

## From My Heart...

My dear Lila Fellows, Lila Girls and Friends,

**T**he first quarter of the New Year has already gone by! They say time and tide wait for none. How true! First and foremost I would like to express my sincere condolences to all our friends in Japan for the great ongoing crisis in their lives; as humans we reach out to them. Let us all put our hands together and pray that God gives them the strength to deal with this natural calamity. The Japanese people have shown extraordinary fortitude, discipline, serenity, dignity and ability in dealing with a catastrophe of such high magnitude!

On happier notes, let us remember to congratulate our Indian cricket team, which has brought laurels for India after 28 years of sheer struggle. We finally have the WORLD CUP. We congratulate TEAM INDIA and particularly Captain M S Dhoni for the leadership he has provided. We at LPF have to learn that hard work, right co-ordination, right focus, continuous training and dedication always pay.

Having said this I would like to come back to LPF and list some of our major achievements during the last quarter:

1. The signing of the MOU with five schools to commence our school scholarships program this year (Read a detailed article in this issue).
2. Completion of the selection of the first batch of undergraduate scholars in Sciences. This also is

the first year and we have 16 new Lila Girls joining the Lila Family.

3. Completion of the selection of the 2<sup>nd</sup> batch of undergraduate scholars for engineering. This was a very tough job. We had more than 150 applications and it was very difficult to decide. All were good and needy. The Board of Trustees had to spend six full days before they could come to a final decision. We have 36 new Lila Girls joining the family in this category this year, as against 27 last year.
  4. Invention of a unique way to raise funds for the Foundation by giving something in return. LPF conducted 4 in-house workshops for the corporate and one open-house in collaboration with MCCI&A in which more than 50 executives from 25 companies participated. The subject was 'Four Temperaments- understanding our colleagues and ourselves'. One such workshop was also organized for LFs and you can read a detailed feed-back from one of the participants further in this issue.
  5. We managed to convince Mrs. Zerbanoo Gifford, Founder Chairperson of Asha Center, Gloucester UK to receive the 4<sup>th</sup> batch of Lila Fellows to be trained in wholesome leadership at UK. The group will leave for UK in September, later this year.
  6. A fabulous parents' day get-together wherein,
- contd....**





# From My Heart...

Inspira

parents of LFs and LGs had the opportunity to share their thoughts about the Foundation and its activities with a large gathering comprising the LPF family and friends. We had Dr. Mrs. Nirmala Pandit, Managing Trustee, Nav Maharashtra Community Foundation, as the chief guest who also released the 32<sup>nd</sup> issue of INSPIRA.

Besides the above specials, we did continue with various training programs.

At an event, Professor Zenobia Nadirshaw, Head of Psychology at Kensington & Chelsea Primary Care Trust, London shared her experiences convincing the young girls that a journey of 1000 miles begins with the first step. Some of our senior Lila Fellows had the opportunity to attend 'Grid Leadership Training' program at KPIT Cummins Info systems. Grid training is the most extensively used organization development program in the world. We are grateful that KPIT included some of our girls in this workshop. Our girls got an opportunity to learn all the benefits of using EXCEL 2007 very effectively at yet another workshop. The faculty for this workshop was Mr. Prashant Runwal, a Chartered Accountant with over 20 years of experience. Even I attended the workshop and found it very useful. Mr. Minochar Patel, an inspiring motivational speaker and corporate trainer of repute, conducted a workshop on how one can create lasting impressions through personal effectiveness. Mr. Patel has been invited to give a talk at the House of Lords at London, UK. We were indeed lucky to get Mr. Patel to talk to the girls. We concluded the 6<sup>th</sup> batch of Spoken English classes. Both LFs and LGs benefited from this 60 hours module conducted over 6 weeks by Mrs. Sangeeta Belvalkar, an experienced English teacher.

Mrs. Zerbanoo Gifford, the Founder Chairperson of ASHA Center at UK, who has partnered us for the last four years in our Peace Ambassador's Leadership training program was in Pune together with the Project Director and experienced trainer, Mr. Adrian Locher. The three batches of PAs got together to meet them and to express their gratitude for the roles they have played to transform each of them into confident individuals.

Dad and I also had a get together at Fili Villa - our home, for the 3<sup>rd</sup> batch of PAs as a token of thanksgiving for the wonderful performance they gave on Parents' Day. This was the first ever group of LFs who got to visit our home and get a guided tour of our travels and souvenir collection over years of our globe trotting.

Dad informs that preparations for SAMAGAM-III are in full swing. I am sure all of you, dear LFs, LGs, Friends and well wishers of the Foundation will participate in this event with family and friends. It is one of our major fund collection drives.

All this has been made possible with the enthusiasm and commitment of all our Trustees and the staff of LPF who work with complete dedication. I thank them for being there whenever we have needed them. I also would like to thank our donors, who have made long term commitments to the Foundation thus giving us the courage and confidence to plan bigger and long term goals. Our efforts are on to convince many more friends and well wishers, both individual and corporate to join us to take LPF forward and reach out to many more girls in many more fields, specially in vocational programs, which would make the girls economically independent. I am sure we will be able to introduce some of the programs next year. Ours is not a CSR activity but is the initiative of individuals and corporate who are convinced that LPF is a transparent, unbiased organization, lead by committed individuals who are working towards the great social cause of girls' education which transforms not only their lives but the entire society in which they live.

I would like to end this communiqué by sharing with you another exciting happening. Some Friends in the USA together with some LFs are organizing a fundraiser and have called it 'Icchā - The Hope'. It is a cultural program and will be held in August in Houston- Texas. Now isn't that exciting? Anyone of you, who can help in this initiative, please do let me know and I will put you in touch with the Icchā team.

These are happy times, exciting times but also hard-work times. Soon we start the selection process for the 16<sup>th</sup> batch of LFs for PG studies and of course for the first time selection of the young girls, who will be called Lila Juniors, for our school project - 2morrow2gether.

I would like to give a message to our Crusaders, led by our chief editor Dr. Rajani Panchang. The last issue i.e. 32<sup>nd</sup> issue of INSPIRA was a fabulous success. The 'New Avatar' has been much appreciated by the readers. We have received a lot of encouraging positive messages from them who have liked both, the get up and the content of the Newsletter. Hurray! Let's keep raising our own BAR. Great Job done Inspira Team!

With love and best wishes,

Mom for Lila Fellows and Lila Girls

A Friend to All

Lila Poonawalla

# Appeal

**T**his is an outright appeal to all Inspira readers to earmark 15<sup>th</sup> of May 2011 in their diaries and set time aside for a happening evening with the Lila Poonawalla Foundation. It is the Foundation's annual cultural event, *Samagam-III* at *Yashwantrao Chavan Natyagruha*, Kothrud from 4 pm to 8 pm. I must tell you all, that this is the one and only program organized by LPF where anyone and everyone gets to mingle with the LPF family closely, along with their own families and friends! Yes. It's an event for a cause.... It's a fundraising event to support graduate and post graduate education for needy girl students from Pune as well as sponsor the 4<sup>th</sup> batch of Peace Ambassadors for the Wholesome Peace Leadership Training in the UK.

Those of you interested are in for a treat. I assure you, the variety of performances and performers have never before been and will never be again seen on the same stage! The performers are all Lila Fellows, trained, accomplished and some professionals in their chosen field of performing arts.... be it music, dance or theatre! We are practicing for the event with doubled vigour ever since Erique from Shiamak Davar's dance group has agreed to support our cause by choreographing a contemporary free style dance form on MJ's 'Heal the World'. At the same time several other group dances set to Bollywood numbers and good old melodies which will sung by the performers are sure to be looked forward to.

But all this is not as easy as it sounds! Several meetings packed with lots of brainstorming have been the most demanding sessions. Roping in performers and volunteers has been a challenge (logistics support, PR, stage and backstage managers, seating arrangements, reception, getting sponsors, drafting and printing sponsorship letters, advertising and promotion, selling tickets and the list goes on). It is a mega event and manpower is the most crucial resource; no matter how much is available it is always less! And believe me, the bigger task is to identify who is a potential performer and who a volunteer!

It's nobody's fault; most Lila Fellows are professionals balancing homes, families and kids

together! Many are still studying, many doing research and yet others are living in far-off suburbs of Pune. In such a scenario finding a common place and time to meet and practice is next to impossible! But as they say "Where there is a will there is a way!" For LPF anything is possible. Once a week we are either meeting at Technigraphics (changed to Nobletek PLM Solutions Pvt. Ltd.) at ICC Towers, Senapati Bapat Road accompanied by Firoz Dad or we meet all by ourselves at Sambhaji Park on JM Road. All our weekends unto the final event are dedicated to practice because those are the only times we find leisure time. We either practice at somebody's home or it Fergusson College ka 'Kimaya' which is the all time favorite practice venue amidst the serene greenery. Dress rehearsals complete with accompanists and lights are scheduled for 1<sup>st</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> May. Time is running out and what is ahead of us is a 'Herculean Task'. The girls are doing a great job roping in sponsors who believe in our cause..... Thanks to all the corporate, business houses and industries which have supported this event for the past two consecutive years.

And the dynamo igniting and fuelling each one of us is none other than Firoz Dad aka Mr. Perfectionist, Mr. Firoz Poonawalla! A hard taskmaster with a miraculous vision and an eye for detailing, he makes an excellent manager and organizer. These capabilities are complemented with his kindness, charm, co-operation, guidance and affection which bring out the best in us. The Foundation staff offers undying support of every kind.

Now the only factor that we need to make this event a grand success is people's participation and attendance in huge numbers! Those interested may please contact the Foundation office for tickets/sponsorship details. Your support is invaluable and would help us take our efforts to unbelievable heights. Please be there to cheer for our performers and boost their morale. To us this event is as big as the World Cup for Team India... why not recreate the same magic then?

■ - Mrs. Nusarat Sheikh, Team Leader (PA-2010)  
(Written by Dr. Rajani Panchang-Dhumal)



# Leading Lady...

**S**he grew up admiring Padmashree Mrs. Lila Poonawalla. Little did she know that one fine morning she would wake up to compliments from her exemplar herself lauding her for her achievements!

