



A Newsletter by Lila Poonawalla Foundation

Vol.no-35 / February 2012



INSPIRA...

Inspire, Ignite, Imbibe

My Dear Daughters, Friends and Well-wishers,

During the chilliest and shortest days of the winter of 2011 in India, through my message, I send you all good wishes for excellent health, wisdom and added endurance to face the new challenges of 2012! Nostalgia prevails with the wonderful and happy memories of 2011. The future remains hidden and is thus exciting; and the present presents itself to us as a new opportunity.



A lot has been achieved and God has sent us a message that only the sky is our limit. We have to dream and work... hard and judiciously, to realise our dreams. LPF has grown leaps and bounds. We had started with 20 girls (LFs as in Lila Fellows) in 1996, giving them support to complete their post-graduate studies, in India and abroad. This category, till date supports education in every discipline you can think of. In 2010, we stepped ahead, supporting Lila Girls (LGs) in their graduate studies in Engineering. The undergraduate scholarships broadened its scope last year (2011) by supporting aspirants in some other disciplines of sciences other than just Engineering. Last year we also took another major initiative; we reached out to school-girls and achieved a new landmark by supporting education at the grass-root level. This was a new genre of girls (termed 'Lila Juniors' i.e. LJs), to join the large LILA (**Leading Indian Ladies Ahead**) family and are being groomed to aim at becoming LGs and further on, to LFs in their near future. We certainly do not want to stop here. We have given more than 1000 scholarships in the disciplines stated above. **We have bigger dreams; dreams of reaching out to more girls - not only in the above streams, but also to extend support to girls pursuing Diploma in Engineering AND Graduation in Nursing, Physiotherapy and Education (Teaching).** I have great faith in GOD and I am sure that all this will be achieved with HIS blessings this year and we would be able to increase our family by about 400 more girls. Let us all join our hands in Prayer to the ALMIGHTY to help us make this happen.

Dad and I continue to dream and plan. Many of you know that I am a collector of small articles that I have gathered from all over the world. I always wanted a museum where I could display all my collections, gifts and souvenirs from our travels and friends. We dream to convert our home *Fili Villa* into a museum. We plan to move into an apartment in a building to-be within the *Fili Villa* premises. **We intend to transform our present home into a well-organized, unique museum, and donate it to the Foundation.** In this way, our memories will live

long after we are gone. The Foundation will manage the museum and keep it functioning.

We have one more dream- that of enabling every member of LPF family to maintain their health and well being through pro active and preventive wellness management. To encourage a change in health related attitudes from illness-oriented to wellness-oriented, **we strategise a state-of-the-art Wellness Centre.** We have noticed that apart from financial support, the girls need a health support system. This Wellness Clinic will get each member habituated to being and feeling well and enable each one to manage her health with a little help from the Physician, who becomes a long-term friend, philosopher and guide. The Clinic will also have a Counsellor, who will help the girls to deal with their personal issues, which sometimes are difficult to share with family. I really hope we will be able to realise this dream in the near future.

Its time I move out of dreams to reality. **There have been some changes in the organisation of LPF. We felt a strong need for an Advisory Board.** After a lot of thought and deliberation, I am happy to tell you all that our three Founder trustees, Ms. Maya Thadhani, Ms. Freney Tarapore and Ms. Shernaz Edibam, together with senior Trustee Ms. Vasantha Ramaswamy, have taken over this new responsibility. They, as Trustees, have worked for LPF for many years and are in just the right position to advise us on the new initiatives and directions that the Foundation should take. We are indeed very

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From My Heart...

grateful to them for their magnanimous contribution in making LPF what it is today. I am more than sure they will continue to guide LPF most rightly.

As the older trustees assume newer responsibilities, we have welcomed three new trustees. **Dr. Ms. Nirmala Pandit** is a doctorate in Human Rights from the University of Pune. She is the managing trustee of the Nav Maharashtra Community Foundation, India. **Ms. Roda Mehta** holds a Masters in Economics and Business Management, and has extensive experience in Advertising and Communication. And the third new trustee is **Dr. Ms. Gulshan Gidwani**, who is the Principal Director of St. Mira's Educational Institutions. You will get to know each one of them more closely through our communication package, INPSIRA.

We also have inducted three new members on our undergraduate board; all three are Lila Fellows. **Ms. Rashmi Dixit (LF-1998)** holds a Masters in Computer Science and works as Project Manager in Persistent Systems Ltd. **Ms. Varsha Borkar (LF-1996)** completed her ME in Electrical Engineering and is working as Deputy Executive Engineer in MSETCL. **Ms. Sukhada Kulkarni (LF-1998)** did her Masters in Chemistry and works in the research lab at Emcure Pharmaceuticals.

Over the past four months, a number of activities and training programs have taken place. I wish to mention a few of them. **Our 4th batch of Peace Ambassadors completed their 21 days training program at ASHA Centre at Gloucester, UK.** They share their experience of the same in a separate article in this issue. DO read it. It is very motivating. **Also for the first time, the 34th i.e. the last issue of INSPIRA was released overseas in UK** at the hands of the Honourable Mayor of Cinderford, Mr. Max Coburn, who was the Chief Guest for the valedictory function of the Peace Ambassadors at ASHA Centre, UK. This indeed was a unique event and a proud moment for LPF.

