



From My Heart...

My Dear Lila Fellows, Lila Girls and Friends...

A ground-breaking scholarship-award ceremony has just concluded. In our 16th year of awards, for the **first time in our history, we had split the ceremony into two functions**. In the first one, we gave scholarships to the girls doing their PG and UG studies. 90 girls were awarded the PG scholarship and became Lila Fellows (LFs) whilst 52 girls were awarded UG scholarship and became Lila Girls (LGs). Of these 52 LGs, 16 girls were given scholarships for doing their graduation in **pure sciences. This new category has been newly been instituted just this year**. The remaining 36 scholarships were awarded to girls pursuing a variety of streams in engineering. The Chief Guest for this function was none other than the very distinguished **Computer Wizard Dr. Vijay Bhatkar**, the man who gave India its Super-Computer PARAM. We also had two young ladies as our Guests of Honour- **Ms. Åsa Andreasson**, Doctor of Medicine, working at the Family Clinic in Stockholm, Sweden and **Ms. Maria Grosskopf**, a tax consultant with KPMG at Malmö, Sweden. She is also the Ex President of the Red Cross Youth Association.

The 2nd function was held exclusively to present awards in a new category of scholarships, again instituted in the current

academic year... **scholarships to schoolgirls**. What is most gratifying is that our dream of reaching out to younger girls at the school level has finally become a reality. **We have taken into our fold 110 young girls from 5 schools. We call them LILA JUNIORS** and will support these girls from 7th standard, right through graduation. We shall be holding their hands and take them through the path of growth from Lila Juniors, to Lila Girls and if they so desire, to Lila Fellows. We will not only give them financial support for school fees, uniforms, shoes, books, etc., but will also provide counseling and mentoring to these girls to empower them to move ahead in life. **This is a unique and a very innovative programme**. In addition we shall also motivate, educate, mentor and guide the parents of these young girls and contribute to change their mindset wherein they **do not get their girl child married away at a very young age and instead educate them to at least up to graduation** and provide them with an opportunity to become economically independent. We shall also train the teachers of the chosen schools to make them fully conversant with the latest methods of education. The Chief Guest for this function was the Director of Education, Maharashtra State, **Mr. Gangadhar Mhamane and the**



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A Newsletter by The Lila Poonawalla Foundation
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Inspire, Ignite, Imbibe...

From My Heart...

Guest of Honour was Ms. Maria Grosskopf.

Besides sharing her own views on the importance of educating a girl child she had also brought a message from her father **Prof. Göran Grosskopf**, who has become one of the largest individual supporters of LPF and from **Mr. Lindholm of Biltema, Sweden**, who is the main sponsor of this school project named **2Morrow2Gether**.

Yet another landmark is achieved - **LPF goes to the SPACE CITY, Houston USA!** It is the first time in the history of LPF that such a fund raising event has been organised outside Pune. The event called **ICCHA -The HOPE** was a well-attended function and was a grand success. **The County Judge of Harris County, Texas, Mr. Ed Emmett**, was the Chief Guest and he issued a proclamation declaring 26th August as the ICCHA - The hope day. I specifically want to thank the four enthusiastic individuals who planned and worked for over 6 months to make this happen. **Ms. Mithali Choudhary**, the key architect of the show, totally supported by her husband **Subroto** and her two very close friends **Sailaja Bahndyopadhyay** and **Piyal Gupta**. Many thanks also to all the sponsors and the performing artists who went out of the way to put up the grand event. A special brochure was released on the occasion. Do read more details of this unique event in this issue.

Coming back to Pune... Our own team of Lila Fellows organised **Samagam III**, an annual fund raising event. They showcased their talents for this wonderful cause. All Lila Fellows who performed are accomplished and trained performing artists in dance and music; many of them had received our scholarships to pursue higher education in performing arts. The event was a run-away success- thanks to all the sponsors and well wishers who participated whole-heartedly in supporting LPF!

This trimester we organized many training programs for the LFs and LGs. One of these was the **Three Secrets of Resourceful Confidence**. We are like the sun of creativity and confidence, tending to get overshadowed by the clouds of fear, doubt and unawareness. **Pragnya Wakhlu** the Creative Director and Inspired Leader of MOUSAI, **Kalindi Bhat** a Certified Hospitality Trainer, and **Suchita Ukidave** a communication specialist conducted this program.

"When Health Improves – Life improves by every measure" was the loud message sent out by our health awareness workshop covering Cancer Prevention, Dental Care, Physical Therapy and Emotional Empowerment Technique. **This was the first time wherein even mothers of LFs and LGs were ever invited to participate in any of the workshops of**

the Foundation. Experienced specialists in each field conducted this program. We had **Dr. Shona Nag**, a renowned Oncologist and her team to speak on early Cancer detection and precautions-preventions to be taken to counter the disease. A dentist, **Dr. Tanveer Khan**, who is the husband of our Lila Fellow Mubashsharaha Khan (Shaikh) spoke on Dentistry - myths and facts and general dental care with special focus on ladies and children. Our Lila Fellow, **Neha Gupta** who is a Physical Therapist gave insights into how Physiotherapy can be instrumental in keeping us healthy. **Ms. Sharon Fernandes** who is a specialist in EET (Emotional Empowerment Technique) demonstrated how EET could be used in daily life.

We also had special orientation programs for the new LFs and LGs with the objective of familiarising them with the working of the LPF and the values most dear to the Foundation. This also gave them an opportunity to get to know the trustees and make new friends with other members of the Lila Family. Our Founder trustees Mrs. Maya Thadhani and Mrs. Freny Tarapore held a special orientation program for LFs going overseas for their PG studies, giving them useful inputs for travel, cultural differences and what to expect when going overseas for the first time.

We had many training sessions with the 14 LFs, shortly leaving for UK for the three-week **transformational Leadership** training programme **being sponsored by LPF and Asha Foundation, UK**. Since 2008, every year we have sent a group of 14 girls for this programme. They will undergo intensive training at ASHA Center in Gloucestershire and return back as our fourth batch of **Peace Ambassadors (PAs)**.

There is still so much more I would love to communicate with all of you all. But instead I think you will enjoy reading all this and much more in detail in this issue of Inspira... which incidentally is also one of the most voluminous editions of Inspira ever- just to cater to its readership! So, with this, I say good-bye for the moment until I connect with you in the next issue. The festive season is setting in. We have by now celebrated *Rakhi, Eid, Onam, Navroz, Ganeshotsav, Dussera* and *Diwali* are just around the corner. Christmas will soon be here and it will be time to bring in the New Year and welcome 2012. **I wish each one of you, your families and friends HAPPY TIMES ahead.**

With Warm Regards
Mom for Lila Fellows, Lila Girls & Lila Juniors
Friend to All



Lila Poonawalla

Lila Poonawalla Senior Awards Nite...

Lila Poonawalla Foundation celebrated its 16th Award Function on 7th August 2011 on the International Friendship Day in the brilliantly decorated auditorium of the Symbiosis Vishwabhavan.

The eventful morning opened to the Foundation's anthem sung by LFs Madhavi Prabhumirashi, Kasturi Paigude, Yogada Deshpande and Mangal Tajane. LF Jyoti Otageri gracefully took over the reins of the function as the Master of Ceremony and welcomed everyone. Padmashree and Maharashtra Bhushan Dr. Vijay Bhatkar, often referred to as the architect of the Param Supercomputer was the Chief Guest of function. Dr. Åsa Andreasson and Ms. Maria Grosskopf, the two graceful daughters of our past Chief Guest Prof. Göran Grosskopf, were the Guests of Honour and had come specially to attend the event, all the way from Sweden.

Founder Trustees Mr. & Mrs. Poonawalla and Senior Trustees Mrs. Maya Thadani, Mrs. Frenny Tarapore, Mrs. Vasantha Ramaswamy and Mrs. Shernaz Edibam joined the eminent guests in lighting the traditional lamp and inaugurating the ceremony. Then, an exuberant Mrs. Lila Poonawalla took over the podium and extended a warm welcome to all the special guests, awardees, their parents and an ocean of invitees from academia, industry and media. She addressed Dr. Vijay Bhatkar as her very close friend over the years and specially thanked him for accepting to grace the occasion as the Chief Guest at an extremely short notice. She said it was a befitting gesture from him on the occasion of Friendship Day. She spoke with pride- *"It has been a satisfying journey since the 20 scholarships we gave away in 1996 to the 260 scholarships we are going to give away, combining numbers being awarded today and tomorrow. In these 16 years we have grown more than 10 times the beginning and with this year's scholarship, we would have given away close to a total 1100 scholarships, till date. That means 1100 family members in LPF! The happiness derived through these scholarships is mutual; we have enjoyed giving them away as much as the awardees have enjoyed accepting it. In so many years, I and Mr. Poonawalla have realized Love, hope and charity is the only way to live successfully! We are here to support these young girls to realize their own potential, beyond their own aims, imaginations and parents"*. Then she went on



The Senior Trustees of LPF join the Guests in lighting the inaugural lamp

to read out the name of each organisation as well as individual who has supported the Foundation in the past 16 years and put on record her gratitude towards them for the same.

Jyoti then formally introduced both the guests of Honour Dr. Åsa Andreasson and her sister Ms. Maria Grosskopf. Both the sisters were surprised to see enormity of the award function. They said they had never expected such a big gathering and not even distantly imagined photography and video-graphy of the scale they witnessed. They also said that they had no idea it was so difficult to procure education in India, especially after knowing that this nation is known to be at par with most advanced countries in the world in terms of talent and qualification.

Ms. Maria Grosskopf is a Lawyer by profession and practices at the Court of Migration at Malmö, Sweden. She is also a Tax Consultant with KPMG, Malmö, Sweden. She has served as the President of the Red Cross Youth Association at Lund, Sweden for which she has also done a lot of voluntary work as a member. Though she had been given a special responsibility of representing Mr. Lindholm from Sweden, the sponsor of the School Project, she came to the dias and read out a very special message from her parents to the audience:

Mrs. Lila Poonawalla, Trustees, Lila Poonawalla Scholars, Parents and Friends,

Time passes quickly and it is already a year since we had the privilege to be here and to meet the Lila Fellows. We are sorry not to be with you this year, but so happy that our two daughters can be with you and share their experience with you and to encourage you to successful postgraduate education.

For us, India is a country you can only love. It is the country of the future. You have so many wonderful people and so many opportunities. To make the best of all these opportunities, education will be the most important. To develop the country you will need skilled people. And skilled people come from good education. Through the LPF you will get a fantastic opportunity to good education and we know that you will all take good care of the gift you have been given.

When Mrs. Poonawalla established the Foundation more than 15 years ago, it was based on her firm belief in the importance of education. She has since then made the most fantastic journey and shared it with many most talented young girls. All through these



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years we have followed her efforts and supported her in her developments. We are still the strong supporters of the LPF and the efforts to help and to develop India. It is a country of the future and it deserves the attention of other countries.

My father had only seven years at school and began to work at the age of 14. He learnt that education was the key to a better life. He realized however, the importance of education and studied in the evenings and on Sundays. Through hard work and studies he got success and he was convinced that once he had his own children he would make sure that they got good education. And we did! We are so grateful for that, because it opened up opportunities for both me and my sister to a good life.

Having got the possibility of a good education and a good life, we want to share it with others and what can be better than supporting the LPF in its efforts to help young girls to a good education? We are extremely impressed with the work of the Foundation and we are happy that we can continue to support the Foundation and Mrs. Poonawalla in her tremendous efforts in the field of education.

We take this opportunity to congratulate all the girls who have received their scholarships, their parents for the support to their young girls and to the LPF for their admirable work. We wish all the girls a bright future and we do admire your efforts so far.