Mrs. Padmini Sundaram (40), currently Vice President - Private Banking of HSBC has over 13 years of work experience in the Banking and IT domain. In 2008, HSBC nominated her for the Wealth Management Program conducted by the Wealth Management Institute Singapore. Awarded at numerous international conventions through her career, she is currently responsible for acquiring and managing High Net worth clients with a portfolio size over 1 M USD.

Recently this banker was nominated as the Chair for Young Indian's (Yi) Pune for 2011-12. She also heads the Employability Chair for Yi Pune. In this capacity, Rajani Panchang interviewed her, anxious to know how at such a young age, she is able to balance profession, family and social-work with such dexterity!



**1. Vice President Private Banking HSBC is an envious position to hold! What challenges does it hold?**

The main challenge is keeping up the high ethical standards of HSBC Group, while working in an extremely competitive financial environment.

**2. Women make up less than 10% of top management in Indian Companies. How does it feel being one amongst them?**

I feel privileged and at the same time responsible. Today, Corporate India is providing a level playing field for us women to showcase our talent and grow in our professional career path. It is up to us women- to make use of these opportunities and map our careers. And I think there are many of us women up here... we just have to stay focused and keep going at it!

**3. Working with various CII-Yi projects... did it come to you as a supplement to your profession or has it been an extra voluntary interest?**

My mother has been involved in social work in Vidarbha region of Maharashtra for the last 35 years and has been recognized by the State Government. She has ingrained in me to give back, and to value and nurture the opportunities and talents one has.

The CII-Yi projects have been an extra voluntary interest and as an employer HSBC has supported me whole heartedly in this involvement, in spite of my being in a 100% business role. This is extremely rare in a competitive business setup. I must also mention that Mrs. Meher Pudumjee and Mrs. Rati Forbes have been the two guiding angels in the little work that I have been able to do.

**4. How important is it to be appointed as the Chair of Yi Pune? Is it an opportunity or a position of power?**

Young Indian's (Yi) provides a platform for professionals and business people to connect and work towards building the India of our dreams. Being the Pune Chapter Chair of Yi has opened doors of opportunity

for me (along with my Yi team of course) to work along with like minded individuals/NGOs /organizations towards building Pune into the society that we envisage and in whose progressive development we all wish to partner.

**5. Who is eligible to be the Chair of Yi and how is he or she appointed? Elections/Nominations...?**

Yi membership comprises individuals from Business and Professionals who have to be below 40 at the time of becoming a member. There is an Executive Committee (EC) which drives the vertical work on Environment, Employability, Education, Health, Arts Sports and Culture. Additionally, Yi provides platforms like Youth Nets, Corporate Chapter and Farmer Nets. The EC nominates a Chair and Co-Chair, based on work credibility and commitment.

**6. What are your functions as the Chair of Yi Pune?**

In early April this year, each vertical worked out a road map for the year which included developmental work activities that they would be driving in that specific area. My role involves working closely with the vertical chair to see the fulfillment of this vertical road map. Additionally, I am the Employability Chair, which means I need to drive activities for that vertical directly.

**7. Is this appointment by virtue of your employment with HSBC and your professional expertise or by virtue of the past voluntary social work you have done?**

This appointment is by virtue of all 3. I am here, because I am able to do voluntary work, because I happen to be gainfully employed. And I am employed because of my professional expertise.

**8. How big is the Pune chapter of Yi? Do you have corporate chapters in Pune?**

The Pune chapter has over 70 + direct members and 400+ indirect members through Yi Student Nets. We are in the process of setting up the Corporate Chapters in Pune

*Young Indians (Yi) is an integral part of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), India's premier business association, formed in the year 2002, with an objective of creating a platform for young Indians to realize the dream of a developed nation.*

[www.yionline.org](http://www.yionline.org)

*Yi Pune established in 2004, works at macro & grass root levels in verticals like Health, Employability, Education, Environment, Youth Affairs, Art, Culture & Sports. It is a non-political organisation under the umbrella of CII, formed by a diverse membership of Youth in Pune. (See [youngindianspune](#) on Facebook)*

**contd....**

# Leading Lady...

and have for the first time a dedicated EC member driving the Corporate Chapter initiative.

## 9. What is your vision for Yi Pune?

My vision for Yi Pune is to be the platform for all Young PuneKars to drive in the change and developmental work that we wish to see in business and public life.

## 10. With your expertise and experience what reforms do you wish to implement at Yi Pune in the span of the next one year? What are the immediate issues you want to address / are addressing?

The immediate issues are driving constructive engagement with the membership and making each member play the role of an evangelist that s/he has aspired to be when they joined Yi.

## 11. What are your functions as the head of Employability Chair of Yi Pune?

The role entails execution of developmental projects which drive in employability.

## 12. Why did you choose ITI's across Pune and the Govt. Polytechnic for initiating employment training programs?

We all are a privileged lot in terms of our education and family background. Interactions & protracted discussions with Meher, Rati and other senior CII members, resulted in identifying the ITI's and Polytechnics as training grounds for valuable technicians which India needs, but who clearly lagged basic soft skills which industry required. We (Yi Pune) identified this as a driving area under the employability vertical and decided to pilot the already existing CII-Finishing school for ITI's. Thus began the journey.

## 13. What kind of initiatives are you running/planning under the disciplines of Health, Employability, Education, Environment, Youth Affairs, Art, Culture & Sports?

The initiatives are as follows:

- Health:** Primarily driving programs for a healthier & fitter India. This includes running de-worming and dental camps, planned introduction of Holistic Health Module including Pranayam & Yoga at PMC schools, conducting awareness campaigns on cornea donation and running helpline for Autism.
- Education:** Make schools more inviting, emphasizing attendance in primary schools. Last year we successfully rolled out Operation Blackboard; this year we will look at Total School Revamp for specific identified schools. Career Counselling for urban & rural candidates is also on the cards.
- Environment:** Driving environment education in both PMC and regular schools through a structured 3-step approach, which is currently being given finishing touches. Also piloting the implementation of portable toilets projects.
- Youth Affairs:** Introducing the student community (Yi Nets) to corporate India through industry visits, senior business person interactions, workshops and projects. We are also working on giving CII & Yi member's a First Employer prerogative to interview these young students.

## 14. You have been extensively involved in recruitment activities for your past employment companies. What has been your experience with aspiring candidates and what would be your

## advice to them?

India is a land of plenty. Each vacancy has so many applicants! As a recruiter sometimes it becomes a process of selection by elimination. The aspirant needs to gauge the employer's requirements and if that matches his professional aspirations then we should work on the interaction to make it fruitful and culminate in a job offer. Competition has increased manifold and hence each recruiter aspires to pick up the best from the pack. Candidates need to do an honest personal SWOT and not follow the herd mentality. A career is an extremely personal choice and should be dealt with that way.

## 15. How do you intend to increase the outreach of Yi Pune to the citizens of Pune? Any appeal of awareness of Yi amongst our readers?

Yi Pune programs are geared towards helping build a better Pune. We need volunteers willing to give that **1 hour a week for the Nation**. It is do-able and something we owe our motherland irrespective of the chaos that reigns and the scandals galore that we live with. We have to begin somewhere.

## 16. How can qualified youngsters not in employment suit the objectives of Yi?

Yi Nets provides a platform for students to engage and work closely, on social developmental projects.

## 17. With the important and dynamic job that you have, how do you balance family and work? Do you have children? If yes, what compromises did you make when they were little?

Trying to find that elusive balance is what makes someone like me tick! On a serious note, the Indian family system (Parents, in laws), the social structure (maids/driver etc) provide a big fillip to most Indian working women like me - not to forget- a supportive spouse. The key is managing relations- be at work or at home and using your IQ to work on that EQ! I have been married for 15 years and have an 8-year old daughter Gia. I was physically strong enough to work throughout my pregnancy and started my maternity leave the day I delivered my little angel. One's mental strength can see one through the ups and downs that are a part and parcel of life. Being resolute and clear can help ward off all the imbalances around.

## 18. Many qualified and competent young girls either avoid marriage or sideline their careers after having a baby. What would be your message to them?

Marriage or no marriage, career or stay at home, child or no child or even the number of children, are all extremely personal decisions that every young girl makes at some point in her life. While finding a supportive partner is always important, it is not necessary. Each person - girl or boy has ingrained strength and ability to face life and that awareness is what I hope that each of the young readers will draw into. Hence, irrespective of the choice one makes (after due introspection of course), the key is to be steadfast and resilient in one's own decision. Each one of us has the right of choice and should be allowed to live with it in a dignified manner.

\* **The position of Chair Yi held by our Leading Lady here, is in her personal capacity and the views expressed here are of the individual and not of her employer.**

■ - As told to Dr. Rajani Panchang-Dhumal





### School Project '2morrow2gether' gets flagged off

In the last issue of Inspira, Mrs. Poonawalla had mentioned the new initiative of LPF, 'Project 2morrow2gether', taken up in its 16<sup>th</sup> year since inception. Recently this initiative has taken off with MOUs being signed with 5 schools in and around Pune.

This project will support girl students from the 7<sup>th</sup> grade, till their graduation. Each year 100 girls will be supported for their education and beyond! The scope of the project will cover education costs including books, study material, fees, uniforms and shoes. A special thrust will be on mentoring the girl-student by providing her with health check-ups, health insurance, guidance in studies, visits to exploratory and educational trips. Special training

keying in on the selection criteria, under the guidance of a highly committed Board.

5 schools have been selected for financial assistance this year. To ensure a fair and transparent selection, over 40 schools were contacted initially of which 32 responded. After initial scrutiny of the data submitted by the schools, 20 of them were shortlisted for a visit by a representative of the Foundation. Detailed data was collected therein

and a matrix was prepared, followed by personal visit by some of the trustees together



**Hirkani Vidyalaya, Gawadewadi**



**Anjuman I Islam School**



**Camp Education Society's Girls School**

with Mrs. Jayshree Shahade. Finally, LPF selected 4 schools from Pune City and 1 from the rural region. They are Dr. Kalmadi Shamrao High School – Kannada Medium, Camp Education Society's Girls High School, Anjuman I Islam School,

to teachers and counseling for the girl-child and parents will be the unique features of this program.