The training programs started with Ms. Ratna Khemani, Director Academy of Natural Health and Beauty and an internationally acclaimed Personality Development Counsellor conducting a seminar for the Lila Girls and Lila Fellows in two separate sessions, which addressed all aspects of personality, including communication skills, confidence building, positive attitudes, motivational skills, etiquette and grooming, personal hygiene and much more. It was a 'loaded package' indeed, to help the girls **'Step into the New World'** after moving out of school! This was followed by a short program **"From College to Corporate and Beyond"**, conducted by our own Senior Lila Fellow and Trustee for our school program, **Ms. Samina Deokar**. She holds a Masters in Industrial Psychology and a Diploma in HRM and is an experienced HR consultant.

Ms. Sunita Chandiramani conducted a workshop on Personal Effectiveness. She is a freelance experienced soft-skills trainer and has conducted many programs for the Corporate, addressing how to improve one's effectiveness, communication and presentation skills, motivation and assertiveness.

Our very own Lila Fellows and Peace Ambassadors, Dr. Ms. Harshada Nagar and Ms. Prachi Divekar, conducted a workshop "Leadership through Fun Filled Activities". Harshada is a doctorate in Polymer Metal Composites (Material Science, Physics) and currently an Asst. Professor at the International School of Business and Media (ISB&M), Nande. Prachi, a postgraduate in Computer Applications, is a Certified IRCA (International Register of Certificated Auditors) Lead Auditor and is currently working with Cognizant as a Quality Analyst. Through various fun games, they covered important aspects like building confidence, self-development, innovation and creativity. What is noteworthy is that they developed this program from their learnings from the Peace Ambassador's training Programme in the UK.

'The sixty-eight hour Spoken English course', which is a must for every girl wanting to become a successful professional, was conducted by **Ms. Sangita Belvalkar** who is a freelance trainer in English training employees with corporate organisations. Having studied in the USA, in the four-week course that she conducts, she covers all aspects of the language, including grammar, vocabulary, speech, comprehension and writing skills.

The soft skills training program was repeated, but with a difference. The girls actually visited corporate organisations, who very willingly and enthusiastically conducted these programs. Two organisations came forth to support LPF in this endeavour - Cummins India Ltd. and KPIT Cummins Infosystems. **Cummins India Ltd. prepared the Lila Girls for actual employability skills development, such as interview techniques, group discussions, composure and etiquette and updated them about the career opportunities available after completing their graduation. KPIT Cummins Infosystems did a marvellous program for Lila Fellows on "How to face interviews with confidence and poise".** A visit to the campus gave the girls a feel of what lies ahead. They were also tutored on resume writing, aptitude tests, general etiquettes and how to communicate effectively during the interviews. LPF is indeed very thankful to both these organisations for their invaluable contribution to the development and growth of LGs and LFs.

I believe industrial and on-site visits are as important as classroom training programs. They equip us with practical knowhow. Driven by this idea, **we organised an industrial visit to Cummins India Ltd.** to give the LGs an opportunity to practically see and learn about the set up of manufacturing units, layout of workshops, and the modern technology used in state of the art manufacturing processes. **A visit-cum-picnic was also organised for both LFs and LGs to GMRT (Giant Meter-wave Radio Telescope) at Narayangaon.** This was one of the most exciting programs for all, including me and other trustees who accompanied the group. We all learned all about the construction of 30 large dishes at a relatively small cost that has been possible due to an important technological breakthrough achieved by Indian Scientists and Engineers in designing light-weight and low-cost dishes. GMRT is a very versatile instrument for investigating a variety of radio astrophysical problems originating from

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From My Heart...

the Solar system close to us, to the edge of the observable Universe, which is much farther. However, two of its most important astrophysical objectives are: 1. To detect the highly shifted red spectral line of neutral Hydrogen expected from proto-clusters or proto-galaxies before they condense to form galaxies in the early phase of the Universe and 2. To search for and study rapidly-rotating Pulsars in our galaxy. Wow! What an experience!

But, "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy!" How could we close this busy trimester without having fun? We combined several festival moods vis. Dandiya, Diwali, Christmas and New Year into one, and partied late into the night! We had a great time dancing to the latest tunes with an excellent DJ, followed by many games and a sumptuous dinner. On this occasion, we also celebrated a special achievement of **Ms. Freny Tarapore**, our senior trustee and now a member of our Advisory Board. **She**

has been appointed as a Director on the main board of Family Planning Association of India.

There is so much happening at the Foundation that I do not have enough space to write about it all in my column. But, Inspira brings it all to you in the pages to follow! Wish everyone a wonderful 2012 and I look forward to jointly be able to realise all our dreams.

Lila.

With Warm Regards,
Mom for Lila Fellows and Lila Girls,
Friend to All,
Lila Poonawalla

Readers Write...