Birgitta and Göran Grosskopf

The older daughter of Prof. Grosskopf, Dr. Åsa Andreasson holds a Masters in Medicine. She is a resident doctor at a family clinic in Central Stockholm and is on her way to become a full-fledged General Practitioner (GP)

soon. She was the next one to speak... and she did with lot of poise, a lot of wisdom most relevant to the girls on the threshold of graduate and post-graduate studies. She said:

"It is an honour and a privilege to be here together with you all today. Last year my parents visited the function and they had such good memories from this extraordinary event that both my sister and I have been looking forward to this opportunity to meet you all and to give you all some words on your way towards the future of your lives.

Being here I do realize that I have had a very privileged life compared to many of you. I grew up in a country where education was a given to every child and in a family where education was considered as a very important step towards the future. In those days I did not reflect upon these facts.

I took it for granted and I could not really think of any other route than going forward into higher education. I now realize what a privilege this actually was and what opportunities education opened up for me and my sisters and brothers.

Growing up in Sweden and Switzerland, we never even thought of the cost of education. Both graduate and post graduate education were free and all of our friends went from high school to universities. Governmental subsidies and support for post graduate studies existed and anyone gifted enough to study had the ability to do so. I now realize that I grow up in a part of the world that was very privileged and rather small.

You have all been born in a country where education is not given for free. Moreover education means a real big financial effort for the entire family. Higher



Dr. Åsa Andreasson

education is not for free. It costs money and you have no money yourself, so the family must support you to cover the cost for your studies. But in addition to that you will not be able to work yourself and you will not be able to contribute with money to cover the daily cost of living for the family. The sacrifices of your families for you to reach this moment of scholarship have been enormous and we all admire your families for their contributions to your success.

You have now successfully graduated and have been granted scholarships to continue your post graduate studies. It is very important to find

the subjects which are motivating to you. Only subjects that are of real interest to you can make you succeed in a tough environment. If you are interested and motivated, you will always manage to make something good out of it. If you are not, your career will not be successful. Make sure you have chosen a subject and a direction which continues to interest you and keeps you inquisitive to know more. Do not force yourself to study a certain subject. That will not be good for you in the long run and you will not score well. My parents never tried to force me into any specific subject and they understood when I wanted to change completely into another direction. That meant a lot to me and that made me dare to choose what I now realize is absolutely right for me.

Education is important to you for getting a good future. In India, this is also important for your family that has been supporting you and I realize you need to give

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something back to your family when your studies are finished. This is how life is not only in this country but in all countries. You should never take it for granted that you receive gifts but always be prepared to support others. Good education means the ticket to enter the job market and provision for good salaries. Do not forget that you have been given this opportunity through your family and now through the Lila Poonawalla Foundation. When your success in your studies is converted into salaries, do not forget to support your family and whenever possible other young girls who need support for their studies.

However, jobs and work is not all in life. As I just mentioned in our family we have always been supported to study, but we have also been encouraged to have a life outside our work and to establish a family

and to have friends. This has also been important for us and we are also in that respect very privileged in having our children and families around us. It is possible to combine families and studies as well as families and work. And when your own family is established do not forget to start saving for the future of your own children and their education. That is what we are doing and we do not take anything for granted. Even in our country subsidies to schools and higher education are decreasing and we do realize that we need to be prepared for a changing world and still make sure that our children will have a good future based on their abilities and their proper education.

Let me wish you all a very good and prosperous future and congratulate you and your supporting families to your achievements."

And after all the ladies had taken turns to inspire the young awardees, came the most awaited part of all the speeches; the Chief Guest's address. Dr. Vijay Bhatkar is one of the most acclaimed and decorated scientists of India. An institutional builder, he is credited with the creation of several national institutions such as C-DAC, ER&DC, Techno Park, IITMK, I2IT, ETH Research Lab and Multiversity. Thinker and thought leader, researcher and innovator, scientist and philosopher, educator and educationist, author and articulator, policy architect and institution builder... all that he is, surely the young awardees on the verge of venturing into unforeseen careers were looking forward to hear him talk.

He started with- *"Echoing the message of the International Friendship Day, I wish Happy Friendship Day to all! Today I have been repeatedly introduced as the architect of the Super Computer. Instead I say, by attending this Function here today I have been introduced to Super-Mom and a Super-Dad, to whose Foundation I had been a distant observer till date. Today I got to see it closely and realize what a great Foundation it has emerged to be! The work being done by LPF is greatly admirable and imaginable to grow to a global level. What Lila has done out of a Friendship Gift given to her is something that can inspire many others. What better contribution can an individual make to society than doing something for the future generations to come!*

Talking about Women's empowerment, I believe the 21st Century actually belongs to women and they are the architects of this era. Remembering women like Chhatrapati's Shivaji's mother Jijabai, Rani Laxmibai and Savitribai Phule, we can be sure that in India, since time immemorial women have enjoyed rights, great respect and power and come from rich histories. It is sad that today girls are denied education! Female foeticide is ever-growing despite every kind of progress in the country! I believe women as mothers-to be are equally responsible for this crime. They must stand up and not let it happen. As a technologist myself, I feel ashamed that it is technology that facilitates this sin! Another issue pertaining to women that needs attention is dowry. This

crime is killing women each year; if not physically, their social, emotional and mental strengths are being crippled.

My intention of bringing such atrocities done against women is to make you girls aware of the strength that education gives you..... the power to differentiate between what is right and what is wrong and stand up for yourselves. I look at LPF as a power-house of this 'narishakti' because each of you is lucky to be enlightened with an additional impetus provided by this scholarship. As Mothers, in the future you have the power to imbibe the right teachings to your children which will contribute to betterment of society. Education must encompass purity of the heart, righteousness and education against corruption... India is the hope of the 21st Century and I do believe India will rise again as the 4th largest economy in the world. I pray through you all a new generation be created with education and pray for fulfillment of your dreams. And as I leave, I pray for the multiplication of this great platform called Lila Poonawalla Foundation".

The scholarship awards were given out next. 89 girls were given scholarships under three different categories to pursue their post-graduation, whilst another 52 scholarships were awarded to girls to pursue their graduate studies. This was the first year when LPF gave scholarships to pursue plain B.Sc. in Mathematics, Physics, Statistics and Computers. Some old LFs came up and spoke about their association so far with the Foundations, whilst many newly awarded LFs and LGs expressed gratitude, excitement and pride for being awarded this scholarship. On this occasion the names of 14 new Peace Ambassadors (PA Batch 2011) selected for the Wholesome Peace Leadership Program at Asha Centre, UK were announced and were given away their scholarships too. The team will be lead by LF-2005 Mrs. Sanchita Satalkar.

This programme ended with the vote of thanks and full meals to all those present.

■ - **Dr. Rajani Panchang-Dhumal**

Inspira School Awards Nite...

Can you imagine the sight... Little school girls dressed in neatly ironed uniforms and hair held back in ribbons thronging the campus of Symbiosis Vishwabhavan, early one morning? It was Monday, 8th August 2011 and the girls had all come to receive their scholarships from the Lila Poonawalla Foundation. Many of the girls from the rural Zilla Parishad School at Gawadewadi were visiting the city for the first time ever! So one can imagine the double excitement and buzz amongst the gathering there!

The auditorium was jam packed with the bright faced chirpy awardees and their proud parents, especially mothers, many clad in burquas, all determined to educate their daughters. The function opened to a pleasant welcome extended to all by the masters of ceremony, LF Jyoti Otageri and LF Rita Shetiya, who compered in English and Marathi, respectively.

The Chief Guest for the occasion was Mr. Mhamane, Director of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education, Maharashtra State. Ms. Maria Grosskopf, Prof. in Law, Lund University, Sweden was the Special Guest. The Principals of five participating schools in the project 2morrow2gether, Mr. P.N. Dighe (Camp Education Society's Girls School), Mr. C.M. Harkude (Kalmadi Shamrao High School-Kannada Medium), Mr. Shivaji Phulsunder (Gavadewadi School), Mrs. Irfana Momin (Anjuman-e-Islam Peer Mohammad High School), Sister Karnampalli Kripa (St. Clair's School), were the Guests of Honour.

After the traditional inauguration by lighting the lamp, Padmashree Mrs. Poonawalla introduced her dream project LPF was just about to flag off. It was overwhelming to hear her say each of the following words- *"The School Project was my long time dream. I was looking for funds and I am fortunate Prof. Grosskopf convinced his friend in Sweden, Mr. Sten Åke Lindholm to support this School Project 2morrow2gether. The funds for this project come from Sweden and the management is ours. This scholarship is not a one year commitment; but a 10 years commitment. It is my request to mothers not to withdraw their daughters, midway through their education till graduation. You will feel proud to know what your daughter's dreams are and what she aspires to be; some want to become doctors and some teachers. And what is more surprising is each one wants to do something for society through their professions."*

The school project has been very close to my heart. What motivated me to formulate this project? I came to India as a refugee. My mother motivated me to study and many friends helped me with funds for my education, only because of which I went onto become the 1st lady engineer from Pune. The role of the Principals of the Schools in this project is very important and without their support I would not have been able to realize this dream of mine. We are also going to impart special



Principals of the five schools join the guests of honour and Mr. & Mrs. Poonawalla for lighting the lamp

training to the teachers also, as a part of this project. I appeal to teachers to take this opportunity and benefit from the experienced trainers and qualified technologists who will be training them in effective teaching techniques."

The awardees, barely twelve or thirteen years old were packed with confidence. This was evident, when one representative student from each school came up and expressed their feelings on being selected for this financial aid. Samreen Shaikh from Anjuman-e-Islam High School said, *"This scholarship is a boon to all those who face financial restraints. Now our foremost duty is to make good use of this scholarship and bring good name to our school. It is an age of competition and without education it is impossible to complete our dreams. We are very thankful to Lila Poonawalla Foundation for giving us wings to fly to meet the heights of education and fulfill our aspirations"*. Pallavi Gawade from Gawadewadi school, barely four feet tall spoke in Marathi. She spoke with such strong emotion and strength, it left Mrs. Poonawalla on stage as well as the audience in the auditorium, in tears- *"We are three daughters in my family and our economical condition is poor. If LPF wouldn't have given me this scholarship, my dreams of becoming a doctor would have remained incomplete. Lila Madam to us has proved to be the oil lamp in the dark night of our lives. **In times when people indulge in female foeticide to avoid responsibilities of a girl child, is Lila Poonawalla not another Savitribai Phule in adopting over 100 daughters and helping them achieve all that they dream of?** On behalf of all the scholarship awardees of my school, I assure the Foundation that we will participate in every activity of the Foundation, make the best of every opportunity LPF is providing us and make this school project a success."*

One of the Trustees of the School Project, LF Mrs. Vaishali Halbe introduced the Special Guest Ms. Maria Grosskopf. She is the daughter of Prof. Goran & Birgitta Grosskopf who have been well-wishers of LPF since its inception. She

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was representing Mr. Lindholm from Sweden who is funding the 2morrow2gether school project and was surprised to know the difficult state of school education in

India, especially amongst girl students. She gave a very simple but beautiful message to the girls, befitting their age and maturity....

"My parents visited Pune last year and were so impressed by the work of the Foundation that they went back and convinced their friend, Mr. Lindholm, Founder Director of Biltema, Sweden to support this Foundation's School Project. Though my parents have been instrumental in making this program a reality, I represent Mr. Lindholm here today. My parents have talked a lot about LPF and its cause and both my sister and I have been looking forward to this opportunity to meet you all and talk to you and motivate you in every possible way.

From all that I hear, see and learn from the moment I have landed in India, I realize education in India is not easy, neither is it for all nor is it compulsory. It was exactly opposite for us in Switzerland. Graduate education was compulsory for everyone and all children were considered to have a right to a basic education. Education can be different but all education is based on the ability to read and write. You are all able to do this and therefore you are all able to continue your way towards higher education and towards new goals in life.