**Dr. Kalmadi Shamrao High School (Kannada Medium)**

A separate sub-board of trustees has been formed comprising Chairperson Mrs. Lila Poonawalla as the Chairperson of

this board, Mrs. Malati Kalmadi (Educationist), Ms. Lolita Kewalramani (Advocate), Ms. Vaishali Halbe (LF-1996, Master's in Electronics and currently a teacher), Mrs. Samina Deokar (LF-1998, Master's in Industrial Psychology, currently an HR Consultant). Mrs. Jayshree Shahade who has been associated with the Foundation since its inception in many of its projects, has been appointed as Executive Project Director and heads the 2morrow2gether project. She has decades of working experience in the field of people management.

Two of our Lila Fellows, Amruta Prakash and Amruta Bahulekar were involved in the conceptualization of the project, detailing and developing the matrix and also

#### MOUs being signed with the Schools



**St. Clair's High School**

St. Clare's High School and Hirkani Vidyalaya, Gawadewadi in Taluka Ambegaon. MOU's have been signed with all the five schools and the Board Members have interacted with the Trustees of the selected schools.

The selection of the girls who will benefit from this project will be completed in June this year and the project will commence with the opening of the school for the new academic year 2011-2012. This project aims at changing the lives of deserving, needy girls and encouraging them to acquire education by overcoming financial constraints... and thus become live examples for other young girls!

■ - **Priyanka Korwalikar**  
Secretary, Project 2morrow2gether

# Short Takes...



**O**ur new and promising Trustee Ms. Prerna Khole received her LPF scholarship in its very first batch of awards in 1996 to do her Master's in Computer Science. Having worked for Patni Computers for three years she shifted to UK and worked in the IT industry for Bull Information Systems and then for one of the biggest asset management companies called DST International. Enriched with a ten-year long crucial experience in the UK as Senior Analyst Programmer and a Business Analyst, she has returned to India for good. The Foundation has clinched the opportunity and invited her on its Board of Trustees. Crusader Sanchita Satalkar chats with her about her new found role.



## **Q. How did you feel when Lila Ma'am invited you on the Board of Trustees?**

**A.** When Ma'am first invited me on board, I had mixed feelings.....I felt ecstatic, honoured and privileged. However, I was also nervous about the responsibility being bestowed upon me. Being a trustee meant 'I would no longer be taking decisions for myself or my family alone, but also for others whom I would not know at all. And my decision could affect not just one individual, but maybe many others who depend on that individual'. It's a huge responsibility! But I am not afraid of responsibilities so I immediately embraced this opportunity. **It is an honour and privilege to be a Trustee of such a dedicated Foundation.**

## **Q. How do you think your qualification and experience can benefit the Foundation as a Trustee?**

**A.** With my professional expertise and experience in varied organizations and cultural backgrounds, I can/will help bring in new Lila Girls, who will enrich the Foundation family.

## **Q. What is your modus-operandi as a Trustee of LPF?**

**A.** Being a Trustee means great responsibility. Hence I am always honest, voice my opinion and treat candidates fairly. I am a good listener and appreciate diverse opinions. At the same time I take initiatives and suggest ways to improve where necessary so as to make the Foundation and its selection process the best!

## **Q. Do you have any experience of working with NGOs or educational trusts?**

**A.** Working with the Lila Poonawalla Foundation is my first experience. However I have also participated in charity marathons organised by my companies in the UK.

## **Q. What has been your experience with LPF over the past 15 yrs.... First as a LF and now as a Trustee?**

**A.** I have been most fortunate to be associated with the Foundation for the last 15 years. When I received the scholarship I hardly realized that it was not just going to be monetary help but would also mean being part of a large new family which was extremely receptive, supportive and closely knit. I was exposed to opportunities and situations which I wouldn't have normally encountered. I am convinced that the sole aim of the Foundation is to help the candidate be the best in every possible walk of life.

Besides, the personal attention I received from Ma'am and Sir, was exceptional. I am one of the privileged few who Ma'am always found time to meet when in the UK. Ma'am is an excellent person; I wish I

could be like her! One of the things I am trying to learn from her is excellent time management.

Nothing much has changed since I became a Trustee. Ma'am and Sir have always cared for me and they still do as much as they used to.

## **Q. Does it matter being a LF before becoming a Trustee? Has it changed your perception towards the functioning of LPF?**

**A.** I don't think it matters being a LF before being a Trustee. If you have the experience and are dedicated then you will always do a good job. We have so many fine examples on our Board. All our senior Trustees are amazing and do such an excellent job. Having said that, for junior trustees, I guess it is nice to be a LF first, as that brings a sense of belonging. Also when you interview, there is that sense of 'déjà-vu' and I believe you can do better than someone who is not a LF first!

## **Q. As I said What is your vision for the foundation?**

**A.** There is a Japanese proverb "Vision without action is a daydream. Action without vision is a nightmare." My vision for the Foundation would encompass all the LFs/LGs sharing the following values:

**Trust-** Girls must share mutual respect and faith. The importance of individuals must be recognized and their diverse opinions should be appreciated. Information should be shared and new ideas must be encouraged.

**Confidence** – Self-confident LFs/LGs must take initiatives, handle the unexpected, stand behind their convictions and support the efforts of others. They should take bold, innovative, creative actions, capitalize on opportunities, make sound decisions quickly and mobilize the best resources for rapid action.

**Teamwork** – Girls must share personal involvement in the Foundation. It includes setting a common goal in support of Foundation objectives, making an individual commitment to the Foundation's success and recognizing the success of the Lila Fellows/Girls.

**Doing What's Right** – Doing what's right is being honest, ethical and having personal and professional integrity. It means consistently treating all people fairly, delivering on promises and taking personal responsibility for actions.

**With these values I see the Foundation as the best, most successful and prestigious.**

## **Q. Where and as what do you see LFs in the near future?**

**A.** I see LFs and LGs as very successful ladies in every aspect of life, personally and professionally, climbing all ladders and rising to the top!

■ - As told to Sanchita Satalkar



**Dear Readers,**

**8<sup>th</sup> March 2011 was celebrated as the centennial year of International Women's Day. Being the one and only Foundation OF Girls, FOR Girls and BY Girls with the sole aim of 'empowerment of the girl child through overall education' how could we not discuss this landmark international event. This time we asked the girls....  
What according to you is the significance of this event in the Indian context? Is womanhood in India celebrated at all and specially on this day?**

**I**t all started with an international conference held in Copenhagen, Denmark way back in 1910 when the need for International Women's Day was first felt. Subsequently, the United Nations' General Assembly decided that a day be earmarked every year to honor women all across the world viz. Women's Day.

On this day we celebrate the achievements of women. Apart from that I feel, Indian women should also be recognized for their hard work, sacrifice and dedication; be it a doctor, clerk, worker or a house wife. It wouldn't be wrong to conclude that Women's Day should not be celebrated only on that day but celebrated throughout the year. This apparently is true and evident through the daily news. For Eg.: On 25<sup>th</sup> of Jan 2011 a newborn girl was found dead in Jaipur, Rajasthan. On 11<sup>th</sup> March 2011, a college girl was stabbed to death at Nagpur. Women's Day will be truly celebrated when a girl feels secure everywhere and when her thoughts will be given importance in every home!

**-Dr. Urmila Aswar (Tambe) (LF 2002)  
Asst. Manager Scientific Affairs, Indus Biotech Pvt. Ltd.**

Women's day is a great concept to celebrate the spirit of womanhood. All of us are indeed superwomen who successfully juggle careers, homes and families with a smile on their faces. I am sure all of you must have had great fun with friends and family on Women's Day. However, I vividly remember that on Women's day, a Marathi newspaper had carried a photo of a 75 year old lady- a daily wage laborer, who had no clue about this day and was as usual going about her work. If we as a society could ease the distress/plight of this woman (or many other in similar situations) then the celebration of Women's Day would really be a grand success. Lila Ma'am has pioneered in this direction. We as Lila Fellows need to carry forward this noble work by doing our bit... Then every day would be a Women's Day in the true sense.

**-Archana Damle Gandhe (LF-1998)**

Indian womanhood has constantly been celebrated with the representation of women as goddesses. The Indian woman is an embodiment of various personalities (wise and graceful as *Lakshmi*, soft and dutiful as *Sita*, loving and caring as *Savitri*, fierce and rebellious as *Kali*).

Women empowerment is already taking place in India socially and economically. Indian women have mastered anything and everything which a woman can dream of. But she still has to go a long way to achieve equal status in the minds of Indian men. She is constantly seeking social recognition in the ever changing society - from actresses to bankers to politicians to bidi rolling women and to rag pickers. As we move on into the 21st century, India still witnesses gender prejudices, domestic violence and female infanticide. To change this, equal rights for education in India will prove to be a vital factor to enable her to become remarkable and make herself a true and inspiring icon.

**- Poornima Krishnamurthy ( LF-2004)  
Trade Officer, French Trade Commission India**

Women contribute significantly towards the building of a cultured society. As a mother, wife, daughter, sister and a friend, women play manifold roles. Women have to make many sacrifices to support their children, husbands and others at home. But, even in today's world, it is not recognized. So, there is a need to have a special day to celebrate womanhood.

Women's Day is celebrated in India by several women's organizations and NGOs where people participate actively. Various events like street plays, documentaries and seminars are organized. This is done to create social awareness. Over the years, we have seen significant improvement in the social status of women. Let's hope that events like this will provide the leverage for enlistment and empowerment of women.

**-Preeti Nagarkar (LF-2002)  
Co-founder, MAPYN**

**contd....**



# Clip Board...

Any kind of celebration should not be restricted to a single day. For me celebration of womanhood cannot only comprise the "lady in question". It should include all individuals who helped her be what she is - parents, siblings, spouse, children, in-laws, friends and colleagues. All the positive pushes - education, emotional support given by people and all the negative nudges - discrimination, doubts - make us the person we are. And to carry the celebration forward, it is necessary that we support women in the best way possible. Don't fall for any kind of stereotypes. Let a woman (or for that matter any person) - be able to do what she likes, achieve the sky if she wants to or also be happy on mother earth with simple dreams and aspirations. Let her be able to achieve her maximum potential. The day people start wishing for a healthy child (not just a male child mind you) and plan for the education and future of that child (irrespective of its gender), that day, we as daughters would have achieved a major goal. It is our duty to show people that daughters can take similar - if not better care of their parents. Only then will the "Happy Woman's Day" slogan have a deeper meaning!