*Mom, Dad,
What can I say?
I CAN say,
You taught me right from wrong,
You gave me life,
You gave me happiness and joy,
You gave me courage and commitment,
You made me the person I am today,
And I just want to say thank you,
From the bottom of my heart
Mum, Dad,
Thank you for all that You do for us.*

*Your life on this Earth has been a blessing to so many a soul
my dear Mom n Dad, I hope that is something that you already know
You will be always be our guiding light, in darkness and joy,
In smiles and tears and on difficult paths.*

*You make us feel special with the pampering and the scold,
When God made you I wonder what he had in mind
To make such beautiful souls those will last forever.
You are the perfect picture of how one can lead one's life.*

*From my heart, you teach us lessons apart,
What can inspiration mean?
I see you and understand.*

*You are an angel sent on earth to make us special for all that is worth.
I promise you will never be lonely, because Lila Fellows will always be by your side.
To you, Mom and Dad, I want to say thank you for all that you do,
and most importantly.... I love you.*

**Yours Loving Daughter,
Sanchita**

News Flash...

Lfs conduct Orientation Program for IIMP students headed for Singapore

The India Institute of Management had requested Mrs. Poonawalla to conduct an orientation program for 60 First year MBA students who are about to leave for Singapore on an industrial visit cum pleasure trip. Unfortunately, due to Mr. Poonawalla's medical treatment, she was away at Banagalore. However, she nominated her best picks- Sr. LFs Dr. Rupali Soni (LF-2002) and Ms. Jyoti Otageri (LF-1998) to conduct the orientation for the students of IIMP. Both, Jyoti and Rupali have completed their 3-week Peace Leadership Training at Asha Centre, Gloucestershire, UK in 2009. They had conducted a similar orientation program for the 4th Batch of Peace Ambassadors before they left for UK in 2011.

On behalf of the Lila Poonawalla Foundation, LFs Rupali Soni and Jyoti Otageri conducted the orientation program for the students of IIMP at Wakad on 29th January 2012. It was attended by 60 MBA students and 3 Faculty members vis. Prof. K. P. Mishra, Dr. Poornima Tapas and Mr. Ashish.

In the two-hour session, Rupali and Jyoti covered the following topics:

- 1 About Singapore
- 2 Baggage Regulations for Air Travel to Singapore
- 3 Personal and General Hygiene, Cleanliness of Rooms
- 4 Team Etiquette
- 5 Punctuality
- 6 Greeting and Introductions Etiquette
- 7 Body Language
- 8 Corporate Etiquette
- 9 Attire Etiquette
- 10 Dining Etiquette
- 11 Gift Etiquette
- 12 Taboos Etiquette for Singapore
- 13 Sightseeing Etiquette
- 14 Places of Interest
- 15 Singapore: The Food Paradise
- 16 Shopping in Singapore
- 17 Photography
- 18 Study Tour Report Writing
- 19 Gratitude and Appreciation
- 20 Separate Brief Session for Girls



The Lila Fellows got a great response from the students who were inquisitive as well as interested. That evening Mrs. Poonawalla received the following e-mail from concerned Head of Department at IIMP:

Dear Mrs. Poonawalla,

Rupali and Jyoti did a great orientation program. They addressed all our concerns rightly. The students have also been sensitised on all possible dimensions. They discussed the smallest of issues and topics and explained each of them right from the basics. I was immensely touched by the values depicted by them. The final quote *"Millions of Indians are starving. You students are getting a chance to fly to and have fun in a foreign country like Singapore; so try not to create any fuss unless something is extremely critical"*. Moreover, the value 'attitude of gratitude' was also communicated well to the students. Rupali and Jyoti made a presentation that was very apt to the occasion and audience. Thank you Lila Ma'm, for providing us great resources like Rupali and Jyoti. Thank you Rupali and Jyoti for conducting such a wonderful program on a Sunday. Some students had personally approached me to convey their thanks to you through me.

Prof. K.P. MISHRA,
Head of Department
Post-Graduate Diploma in Management
Indira Institute of Management, Pune



■ - Rajani Panchang-Dhumal

Empowered LILA fellows...



I am Alkab Shaikh Lila Fellow 2003. "Life itself can't give you anything unless you really work for it. Life just gives you time and space. It's upon you to fill it with your dreams!" I always had a dream – "One day I will start an institute / company of my own!" In 2009, my dreams came true! I currently run my own language institute 'Bleu Blanc Rouge' at Deccan Gymkhana, Pune. It completed its second year this October. It's a well-known fact that being proficient in two or more languages in today's globalised era is as important as being tech savvy. Recognizing this need of the hour, I founded *Bleu Blanc Rouge*. Currently, we teach French at all levels as per the CECR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) competency framework. Besides language training, we also offer translation, interpretation and voice-over services at competitive rates.