Every kind of education costs money in different forms. Even if the school as such is for free, you need a school uniform, you need to travel to and from the school, you need food and you need books. And most importantly because you choose education, you will not be able to help your family in earning a living. The sacrifices made by your families have enabled you all to reach this moment of scholarship. Their sacrifices have been and will continue to be big. I reach out to all the parents to these young girls and thank you greatly for supporting your daughters to a better life – not only for them but for your entire family.

You have all been granted scholarships to enable you all to become graduates – the first important step towards a life based on a good job. You are still very young and I am convinced you will soon find certain things at school rather boring. But you must then always remember that there will always be things in life that are boring – and still they will help you to go forward in a good way. Take the boring moments with a good smile and make sure that you continue your efforts to reach a graduate exam with good scores. You are all worth it and your families.

When I grew up in Sweden and Switzerland I very often found it rather hard to go to school and to do my homework. My parents supported me, pushed me... and I am convinced I was NOT happy about all that then. However, today I realize how good it was and what a privilege it was. I am sure you will all



Ms. Maria Grosskopf

experience the same. You will have the difficult moments, when it is tough to go school, when teachers are difficult, when homework is too much and so on. However, you will soon find that school is fun, simply because learning is fun. And you will get going again and you will search for more education and more fun. Never let the dull moments stop you from going forward and forward towards new challenges and even better education.

While you enjoy the privilege of education, and subsequently succeed in life, do not forget that you have been given this opportunity to graduate studies through your family and now through the Lila Poonawalla Foundation. You will be showing how grateful you are simply by doing a real god job at the school.

Never forget, education is your key to a good future and also a stepping stone to post-graduate studies which will give you even better opportunities in life. However, work is not all in life. Whether you are young or old, you need to have fun in life – and I think it is probably even more important when you are young to have fun. Do not forget to have fun and to make friends and make real good friendships. They will be important for you during your lifetime and they will support you whenever needed. I myself have some very close friends that I made during my school-days and they are a great support to me whenever I need them – and I believe I am a great support to them when they need me. Do take care of your studies and do it with care and with friends and family.

I wish you all very bright and successful futures full of hope. Congratulations to you and your parents for having travelled so far."

contd...

School Awards Nite...

All the Principals took turns in sharing their experience on this project and their association with LPF till date. Each of them assured full co-operation to the Foundation and motivation to their students. They all expressed gratitude for having financially supported these girls, most of them from the low-income group and many from the minority communities, where female education is not considered important. Ms. Irfana Momin, the Principal of Anjum-e-Islam Peer Mohammad High School said, "Our students mostly come from slum areas and belong to classes below the poverty line. We are dedicated to building their characters and groom their personalities. For making them financially independent, education is a basic need; important but expensive. LPF has not just taken up this herculean task of educating them, but have shown them dreams of their glamorous future."

The Chief Guest, the Director of Education, Mr. Gangadhar Mhamane said, "It's a Monday morning when usually my office is very busy. But I am here because this program is for the benefit and future of poor, needy but meritorious girls. **Though the importance of education has spread far and wide, it is sad that EDUCATION ITSELF DOES NOT REACH EVERYWHERE**, especially slums and rural places. When education is becoming increasingly expensive and government subsidies reducing, Trusts should extend help to students, like LPF is doing. And in this parents should support their wards to make the best of

such opportunities. I have studied with the help of scholarships all my life and thus know their importance. The Lila Poonawalla Foundation is giving you all an overall scholarship with so many facilities. It's a rare kind of a scholarship to get. I only advise all the young girls to be persistent, firm on their decisions and unwavering in reaching their goals. Use this scholarship to build immense self-confidence within yourselves and create your own identities".

Last came the most awaited part of the morning... distribution of scholarships. There was a bounce in each girls walk, as she climbed the stage to receive her scholarship. Almost 80% of the girls wanted to be Teachers and Doctors. But it was surprising to know some of them wanted to join the Indian Administrative Services, Indian Police Services, some wanted to be Pilots, Astronauts and... had anyone heard of a Forensic Doctor?

The function ended with lunch for one and all present. But amongst every group of guests, there was one matter being discussed with great conviction- **"Here is where the Foundation is going to really bring about a revolution. So many bright young girls, being caught raw, groomed and guided. Imagine what each one is going to be ten years from now. And helping 100 such girls in society every year! This is where one needs to look out for the desired change in India"**.

■ - Dr. Rajani Panchang-Dhumal

Appeal...

Dear Readers,

Toys are known to be a very important part of every child's emotional, mental and physical development. But it is a sad fact of life, that millions of underprivileged children in our country are denied this joy of toys due to several reasons. It is easy to visualize street children sprawled across the glass windows of toy shops, with longing eyes and groping hands.

This time the Foundation is about to initiate and execute a new project, "JOYS THROUGH TOYS", continuing with its principle of the Joy of Giving..... giving joys to children up to the age of 10. The plan is to carry out a massive toys collection drive amongst the LPF family, their families, friends, relatives, neighbours and every possible network we can create. The toys collected will be segregated according to age groups and donated to pre-decided organizations supporting underprivileged children on Children's Day, i.e. 14th November 2011.

The Project will be led by LF Manisha Deshpande who conceptualized this project and has already executed it through her company. The Project will undergo several stages in a well organized and pre-planned plan of action. Teams are in process of formation who will look into different departments of functioning, right from collecting toys from donors, to sorting of toys according to age-groups and condition and preparing them for final donation.

JOYS THROUGH TOYS

On this platform, Inspira to all its readers to come forward and contribute old and new, used and unused toys of every kind to LPF's toy bank. The toys may not be in very good condition, but in average condition ATLEAST. The toys should not have sharp edges and small pieces. Target age of the children we are considering is 0-10 years.

WE REQUEST YOU ALL TO SPREAD OUR APPEAL AMONGST ALL YOUR FAMILY FRIENDS, NEIGHBOURS AND COLLEAGUES, MOTIVATE AND CONVINCE THEM TO JOIN OUR CAUSE.

LAST DATE OF RECIEVEING TOY DONATIONS DURING THIS DRIVE IS 31st October 2011.

Those interested in donating toys can contact the following persons for further assistance:

1. Mrs. Manisha Deshpande
manisha_deshpande@persistent.co.in
9890942582
2. Dr. Rupali Soni
9822210530
3. Dr. Rajani Panchang
rajanipanchang@gmail.com
9552759452

Lila Inspira Award Categories at LPF...

POST-GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS - "LILA FELLOWS"

Girls students below the age of 30 and are either domicile of Pune District or have lived in Pune district for the past 5 years are eligible for LPFs Post Graduate Scholarships. These are awarded in the following three Categories:

Category A - Overseas Scholarships: These were instituted in the first year of awards i.e. 1996. Girls aspiring to pursue post-graduate degrees abroad, who have a consistent academic record of scoring 60% and above and whose family income is below Rs. 7,00,000/- (Rupees seven lakhs) per annum are selected under this category of awards. **This year 9 overseas scholarships** have been awarded of which 3 girls go to the UK and 4 to the USA to pursue their Master's in varied streams like Engineering, Management, Pharmacy, Economics, Architecture and IT.



Category B - Scholarships to pursue post-graduation in India: Even this category of scholarships was started in 1996. **This year 60 girls** pursuing post-graduation in varied fields have been awarded scholarships in this category. The criteria for selection is that the candidates must have secured admission to the desired course anywhere in India, must have academic record of scoring 60% and above throughout and their family income should be less than Rs. 4,50,000/- (Rupees four lakh fifty thousand) per annum.

Category C - Special Scholarships: This category was instituted in 2005, for girl students from the lower income group (annual income less than Rs.3,00,000/-), having lower academic grades (consistently between 50-60%). The experiment was to check if financial support could provide the required impetus to these girls and help them score better. To qualify for this scholarship, the candidates need to have secured admission to a postgraduate course in India. **This year 20 girls** have been selected in this category to pursue higher studies in 9 different disciplines.



Lila Inspira Award Categories at LPF...

GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS - "LILA JUNIORS"

Girls below the age of 25 and wanting to pursue their under-graduate education from institutions within Pune District are eligible for these scholarships. Their family's annual income should not exceed Rs.2,00,000/- (Rupees two lakhs) per annum and they should have consistently scored a minimum of 60% marks in academics. The graduate scholarships are awarded in the following two categories depending upon the discipline pursued-

Category D - Graduation in Engineering: This category was newly introduced last year. The scholarship will support the girls throughout their 4 year period of engineering graduation. Only girls in their first year of engineering are eligible and diploma students from any stream cannot apply. In this category this year, LPF gave away **36 scholarships in 11 different branches of engineering!**



Category E - Graduation in Science (Mathematics, Statistics, Physics & Computers): This category of awards has been started this year. Only those girls who are pursuing graduation studies in the 1st year of Science with Mathematics, Statistics, Physics, Computer Science & Computer Application as their principle subjects can apply. The scholarship is for a period of three academic years and is subject to the candidate passing in all subjects and securing a minimum aggregate of 60 % marks each year from the same college. **16 girls** have been supported in this category of scholarships this year. This is the fourth consecutive year that LFs are being awarded in this category.



PEACE LEADERSHIP SCHOLARSHIPS - "PEACE AMBASSADORS"

The Peace Leadership Programme is a three week wholesome leadership training programme at the ASHA Centre, Gloucestershire, UK. This is a collaborative programme conceived between LPF and ASHA Centre, where the awardees are committed to use their newfound knowledge through the programme for the benefit of society, in every possible way. Lila Fellows are called to apply for the programme every year. Essay type applications are closely scrutinized and shortlisted LFs are interviewed personally by a panel of Trustees. Candidates with a vision and grit to make a difference to the world around them surely strike a chord. This year 14 Lila Fellows have been selected for the Peace Leadership Programme 2011. They are enlisted here in the order of their appearance in the group picture (standing from L-R) Dipali Bhosale (2008), Bhavana Mutha (2009), Deepa Ingawale (2008), Madhura Kanade (2008), Rita Shetiya (2005), Shweta Ghatole (2007), **Sanchita Satalkar**



(2005, TEAM LEADER), Vijaya Laygude (2009), Prayaga Hoge (2008), Varsha Shirke (2008), Yogada Deshpande (2008), Tejashree Giramkar (2008), Pooja Thorat (2005) and Minal Marne (2007).

contd...

Inspira Award Categories at LPF...

SCHOOL PROJECT - 2MORROW2GETHER - "LILA GIRLS"

This is the first year scholarships are being awarded in this category. This initiative of LPF is being funded by Mr. Sten Åke Lindholm of Biltema based in Sweden. **It supports school girls for ten consecutive years, right from their 7th standard and will see them through their graduate education. It covers tuition fees, extra coaching fees, uniform, books, travel, bags, raincoats, shoes, health insurance as well as counseling to the students, their parents and training to teachers on advanced teaching aids.**



Anjum-E-Islam Peer Mohammad High School - 19 girls



Camp Education Society's Girls School - 25 girls

Based on information collected on many schools for needy children in Pune district, LPF had invited application for participation to 38 schools, out of 5 schools had been finally shortlisted after thorough scrutiny. A panel of trustees from the LPF interviewed several girls from each of these schools along with their parents. **A total of 110 girls** have been awarded under this category of scholarship awards and will be addressed as 'Lila Girls' hence forth.



Gawadewadi Zilla Parishad School - 27 girls



Kalmadi Shamrao High School (Kannada Medium) - 21 girls



St. Claire's School - 18 girls

■ - **Compiled from the Foundation's Database**

The First Look...