**-Nandini Vishwanath (LF-1999)**  
IT Professional

Specifically in the India context I believe everyday is Women's Day. We celebrate a woman's strength in various ways - *Durga Pooja, Laxmi Pooja, Saraswati Pooja*. We even do *Bhoomi Puja* before the commencement of building a new house, signifying how a woman's strength forms the foundation and provides stability to a new home. It is well summarized in a Sanskrit *shloka*..... "*Ya devi sarva bhooteshu, Shakti roopena samsthitha, Namastasyay Namastasyay Namastasyay, Namah Namaha*".

**- Chandrika Shrinivasan (LF-1996)**  
Software Consultant

■ - As told to Nisha Pandya

## Donations...



**A**s Lila Poonawalla Foundation grows by leaps and bounds, it aspires to hold out its umbrella farther to accommodate and shelter many many more needy as well as deserving girls. We are able to dream big only because of your big hearts to give. LPF is grateful to all friends and well wishers of the Foundation for their continuous support over the years.



Mrs. Vijaylaxmi Rishi  
Shukla (Mishra) (LF-1999)  
Rs. 1,00,000



Mrs. Preeti Ajay  
Nagarkar (Joshi) (LF-2002)  
Rs. 30,000



Mrs. Ketaki Sachin  
Katkarn (Madkikar) (LF-2000)  
\$ 500



Mrs. Veena Vijay  
Ramachandran (Ramani) (LF-2000)  
\$ 401



Mrs. Anisha Ameya  
Kelkar (Kurane) (LF-2007)  
Rs. 10,000

Dr. Mrs. Ashonita Sameer  
Chhajed (Chavan) (LF-2002)

Mrs. Kalyani Rajiv  
Nanajkar (Pathak) (LF-1998)



Mrs. Pallavi Sagar  
Deshpande (Ozarde) (LF-2007)  
Rs. 10,000



# *Life Snippets...*



**'Thanks Giving' to the team of PA-2010 and some volunteers at Fili Villa by Mom & Dad, for their wonderful performance on Parent's Day**



**Dad's 74<sup>th</sup> Birthday celebrations at Hotel Pride Executive**



**Girls attend workshop on 'Lasting Impression though Personal Effectiveness' by world renowned corporate trainer Mr. Minocher Patel**



**LFs with Mr. P. N. Singh, Chairperson Grid Consultants at the Grid Leadership Training Program at KPIT Info Systems**



**Prof. Zenobia Nadirshaw during her talk "A journey of a1000 miles begins with the first step"**



**Valedictory gathering of the 6<sup>th</sup> batch of Spoken English Classes**



**Workshop on EXCEL 2007 with Mr. Prashant Runwal at Deccan Rendezvous**



# Inspira Special Feature..

## Asha Centre visits Lila Poonawalla Foundation

For three consecutive years LPF has been sending a batch of girls to Asha Centre, UK to be trained as Peace Ambassadors under the able guidance of Founder Director Mrs. Zerbano Gifford and her team. It was a mega event for LPF and moreover the Peace Ambassadors when Mrs. Gifford, her son the current Director Mr. Mark Gifford and Project Director Mr. Adrian Locher recently visited Pune. The Foundation organized various events during their stay in Pune in order to facilitate interaction between the members of the two Foundations. Inspira brings you the highlights of this event in a series of articles in this special feature.

### MARK VISITS LPF AND CONNECTS WITH ALL THE PEACE AMBASSADORS

Mark Gifford, the current Director of Asha Center, the son of Mrs. Zerbano Gifford, Founder Director Asha Center, was in Pune in December 2010. He has been to India several times before. Though he spent 4-5 days in Pune, his main objective this time was to particularly visit some religious places in Mumbai, Bangalore and Gujarat. He was accompanied by a UK bred Indian family friend, Mr. Inderpal. As Mrs. Poonawalla was abroad, the Group Leader of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Batch of Peace Ambassadors, Trustee & LF Nusarat Sheikh coordinated his visit. When Nusarat offered Mark to show around Pune, he denied the offer saying, *"I have been around Pune many times. I would love to meet up with all my Peace Ambassadors!"* It was only with the phenomenal help of Vidya that Nusarat was able to organize a get-together with just a day's notice.



**PA's elated to meet their mentor Mark Gifford in Pune**

On 7<sup>th</sup> December 2010, LPF conducted an informal meeting of all the three batches of Peace Ambassadors with Mark at Hotel Studio Estique, Camp. Since his arrival in Pune, Mark had shown his immense eagerness to meet the PAs. After the desperate wait the actual meeting with them culminated in great happiness and joys. Mark remembered everyone and used gestures (assigned to every individual during the Leadership Program at UK) to link with each one. His interaction spread warmth amongst the PAs. On behalf of the Foundation, Nusarat welcomed Mark with a bouquet and a card, whilst the PAs gifted him a beautiful Candle-stand. In the three hours (7-10 pm) they played a game, participated in a quiz on the

*Mahabharata* and spent majority of the time chatting and discussing various topics. Mark was keen on knowing how the Leadership Program at Asha Center had changed the lives of the girls and how they intended to change the society. He wanted to know how they were putting to use their training and their social undertakings. He was amazed to learn how LPF imparts a wholesome training to girls through training programs not just in India but also abroad. He appreciated the work of Lila Ma'am, the Foundation and it's initiatives like Inspira, Samagam and Parent's day. He appealed to the PAs to use Lila Ma'am's confidence and leadership to bring about global change. The interaction ended with a sumptuous warm, continental dinner and a feeling of oneness motivated to change the world!

**-As told to Mrs. Nusarat Sheikh  
Team Leader (PA-2010)**

### "KNOW YOUR SELF THROUGH FOUR TEMPERAMENTS"

The Foundation took the opportunity of Mr. Adrian Locher's being in Pune and organized his workshop on "Four Temperaments" (Understanding Ourselves and our colleagues) for the Lila Fellows and Girls, who are not yet Peace Ambassadors. This workshop is a part of the Wholesome Peace Leadership Program that the PAs undergo at Asha Centre, UK. This one day workshop was held at Deccan Rendezvous.

Adrian is a trainer at Asha Centre and is an accomplished speech and theatre expert from UK. He has been associated with stage for the past 20 years and is actively involved in renowned theatre productions. He started the workshop by explaining the new concept to us - *"Knowledge of the temperaments is fundamental to a good teamwork! We can use it as a key to identify our personality types and our unconscious behavior patterns. When we are not aware of our temperament and the way it works, we are blind to the effect we have on the world around us, especially on our relationships at work. The knowledge about the four temperaments can teach us to balance our own biased attitude in order to be a more effective and grounded colleague to others."*

Throughout the workshop Adrian used very common activities in our daily use to explain the concept of the 'Four Temperaments'. At first, he divided the participants into four groups and assigned each of them a temperament. Each of the group was asked to think like and enact each of these temperaments. Each of the group

**contd....**

# Special Feature...

discussed the behavior of different temperaments with their own temperament. This was followed by a small session about touching and feeling the touch of our fellow participants wherein participants learned that even our touch speaks volumes about our temperaments.

We then came the game of chairs, wherein the last chair in a row was kept empty. The one to whom the chair belonged to was supposed to approach from the other end and try to acquire it against all odds. The odds were being created by all the other occupants in the same row. They were all working as one team and making group efforts to prevent this girl for occupying her seat. The task was to occupy the seat without losing temper or peace of mind, without being in a hurry to reach the destination. The game gave out a message that "One need not hurry to beat competition; instead one needs to maintain his calm and peace of mind to do so". That was the phlegmatic temperament!



**Trainer Mr. Adrian Locher with his students. The girls don the body language and masks symbolising the 4 Temperaments; Blue-Melancholic; Green-Phlegmatic; Yellow-Sanguine and Red-Choleric**

| Temperament   | Symbolic element | Representative colour | Personality traits  |
|---------------|------------------|-----------------------|---|
| 1 Choleric    | Fire             | Red                   | short tempered, impatient, aggressive, dominating, rude, indifferent and inconsiderate of other's views   |
| 2 Sanguine    | Air              | Yellow                | impulsive, unstable irresponsible; <u>BUT this temperament also has some positive qualities</u> like good communication skills, good sense of humor, energetic and relationship building capacity |
| 3 Melancholic | Earth            | Blue                  | low energy, negative attitude, low self esteem, introspective, self-blaming, extremely serious and philosophical  |
| 4 Phlegmatic  | Water            | Green                 | can adjust in any atmosphere, they require their own space, they always enjoy life, reliable, good followers, secure in life, consistent and avoid taking risks                                   |

In this way Adrian revealed the four temperaments to the girls. The workshop was practical, employing techniques from theatre to effectively reveal the different characteristics of the temperaments; a blend of acting, voice modulation and using a mask. The use of the mask was a remarkably efficient way of embodying the temperaments. It makes the process of experiencing the four temperaments and their corresponding characteristics very easy and fast.

Then, through role-play, he demonstrated how the temperaments can work together or not, and how to bring about a greater harmony in our interaction with others. Finally, through further exercises, Adrian made the girls aware of themselves as human beings who can control the temperaments and play with them, like strings of an instrument! It was evident that the girls had become aware of the masks they wear in life and at work and had learned how they could strengthen their core-being i.e. essentially humanity.

These four temperaments represent four different fluids in the human body, which need to be in equilibrium (neutrality represented by the white mask), according to a European philosophy. Disturbance in this proportion can cause various illnesses. Similarly domination of any one of these temperaments in a person can lead to various problems in his/her life. We all need to achieve our equilibrium (Neutral) by striking a balance in acquiring all four temperaments in equal proportion which can help us build good and healthy social relationships. This can be achieved through our behavior and body language. The participants realized that despite wearing a white (equilibrium) mask their body language gave away their true temperaments! Knowledge of the temperaments can serve as a fundamental to a good teamwork and achieving equilibrium is a key to success!