It all began when I stood 14th in the HSC Merit List in Pune division. I was then confused about the future studies I wanted to pursue. One of our lecturers, Prof. Suhas Joglekar, suggested that I consider studying Economics; and so I did. After qualifying the NET exams in 1999, I started working as a research assistant under the guidance of the renowned scientist Dr. Ram Manohar Lohiya. It was from him that I learnt the importance of being disciplined, punctual and responsible. Imbibing these attributes have helped groom my personality.

When I was working as a research assistant, I faced many problems while using statistics and mathematics, which led to my interest in econometrics. Unfortunately, I was the only one to choose this subject and so the subject was never taught in class. Then I decided to meet Prof. Sahani of Pune University to request him to teach me econometrics. Although he warned me that the subject would be difficult to pursue, because I lacked a Mathematics background, I accepted this as a challenge and secured 80% marks in the subject.

Meanwhile, I had started working as a lecturer in the Symbiosis College. My mother had always stressed the importance of learning new languages. Keeping that in mind, I simultaneously started attending French classes. In 2003, I was fortunate to receive full scholarship for the IMP École Supérieure de Gestion (ESG) course in Paris. I was the first in my family to venture out of India. Although my family supported me, my Paris ticket fare could not be arranged, as both my parents had retired. It was then that my French lecturer Ms. Nandita suggested that I apply for the Lila Poonawalla Foundation scholarship. Eventually I

was awarded the scholarship and I landed in Paris.

Like most of us, I too grew up reading the adventures of *Sindbad*, epics like *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, the real life journeys of *Huan Tsang*, the struggle of *Anandibai Joshi*, about the World Wars, the Renaissance, the Independence struggle, Greek mythology, biographies of great men and women and much more. I knew that the only way to make my life fuller and fulfilling was to learn more, to understand better, and to empathise. As my studies progressed in Paris, I was more than eager to travel and explore. Although I had managed to save a few Euros out of my allotted scholarship fund, it did not seem sufficient for my travel in this continent.



So I decided to work part-time in a restaurant near Hotel de Ville in Paris as a Chef. I was supposed to learn Lebanese cuisine, which I did with the help of the Chef I was going to replace. I thoroughly enjoyed this experience. There were times when I earned 'tips' for my cooking from customers who had relished the "*manuche*" or "*keftas*" that I had prepared. While I was at it, I thought of making Indian "*paranthas*" and sell them in Paris. I was not sure if they would sell, but I felt it was worth a try. So, off I went to an old South Indian store in the suburbs of Paris, where they sold flour that was similar to "*atta*". For a rolling pin I used a bottle and the 'rolling board' was a flat

board of the shelf in the kitchen (much to the displeasure of the *femme de ménage*). I rolled out some square, bland *aloo paranthas* and called up my French friends for the treat. They simply loved it! They even offered to help me get orders. So that became my weekend activity. Slowly the business grew and I started receiving calls on Fridays for orders on Saturdays and Sundays. I charged 2 euros per *parantha*, and with an order of 50-100 *paranthas* a week, I could garner enough money to go on my much-awaited trip to the different countries of Europe. Through all this, I discovered a new side to myself, that of an "entrepreneur".

In the second year of my stay in Paris, one of my friends suggested that I contest the upcoming Presidential elections of the Residents Committee of *Maison de l'Inde in Cite Universitaire*, Paris. I refused instantly. "*Who on earth would vote for me in this foreign land?*" I thought.



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Empowered LILA Fellows...



After all, there were so many different nationals living under one roof and they hardly knew me. Upon further insistence, I filled up the form. It was important to go well prepared for the campaign, and so I prepared an agenda detailing my plan of action upon being elected and how it would benefit all. The day of the election dawned and the results were more than astonishing! I won by majority and went on to become the President. My joy knew no bounds. I was the first Indian "woman" to become the President. I was proud to unfurl the Indian flag in the House in Paris on the Indian Independence Day.

Then I set to work, and could accomplish 70% of my promises. I also organized many cultural events in collaboration with the Brazilian and African Houses. Some of them even included my own performances, one of which had me dressed up as Lord Krishna playing the flute in a yellow *dhoti* made out of a *sari*, dancing to the tunes of "*Mohe chhedo na nand ke laala...*", and another where

a *Bharatnatyam* dancer trained me and we performed a *Bharatnatyam* sequence on a Bengali classical song!

Beyond my social activities, Mr. B Sanyal, the Director of *Maison de l'Inde* engaged me in the project "Evaluation of the Masters Programme in Economics" by UNESCO, specially designed for Economic Planners by the IICBA (International Institute of Capacity Building in Africa). I consider this a true honour. I was a postgraduate in Economics, and evaluating the content and composition of a Masters Program for the UNESCO was indeed a gratifying experience.

Meanwhile, after returning to India, I answered the call of my inner voice to, "*do something for the Lila Poonawalla Foundation.*" Eventually, I decided to conduct French language classes for the Lila Fellows gratis. Every year Lila Ma'am selects 3 Lila Fellows to whom I teach the French language. Further, in 2009, I completed my Post Graduate Diploma in Cyber Law from the Asian School of Cyber Laws, Pune.

