass Communication. She is now a

freelance journalist. She is the Executive Editor of a book "Frontiers of Research in Longevity Medicine" and the Editor-in-chief for a brochure on Leprosy Awareness. Currently as Group Editor, she is responsible for three international magazines.



Rashmi Borole (LF-2006) did her Masters in Fine Arts Animation, specializing in animation technology, from Savannah College of Arts and Design in USA. Recently she has developed a 3D Modeling and

Character based Animation Film, which is being submitted for the Berlin International Film Festival. She is working at a company called Launch in New York.



Aayesha Shaikh (LF-2006) stood 1st in Pune campus and 3rd across all campuses of TASMAC in overall Information Management Specialization. She also ranked 1st across all campuses of TASMAC in

two of her specialization subjects i.e. ISS (Information Systems Strategy) and ISD (Information Systems Design).



Tejilee Tembe (LF-2007) is a certified mountaineer. She achieved the feat of climbing 18,700 ft. above sea level and set foot at the Norbu Peak near Manali in the Kulu District of Himachal Pradesh. She works for

a famous food company Percy Daltons, situated in Haverhill, UK as a Quality Auditor.



Poornima Krishnamurthy (LF-2004) did her MBA specializing in heritage management and industrial law from the University of Jean Moulin, Lyon, France. Now back in India she works at French

Trade Commission Mumbai (French Ministry of Trade & Economy) as Deputy Commercial Attaché in the Audiovisual, Media and Communication Sector.



Arpita Chanda (LF-2004) is a graduate in (Human Development) in Early Childhood Education/Child Psychology from SNTD and holds a B. Ed. in Special Education. She currently works at "Vidya Valley",

an integrated school set up for special children as well as part time lecturer in SNTD College of Home Science (Department of Communication media for children). She is also a Counselor and Remedial Tutor for special children. She is proficient in reading and writing Braille in English, Hindi and Marathi.

LILA POONAWALLA FOUNDATION DONATION FORM

To,
Lila Poonawalla Foundation

I would like to contribute for the noble cause of LPF.
The detail of my donation is given below.

Name :

Address :

.....

Phone :

Email :

Name of the bank :

Cheque No. :

Date :

Signature

All donations made to Lila Poonawalla Foundation is eligible for the benefit of deduction under section 80 G, (5) (VI) of the Income Tax Act 1961.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT TO THE FOUNDATION WITH YOUR GENEROUS DONATION



Ms. Mukta Anirudha
Satarkar
LF-2005
(Rs. 25,000/-)



Ms. Sunetra Chaphalkar
LF-2001
(Rs. 10,000/-)



Mrs. Perna Rahul Khole
(Gupta) LF-1996
(Rs. 25,000/-)



Mrs. Sana Satyajit Mone
(Sayed) LF-2001
(Rs. 10,000/-)

Ms. Rashmi Amol
Joshi (Soman)
LF-2001

Mrs. Snehal Abhijit
Kulkarni (Punde)
LF-1999

EDITOR'S DESK

Dear Friends...

With this 28th issue, **Inspira enters its tenth year of a proud publication!** Just like the growing up of a little girl, Inspira has metamorphosed with its share of inquisitiveness, experimentations, mistakes, explorations, education and anxieties. We look forward to step into a new decade with better poise and good-will. Amen!

At the outset, we welcome the new batch of LFs into the family! We look forward to personally introduce Inspira to you all at the release of this issue. What could be a better occasion than when our very own LF Smita Acharya who will be conducting the workshop on 'Team Building'! Obviously, only when an older LF helps in reaching out to the younger ones, are we going to get closer to the dream of making LPF a Foundation **"OF the LFs, BY the LFs, FOR the LFs"**. Recently when many LFs came together and organized "SAMAGAM" to build upon the corpus of the Foundation, they discovered that the joy of giving back to society was much more satisfying than any other. The girls were able to raise handsome funds for the Foundation **(thanks to our benevolent sponsors who believed in us!)**. These funds in turn have helped retaining the Wholesome

Leadership Program for the second consecutive year. We wish the new batch of Peace Ambassadors a safe and successful trip to UK and hope they return empowered to enable many more back home.

Since last year, LPF broke its barriers and started awarding its scholarships to girls from the entire Pune district. It realises that the needy and financially backward LFs are extremely determined and driven. It was only lack of funds that threatened their dreams and so more such girls need to be supported in the future. It's important that we realise that each one of us can make a significant difference, no matter how small because the ocean is made up of innumerable droplets. Realising our responsibility, **this issue onwards, we have started including a donation form in Inspira.** This is our small way of maintaining our lifeline-the Foundation.

On a very different note, I sign off this time making an appeal to all our readers, well-wishers, associated relatives, families and friends to make donations to support our cause.

**Keep Swine Flu at bay. Celebrate safely.
Celebrate happily. Good Bye and God Bless!**

■ - **Dr. Rajani Panchang-Dhumal**
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<http://http://www.lilapoonawallaoundation.com/html/inspira.html>

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