In the end, Mrs. Zerbano Gifford, Founder Director of Asha Centre joined the gathering and interacted with the

**contd....**





participants over lunch. She then addressed the gathering with a very motivational talk punctuated with stories and her challenges in life. The workshop came to a close by Mrs. Gifford giving away certificates of participation to all.

- **Ritaa Shetiya & Supriya Satwekar (LF-2010)**

## **A FEED BACK TO THE 4-TEMPERAMENTS WORKSHOP**

This Sunday, I had something pretty different and interesting to do. I had planned to attend a workshop - **The Four Temperaments by Mr. Adrian Locher organized by the Foundation**. When I received the invite, I was unaware of the very concept of temperaments. So, I thought why not attend and get to know what these are and how they affect me. I am always in the quest of understanding myself better. This was a great chance in the right direction. As always, I am



**Lila Fellows imbibing the lessons of 4-Temperaments through interactive games and exercises**

awestruck the way **Padmashree Mrs. Lila Poonawalla** perfectly manages and innately handles everyone. This was a chance to get some advice from her, as well as enable myself to absorb her wisdom. Being in good company was an additional bonus.

A bit apprehensive at first, to see unknown faces on a Sunday morning, after much introspection, I persuaded myself to be there. There was child like energy, when we started with the small **sound exercises** to warm up to the actual magic. This is the first time, I felt like I was energetically playing with close buddies just after finishing school. We just cheered and appreciated the

effort by clapping and soaking in all the fun.

Starting with exchanging claps, sounds, words amongst ourselves, we learnt to **enact a poem** giving the perfect meaning to every word. There was a conscious effort to express ourselves through meaningful words. Opening up to the crowd, we started experiencing the different temperaments - **choleric** (*angry, dynamic*), **phlegmatic** (*happy and stable*), **melancholic** (*gloomy and thoughtful*) and **sanguine** (*chirpy and joyful*). We enacted the composure, needed to settle comfortably, and switch between these temperaments.

In one exercise, we walked around randomly, as *fishes* swimming in different temperaments. We reacted to the **blockages** we faced in the inherent temperaments, least through the phlegmatic. It was wonderful to know the functioning and presence of any of them, in different situations; **choleric** in emergencies to lead, **sanguine** to bring in *joy and chirpiness*, **phlegmatic** to be *consistently performing* and **melancholic** to be *reflective*. After encountering such situations, we tried our hand at improvising situations, by

putting on different one sided masks. The masks brought out the humour in the interactions of different temperaments. The paradox of expression of a melancholic and a sanguine got out different hues and dominance of temperaments. We came to know that singular temperaments are described as humours (**four humours**), causing intense humour while interaction.

We also learned about a mixture of all the four, known as the neutral temperament. I tried my hand at it, by wearing and performing with the neutral mask. My sanguine temperament came to the fore under the mask and there was **laughter all around**.

**contd....**



We identified our dominant and secondary temperaments, understanding why we behave the way we do. It was true, that our least identified temperament, if moved towards us stabilizes our being (**somewhat like a magnet**).

To top it all, we got to interact with **Mrs. Zerbanoo Gifford**. I was pretty impressed by her persona. The way she **addressed the issues**, she had faced and we face, gave us pointers to move ahead gracefully in life. We saw a different dimension of our lives.

Above all, the entire experience was enriching, with lessons to take home and to work. The **participatory certificate** just made me realize the presence of the knowledge I had gained and utility.

My ability and capacity as an individual has just moved to a different level. I am more rooted and self aware of the possibilities ahead. I am sharing this hoping it might help you along in your journey, to find what you want.

**-Mrs. Sujal Shelke (Nagarkar) (LF-2004)**

## **ITS' TIME THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY WOMEN UTILIZES HER INNATE QUALITIES TO TRANSFORM COMMUNITIES**

Zerbanoo Gifford addressed the participants of the 4-Temperaments Workshop. She started with the declaration..... *"Without Adrian, Asha Center would never work. Such is his commitment and initiative to handle multiple responsibilities."* This introduction evolved into a very casual and non-structured motivational talk in which she quoted old English stories for their morals and her own experiences in life for their teachings!

She said *"I must say you are all very lucky to have Lila to give you opportunities and to groom you. Unfortunately in our times we did not have any one to guide us this way. Women by nature are givers of physical and mental energy. The 21<sup>st</sup> century woman has immense respect for education and realized her own power. She should utilize these qualities as a catalyst to transform communities."* She gave us an example of herself how she as a housewife got up and contested elections and won. She was looked down upon for being an Asian. A senior male English MP had questioned her out of conceit if she even knew English, she had replied, *"That's why you see me here"*. Women were in minority and thus their opinions were not important in decision making. When Mrs. Gifford came into power as the President of the Council she passed a legislation increasing the women population on the council to 50%. After that there was no ignoring the women's demands and opinions. Thus she told the girls, *"The energy / power should be imparted for the betterment of other people. The respect for education should be spread to individuals and society at large. Women should not miss the opportunities that come their way but utilize them. If you're ready to change, the world can change for you! You can change legislations, media,*

*views, etc., by setting an example by changing yourself.*

*The people you mix with are also very important because qualities rub off! If you mingle with people who are mean and selfish you will tend to be the same and similarly if you are with those you give and share, you will learn the joy of giving."*

*Another important tip is what you wear and what you speak for the first time in public is extremely important. People remember what you wear. And when you speak for the first time be sure to say or do something with a great emphasis. Do not speak if you are not confident or do not have enough knowledge. But when you do, be sure to leave a lasting impression!*

*Many people ask me which the right way for them to lead their life. And I tell them, 'There is no right or wrong way to lead one's life; it is how you want to and wish to live your life'. You must decide what you want to be remembered as. Just think of what do you want Times of India to write about you in your obituary after you are gone and accordingly live your life. Happiness you cause to everybody always comes back to you too. Remember you are unique. I believe in God and in destiny. But it is a fact that each one of you is unique and God wants you to defy your destiny and create the life you wish for yourself! In your quest, remember to be 'karmically good' because karma comes back to you some time or the other in the same life and there is no escape from karma.*

She ended the talk by narrating a beautiful English story of King Arthur, the King of England and his Knight Sir Lancelot. Once, King Arthur lost a battle against a nasty king who had an unhappy daughter. This nasty King told King Arthur that he would relieve and forgive him if he could tell him 'what was it that made women happy'. King Arthur sent out all his soldiers in search of this secret. An ugly old hag agreed to reveal the secret if he promised to get his most handsome and brave Knight Sir Lancelot to marry her. Sir Lancelot agreed. The old hag revealed the secret. She said, *"Its' simple. Listen to what women say and follow them"*. Once the secret was out, everyone urged Sir Lancelot to go back on his words and not marry the old hag. But he stuck to his commitment and married her. On the first night, the old hag told Sir Lancelot, *"I can grant you one wish. I can either be an ugly old hag all day and transform into a beautiful lady for you at night when we make love OR I can be a beautiful woman all day for you to show me off to all your friends and colleagues and in the night again be one old hag. How do you want me to be?"* To this Sir Lancelot replied, *"I leave it up to you as long as you are happy with it."* The old hag was very happy and said, *"You are truly a very wise man and I am lucky to be your wife. Your answer has made me so happy that I have decided to be a beautiful woman both, during the day and at night."* **The moral of the story- "When you love anybody, you let them be what they are!"**

**- Dr. Rajani Panchang-Dhumal & Priyanka Khopkar**

**contd....**



# Special Feature...

**Mrs. Zerbanoo Gifford (60) studied Journalism and was home-maker raising her two sons when she had her first tryst with politics. She created history by becoming the 1<sup>st</sup> Asian Woman ever to have been elected as a Member of British Parliament in 1982. She is a voracious writer and addresses various social issues like human-rights, slavery, child-labour, ethnic discrimination, education and philanthropy. Well known for her charitable and human-rights activities, in 2006 she was awarded Zee TV's International Woman of the Year Award for humanitarian work worldwide. Inspira spoke to her about Asha Centre and her vision for her collaboration with LPF.**

**Why did you start Asha Centre and why did you name it ASHA?**

I always wanted to do something for society and thought of a place like this one. I initiated the work related to the center close to my retirement with no defined vision. I just followed my heart flowing with creativity and the Centre came into existence about 7 years ago.

Good question! No one's asked me that before -'why ASHA?' Asha means divine justice of human beings, togetherness and mixing of people and so ASHA Centre.

**What kind of trainings do you impart at the Centre and for whom?**

The Centre provides trainings to various communities, people and interfaith ministers to people from many countries all over the globe- a lot of East Europeans, people from Georgia, Portugal, Armenia, Zoroastrians, Africa, Chinese, Druids (ancient Britain's), etc. The Centre provides training in psychodrama, theatre, biodynamic gardening, inter-faith studies, hospitality and leadership. There are many issues like Islam in Europe and ethnic minorities and diversity in which we provide courses. People come to us with different needs either as individuals or as groups. Many young people come to train in theatre whilst we had an African athlete with completely different needs. Most programs are thus tailor-made. It's normal to have batches of 30 for a month whilst some stay back for 6-month courses.

**How is Asha Centre funded or how are the students funded?**

It is supported through funds from the European Union (EU) and from the funds of a Trust I have formed under the auspices of Asha Centre. Many students fund themselves, or have scholarships or are sponsored, also by organizations like the EU.

**Why did you name this program with Lila Fellows as Peace Leadership Program?**

Because I think peace is an important issue without which nothing is achievable.

**What are your expectations from the PAs program in collaboration with LPF?**

No expectations! I just want girls to come to Asha Centre and have the best time of their life time. On a later thought, it would be great if the girls learn something new and use their new-found knowledge to transform their communities.