Feedback of Lila Fellows' on Alkab Shaikh's French language classes

"I got the opportunity to learn French from Ms. Alkab Sheikh through the Lila Poonawalla Foundation. Even after achieving so much at a young age, Alkab is a very down-to-earth person. As a teacher, she used to simplify things without pressurising the students. She made her classes humorous, comforting us and capturing our interest in the subject. Through her teaching and personality, we came to know that her knowledge is not confined to one particular field. She is knowledgeable about Commerce, Literature, Language, Cyber Law, and many other subjects. It interested us to know that her hobbies included sketching, trekking, singing, etc. When I first met her, the common link between us was that we were both Lila Fellows. After a few days we became close friends because of her kind, caring and understanding nature. I completed both, the basic and the intermediate course with her."

- Aparna Bhandar (LF-1998)

"I am happy I got this opportunity to learn the French Language from Alkab, who certainly is a master in it! The best part was the personal attention she gave to each of her student. Thanks to her and the Foundation that I could fulfill my dream of learning French."

-Supriya Satwekar (LF-2010)

Note: Alkab is the Founder Director of Bleu Blanc Rouge located Off. Bhandarkar Road, Opp. PYC Ground, on Deccan Gymkhana, Pune. She can be e-mailed at md@bbr-india.com

■ - Compiled by Rita Shetiya

Donations...



Ms. Anjali Sarada
(LF-2005)
Rs.10,000/-



Mrs. Uzma Anwar
Sayyad (Kazi)
(LF-1999)
Rs.10,000/-

Snippets...



Spoken English classes conducted by Ms. Sangita Belvalkar



"Stepping into a new world" by Ms. Ratna Khemani for Lila Girls at Deccan Rendezvous



"Stepping into a new world" by Ms. Ratna Khemani for Lila Fellows at Hotel Studio Estique



Ms. Kavita Amarnani, a senior professional from the hospitality industry trained the PA Batch 2011 in table manners, grooming and dressing-etiquettes



Parents and spouses gathered to bid adieu to the PAs-2011 on their departure to UK



Mom and Dad organised a get-together in London for the PAs-2011 and the LFs based in the UK

LF Snippets...



The UK-based LFs pose with Mom and Dad at the get-together at China Town, UK



"Personal Effectiveness" by Sunita Chandiramani



"Learning leadership with fun-filled activities" by PAs Harshada Babrekar and Prachi Divekar



Dandiya cum New Year Party at Sadanand Resort



"From College to Corporate & beyond" by LF & School Project Trustee Ms. Samina Deokar



LF Priya Lele organised a get-together of LFs at her house in UK on the occasion of New Year



KPIT Cummins conducted "Versatile Soft Skills Training" on its campus for Lila Fellows



"Soft Skills Training" conducted by Cummins India Ltd. For Lila Girls



Lila Girls at Cummins India Ltd. on a Industrial Visit



Picnic cum educational tour to GMRT (Giant Metre-wave Radio Telescope) setup at Narayangaon



Mom and Dad met up Bangalore based LFs and their husbands and kids at Cafe Coffee Day



Sneha Bhoi (Nikum) LF-2005 and PA-2008 conducted the workshop "From College to Corporate" for LFs and LGs at Hotel Deccan Rendezvous

Inspira Reading Lady...

Dr. Uma Ganesh, CEO, Global Talent Track has over 20 years experience in the IT Industry, in the area of education and technology. She holds an MBA from Delhi University and a PhD from IIT Bombay. She has been involved with the Education business through her association with leading IT training companies - NIIT, Aptech and Zee Interactive Learning Systems and has a successful track record in building technology led education ventures. As the CEO of Zee Interactive Learning Systems, she was instrumental in pioneering several IT led learning initiatives which included setting up 300 learning centers to train over 25,000 IT professionals at a time. She was also closely involved with the creation of Animation Studio and the e-Learning Development center in India.

The driving force of Dr. Uma is her extensive experience in profit centre management, strategy formation, business development, entrepreneurship, human resource empowerment in Manufacturing, ICE (Information, Communication and Entertainment) and education. She has written a book entitled 'Unleashing the Knowledge Force' and is a champion of educational reforms. She spoke to Inspira about the lacunae and reforms needed in the education system and the initiatives she has taken.

How and when was GTT conceived?

GTT is now about 2 years old. I have been part of the industry for over two decades. I had noticed that over the past 7-8 years there has been a major concern over finding adequate talent. This was not a problem in the previous times when the industry was smaller. But, with the economy growing at such a fast pace, the balance between the demand and supply is not being reached, despite a steep increase in the number of Universities in the country. Specializations do not meet the demands of the market.

So, I thought why not convert this challenge of the times into an opportunity. If you see, India has the demographic dividend of being the youngest country in the world. Many qualified people are unemployed. For Eg. 30-35% of engineers are unemployed in our country. On the other hand, if we look at UK, it is technical talent deficient. The USA is forever in need of IT skills. According to the Boston Consulting Group, by 2020 the world is going to face a shortage of 25 million skilled people. India can fill this void of the global skill shortage making use of its dividend.