The main Board of Trustees of the Lila Poonawalla Foundation passed a resolution for starting the new school project '2morrow2gether' and appointing a new panel of Trustees for the same in June 2010. It was resolved to appoint four new trustees in the 1st board meeting of school project in September 2010. The preliminary work of the project, like sending letters to 36 schools had already been initiated before this panel was formed. Now that the first batch of school awardees has been selected, here is a brief introduction to our new trustees who share the panel with Mrs. Lila Poonawalla...

Mrs. Malathi Kalmadi

- MA in English, Post-graduate diploma in Communication Media for Children and Post-graduate diploma in School Psychology
- Secretary, Kannada Sangha
- Senate Member, University of Pune
- Advisor, NGO 'BOLD' (Building Over Learning Difficulties) that caters to children with learning difficulties
- Co-Convener Projects 'IFUWA' (Indian Federation of University Women), NGO working for empowerment of women
- Member, 'Connecting', an NGO preventing suicide amongst youth
- MA in English, Post-graduate diploma in Communication Media for Children and Post-graduate diploma in School Psychology



Mrs. Lolita Kevalramani

- B. Com., MA Economics, LLB, LLM. and Diploma in Cyber Law
- Currently a Legal Advisor with the Bajaj Group, since 2003
- Practicing Civil and Criminal Law
- Has been a Consultant on a project with USEPA (US Environment Protection Agency)
- Held various positions with ECONET-Pune since 1995, having headed the Environmental Law Cell between 1998-2001
- Taught law and allied subjects at several reputed colleges and institutions



Mrs. Vaishali Halbe (LF-1996)

- IBE in Electronics and Telecommunication & ME Instrumentation from COEP
- 17 years of academic and industrial experience
- Visiting faculty at several Engineering colleges in and around Pune Pane list for Pune University's B.E. and M.E. project examinations
- Was a Senior Project Engineer with Automotive Research Association of India (ARAI) (2004-2007)
- Started career in Phillips India Ltd. after graduation.
- Eleven years experience in teaching at PICT (1993-2004).
- Proficient in Indian classical music and instruments like the piano, synthesizer and accordion



Mrs. Samina Deokar (LF-1998 & PA-2008)

- BA Psychology & MA Industrial Psychology from Fergusson College
- Currently Independent Consultant helping companies to set up entire HR systems and processes
- Started career in IT recruitment and gradually moved to the role of HR Generalist
- Eleven years of experience in different aspects of Human Resource Management
- Playing a pivotal role in the 'Project Abhigyaan' run by LPF and Shamrao Kalmadi School
- Diploma in Human Resource Management
- Winner of National Merit Scholarship, Government Open Merit Scholarship, T.M. Joshi Prize for standing 1st in Economics (HSC)



■ - Compiled from the Foundation's Database



Appreciation..

Dr. KALMADI SHAMARAO HIGH SCHOOL
SECONDARY SECTION (KANNADA MEDIUM)



Ref.no.KAN-269

Date - 02-07-2011

To,
The Chairperson
Lila Poonawala Foundation
Pune.

Respected Sir/Madam,

Sub: regarding the Abigyan project.

It is my pleasure to inform you that the last years activities conducted in our school under the abigyan project were successful. Our students could gain a lot of knowledge as they had the opportunity to learn the subjects of their interest. They enjoyed during the Spoken English class and could try to express their views in English. During the dance class they learnt dance and came to know the various dance forms which were shown with the power point presentation. The music sessions were lively, the art and the performing art sessions helped us to discover the talents in our students. There were visits arranged for the NARI institute at Bhosari, The GMRT were very successful and the children got a lot of information. The Maths and the environment science sessions too were very interesting.

The Lila fellows who had taken the classes in our school have really done a great job. We would like to thank them all. Once again I express my words of gratitude to you and your team.

Thanking You,

Your's faithfully,

HEAD MASTER
DR. KALMADI SHAMARAO HIGH SCHOOL
K.N. MED.
PUNE - 411004.

Lila Poonawalla Donations...

Expression of Gratitude

The first seed of the Lila Poonawalla Foundation was sown in 1994. I was celebrating my 50th birthday with the Tetra Laval Group. The BD gift given by the company as a reward for my excellent performance, was converted into the corpus to start a charitable Trust to empower the economically challenged girls with professional education. This idea had its origin from my own personal life of hardships in my young days.

The Foundation became functional in 1996 with awarding scholarships to the first batch of 20 girls for post-graduate studies. At that time, twenty girls could be supported with the limited resources that I had managed to accumulate. Since then 16 years have gone by, and the Foundation has bloomed into a family of 800 plus.

As years went by, many individuals and corporations came forward to hold my hand so that the Foundation could reach out to many more girls. This year the Foundation has added close to 250 new girls to the LPF Family. With this year's scholarships, the total number of

scholarships given has crossed 1100. This is a tremendous leap. Not only has LPF attained this remarkable growth, but also LPF has made a commitment to support all the girls including those from the schools right through, their graduation in their chosen fields.

This certainly would not have been possible without the support of generous individuals and corporate organizations. Some of them have been with LPF right from its inception, and some have joined in with munificent contributions. Alphabetically, I am humbly acknowledging their invaluable gifts to the LPF. The list has the corporate organizations and names of major individual donors, who have made it possible to reach out to so many girls and enabled us to make a difference, not only to their lives but also to that of their families and the communities they live in. I know the list is not exhaustive; there are hundreds of individual donors, who in their own way have walked the walk with us to enable us to make this difference. Do forgive me if, for some reason or the other, some names are left out. .

A special thank you to all those who have promised to be with us for many years to come.

Lila Poonawalla
On behalf of the Board of Trustees
Lila Poonawalla Foundation

Corporate Donations



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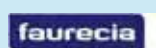
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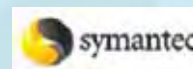
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The Park Hotels,
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Venkateshwara
Hatcheries

Individual Donations

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Mr. Ajit Pawar | 9. Ms. Jessee Chandra | 17. Mr. Pradeep Musale |
| 2. Mr. Bellinx Jos | 10. Mrs. Kamla Iyer | 18. Ms. Radha Bhatt |
| 3. Mr. Blach Claus | 11. Mr. Kirstin Rausing | 19. Mr. Ramesh Barli |
| 4. Mr. Chandra Grubb | 12. Mr. Mark Kerner | 20. Mr. Sachin Tikekar |
| 5. Mr. Gerald Husch | 13. Mr. Mohan Baburao Sankpal | 21. Ms. Sonya Thadani |
| 6. Prof. Goran Grosskopf | 14. Mr. Nari Bhavnani | 22. Mr. Sukhbir Puri |
| 7. Mr. Harry Faulkner | 15. Mrs. Nishtha Pierre-Marie | 23. Ms. Swati Mehta |
| 8. Mr. Jan Carlsson | 16. Mr. Noble David | 24. Mrs. Vasantha Ramaswamy |

Individual Donors (Lila Fellows)



Mrs. Chandrika Mageshwaran
(Srinivasan) (LF-1996)
Rs.35,000/-



Ms. Tejilee Tembe
(LF-2007)
Rs.11,000/-



Ms. Romana Tambe
(LF-2006)
Rs.10,000/-

Ms. Soniya Borse
(LF-2009)
Rs.7,500/-

Events... Inspira

Samagam Season-3.

This mega, cultural fund-raising event of the Foundation was held for the third consecutive year, on 15th May 2011 at the Yashwantrao Chavan Auditorium, Kothrud. It was OF the LFs organized BY the LFs, FOR the LFs under the able guidance of Founder Trustee Mr. Firoz Poonawalla, whom the girls now fondly call 'Dad'. The objective of the LFs in organizing this event was two-fold... to raise funds for other deserving girls and find a reason to gather family and friends together and rejoice.



Jyoti, Rita and Amruta at their compering best!

With close to 700 spectators in the audience, the event opened to the Foundation's encouraging theme song sung by LFs Madhavi Prabhumirashi, Kasturi Paigude and Yogada Deshpande. Our in-house dancer and excellence personified, Gauri Swakul and her dance troupe then presented a hair-raising performance entitled **'Jhansi ki Rani'** choreographed by Gauri herself. What could have been more pertinent than showcasing the life of this great woman warrior of India's freedom struggle on an occasion when LPF symbolizes women's empowerment? Then came a graceful classical solo Kathak performance by LF Pooja Thorat to the tunes of the famous Bollywood track from the movie *Devdas*. The Foundation then showcased its audiovisual promo for the audience to see for



'Jhansi ki Rani' by Gauri & Group

themselves, how it is involved in not only supporting the girls financially, but also instrumental in grooming their personality in every way.

The Chief-Guest was Mrs. Arti Ankaliker-Tikekar, a renowned classical vocalist and the guru of LF Kasturi Paigude. She started by thanking the Foundation for inviting her to be a part of the event. She vehemently spoke about women's empowerment by

citing examples of India's dynamic female politicians Mamata Banerjee and Jaya Lalita and how they have carved their niche in society. She said, "These hands



Kathak recital by Pooja Thorat



Yogada, Kasturi & Madhavi presenting the LPF anthem

which hold the pulleys of cradles are capable of ruling the world". Talking about careers in performing arts, she said "Many girls pursue training in dance and music with lot of dedication, out of sheer love for these performing arts, but do not dare to take them as career options. The main reason for this is- that a career in dance involves a lot of hard work and is comparatively not very lucrative in terms of money. The encouragement, to yet follow your heart in terms of financial assistance from the LPF at such a stage, is not only crucial but is also highly commendable. **I see the need to clone Mrs. Lila Poonawalla, so as to**

contd...

LF Events... Inspira



The captivated audience

produce another 5000 of them who can help the poor and needy girls to achieve their dreams! I



Chief Guest Mrs. Arti Ankaliker-Tikekar being welcomed by Mrs. Poonawalla

congratulate both, Mr. and Mrs. Poonawalla for the noble work they are doing by empowering girls."



Group Dance on the MJ number Heal the world



Hot and sizzling 'lavani' by Kiran Pardeshi

The evening became more melodious as LFs Madhavi, Mangal, Kasturi and Yogada lost themselves in singing evergreen Bollywood songs of legendary singers Asha Bhonsle and Lata Mangeshkar. Some LFs performed a group dance on Michael Jackson's 'Heal the world' which was choreographed by Erique Anthony, a student of the legendary dance guru Shiamak Dawar. He delivered the message of acceptance towards the girl children and their education. This musical evening in 'aamchi Pune' was given a befitting climax by our *Puneri porgi* Kiran Pardeshi. She performed a hot and sizzling lavani, on the



Entire Team of Samagam 3

hit Marathi number- *zau dya na ghari, aata vaazale ki bara...* much to the delight of the audience.

For the first time, this entire event was compered in three languages English (by Jyoti Otageri), Marathi (by Amruta Bahulekar and in Hindi (by Rita Shetiya).

The fundraising event was a runaway success. The team managed to collect close to twelve lakh rupees through sponsorships and selling tickets. Mr. & Mrs. Poonawalla gifted tickets to 98 Lila scholars, who could not afford to buy tickets to witness the event. The Foundation gives the entire credit of this fundraiser to the organizing team of Samagam-3, all the sponsors, donors, guests, performers and the audience. The media was extremely benevolent in giving wide pre- and post-event publicity to Samagam-3.

■ - **Nisha Pandya**

I still have to pack in my toiletries and my red dress Mom, please do not put in another pack of Complian!!" were my words when I was travelling abroad for the first time to pursue my Masters in England. The last few days at home were only spent in shopping and more shopping as if I was going out of civilization and of course meeting all my relatives and friends to say Goodbye! I was very excited and looked forward to a new experience and a new journey.