**Rajani & Priyanka in a tete-a-tete with the gracious Zerbanoo**

**Are you satisfied with what each batch of Peace Ambassadors is doing, upon their return to India?**

Yes! Very much happy and satisfied.... the impact of the training to inculcate the attitude to give back to people is achieved. How wonderful it would have been if somebody would have imparted this training to me in my young age! I know some girls have not yet been able to initiate any such work, but I am sure they will; if not immediately, then surely at a later point of time. It is just that they are presently occupied with some other priorities.

**What is your vision for the future of this collaborative program?**

I would love train as many girls as I can and expand this further. Funding is an issue; but we will overcome it. We are trying to sort it. Lila and I are having plans to have corporate training workshops in India by Adrian in the winters. Our proposal seems to be catching up with them.

**Who are your role-models?**

Dadabhai Nawrosjee and Thomas Clarkson. Dadabhai had the guts to contest the British elections and was the first Indian to be elected to its Parliament. He even gave up his life for the freedom struggle. Thomas Clarkson was the champion of anti-slavery. Both had magnificent obsession for justice, kindness and defiance. I have written books on both of them. I also admire the only word in Mrs. Thatcher's dictionary i.e. compassion.

**What is your voice as a human rights campaigner?**

As a Human Rights campaigner I feel every human/child has three basic needs

1. They should have right to live and be loved.
  2. They should be fed, clothed, housed and educated.
  3. They should be cherished and feel wanted in this world.
- Justice demands there should be no child labor but the world prefers the other way. We should stop this and it is possible only with education.

**You've met women globe over. What is your opinion about Indian women?**

I think most Indian women are much more powerful than the western women. They just seem to lack confidence. India is a spiritual and economic giantess towards which most of the eyes around the world are turned to. With more women coming into power, it will provide a huge impetus to the growth of the country.

**contd....**



## **Your message for young aspiring girls...**

Reputation is most important for a girl; if that is lost all is lost! I have never had lack of funds for my projects. I think that is my reputation; people trust that the money they give me will never get misused. Next, I think everyone wants to do good things. They just need an opportunity. LPF is giving you all that opportunity, make the most of it. And lastly, build connections and networking; it goes a long way in transforming lives.

## **What do you think is hindering the growth of India?**

**Its unbelievable to see so much litter on the roads here! I seriously think India needs an official 'National Clean up Day'.** It lacks civic pride. Greed and consequential corruption needs to be curbed. Population! And of course child labour not just here, but anywhere is a blemish on the face of the world! And yes, I would tell everyone to choose their politicians wisely. Before voting for them do not see what they are promising, but get to know what they have already done in the past!

**- Dr. Rajani Panchang-Dhumal and Priyanka Khopkar**



**PA's with Zerbanoo & Adrian**

batch of Peace Ambassadors at Asha Centre. She said that the Peace Ambassadors program has bound the two Foundations firmly together. She called the program an inter-cultural program, where different people came together to learn and share their views for the benefit of society. She was very happy to know about the progress of the different projects undertaken by the Peace Ambassadors and felt proud she had been able to enable the girls to work towards the benefit of society. She said *"You are blessed and happy when you give back to society without expecting anything in return. And as women we are always ready to give in their lifetime without expecting anything in return"*. How true! A realization to make us proud!

The Peace Ambassadors gifted beautiful jewelry boxes handcrafted in Rajasthan along with a set of traditional lac bangles (also traditional of Rajasthan) to Zerbano Ma'am and Lila Mom, both. We gifted Adrian the symbol of love, a small marble replica of the famous 'Taj-Mahal'.

We enjoyed a delicious continental dinner and suddenly it felt like sand had slipped out of our hands! It was time to say good-byes and part. With a heavy heart we made them promise they would visit us again in India and wished them a Bon Voyage!

■ **-Nisha Pandya & Priyanka Khopkar**

## **PEACE AMBASSADORS' GOT-TOGETHER TO MEET ZERBANOO AND ADRIAN**

On the centennial year celebrations of International Women's Day 8<sup>th</sup> March 2011 we got an opportunity to meet our dearest Mrs. Zerbano Gifford in Pune and that made the Women's Day all the more special to all of us (all 3 batches of PAs)! Lila Mom and Firoz Dad had arranged a special evening with the perfect ambience at Hotel Studio Estique so that we could all interact with Zerbano Ma'am and our dear Adrian. Senior Trustees Maya ma'am, Frenny Ma'am and Shernaz Ma'am were also present. We were all excited and when we saw our admirable teacher there, we were overwhelmed. Adrian and Zerbano ma'am were equally happy to be back amongst us once again. Each one of us individually interacted with them and updated them about happenings in our life. Cherished memories of our stay at Asha Centre rushed back to us.

On the occasion, Zerbano Ma'am announced that she was delighted and looked forth to welcome the fourth

## **Lila Poonawalla Foundation SCHOLARSHIP ANNOUNCEMENTS 2011**

### **Postgraduate Scholarship**

Applications are available till Saturday, 28th May 2011

For any queries please contact on +91-20-66302610 / 66302611,  
(M) 8605867658 / 8605867657 (Between 9.00 am to 5.00 pm)

Email : [vidya@lilapoonawallafoundation.com](mailto:vidya@lilapoonawallafoundation.com) / [priyanka@lilapoonawallafoundation.com](mailto:priyanka@lilapoonawallafoundation.com) OR

Check our website : [www.lilapoonawallafoundation.com](http://www.lilapoonawallafoundation.com)

Office Address : Akshay Centre, office No. 8,  
1st Floor, Thergaon, Pune 411033.



# *Inspira* Updates from PA Forum

***Project 'Abhigyaan' completes one successful year with a positive feedback from the school authorities and students; to continue throughout the next academic year***

**O**n return from UK after the Peace Leadership training program as Peace Ambassadors (PAs), the first batch PA-2008 had regular brainstorming meetings to devise a plan of action for taking up various projects for the betterment of the society. The PAs took up various individual and group projects: Remand-home project (PAs Rajashree Kare, Deepa Krishnamurthi and Anjali Sarda), conducting training programs for other LFs, rural education, performances at 'Nivara' old-age home and a fund-raising event Samagam-I, etc.

However, the need was felt for all the members of PA-2008 to come together and work on a single project so that their combined efforts could bring about more positive results. Thus the project 'Abhigyaan' took shape and Inspira reported its takeoff in its 31<sup>st</sup> issue last year.



***Children of Kalmadi Shamrao School listening intently during the inaugural ceremony***

**Project 'Abhigyaan' – The Beginning** aims at teaching, training and mentoring the children not-so-privileged to receive continued and advanced education. The PAs tied up with Dr. Kalmadi Shamrao High School, Pune, which is a school for the underprivileged children. The focus is to spread awareness regarding the importance of education amongst these students and further help them develop and enhance their skills. The project was inaugurated on July 24, 2010 at the hands of Padmashree Mrs. Lila Poonawalla, Founder and Chairperson of Lila Poonawalla Foundation and Mrs. Malathi Kalmadi, Trustee and Secretary of Kannada Sangha, Pune.



***The 'stake holders' witness their dreams finally come true***

## **Project Abhigyaan Course Content**

1. Performing Arts:
  - Drama and Theatre
  - Music
  - Dance
2. Fine Arts
3. Joy of Mathematics
4. Environmental and General Science
5. Computers
6. Spoken English and Communication Skills
7. Career Guidance and Counselling

A total of 160 students studying in Class 8, 9 and 10 have been selected initially for this special guidance program. Two sessions spanning an hour each are conducted for these students every Saturday. The present response is encouraging and the PAs intend to continue this initiative for the second consecutive academic year i.e. 2011-2012, assessing the progress and then chalk-out a further plan of action for this project.

***contd....***

# Updates from RA Forum

**The Team of Abhigyaan, Peace Ambassadors 2008**



Project Leader,  
Jayshree Shahade



Neelu Nawani



Samina Deokar



Smita Acharya



Swarada Angal



Madhuri Kad



Kasturi Paigude



Anjali Sarda



Sneha Nikum



Priyanka Khopkar



Rajashree Kare



Deepa Krishnamurthy



**Boys and girls responding alike to  
Swarada Angal's dance sessions**



**Anjali Sarda with the session on  
Environmental and General Science**



**Communication and spoken English  
session with Samina Deokar**



**A music session with  
Kasturi Paigude**



**A session on spoken English  
with Smita Acharya**



**Creativity with Priyanka Khopkar  
at a Fine Arts Session**



**Sneha Nikum conducting a  
session on computers**



**Neelu Nawani conducting a session on  
Environmental and General Science**

■ - Samina Deokar (LF-1998 & PA 2008)



# Movie Review...



**Name of the Movie:**

**Pray the Devil back to Hell**

**Genre:** Documentary

**Filmmakers:**

Gini Reticker and Abigail E. Disney

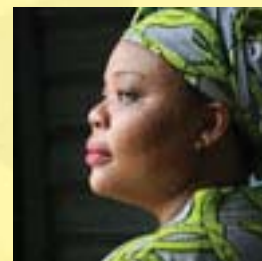
**I**magine this: A west African coastal country ravaged by an anarchic past, history of slave trade, bloody ethnic conflict, two civil wars spanning over 14 years resulting in more than 85% of the population suffering from unemployment and misery, children trapped in human trafficking and used as child soldiers and shockingly, 50 % of women being raped by rebels. There was no ray of hope for the people of **'Liberia'** until a group of women decided to come together and fight for peace. Read on to know about the remarkable and inspiring story of how women of Liberia came out of the burden of being victims of war and played an instrumental role in bringing peace to war torn Liberia.

Made by USA based women filmmakers, the film opens with a brief narrative about the gory history of Liberia and its past, full of conflict. Liberia was once described as Malaguetta Coast or **Pepper Coast** due to the cultivation of a high range pepper crop found in rural Liberia. This was instrumental in bringing the country in to the spice trade during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Liberia earned its name from the word 'liberty' as it was founded by slaves freed from the United States of America. Though these slaves belonged to a mixed ethnic background and were from different parts of Africa, they were repatriated to Liberia. Soon after the slaves, who were called as **'Americo-Liberians'** settled in Liberia, ethnic tensions grew between them and the existing ethnic tribes of the land. In 1980, the USA backed President William R. Tolbert who was overthrown in the military coup led by Charles Taylor and this started the period of instability in Liberia. What followed was not only horrific in terms of loss of people and resources, but also in terms of the spirit of the country. For next fourteen years from 1989 to 2003, the country faced bloodshed, political chaos and destruction of livelihood of the people. People living in rural areas fled to the capital city of Monrovia and became refugees in their own homeland. It was women who suffered the most in these conflicts. Incidents such as kidnapping and rape were common and children who were born after Taylor's coup, grew up in an atmosphere of war. In spite of constant pressure from the international community Taylor refused to end the strife and sit for peace talks.