Another problem is that the curriculum at Universities and Colleges are not at par with the demands of the Corporate and Industry and there is a need for training that can bridge this gap. Technological changes have taken a toll on the current knowledge force, which seems inadequate. There is a need for 'tie ups' amongst universities/colleges and the corporate.

Where are things going wrong?

As a nation, we do not have risks covers. We bank upon our families to fall back on, if nothing else exists to support ourselves. Education in India is looked at as a source of stability and security and no one wants to take risks. Our society has created a problem of identifying prosperity with money. That has made today's youth in

hurry to get to their goals and unfortunately end up taking shortcuts. They jump jobs very often proving their loyalty quotient to be zero. They lack depth in knowledge. Unfortunately, paper is the currency of today whilst there is a need to convert skills into currency. The entire education system needs to be become 'knowledge acquisition' centric, the responsibility of which vests with the policy makers. Parents take great efforts and borrow loans to pay for the child's education. But there is need for soul searching to assess the quality of the 20 years of education we give to our children. Do the educational institutions instill the right value systems and knowledge systems in them?



What role does GTT play in the reforms you suggest?

GTT has been created to equip personnel with the needed capabilities to meet the demands of the industry. We design programs by understanding the requirements of the students so that they can be effectively placed. We offer some scholarships. Some candidates are sponsored by their employers to do courses with us. We have tie-ups with banks to facilitate loans to the needy students whilst we also have provisions for part-payment of the fees.

Why did you choose Pune to start GTT?

I think it is a fantastic city, which attracts youngsters from all over the country. They say if something works here, it works anywhere. It has a great climate, great people with great attitudes and the best is the great University and many good institutions.

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Reading Lady...

What made Uma Ganesh what she is?

Good education, company of inspirational and motivating people, combination of some hard-work and some luck, and no matter persistence till I got the desired breakthrough! I have a strange fascination to do difficult things and what comes easily is a strict no-no for me. My family always promoted me to do well in life, no matter what it was that I did. Only It should be meaningful and purposeful. I took up lot of leadership roles in school, did very well academically and got an opportunity to leave a small town 25 years ago when the norms were very different for girls. Due to my father's profession and then my own, I travelled far and wide. Meeting people and networking went a long way. I believe meeting people from all walks of life makes one wiser.

How do you balance home and career?

By making sensible compromises and choices at different points of life.... We take short vacations that ensure quality time with family. With working women spending much of their time at the work-place or in travel, children initially tend to complain of not getting enough of your

time. But, eventually they just grow up to realize your contribution. My daughter studying medicine at the Harvard Medical School, Boston now says, "Mama, I am proud of you".

What is your message to young girls, especially those who have to make choices between professional and domestic goals?

Face challenges and take up responsibilities. Be focused and have the zeal to excel. Most importantly, do things that you enjoy and not just because they are needed to be done. Marriage happens to all; take it as a milestone and not a destination. Jobs have changed and employers offer flexi-times and 'work from home' options. Many work places have crèches too. It is important you be there when your children need you; but it does not matter how much time you spend with them. It is all about how much quality time you spend with them.

■ - **Sanchita Satalkar & Rajani Panchang-Dhumal**

News Flash **Giving "Joys through toys" was a giving with a difference**

LF Manisha Deshpande had initiated and successfully completed a toys collection and donation drive through her office. She came up with the idea to do it through LPF and Mrs. Poonawalla passed on the idea to me and gave us the free hand to implement it. Lila Fellows volunteered and many many homes all across the city were identified as 'collection booths'. We spread the word hoping people would walk up to us and drop their toys. We had started out in the first week of October 2011. Our target was to donate toys to many destitute children on Children's Day, i.e. 14th November 2011.

At the end of 3 weeks, the campaign seemed to be dying out with just about 100 toys collected as a team. Then, we changed our strategy. We approached schools, offices, and companies and appealed to them to conduct collection drives within their organisations assuring them to transport the toys from their premises. Tides turned... and daily collections of an individual volunteer struck 100 toys and at times more! The successful collections of one volunteer acted as an impetus to other volunteers and urged them to go that extra mile and SPEAK UP AND APPEAL! That was all that was required! Thanks to Lila Mom.... the goodwill that Lila Poonawalla Foundation has earned over the years made people readily believe in the cause and join it.

Then came another stage. Toys occupy volume and storing 300-400 toys at homes was another challenge. Special thanks to parents, spouses and in-laws of the

volunteers who did not only collect and transport toys, but also offered space to store the toys till they were distributed. The toys were pouring in so rapidly that we had to start the donation drive pre-maturely, in the first week of November itself. Finally, one appeal by Lila Mom to KPIT made it merrier at one stage to difficult at another. Lila Mom says, *"When I contacted the Corporates through an informal mail, I did not expect to get such a quick and positive response. It appeared as if they all were waiting to do something for the children but did not have the time or the knowhow about how to go around doing this. LPF came as a blessing to them. They all were more than happy to rally around and get the toys collected from their employees not only in Pune, but also from their other establishments outside Pune too!"*

We collected and donated close to 3000 toys. And they were not just Children's Day gifts! To some others they were Diwali presents, to some Christmas and to yet others New Years gifts! We closed the donations at the end of 2011 by giving lots and lots of joy of a different kind.