I used to think it would be very different once I land in a foreign country but it was not something terribly drastic and was quite similar to what I had seen in movies. It actually helps watching different movies and reading/researching about a place, any place, before you go to start living there.

Joining the University was a great experience. I was looking around for Indians or Asians, but it turned out that I also made a lot of international friends. It was a learning experience for me as we shared our cultures and cuisines. It was the first time that I was away from home and in a different country. There were a lot of first times for me, like grocery shopping, cooking, assignments, classes and of course hanging out with my newly made friends. Life was moving fast between university, assignments, semesters and managing my new home. I did miss my old home a lot and missed India. However, UK was a different experience altogether. The British take time to open up and getting around them is quite a task. But one gets to learn their ways, the place and people, as time goes by.

It's been two years in England and now my third year away from home in Italy. I must say, Italy is a different story and needs a new article; but for now, let me highlight a few points that one must remember when out of that comfort zone of home:

- ◆ Have an open mind and be open to new challenges. The fact that you are preparing to go out of home itself is a big achievement. So do not stop there.
- ◆ Never fear from doing a task or meeting new people or asking questions to educate yourself, even if you might end up irritating someone else.

- ◆ Share your knowledge and what you know with fellow mates. What goes around comes around, so do not be stingy!
- ◆ Learn to COOK!! That is the harsh reality of life girls and you cannot escape this one. Eating 'ghas-pus' (green salads) like the phirangis does nothing to our appetite so learn some tadka dishes and also organize cook-outs for your friends. This is also one of the best ways to socialize without spending too much of money.
- ◆ Save those pennies! Studies are hectic; the teaching is difficult – agreed! But spice up your resume and drop it off at nearby stores for a part time job. You not only get the little extra bucks but also have fun at the job.
- ◆ From what you have saved, go travelling!! Explore the country you are in. It is best to travel around, meet the locals and capture these moments on your camera, which reminds me.... Do NOT forget to take your camera with you.
- ◆ Make sure you train your parents to use the computer and Skype for the times you need to connect with them. It is very important to keep them posted about your life and friends abroad.

Find happiness in what you do and what you get wherever you are. You will always miss home, family, old friends....like I did too; but also discover the joy and satisfaction in your new venture. Afterall, Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara, so make the most of your time there! Good Luck.

■ - Tejilee Tembe (LF-2007)



Hello Friends,

I take this opportunity to share a unique experience that I recently had. For me it was like a dream come true ... one which I never imagined could happen in my life time! I was invited by the Prime Minister's office to witness the Republic day parade at New Delhi this year! I, consistently for four years scored the highest percentage of marks in the B. Pharmacy examinations conducted by the University of Pune. That made me their Gold Medalist! Every year, the Government of India selects 100 meritorious students across the country to witness the

Republic Day Parade at Rajpath, New Delhi. This year, YES, I was one amongst them!

My family and I were overjoyed upon receiving the invitation letter. The stay in the 5-star Hotel Janpath and the travel was sponsored by the Government of India. While I was looking forward to this experience I was also a bit scared; firstly because I was going to Delhi for the first time and secondly because, I was to travel by plane alone I had never travelled by plane before! I consulted Lila Mom. She was extremely happy. She congratulated me first and then gave me very useful guidance. **To ensure that I did not reach late from Hyderabad, 'Mom' advised that I should travel one day in advance. But, I had no funds for paying for a 5-star hotel. Our Foundation provided me the financial help for one additional day's stay in Hotel Janpath. I am very thankful to LPF for this timely help which enabled me to reach Delhi on time.**

contd...

Explorer...

On 26th January 2011 we were escorted to Rajpath early in the morning. I witnessed the parade, the flag hoisting and the entire celebration at close proximity. I was unable to believe that all that I had seen on TV throughout my childhood, I was watching live! Seeing the President and Prime Minister of India as well as other eminent personalities so closely, gave me a different joy and excitement. The Government of India gave me a certificate for the participation. I met the top 100 meritorious students who had come from all over India. They were all from various fields. Some of them are still in contact with me and are my good friends now. The stay in the 5-star hotel was indeed an awesome experience and of course very enjoyable. I am very thankful to God, my parents, siblings and teachers

from college who inspired me and helped me achieve such an position in life, where I could realize such a unimaginable dream in my lifetime! I specially thank Lila



Mom for always standing by me, inspiring me and guiding me. THANK YOU LPF.

■ - Snehal Patil (LF-2010)

Book Review...



Name of the book: 'Timeless Inspirator - Reliving Gandhi'

Author /Conceptualized and Edited by: Dr. Raghunath Mashelkar

Co-Authors: Dr. Triveni Goswami Mathur,
Jayshree Shahade Sushil Borde

Dr. Raghunath Mashelkar is a very well known scientific personality who has made path-breaking contributions to science and technology. As a phenomenal author in this book Dr Mahelkar vividly narrates have followed Gandhiji's ideals/virtues that have served to be timeless inspirations for many.

The book takes you through Gandhiji's legacy with varied perspectives that range from world's greatest sportsmen to scientists, iconic industry captains to social crusaders, sinful politicians to creative artists, blissful musicians to profound diplomats. Irrespective of the professions that these people, they all envision Mahatma Gandhi as India's greatest gift to the world in the 20th Century, describing Gandhiji as a symbol of courage, character, conviction, purity, perseverance, sacrifice, discipline, leadership, innovation and a lot more.

Dr. Mashelkar describes Gandhian Engineering at its best by sighting classic examples of 'More from Less'.

like Tata Nano, Jaipur Foot and Aravind Eye Care. The author reflects that, "When burden becomes responsibility and when concern triggers creativity, we encounter Gandhian spirit in action!" and stresses that this is the kind of transformation that is required by the world for the betterment of humanity. He wants us to realize and know what Gandhi meant in the true sense. Through this book, Dr Mashelkar wants to pass on these ideals to the younger generation that is in search of inspiration by looking at a timeless legend, a timeless inspirator, - 'Mahatma Gandhi' who will continue to guide and influence generations to come.

Being a master piece in itself, the book explores and redefines the relevance of Mahatma Gandhi and his profound ideals in today's times. While reading this book, I was really moved with a strong conviction to be the change that will change the world for better. a must read for all our readers!!!

■ - Priyanka Khopkar

Three Secrets of Resourceful Confidence

On Sunday, 8th March 2011, International Mother's Day, Lila Mom gifted her daughters with a very special workshop- '**The three secrets of resourceful confidence**' conducted by **Pragati Leadership Institute**. Three cheerful instructors Ms. Pragnya Wakhlu, Ms. Kalindi Bhat and Ms. Suchita Ukidve conducted this session in a non-conventional interactive manner, for which LPF has a reputation by now!

Our mentors started our day by making us meditate and chant the magical 'OM' that relieved us of all our worries. This relaxed our mind, body and soul, preparing us to grasp the maximum inputs from the workshop we were about to attend.



The workshop began with a wonderful, innovative activity which none of us had ever even thought of! It was called '**Mirroring your gifts**' and had to be performed in pairs.



Within each pair, the partners had to tell one another about their dreams, nature's gifts to them viz. their talents, their fears and last but not least, about things which excite them about life. This helped us to explore creativity within ourselves and enhance our usage of the pencil, crayons and magazine pictures to create a wonderful gift for our partners. This comprised the first half of the goodness of this activity. Explaining our picture creation to the audience as a pair was the second half of the feel-good factor. None other than Ms. Pragnya Wakhlu, who is known for capturing a perception of her surrounding in her drawings, conducted this part of the workshop. This session revealed the **first secret: "Focus on what we already have within us"**. One must always bear in mind our natural gifts. Self-awareness and self-belief creates wonders in life. Self-confidence is the foundation for success and it gives us an optimistic lens to view the world around us.



The **second secret** was about "**the magic of networking**". Networking helps improve communication



Rita, Nisha, Mom and Dad join Mrs. Anu Wakhlu for the release of Inspira at the workshop

About the trainers:

- **Pragnya Wakhlu** is Creative Director and Inspired Leader of MOUSAI, a company dedicated to reenergizing people and bringing them back in touch with the natural gifts of music and dance. Pragnya Wakhlu, an alumna of Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Bangalore, is the Founder of MOUSAI. She is a software professional as well as a musician and composer.
- **Kalindi Bhat** has been a trainer for the past 28 years. She holds an MBA from the University of Pune and a diploma in Training and Development, from ISTD, New Delhi. She is a certified Hospitality Trainer from the American Hotel-Motel Association and holds ISTD. She is a certified MBTI practitioner and a counselor. The **Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)** assessment is a psychometric questionnaire designed to measure psychological preferences in how people perceive the world and make decisions.
- **Suchita Ukidave** is working with Pragati Leadership as a Communication Specialist; she has been using music and dance as a medium to help people be more positive, creative and expressive.

Events...

skills, work in a team, initiate contacts with new people and update our knowledge regularly.

The third secret of life: **"Treat your life as if it were a play and yourself as the actors in it; NOT reactors ever."** Nothing is permanent. Fill each and every moment fully with joy and happiness.

Lastly our mentors gave us tips for everyday use in order to make our lives happy and peaceful. First, always

remind yourself of your natural gifts everyday. Second- understand, appreciate and be grateful to the people who help you in expanding your networks. Third, meditate daily; it helps increase your concentration power. Last but not the least, use your mind-map as a visual reminder, to help focus on your daily routine on an intellectual level.

The workshop ended with a dance session on the theme- 'Treat life as a play' which was followed by cutting the cake in celebration of Mother's Day! The participants left enriched and grateful to LPF as well as Pragati Institute with their new found knowledge of recognizing their inner selves and utilizing it for a happy and peaceful life.

■ - **Nisha Pandya**

Short Takes...

Continuing our series of introduction to new trustees, joining the LPF family, we present to you the highlights of Crusader Rita Shetiya's heart-to heart talk with Mrs. Madhavi Prabhumirashi (LF-1997). She joined the Board of Trustees to facilitate the Undergraduate Scholarships' Program. A recipient of the distinguished recognition 'the Sangeet Alankar' by the 'Akhil Bharatiya Gandharva Mahavidyalaya', she is the disciple of gurus, Mrs. Rohini Chandekar and Dr. Shobha Abhyankar. A singer on 'Aakaashwaani' (ALL India Radio), Pune she has also participated in the reality show TVS SaReGaMa on Zee TV.

There was sheer nostalgia sprawled across Madhavi's face as she spoke of her 16 year old connection with LPF – "My early association with the foundation was less because I was working. Then I got married and moved to Hyderabad. My marriage and job kept me busy and that made my interaction with LPF nil. After 6 years, we returned to Pune when once again I got a chance to revive my relation by attending programs of the foundation. As a Lila Fellow, I was only a participant in the foundation's many programs. Now as a Trustee, I am on the other side of the table where I'm actually involved in its functioning. As of now, I evaluate application forms in the under-grad category and also interview them in the selection process. I am gaining a lot of experience interviewing these candidates! At the foundation I have been lucky to also have gained special training and experience as a Peace Ambassador. I learned many things really important in day-to-day as well as professional life, namely team work, leadership, group presentation, time management, interaction with seniors and facing press conferences!"

Talking about her being chosen as a Trustee, Madhavi says, "I remember that day of December 2009; I was traveling to Hyderabad. (Lila) Mom called me and invited me to be on the Board of Trustees. It was a pleasant shock to me! I accepted right away. It is one of the most memorable moments in my life. But I do realize what is expected of me. Lila Ma'am surely must have assessed my potential as a Trustee. My guess is that firstly, I am senior LF and have closely observed the functioning of the Foundation and its activities. Next, I freelance in music and am not into permanently employed. That gives me a lot of time at hand to dedicate my services to the Foundation. I have actively participated in Samagam, the Foundation's Fund Raising program for three consecutive years. I have also undergone the Peace Leadership Program at Asha Center, UK as a Peace Ambassador in

2009. I am already realizing that my training during this program has equipped me with a lot of skills that I will need as a Trustee, to groom and guide young scholars in our Foundation. However, whilst as a trustee, I wish to one day organize exclusively a classical music program for raising funds for the Foundation."