During this period of disillusionment, hope appeared in the form of **Lehman Gbowee**, an ordinary woman of Liberia. The documentary unfolds through the compelling narrative of Lehman who, one day, saw a spark of change within her, and later on became the leader of the **Women in Peace building Network (WIPNET)** who pushed the devil back to hell in Liberia. According to Lehman, she had always considered herself as a victim of war. She says that she **'went around with this big chip on my shoulder that I was a victim of war'** for years, until she started working

with women and children who were disabled during the conflict. She saw that under the horrible conditions the women she worked with still had the hope of a better future. Lehman asked one woman **"Why are you people so optimistic about life?"** for which she got a reply, **"Because we believe, as mothers, we are the ones who will change everything."** That night Lehman had a dream which she describes as a **'crazy dream that someone was actually telling me to get the women of the church together to pray for peace.'** The next day, she spoke to the women at her Lutheran church and started the **'Christian Women's Initiative'**. Women from different churches joined them and their discussions gave birth to the movement that changed the fate of the nation. Soon, something happened which was never imaginable in ethnically divided Liberia; both Christian and Muslim women came together to work for peace. The group of Muslim women was led by **Asatu Bah Kenneth**, a woman police officer who got inspired by Lehman's ideas.

Slowly, the women made their presence felt by staging protest rallies in the fish market and roadside from where the car fleet of President Taylor used to pass by every day. These women were only armed with 'White T-Shirts' with messages of peace written on them. They posted a large banner that read, **"The Women of Liberia want peace now"**. They



**Lehman Gbowee**

noticed that though their movement grew in strength and popularity, President Taylor ignored their appeals. Desperate for being heard, the women also went on a **'sex strike'** refusing sex with their husbands until they supported their wives in the peace struggle. After many sit-ins at the market place, the President decided to meet the women at a public hearing. While Taylor was seated at the dais expressionless, the lady member of his senate urged Lehman to speak. Lehman made a compelling appeal which came straight on behalf of each woman's heart. She said **"We ask the honourable Pro Tem of the Senate, being a woman and being in line with our cause, to kindly present this statement to His Excellency Dr. Charles Taylor with this message that the women of Liberia, including the IDPs, are tired of war. We are tired of running. We are tired of begging for bulgur wheat. We are tired of our children being raped. We are now taking this stand, to secure the future of our children because we believe as custodians of society, our children will ask us, "Mama, what was your role during the crisis?" Kindly convey this to the President of Liberia. Thank you."**

In the spring of 2003, the civil war intensified and so did the pressure on Taylor from the international community who had noticed the growing strength and courage of women of Liberia. Finally, he agreed to meet the warlords and rebels in the neighbouring country Ghana. The women formed a delegation and took off for Ghana to see that the peace process started by them was not stalled midway by politicians. Thereon, the documentary gives a live coverage of the events that took place at this negotiation meeting in Ghana. The warlords and rebels who were never legitimately recognized suddenly all the material comforts

**contd....**

# Lila in News



पुणे । सोमवार, २४ मार्च २०११

## लीला पूनावाला यांना 'जीवनगौरव' पुरस्कार

वाकडमणोल इंदिरा कॉलेज सुफर्ने पुरस्कारांचे वितरण

पुणे, मा. १३ : वाकडमणोल सामान्य हस्तकला केंद्राच्या वतीने इंदिरा कॉलेज सुफर्ने वितरण केलेल्या 'जीवनगौरव' पुरस्कारांचे वितरण आज (मा. १३) झाले.

विशाल सतीश वाकडमणोल, माधुरी माडे, ज्योतीबा रंजित वाकडमणोल, तयार करीत सतीश वाकडमणोल यांच्या वतीने या वेळी विविध क्षेत्रात उत्कृष्टतेने काम केलेल्या व्यक्तींना 'जीवनगौरव' पुरस्कार देण्यात आले. इंदिरा कॉलेज सुफर्ने वितरण केलेल्या पुरस्कारांच्या यादीत 'जीवनगौरव' पुरस्कार देण्यात आले. इंदिरा कॉलेज सुफर्ने वितरण केलेल्या पुरस्कारांच्या यादीत 'जीवनगौरव' पुरस्कार देण्यात आले. इंदिरा कॉलेज सुफर्ने वितरण केलेल्या पुरस्कारांच्या यादीत 'जीवनगौरव' पुरस्कार देण्यात आले.

सगळ्या संस्थानात वेगळ्या वेळी वितरण केलेल्या पुरस्कारांच्या यादीत 'जीवनगौरव' पुरस्कार देण्यात आले. इंदिरा कॉलेज सुफर्ने वितरण केलेल्या पुरस्कारांच्या यादीत 'जीवनगौरव' पुरस्कार देण्यात आले.



लीला पूनावाला यांना 'जीवनगौरव' पुरस्कार देण्यात आला.



**Padmashree Mrs. Lila Poonawalla receiving the Lifetime Achievement Award at the hands of renowned industrialist Mr. Arun Firodia and Ms. Tarita Shankar, Chairperson Indira Group of Institutes**



Finally, the women got what they wanted. Peace was restored in Liberia and elections were held to choose the leader of the country. Then once again, something unimaginable happened. For the first time in the history of Africa, a woman was elected as the head of the State. **Ellen Johansson Sirleaf**, a Harvard educated economist became the President of Liberia.

Abigail Disney, the director of the documentary quotes Mahatma Gandhi while commenting on how the women's movement progressed: **"First they ignore you, then they make fun of you, then they try to hurt you, and then they deal with you".**

Watching this documentary is a disturbing experience. It makes you realize that how we as human beings, have done so much irreversible damage to our fellow beings through brutal wars and conflicts. But seeing the victory of the women also shows us the other side of life. The remarkable story of women who did not settle for anything less than peace and never gave up, inspires you to fight your own fears and keep walking. The words spoken by Lehman while she received an international award linger in your mind: **"If you're hungry, keep walking. If you are thirsty, keep walking. If you want a taste of freedom, keep walking. For us, women of Liberia, this award is a call that we will keep walking until peace, justice and the rights of women is not a dream, but is a thing of the present."**

■ - Amruta Prakash (LF-2005 & PA-2010)

### Movie Review continued....

provided to them at the meeting as luxury and turned the peace talks into a mere farce. Realizing that the peace negotiations were not making any progress, Lehman and her ladies decided to seize the peace hall and block its exit. They declared that they would not leave until the politicians reach a conclusion and settle for peace. The documentary provides the minute a minute account of how the women kept the pressure on the politicians and compelled them to negotiate.



# Empowered LILA fellows...



I am Poornima Krishnamurty, 27 years old. My career objective is to develop economic relations between India and other nations through cultural, intellectual and people-to-people exchanges by working in an international organisation. For this, after completing my Bachelor's of Commerce from BMCC and French language courses from Alliance Française de Poona, I intended to enhance my Indian vision of business, based on a blend of European management and economic theories.

After a lot of research and precious advice from the Edufrance desk at Alliance Française, I decided to pursue a MBA in International Trade and European Business from IAE de Lyon in France. I was ready to explore a very diverse and rich world, which would help me widen my perspectives to face the challenging new world. I was also preparing myself to grow in a place which would be less protective and influencing like India and help me understand other society values.

France has a long and proud history of being a 'cultural exception', a land which resists universality by keeping its identity intact and at the same time developing human aspirations and socio-cultural fundamentals in the society. Similarly, I fiercely defend the intactness of my Indian identity and I nurture my love to integrate with new cultures and take initiatives to explore new things independently. Thus, I chose France to pursue my career goals at a time when my peers would choose English speaking nations like the USA, UK or Australia.

Thanks to the scholarship awarded by the Lila Poonawalla Foundation in 2004 and an additional scholarship by the Embassy of France in India, my dream of realising my goals gradually commenced. My parents, family and my loved ones completely supported me throughout in my endeavours and my decision of choosing France as my study destination only brought joy to their minds rather than worries about their little girl surviving in a foreign land alone. Their motto of 'Try till you succeed' has still kept me going strong in my personal and professional life.

**Talking about LPF, it is undoubtedly an excellent support for young aspiring girls to live their dreams but, one must understand that it is only the stepping stone to reaching the top. The Foundation, which is constantly trying to push girls to become strong and independent through various interactive and informative sessions and financial aid, must be viewed as a measure to enhance your dream and stay focussed to accomplish your ambitions.**

France is a real melting-pot of cultures, and I found myself along with young, determined and ambitious students from across the world with so many dreams in their eyes. Though life has been challenging and adventurous for me in France like the case of any foreigner, I learnt very quickly to be bicultural using the French language as a medium to communicate freely with the people. My strong Indian values, family relationships, easy adaptation skills due to the Indian culture, generosity and open mindedness helped me move ahead and break all barriers in France. I always tried to strike a balance

between the two worlds enriching myself in the process.

I was fortunate enough to be chosen as a 'Young Ambassador' by the Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Lyon, wherein I proudly represented India and promoted our country through various platforms (culture, films, cuisine, seminars, etc.). Three



years of learning and working experience in France gave me the right international exposure and added great value to understanding European business realities. Little by little, I realised that my privileges had to be turned to responsibilities. Armed with two MBA degrees (from IAE de Lyon in International Business and European Business Realities, work experience in some prestigious French organisations and some priceless personal experiences (For E.g.: interactions with European politicians, exchanges with students from across the world), I decided to come back to India in order to utilize what I had learnt so far. My strong educational background in Indian commerce, my French language skills and French management degrees (thus bicultural) had by then, equipped me best to advise French companies of the appropriate strategies to enter the Indian market.