Our team also reached out to kids who are differently abled! We gave away loads of puzzles/lego type toys to special children at Bal Kalyan Sansthan and Snehalaya in order to help them enhance their motor skills and thinking abilities. People who were aware donated money, so that we could buy new toys for AIDS and HIV infected Children at Manavya. This we consider as the highlight of our donation drive.

contd...

News Flash



Organisations that conducted internal collection drives and donated to the cause as a group:

1. Moondrop Nursery School (Model Colony)
2. SNBP International School (Rahatni)
3. AISSMS college of HMCT
4. KPIT Cummins
5. Cognizant
6. Wipro
7. HRS Software (Bhandarkar Road)
8. Elephant Design
9. Ernst & Young
10. NLC Nalco
11. LIC Office, Model Colony, University Road

Volunteers-

1. LF Manisha Deshpande (Project Leader)
2. LF Dr. Rupali Soni
3. LF Dr. Rajani Panchang-Dhumal
4. LF Chandrika and sis Radhika Srinivasan
5. LF Nisha Pandya
6. LF Shraddha Kokane
7. LF Romana Tambe
8. LF Dr. Harshada Babrekar
9. LF Snehal Kulkarni
10. LF Dhanashree Wadkar
11. LF Prayaga Hoge
12. Vidya Khutwad, Secretary LPF

Beneficiary Organizations -

1. Bal Kalyan Sanstha, University Road
2. Snehalaya, Wagholi
3. Manavya, Residential rehabilitation centre for AIDS/HIV infected children at Bhugaon
4. Saraswati Anaath Ashram, Dapodi
5. Sindhutai Sapkal's Orphanage at Saswad
6. Bharatiya Samaj Seva Kendra (BSSK) at Koregaon Park
7. Balgram SOS Children's Village, Yerwada
8. Slums and Anganwadis in Sus-Baner-Pashan
9. Khadakvasla-Singhagad Road Anganwadis
10. Mahila Sevagram, Kothrud
11. Slums in Wadarwadi and Kothrud
12. Maher, Bhima Koregaon
13. Anganwadis and ZP Schools in Shirwal, Shindewadi, Palshi, and Javale of Satara District
14. Destitute kids at traffic signals and in the Pune University Campus
15. Zilla Parishad School at Singapur, Taluka Velha, District Pune
16. Aadhar Pratishthan at Kharadi
17. Shivajinagar Remand Home

Friends, families and residential colonies contributed and facilitated collections. However, many friends were eager in joining the volunteers for donations. Rupali Soni's three male colleagues from the Biotech Department at the University and Prayaga Hoge's two male journalist friends joined them all the way to the most rural and under-developed village of Sinhapur. Chandrika Srinivasan's sister Radhika conducted this huge collection drive in her school and got her staff to sort, wash and clean all the toys before they were donated! Shraddha distributed chocolates along with the toys!

Donation was another experience all together. Organisations welcomed volunteers as if we were guests of honour at some ceremony. Children eagerly displayed their paintings and skills. Rural schools even offered lunch. One child came forth and gifted a self-made Diwali card to Manisha as a reciprocation of his joy. It was extremely touching, when children ran up and hugged our volunteers or placed a peck or two on our cheeks. Quoting Lila Mom's experience, she said *"I went with the LFs to some organisations they visited. One of them was Maher and the other was BSSK Orphanage, Koregaon Park. Both the experiences were different! I actually felt that the kids were giving me more joy by accepting the toys than they were getting from the toys we gave them!"* Mrs. Priyanka Paygude, an anganwadi teacher at Donje Village, Sinhadag, shared something very surprising. She said, *"In villages, children are not willing to come to school; but because of such activities and specially toys in school, children show interest and come to school regularly".* Shraddha shares, *"My experience in the slums was fabulous.... I placed the toys in the centre for children to choose from and they all vanished in just 5 minutes flat! I wished I had more toys! Seeing the children from one home carry toys around, more children poured in and I was left empty-handed which gave me a sombre feeling. But I am going to visit them once again sometime soon with some other friends of mine."* The care-taker of one of the organisations said, *"The children are lost... immersed in the joy of their toys. We seek your association forever, hoping to bring about similar happiness in the lives of many more children."* Officials from the beneficiary organisations did not only request for many more such drives, but instead even offered to contribute next time onwards! The feedbacks echo in one voice, *"The Foundation has brought happiness in the life of so many little ones. May God bless you!"*

All in all a great initiative and a tremendous team effort! LPF thanks every one even distantly associated with the 'Joys thro toys' project. Without donors who agreed to part with their old and new toys, and some with their money, we would never have been able to reach out to nearly 3000 underprivileged children. Special thanks to the press, viz. Citadel, Mid-day and Pudhari for giving widespread coverage to our cause.