Mrs. Madhavi Prabhumirashi

Based upon her experience at LPF, Madhavi has some words of wisdom to share. She says,

"The Foundation gives us two major platforms; one to learn and imbibe and second to give and share. I strongly recommend that all girls actively participate in all the events of the Foundation. There is a great joy in giving back to society. LPF provides us with a good platform to explore our skills by arranging different events. Girls should whole heartedly participate and volunteer in fundraisers by singing, dancing, acting, anchoring, etc. Else, they should join hands with groups within the Foundation working at schools, remand homes, old age homes or creating environmental awareness."

Madhavi will soon be leading the foundation's very own brigade of environmentalists in creating awareness about global warming through presentations and workshops at schools, offices, colleges, etc. This program will be carried out under the guidance of Ex-Mayor of Pune, Advocate & Environmentalist Mrs. Vanadana Chavan. She has been teaching music to the underprivileged children at a remand home, since the past couple of months and performed gratis at the Cipla Cancer and AIDS Foundation, Pune.

■ - **Rita Shetiya**

Events... Inspira

**"When Health Improves –
Life improves by every measure"**

As parents, Lila Mom and Firoz Dad have always been concerned about all our health. Out of this concern, this time they came up with a Women's Health Awareness Workshop for LF's and their mothers and sisters! The program got such good participation and post-workshop response that we surely did feel sorry for those who were not able to reap the benefits of this workshop due to varied reasons.

THUS- THE FOLLOWING FOUR ISSUES OF INSPIRA WILL COVER THE FOUR HEALTH MODULES (Dental care, Cancer Prevention, Physiotherapy & Emotional Empowerment Technique) OF THE WORKSHOP AS INDEPENDENT ARTICLES. READ ON FOR FEEDBACKS..... BUT DO NOT FORGET TO CATCH UP ON THE DETAILS IN OUR FORTHCOMING ISSUES!

All of us know 'Health is Wealth'. But we seldom realize that health covers not only the physical issues but also deals with mental aspects. Our Lila Mom once again gifted her daughter's with a 'Health Treat'.... but this time along with their natural mothers and sisters. That's what made this workshop significantly unique.

The first session was covered by the husband of our LF Mubashshara Khan (Shaikh), Dr. Tanveer Khan, a dental surgeon by profession. Dental health is the most neglected aspect of health in our country, primarily due to ignorance. Dr. Khan discussed all important issues pertaining to dental care, right from the most basic and day-to-day dental care, to dealing with complex dental problems like root canals and sensitive issues like dental health in children. He also cleared myths about dental care and spoke about important symptoms when one must visit the dentist.



Dr. Tanveer Khan talking about Dental Care

Thereafter, the workshop moved onto the next very interesting and important session relevant to most women. Yes, I am talking about Cancer. The module of 'Cancer Awareness' was conducted by Dr. Shona Nag, an Oncologist with nearly two decades of experienced expertise in her field. She spoke about the commonly observed cancers in India, its causes, preventive measures, and changes in our lifestyle which are a must. This session was then taken over by Dr. Anupama Mane. She concentrated on the occurrence and prevention of the three most common types of cancer in Indian women, namely ovarian, cervical and breast cancer. She discussed in details their symptoms, causes and screening modalities available. She also spoke about the availability of the 'human papillomavirus vaccine' for the prevention of cervical cancer and the need for its awareness and



Oncologist Dr. Anupama Mane speaking on Cancer in Women

adoption amongst women. She also deliberated upon the aspect of breast self-examination.

The session immediately post lunch was a very interactive and relaxing one by our very own LF-2009 newly turned Doctor of Physiotherapy, Dr. Neha Gupta. Despite her very methodical power-point presentation, Neha included the participants in her talk. They were unknowingly invited to join the demonstrative session on exercises. This left every one with a sense of wellbeing with simple flexion and extension. Neha focused on exercises, fitness, ergonomics for everyday physical wellbeing and increasing the body's strength and endurance.

'Magical Session' is what we christened the last session. Ms. Sharon Fernandes, the daughter of our Trustee Ms. Lorraine Fernandes, took up the issue of our emotional health! Sharon is a professional trainer and she practically



LF Dr. Neha Gupta charms the audience to join her physiotherapy session

contd...

*E*vents... *Inspira*

with us, demonstrated to us the 'The Emotional Empowerment Technique'. After this session 'Dad' had already got relief from his knee pain and was feeling better than in the morning. I am sure everyone must have benefited in different ways from this session.

Every module was followed by a question and answer session which was getting overwhelming participation, especially from the mothers. This was the first workshop ever at the Foundation wherein LF's, their mothers and



Ms. Sharon Fernandes engulfed the participants in her 'Magical Therapy'

sisters all benefitted at a common forum. It being a forum on health care, was more important because in India, women tend to neglect their health placing their family responsibilities on the pedestal. As a participant, I voice the united feeling of all those present there. Words cannot justify Lila Mom's gesture of showing she cares, nor can our words show her enough gratitude for the same. It is just her... she always thinks, plans and implements different workshops wherein we get every possible opportunity to grow. Thanks a Lot Mom!

-Vidya Yadav (LF-2010)

Now-a-day's women are multitasking in many areas of responsibilities. While taking care of their entire family, many times women don't pay attention to their personal health, especially mothers. From my own personal experience, I can vouch on behalf of other mothers that due to this neglect many health related issues culminate into major problems later on. I personally felt that this workshop focused on the main problems that every woman is facing in her routine life. I did not only learn what is causing my back-aches but also learned few easy exercises to keep the pain at bay! My favourite part of the workshop was cancer awareness and screening techniques for prevention. I also picked up simple practices to for healthy teeth. And what I need most.... peace of mind that can help me think straight! That I got through the magic healing technique. Overall I think it was a very useful workshop, especially for all mothers.

**- Mrs. Kalpana Pandya
Mother of Nisha Pandya (LF-2005)**

I highly commend the Foundation's effort in arranging such a workshop. It has left a strong impression on me. I will never forget the valuable tips given by the experienced doctors. The seminar was only for ladies and I believe that the ladies are not only the pillars of the

family but that of the entire nation. Health is wealth; it keeps one not only smiling but also truly happy. The seminar has not only made me mentally ready to practice many tips, but it has changed my life-style to a great extent. Now I can take care of myself and my family.

**-Mrs. Vanita Phalke
Mother of Pooja (Phalke) Thorat (LF-2005)**

Sharon Didi told us what EET is. I now know that to keep my confidence high and reduce my pains, all I have to do is pray and exercise every day. Dr. Neha did not only give important tips in physiotherapy, she also spoke about yoga, meditation, exercise. I am now well equipped to take care of myself as well as my family.

**-Mrs. Jyotshna Lohangade
Mother of Poonam Lohangade (LF-2009)**

My favorite part of the health treat was the dental section wherein I learned how to maintain healthy teeth. Me and my daughter specially liked that the discussion on dental myths. In the session conducted by Dr. Shona Nag we learned how to detect breast cancer at home. We did not know of these self-help techniques.

**-Mrs. Choudhari
Mother of Santoshi Choudhari (LF-2010)**



Mother of LF Monika Kalbhor joins Lila Mom in gifting a token of appreciation to Dr. Shona Nag

Monika always praises the diversity of the workshops and the resource persons at such workshops at LPF. I was always curious about them. And the health workshop was the first one I ever attended. It was the first program of the LPF I attended. Every bit that the doctors explained so well at that workshop, right from the teeth to Cancer, everything was new to me and so it was an extremely enlightening event for me. The doctors even explained how we can fight against cancer and recover well. And exercises were most explicitly explained by Dr. Neha. I am unable to do all of them; but I do those that I can and I am benefitting from them.

Truly Lila Ma'am is a very nice human-being! I felt honoured and special when Lila Ma'am asked us to handover the token of gratitude to the doctors. For the first time I had entered such a big Hotel. First time I experienced that which I had never experienced before. If the Foundation ever again offers me such an opportunity, I will surely avail it!

**- Mrs. Sunanda Kalbhor
Mother of Monika Kalbhor (LF-2009)**

■ - Most feedbacks compiled and translated by Rita Shetiya

Audio CD of Lila Fellow released

Having bagged the LPF scholarship to do her post graduation in Music from Lalit Kala Kendra, Pune University, in 2004, Kasturi Paigude-Rane went on to teach music to students privately and at schools. Her voluntary work for SPIC MACAY (Society for the Promotion of Indian Classical Music And Culture Amongst Youth) Pune chapter, led to her being selected as a National Executive of the movement from 2009-2011. She got a chance to visit UK for the first time in 2008 as a part of the PA program, where also she gave live concerts in London. She was honoured to be invited back to UK to perform for the Nehru Centre, London in 2009. During that tour, she also performed in Birmingham and Oxford University along with other concerts in London. She is also a graded light music artist with Akashwani Pune, AIR (All India Radio). Since January 2011 she has been engaged in making her own Marathi album '*Mi Premika*', which was released recently at a mega-publicized event. We catch up with Kasturi to share her latest experience....



Kasturi at the studio while recording

Otherwise calm and composed, Kasturi had a fray of expressions on her face when we spoke to her about her new album. "Of course '*Mi Premika*' is very close to my heart! This is the first album ever to be recorded in my voice! I've recorded 8 Marathi songs in the light Indian genre of music for the very first time. This album is important for me as it has brought out a new dimension in my singing. I have recorded before on small assignments, but this is the first time I have recorded on a commercial scale."

Kasturi on how '*Mi Premika*' happened- "It was an initiative of Abhijit Kumbhar from USA, who is also the lyricist and the composer of all the songs in this album. He had written and composed many compositions as a hobby and he wanted to take them to the next level. So he approached me and before we finally decided to make an album out of his compositions we had several discussions and sittings. Finally, Aakanksha Creations, also founded by Abhijit Kumbhar, produced the album. The recording was done at Shivranjani Studios, Pune and the music arrangement was done by Milind Gune."

24th July 2011 witnessed the release of her album '*Mi Premika*' at the S.M. Joshi Auditorium in the city at the hands of the renowned classical vocalist and Kasturi's Guru, Mrs. Arati Ankalikar-Tikekar. Padmashri Mrs. Lila Poonawalla and Mr. Firoz Poonawalla graced the occasion as the Guests of Honour, whilst noted music director Anand Modak, was the Chief Guest. The event was



The publicity plaque being released

organized by Cultural Pune and the evening was anchored by Arun Nulkar. Mrs. Poonawalla expressed great pride to have supported Kasturi's musical education at the Post graduate level and immense satisfaction in seeing her scaling new heights. The anchor also spoke to Kasturi and Milind about their experiences in the making of this album. The function ended with Kasturi presenting a few melodious songs from her album. The other dignitaries who attended the event were Daji-kaka Gadgil (one of the founders of P.N. Gadgil Jewellers), Mr. Maduskar (Station Director, AIR Pune), Ramdas Palsule (renowned tabla exponent), Preeti Kudal (Proprietor, Asha Publicity), Sanjay Savarkar (DGM and Publication Head, Sakal Times) and many others.

This recording has given Kasturi great exposure to the professional side of song recording and has also been a great learning experience. She says, "*Delivering at a recording is totally different than delivering music at a live concert. This was a new realization again! I had to prepare myself extensively in all ways which demanded full time commitment for me for two and a half months...and during that time I did not perform a single concert!*"

"During this venture, everyday was a different learning experience in terms of activities, responsibilities, meeting people, new situations, new challenges and handling people with different behaviour and temperaments. I got to meet some of the finest musicians of the industry who



Release of the CD

Inspira Events...

are fortunately also an integral part of our album. Moments in their company were extremely enriching.