This decision was however not easy to handle! Once I was back in India, the Indian societal pressure was very high. I rapidly felt it, despite my family backing. Curious interrogations like "So, why did you not take up a job in France and earn in Euros?", "Have you failed abroad that you are back?", "Did your parents call you back?" and so much more was constantly lobbed at me!!! I realised that my absence left a lot of unanswered questions about me and my aspirations and that the Indian society rarely values and respects liberty of individuals.

After a few discussions for collaborations with French companies and institutions, I decided to be a part of the French Trade Commission in Mumbai, a government institution under the aegis of the French Ministry of Economy, Industry and Employment. Its primary role is to facilitate business and trade relations between France and India through business missions, market studies, trade fairs and economic publications. This offer was an ideal start for me, as it would be a rare opportunity for me to get the best of both worlds. I was introduced to a different organisation structure which predominantly depends on the 'relation' aspect. I learned how to reach out to French companies, propagating the image and the economy of 'Incredible India' and consequently advising them on setting up operations in India. India is on the threshold of a new economic development, and this is the right time for anyone to be in our country. The 21<sup>st</sup> century shape up by our "Old civilisation, Young Nation" as was discussed at the Davos Economic Forum. The recent visit of the President of France Mr. Nicolas Sarkozy to India has opened up several avenues for taking bilateral relations forward between India and France.

**contd....**

# Inspira Empowered LILA Fellows...



On a daily basis, I interact with government organisations, media, Indian conglomerates, follow trade policies that may affect French investments in India and represent French interests through seminars and trade fairs. My team is a good mix of Indians and French and the sharing of knowledge of Indian and French culture is amazingly enriching.

On the personal front, I am back again on my own, independent and ready to face a new world in Mumbai, the Maximum City: a city full of promises but only to those who persist. My love for integrating with new cultures, my ability to adapt and reach out to people has helped me be what I am today an enhanced my worth. During my free time, I enjoy watching a movie/concert or an art

exhibition, and I love to travel. I also like photography, painting and reading.

My journey continues and I aspire to be professionally associated with international organisations like the United Nations or the World Trade Organisation to promote India on the global economic scene. The dawn of the new century has brought India to the forefront in the global economy, with an increased awareness of the opportunity that India presents to the rest of the world. People all over the world are eager to know more about India and I would be more than happy to be part of its remarkable growth story.

■ **-Poornima Krishnamurthy (LF-2004)**

## Event

**1** 6<sup>th</sup> January 2011 was celebrated as Parent's Day by the Lila Poonawalla Foundation. An event was organized at the Symbiosis Vishwabhavan Auditorium. This was an occasion when parents and spouses of Lila Fellows got an opportunity to meet and interact with each other as well as the entire LPF family.



**Mrs. Nusarat Sheikh,  
Team Leader of PA-  
2008 introducing the  
event**

The event opened with an invocation to Goddess Saraswati. This was followed by Padmashree Mrs. Lila Poonawalla welcoming the gathering in a mix of English and Marathi (the local language, considering the fact that many



**Comperes Amruta B. and  
Amruta P.**

of the parents would not be acquainted with the English). Mr. Firoz Poonawalla with great pride spoke about the Foundation's mission in training LF's to become P e a c e Ambassadors. The 3<sup>rd</sup> batch of P e a c e

Ambassador's was scheduled to showcase its learnings at Asha Center, UK to the gathering. **Dr. Mrs. Nirmala Pandit, Managing Trustee, Nav Maharashtra**

**Community Foundation** graced the function as the **Chief Guest**. She lauded the Foundation's initiative of Peace Leadership training in the UK. She mentioned how difficult it was going abroad during her student times. She reminisced one of her foreign visits on a fellowship during which her exposure to the foreign land and culture had made her wiser, manifold. **She also released the 32<sup>nd</sup> issue of Inspira which had been given a new look, after nearly a decade of its existence.**



**Parents and spouses in the  
gathering**

**When the Editor of Inspira Dr Rajani Panchang announced the facelift they had given the newsletter, there was an uproar in the crowd amidst loud clapping. She said Inspira was one of the oldest and longest running training programs in the Foundation. She claimed that over two dozen girls had been trained, under the auspices of Inspira over the past decade-in various aspects of interviewing, writing, printing, publishing, PR, HR and much more.**

Then PAs Amruta Prakash and Amruta Bahulekar took over controls on the stage as hosts and what followed is history! From the first moment, they commanded rapt attention and applause. The program comprised introduction of the team members of PA-2008 followed by the Team Leader Mrs. Nusarat Sheikh speaking about the history and objectives of Asha Center, UK. The members of the team paired up and made power-point presentations about their interactions with eminent personalities at the Asha centre. These includes Lucca Leadership training, interfaith

**contd....**



# Event Inspira



**Durga Aarti**

concepts, biodynamic farming, visits to London, Grange village and other institutions, their stay and group interactions at the Asha Center and the Indian Tea Party they organized for the foreigners. Girls gathered in groups and enacted as well as recited interfaith poetry, namely the poem of Michael, the *aarti* of goddess Durga and verses from the Holy Quran. They also enacted short skits to explain the concept of the Four Temperaments. In the end they performed a 'deep-nritya' (lamp dance) on the motivational national integration song 'Tum Chalo to Hindustan Chale....'



**Poetry recitation**

The narration of events might have sounded bland and routine... that's because the highlights were yet to come! The most impressive feature of this event was that the audience never realized how the 120 minutes had gone by; the performances were mesmerizing and captivating! All the 14 PAs were clad in similar sarees, but not for a single minute did their presence on the stage appear monotonous. All the credit goes to the MCs Amruta Prakash who compered in English as Amruta Bahulekar in Marathi. Whilst their



**Husband of Pooja Thorat said he wished he was a Lila Fellow!**



**Verses from the Holy Quran**



**Enactment of four temperaments**

script was awesome, their talent, command over their respective languages and hard work was a class apart! The deftness, with which Amruta Bahulekar was punctuating the announcements with Marathi verses and punch-lines extempore, did not only electrify but also the gathering showcased the girl's knowledge and command over the language! The girls newfound confidence, speech, diction and command over theatrical dialogue delivery was visible



**Tum chalo to hindustan chale....**



**Prayaga Hoge's father expressing his gratitude**



**Mother of Kanchan Dhone said her daughter would have to discontinue studies if LPF was not there contd....**

# Event

and needed no further substantiation.

It was not just the Pas that rocked that day. The parents and spouses also seemed to have got infected with the same fever as they expressed what they felt for the Foundation. The biggest hit was LF-2008 Prayaga Hoge's father, who left half the crowd cheering, whilst the rest including Mrs. Poonawalla were in tears. He said, "Forgive me as I speak in Marathi. I do not know English. I was a farmer by profession but for the careers of my children, I left my village, and today I work as a watchman. The only reason why I stand on this stage is to thank Lila tai without whose help my daughter would have had discontinued her studies long ago. Today she is a transformed girl in terms of confidence. Lila Poonawalla is another Mother Teresa. Like

Lord Krishna had a foster mother in Yashoda, Lila tai is the foster mother of so many of our young girls, who are creating and securing their future. I wish her and Mr. Firoz Poonawalla a very long and healthy life and pray that every girl has a mother like Lila Poonawalla to support her". Ashok Thorat, husband of Pooja Thorat, LF-2005 said "I address you as Mom and Dad, because my wife fondly calls you Mom and Dad. She always keeps speaking so much about the Foundation. By personally being here today I am witnessing why and from where she gets all that motivation and cheer. I am sad LPF is just for the girls.... I wish I had been born a girl to enjoy the membership of such a family." LF-1996 and Trustee Nusarat Sheikh's husband had taken care of their two children for three weeks when she was away to UK. He appealed to everybody to support and motivate their daughters and wives to avail the opportunity and go to Asha Center and undergo this Peace Leadership program in UK.

The thunderous claps, and cheers brought the event to an unbelievable end followed by lunch for all those present.

■ - **Dr. Rajani Panchang-Dhumal**

## Editor's Desk...

Dear Readers,

**T**hank you for all your appreciation and acceptance of the new WINTER look of Inspira! My team and I received many, many messages lauding not just the new look but also the content of the past issue. Whilst our readers from various parts of the world have sent in delight full feedbacks over the mail, even my Facebook and Orkut accounts have been receiving compliments and exclamations every publishing group would aspire for. It was a very proud moment for me when Firoz Dad walked up to me and said, "Adrian just said Inspira is one of the best English newsletters he has come across." Getting a compliment from an Englishman who himself is so good at the language and literature surely means a lot to me and my team. Three Cheers to all my Crusaders.... Hip-Hip Hurrah! Hip-Hip Hurrah! Hip-Hip Hurrah! All thanks to Mom and Dad for giving me the freehand to take such decisions! Those of you who might have forgotten, by now might have been reminded that we promised you a different face for Inspira every season. I hope you all love

the vibrant, contemporary and unconventional SUMMER look too.

It would be unfair not to make a special mention of Ms. Vidya Khutwad, the secretary of LPF, without whose undying support Inspira would not be the same. Especially for this issue, when she is nose-deep with the LPF selection procedures, I have loaded her with URGENCY and SOS calls, making demands; sometimes at six in the morning, sometimes three at night.

As I sign off for this issue, I remind all our readers that this year is the Centennial year of International Women's Day Celebrations. Ladies, remember its only you who is responsible for the position

you hold in life; so realize your own potentials and follow your dreams. And to all the Gentlemen there.... nature is serene as long as there is a balance. Support us, encourage us, motivate us; walk with all the Ladies around to build a tomorrow of honour and pride! Amen!

■ - **Rajani Panchang-Dhumal**  
[rajanipanchang@gmail.com](mailto:rajanipanchang@gmail.com)



**Release of 32nd issue of Inspira at the hands of Dr. (Mrs.) Nirmala Pandit**

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**Crusaders:** Nisha Pandya, Sanchita Satalkar, Yogini Karmarkar, Priyanka Khopkar and Ritaa Shetiya

**Inspira Design and Background:** Amruta Nigade

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<http://http://www.lilapoonawallaoundation.com/html/inspira.html>

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