"One particular situation redefined my theories of perfection. We had invited a group of 8 violinists from Mumbai. That day, the group recorded music till mid night in the studio. The lead violinist Jitendra Thakur kept insisting on one-take-ok music which I found was very professional. Their utmost focus on quality while working and their endless efforts to deliver the desired music has made a long lasting impact on me. This experience has surely enriched my life manifold."

Speaking about how she is putting her Peace Ambassador's training to use, she says, "Since my return from UK in 2008, I have been deeply involved in LPF's Project Abhigyan, under which I take music sessions for the students of the Dr. Kalmadi Shamrao High School (Kannada Medium). I have also designed a new music syllabus for the Primary and Secondary sections of the school. I did a concert for the inmates of the Nivara old age home in 2009. I have also conducted a week long music workshop for the students of a government school in Pune which is supported by a Foundation."

Kasturi has an appeal to the masses..... "I request one and all to support this genuine and sincere work that we have



**Felicitations to the Chief Guest
who's also the 'GURU'**

done. My album is priced at a meagre Rs.100 and it is available for sale at the

Lila Poonawalla Foundation Office (Akshay Centre, Thergaon, Pune, Tel.: 020-66302611) and at 12/A, Shri Vishnubaug Housing Society (Behind Govt. Polytechnic College, Shivajinagar, Pune-411016, Tel.: 020-25661100)."

We at Inspira sincerely believe 'Mi Premika' would not only make a good contribution to your music collection, but would also serve as a nice gift for your loved ones. And isn't monsoon supposed to be the right season for romantic songs?

■ - **Rajani Panchang-Dhumal**

All a part of Luck

It is all a part of luck sometimes,
It is all a part of luck,
Even when you put in so hard,
You get not the fruit but the bud.

You feel that the villain is laughing at you,
looking at your disappointed face.
You feel like wanting to kick something,
You feel like doing something rash.

But, you don't even have strength for that
as you find yourself overwhelmed with tears.
It is all a part of luck sometimes that someone gets it easily
and someone else doesn't.

I don't know why it is so, but,
It is trying your patience like mad,
for a bud is the thing that can grow into a tree
and bear fruit for all.

A fruit can perish but the bud will not;
having realized this, you are about to win the whole lot
It is all a part of luck sometimes,
but, winners aren't a part of luck.

They are the ones, who will never quit,
for whom hope never dies,
for whom the sky is the limit,
and sacrifice is the only way for achieving it.

So, don't you want to win?
Don't you want to sacrifice?

■ - **Rucha Deshpande (LF-2011)**

Snippets...



Chief Guests at LPFs Award Function Dr. Asa Andreasson & Ms. Maria Grosskopf visited the rural school at Gavdewadi included under our school project Tomorrow2gether



Orientation Programme for the LFs batch of 2011



The 'environmental brigade' newly formed at the LPF attended a training programme on 'How to spread awareness about Global Warming' by 'ALERT' an NGO



PA Batch-2011 leaving for UK



Maya Aunty imparted lessons in cake making to the group of Peace Ambassadors leaving for the UK soon



Senior Trustees Maya Thadani and Ms. Frenny Tarapore conducted the orientation for Overseas LFs at Mrs. Thadani's residence



Trustees & Staff of LPF at a special farewell Dinner hosted in honour of Dr. Asa Andreasson & Ms. Maria Grosskopf at Hotel Studio Estique



Mentorship Program by Mrs. Vasantha Ramaswamy and Mrs. Anagha Mitra for 2011 Lila Girls

News Flash...

The Stafford Civic Centre (Old), Houston, USA saw a historic event on Friday, 26th August, 2011; Iccha-the Hope, a magnanimously arranged fundraiser organised by some Houstonites to support the cause of the Lila Poonawalla Foundation. Not only did the Organisers hand over a handsome cheque for US\$20,000 to Mrs. Poonawalla, but the County Judge Ed Emmett presented her with a proclamation deeming 26th August 2011 as the day of Hope!

The organisers also came out with an elaborate brochure about the origin of the fundraising event, its organisers, its beneficiary, its sponsors and its making. The brochure contains overwhelming statements from nearly every performer at the event. Their message is loud and clear, "We are proud and lucky to be able to perform at 'Iccha' and support such a noble cause of helping our counterparts in India to get their basic right to education and realise their dreams. Inspira has reproduced the detailed coverage of the event in the American press. Here are some related FAQs:

Q. How did this programe originate? Where and whose idea, with what objectives?

Mrs. Mithali Bhanja Choudhary grew up in Pune. An engineer by profession, she started her first job with Alfa Laval several years ago, with Mrs. Lila Poonawala as the CEO. Over the time, they managed to stay in touch intermittently with each other. Last year, Mithali and her husband Subroto approached their friend Ms. Sailaja Bandyopadhyay in Houston and they came up with the idea of putting together a fund raising event to take the LPF's message of women's education, out to the world.

The objective of the event was to generate awareness, interest and funds for LPF and make a difference in the

Q. Who were the individuals who took lead initiatives and what were their individual responsibilities?

This initiative has been taken by 4 individuals, who are not directly related to the LPF, but do believe in the cause of empowering women with good education. These four Houstonites have their own motivations for being a part of this initiative; but the foremost objective is to use their network outside India and their expertise in each of their individual fields to garner awareness and support for LPF and raise funds to help many young girls achieve their dreams. The team members and their responsibilities are as follows:



lives of many deserving young girls. Together with their friend Piyal Sen Gupta, a dancer and choreographer, the idea of a dance drama 'ICCHA- The HOPE' was conceived, a dance production to showcase the lives and journey of the underprivileged, yet academically brilliant girls that LPF supports – their struggles, obstacles and eventual ability to be successful with the help of LPF.

- Mithali Bhanja Choudhary (**Fund Raising & Publicity**)
- Sailaja Bandyopadhyay (**Fund Raising & Event Management**)

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News Flash... Inspira

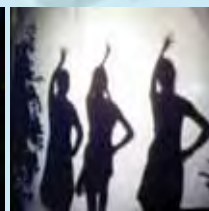
- Piyal Sen Gupta (**Dance Production & Choreography**)
- Subroto Bhanja Choudhary (**Operations**)

Q. Who were the sponsors for this event?

IDRF- India Development Relief Fund along with a number of very generous US based individuals and local businesses have sponsored this event.

Q. How were the dance schools roped in to perform for this event?

Sailaja came up with the idea of showcasing the most-probable journey of a Lila Fellow. This idea was then turned into a Dance production 'Iccha-The Hope' by Piyal. To make this concept a reality, a number of local Houston Dance Schools were approached to participate in this event. Each choreographer was briefed about the vision of this production and their role within the 'bigger picture'. Each choreographer with their own style and their team of dancers brought in a fresh look to the individual dance pieces...which were then weaved together into the story...the journey of 'Maya', a simple girl from a modest background, her hopes, her struggles and her ability to achieve her dreams with the help of LPF. The unique



synergy within the team of choreographers and dancers from the Greater Houston brought to life this dance drama showcasing Maya's transformation from being an under-privileged girl to a woman of substance and fulfilling her dream towards a better life. The entire Production was supported by media and narration put together by Sailaja, Piyal and Subroto. The Dance Schools that created MAYA were Kathak Nrityalaya, Drama Dance Group, Payal

School of Dance, Avantika Academy of Odissi Dance, Mahesh Mahbubani's Anjali Centre of Performance Arts and Nritya Pallavi School of Semi-classical & Folk dance

Q. How difficult or easy was this task?

This event has been an exciting yet demanding project for the Iccha Team. Right from renting the auditorium, arranging for catering, marketing, brochures, creating the website, putting together the entire dance production- dance choreography, rehearsals, music, light, narration,

media and of course, most importantly contacting prospective sponsors, selling tickets and raising funds- it's all been an immensely challenging endeavour.

The foursome Mithali, Sailaja, Piyal and Subroto put in countless hours to make this event happen...with one goal, **"Making a difference in the life of a young girl with aspirations in her heart and dreams in her eyes...to help her get the support needed to make her dream a reality".**

Whereas, "Iccha-The Hope" is a fund-raising event for LPF, to further its goals and positively impact the lives of many young women: now, therefore

I, Ed Emmett, County Judge of Harris County, Texas, hereby proclaim

Friday, August 26, 2011, as

"Iccha-The Hope" Day

in Harris County, Texas, in celebration and recognition of this outstanding organization that continues to assist women in pursuit of higher education.

**Ed Emmett
County Judge**

Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition

Presented to

Lila Poonawalla Foundation

On behalf of the Constituents of the Ninth Congressional District of Texas, I Salute Your Dedication to Empowering Indian Women Who are Academically Outstanding to Achieve Their Dreams of A Higher Education

Al Green, Member of Congress

■ - Facts compiled by Dr. Rajani Panchang

CHAMPAGNE MOMENTS



Cultural Confluence

Samagam literally means the confluence of cultures. Samagam III, organized by Leela Poonawala, was truly a confluence of cultures. Held at Yashwantarao Chavhan Natyagruha, the event was a spectacular performance in the fields of dance, arts and music by Leela fellows. To add to the increasing excitement, there was light Indian classical music, Bollywood songs, *abhang* and Marathi *bhuregit* by Madhavi Pradbbumirashi, Kunturi Paigade, Yogada Deshpande and Mangal Tajaric. *Lavani* by Kiran Pardeshi and Bollywood tracks from Devdas by Pooja Phalke made the audience dance to their beats! The event saw who's who of the corporate world, Leela fellows, Leela girls and their families, friends and well wishers of Leela Poonawalla Foundation.

"Women of today need to be strong. To achieve their dream, one must have an idol and I pray really hard that God helps every girl to live her life and attain great heights," said Leela Poonawalla, Founder and Chairman of the Leela Poonawalla Foundation.



Getting To Know Padmashree Lila Poonawalla

Jyoti Ranade
06/23/2011

Life was not easy for Lila Poonawalla when she came to India as a refugee from Hyderabad, Pakistan with her grandparents, mother and four brothers. The entire family had to survive on the pension from their father's life insurance policy after he died in a train accident. Lila was determined to go to college despite the fact that money was tight. She beat the odds and became the first female mechanical engineering student at the Government College of Engineering in Pune. Today she is known to the world as the first woman CEO in India's business history as Chairman and Managing Director of Alfa Laval from 1987 to 2001.

After a very successful career at Alfa Laval and Tetra Pak (India), Lila Poonawalla could have enjoyed a quiet retirement. Instead, she wanted to make a difference by helping Indian women pursue higher education. She started the **Lila Poonawalla Foundation (LPF)** in 1996. With over 200 million illiterate women, India has one of the lowest female literacy rates in the world. The foundation supports the college education of young women by awarding scholarships. So far, 581 girls have been given 785 scholarships. Because of LPF scholarships, Prajakta Rane, a handicapped girl, who does not have both palms from birth, is working on an MBA in finance; Koyel Ghoshal, from a low income family has completed masters in Pharmacology and Toxicology from University of Rhode Island and Rita Jaiswal, a daughter of a lottery ticket seller is doing electrical engineering.

Every Lila fellow has an amazing story. I was inspired by Mrs. Poonawalla's pioneering work and decided to ask her a few questions about her mission.

1. What inspired you to start the Lila Poonawalla Foundation (LPF)?

Traditionally, in India, the importance of educating girls is unrecognized by society, especially in economically and socially disadvantaged communities (family income of less than \$1000 - 2000 per year). This bias is rooted in the 'gender realities' of India where boys are regarded a virtue and their education receives utmost priority. Young girls face challenges in pursuing professional education at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, mostly due to poor financial backgrounds. This hinders their chance to get gainful employment and become economically independent. I too come from a poor family background. As a child of two years, I came to India as a refugee. My mother had a difficult time bringing up the family, especially since I had lost my father when I was only three years old. So I appreciated the timely support I got through scholarships to pursue my education.

2. Only 1% of women in India have a college education. What kind of steps does your foundation take to expand the education of women in India?

The whole purpose of education is to turn mirrors into windows. Education is an undisputed tool of empowerment. Education plays a very important role in shaping the capacities of girls at an individual level. It is for this reason that we give scholarships, which are an outright grant, to academically brilliant but economically challenged girls for higher education.



Lila Poonawalla LPF in News...

3. It is wonderful to know that LPF has given several scholarships to the girls who want to pursue a degree in Science and Engineering. Even in wealthier countries, women are underrepresented in the academic fields of science and engineering. Is your foundation working to encourage more women to seek these types of degrees?

Yes, we are encouraging girls to get into technical education. From my personal experience in the industry, I am aware of the opportunities that exist for them. Today the industry needs girls who have highly technical skills. The unique aspect of this scholarship program is that the scholarship holders receive not only financial support but also technical guidance from experts in the industry, entrepreneurship training, career counseling, job placement services from the foundation, and personality development training to make them well developed individuals.

4. You were one of the first women CEOs to lead a major corporation in India. Does your foundation work to promote entrepreneurship amongst young women in India? What advice would you have for women looking to follow in your footsteps in the Indian corporate world?

As explained in question three above, we believe that every individual has potential to become an entrepreneur. We encourage this as a means to secure employment and become financially independent. We invite speakers to talk to them about the benefits of entrepreneurship and how to go about achieving these goals. Of course they have to work hard and be committed to their careers - otherwise it is not possible to succeed.

5. Can you tell us about the special training programs for the "Lila Girls" and the "Lila Fellows" initiative?

We aim at providing a platform for girls to engage in total personal development. The aim is not only to support the girls in getting a university degree but also to groom them through mentoring and a total development program. We want to not only give them financial assistance but also the emotional strength to develop as an able human being. We have had over 100 programs in soft skills, motivation, confidence building, positive attitude, professional skills, etiquettes and personality grooming, spoken English classes, personal power and personal effectiveness, thought management, importance of body language, and many more. These programs are conducted by specialists from their field and renowned teachers.

6. You started LPF in 1996. What have been some of your most memorable personal experiences while working for this foundation?



Every time I see a successful girl, my heart jumps with joy. Luckily, I have had many such moments. When a rickshaw puller's daughter becomes a professor in a reputed college and vows that she will get each of her siblings educated, when a cobbler's daughter becomes a renowned singer and achieves her dream of becoming a professional singer, when a maid servant's daughter becomes an engineer and gets a job to work in a multinational corporation, my heart soars. Ever since the start of the foundation, my life has been full of joys and more joys, as almost all of my girls have made a breakthrough in their lives. I now have a big family with many daughters, and also many sons-in-laws and many, many grandchildren. We are one big united family.

"No deserving girl should be denied the right to get education."- The LPF Foundation

Your financial contribution can change the destiny of a young girl!

If you want to help, please send your contribution to:

Vinod Prakash, PhD
President, India Development & Relief Fund, Inc.,
5821 Mossrock Drive, North Bethesda, MD 20852-3238, USA

email: idrfvinod@yahoo.com, www.idrf.org

Your donations are tax deductible. The donations should be made to India Development & Relief Fund (IDRF) which is a registered charity trust. Please state that you are donating for the education of underprivileged girls in India through the Lila Poonawalla Foundation.

Please check <http://www.lilapoonawalla.com/> for more information.

Lila in News...



Padmashree Lila Poonawalla being felicitated by the Mayor of Pune Mr. Mohansh Singh Rajpal and Mrs. Vandana Chavan on account of Guru Pournima



Along with Padmashree Mrs. Poonawalla, Dr. K.H. Sancheti, Dr. Vijay Bhatkar and Dr. S.B. Muzumdar were felicitated for their outstanding contribution in the field of education

Editors Desk...

Dear Readers...

This is an issue of Inspira with a lot of 'firsts'. This is the first issue flashing the new monsoon look of Inspira. **This is the first time Inspira is scheduled to be released abroad, specifically in the UK, during the course of the Peace Leadership Programme.** This is the first time that Inspira runs into 30+ pages (a substantial proof of how much the Foundation has grown and thereby the responsibilities at Inspira). And this is also the first time Inspira features a picture of the entire team, complete with its mentor, the graceful Mrs. Maya Thadani (seated left-most).

It's been a very challenging issue and also a race against time. Inspira too is growing by leaps and bounds. It is expected to keep pace with the changes at the Foundation. **With the initiation of the School Project 2morrow2gether, Inspira's range of target readership has changed; it is now expected to cater to the understanding and maturity levels in school going girls also.** Some of the schools on this project are semi-English with Marathi, Kannada and Urdu holding equal importance in their medium of instruction. In order to meet these stipulations, **I at the award function, in consultation with 'Mom' (Mrs. Poonawalla) have announced a new publication - 'Inspira Junior',** currently in its planning stages.

Whilst Inspira has served as a very good communication and networking package amongst



The Team of Inspira- Priyanka, Rita, Sanchita, Rajani, Nisha & Amruta (Standing L-R) pose with their mentor Mrs. Maya Thadani, Mom, Dad and the special guests at the Award Function

all LPF family members for the past 11 years, it has primarily functioned as the face of the Foundation and has been earning LPF a lot of goodwill. But the challenges with 'Inspira Junior' will be complex. It will bear the responsibility of inculcating good writing, reading and communication habits in these young girls as well as offer them a platform to showcase their talents.

Personally for me, this particular issue has been extremely rewarding and satisfying. The array of events and articles that we have covered in this issue makes me feel proud for volunteering to work for the noble cause of LPF. With an assurance of bringing you more exciting updates at the Foundation and Inspira as well, I sign off hoping all our readers find immense pleasure in reading this issue, as much as we have enjoyed creating it.

Love and regards,

■ **- Rajani Panchang-Dhumal**
(rajanipanchang@gmail.com)

Editor: Dr. Rajani Panchang-Dhumal
Crusaders: Nisha Pandya, Sanchita Satalkar, Rita Shetiya,
and Priyanka Khopkar

Inspira Design and Background: Amruta Nigade

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

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Lila Poonawalla Foundation Leading Indian Ladies Ahead Through Education

By Kalyani Giri

HOUSTON: It was nothing short of inspiring, the personal anecdotes recounted by women who had transcended hardships unimaginable to achieve success and become role models for future aspirants.

"I never really thought about pursuing higher education because my family couldn't afford it," said Bhakti Purandare, an architect now based in New Jersey. "Then a friend introduced me to an organization that helps women through education. With a scholarship and the opportunity to study abroad I was able to fulfill my dream and I am so grateful for the support that the Lila Poonawalla Foundation gave me," added Purandare. It was a sentiment reiterated by Manasi Gadkari, a Research Assistant at the Baylor College of Medicine in this city, who was also a beneficiary of the Lila Poonawalla Foundation (LPF). With a scholarship to study abroad, Gadkari was able to leave her native Pune in India and reach her goals on foreign soil.

"I was motivated to excel and exceed my boundaries," said Gadkari. "The LPF gives me ongoing support and keeps me involved in all the projects that the foundation conducts."

Both Purandare and Gadkari were attendees at the *ICCHA The Hope* Lila Poonawalla Foundation Fundraiser held at the Stafford Civic Center on August 26, 2011. Visiting from India were Guests of Honor Padmashree Lila Poonawalla and her husband Feroz, philanthropists and the visionary founders of LPF. The event, organized by Mithali and Subroto Bhanja Choudhary, Piyal Sen Gupta, and Sailaja Bandyopadhyay, champions of LPF's cause, was the first benefitting the organization in this country; they presented Poonawalla with a cheque for \$20,000. The India Development and Relief Fund, Inc. was the grand sponsor of the event that raised awareness of the mission of the foundation to empower women with education, and thereby break the debilitating cycle of illiteracy and poverty. Serving as Mistress of Ceremonies for the evening was Sangeeta Pasricha, a well-known artist in the local Indo American community. Dignitaries included County Judge Ed Emmett,



Standing, from left, Ichha - The Hope Team: Subroto Choudhary, Operations; Piyal Sen Gupta, Dance Production; Mithali Choudhary, Fund Raising and Publicity; Sailaja Bandyopadhyay, Fund Raising and Event Management. Seated in Front: Firoz and Lila Poonawalla

Dr. Rathna Kumar, Director of the Anjali Center for Performing Arts, Fort Bend Independent School District Trustee Sonal Bhuchar, Houston Community College Trustee Neeta Sane, and Masala Radio's CEO Sandhya Thakkar, to name a few. Following the traditional lighting of the lamp, Judge Emmett presented Poonawalla with a proclamation deeming August 26 the day for *ICCHA*, or hope.



"Thank you for this unique recognition which is all the more significant as we all live on hope," Lila Poonawalla said. "Our girls hail from humble homes, many are daughters of

contd...

LPF in News...

cobblers, maidservants, rickshaw-walas, and paanwalas. But what differentiates these girls from others is their determination to succeed. This year we have decided to select children from middle schools and put them through college and continue to mentor them. In India girl-children are at a disadvantage because they're married off at 14 and 15 years of age and have to deal with dowries and abuse. We want to support more girls, but we need the funding," added Poonawalla.

Lila Poonawalla came to India as a refugee from the Hyderabad District of Pakistan as a young child. Growing up there were many financial hurdles but through sheer determination, she overcame them and graduated as the first female Mechanical Engineer from the Government College of Engineering in Pune. On her 50th birthday, she decided she wanted to give back to the community. She founded the Pune-based LPF in 1996 and since inception the organization has supported 834 women professionals to do their post-graduate studies in India and abroad. The foundation has also introduced scholarships for promising undergraduate students pursuing degrees in Engineering. LPF awards scholarships in varied fields including Computer Science, Architecture, Pharmacy, Law,

Psychology, Travel and Tourism, and Environmental Science, to name a few.

Every year, 14 girls from the foundation are selected to attend an enrichment program in the UK.

"They learn leadership skills, and how to operate as a team. It is a tremendous program that transforms the girls into courageous and confident individuals and socially responsible human beings," said Poonawalla. Her name Lila is affectionately deemed an acronym for the catchphrase *Leading Indian Ladies Ahead*.

During dinner guests enjoyed the entertainment for the evening, *ICCHA – The Hope*, a dance drama production depicting the journey of a young girl, Maya, whose quest for a better life takes her on a journey to success. Scripted by Piyal Sen Gupta and Subroto Bhanja Choudhary, the choreographers included Mahesh Mahbubani, Shipra Avantika Mehrotra, Parmita Mondol Modi, Keka Kar, Piyal Sen Gupta, and Arpita Mukhopadhyay. A local cast of dancers and artistes presented various styles of dance.

For more information on the foundation visit <http://lilapoonawallaoundation.com/>.

LPF in News...

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• indoamericannews@yahoo.com •
713-789-NEWS (6397) • fax: 713-789-6399

www.indoamerican-news.com
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ICCHA, The Hope For Women in India

Houston - Padmashree Lila Poonawalla was Chief Guest at the ICCHA The Hope Lila Poonawalla Foundation Fundraiser held at the Stafford Civic Center on August 26, 2011. The event, organized by Mithali and Subroto Bhanja Choudhary, Piyal Sen Gupta, and Sailaja Bandopad-



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