■ **-Dr. Rajani Panchang-Dhumal**

Further reading at:

1. *Khelniwaalya taai bharat aahet mulaanchya jeevanat aanand*, Pudhari, December 2011
2. *Spreading the Festive Spirit*, Citadel, January 2012, Page 12-13
3. *A playful idea*, Mid-Day, 4th January 2012, Page 3

Not just one award or one event; our Lila Fellows are all set out to conquer everything that comes their way, just everyday! Everything that they are doing, they are doing it with style! It has been just impossible to summarise their achievements in few sentences this Zenith!

Advocate Kshama Loya (LF-2010)

completed her Bachelor's in Law from ILS Law College, Pune. She received the LPF Scholarship to do her LLM in International Commercial Laws from King's College, London. In July 2011, her college sponsored her to attend a 2-week International Workshop in Investment Law conducted by the World Trade Institute in Bern, Switzerland. Soon after her return, she was shortlisted to attend a 3 days Advocacy Workshop conducted by renowned international Arbitrator, Mr. Martin Hunter (aged 74!). After the final day of the practical Advocacy session in which she had to argue a case and examine witnesses, Prof. Hunter took her as an intern to work under him until he finally retires!



In February 2011, Kshama was chosen to represent King's College London, in an International Level 'Foreign Direct Investment Moot Court Competition' to be held in November 2011. The team comprised of her and 5 other students from different nationalities- China, USA, Russia, Portugal, and UK. She and the British team-mate were chosen to argue the case before internationally acclaimed barristers and arbitrators. 40 teams representing 20 countries competed at this forum. After several rounds, Kshama and her British colleague successfully steered the team into the finals and finally won the International Moot! They won four awards of which three were for the team: Winners in Finals, Most highly ranked team (with a gap of 98 points between them and the runners up) and the Best 'Written' Memorial Award. She also bagged an individual award, the 'Honourable Best Advocate', given to the top 10 best advocates. She stood 6th out of the total 107 international speakers. She shared this news with one of her lawyer friends in India. Through him, the news of her success in the moot court reached the Aurangabad High Court where she had practiced for a year. The High Court in turn gave her a '*Special Satkar*' by displaying her certificates on its Official Notice Board and asked her to write a message to the Aurangabad Bar, which was also displayed. Subsequently, the news reached the Bank, which had given her educational loan and got it published in Aurangabad Sakal. Several newspapers, namely Divya Marathi, Lokmat, Times, and Times of India, interviewed her father on her success. Meanwhile, her other scholarship provider declared a cash prize of Rupees 1 Lakh for Kshama and got the news published in Mumbai Sakal.

She has passed the LLM course with merit and now she works for a US International Law firm at their London office. She is already looking forward to be able to pay off the massive educational loan her parents took for her! Kshama has brought great pride to our Foundation and

she surely is at the Zenith of our success stories! We wish her every success she vies.

Animator Meghana Gupte (LF-2007)

graduated in Fine Arts -MFA-in 3D Animation from the Academy of Art University, San Francisco in December 2010. During her course, she impressed all her instructors with her creativity in animation, given the fact she was the only one in class without an animation background whilst all her classmates had over 5 years experience in the same. Out of 800 entries at the 'Annual Spring Show Awards' her creation was awarded the 'Runners-up' in the 3D animation category.



She had been working on a 3D animation film, 'Alvin and Chipmunks 3' at the 'Rhythm and Hues Studios' as a 3D Animator. The movie released in the USA on 16th of December 2011 and in India on 23rd December 2011. It brings us great joy and pride to see her name in the credits of such a big commercial film that released worldwide!

Oceanographer, Dr. Rajani Panchang-Dhumal (LF-2000)

took a two-year sabbatical to raise her baby after completing her PhD in Geological Oceanography from the National Institute of Oceanography, Goa in 2008. She recently came back into science with a bang as the Principal Investigating Scientist of her own project, which was sanctioned by the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India. She is currently at the Agharkar Research Institute working on this project. She attempts to work on the extremely sensitive marine microfossils in mangrove mudflat habitats of Coastal Maharashtra. This will be the first study to describe the distribution of these microfossils from any mangrove habitat in the country, which is also considered a very difficult terrain to sample. She aims at understanding how climates and sea-levels fluctuated in the past and the effect of the many anthropogenic activities on the endangered habitats over the past century.



She has presented her research at many national and international forums and mentored several students in their Master's dissertations and summer projects. She has 9 research papers to her credit of which 5 are published in reputed international journals. Her latest paper, scheduled for publication in 'Marine Geology', for the very first time in the world, reports high-resolution climatic variations for the past 500 years from Central

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Asia, Irrawaddy Delta off Myanmar. During this period in Earth's Climatic history, a period of cooling described as the 'Little Ice Age' was first reported to have occurred in Europe. However, later there was speculation if this climatic event was limited to Europe. Rajani's work provides evidences for similar extreme climatic variations during the same period in Central Asia. Her current research interests are Recent Foraminiferal taxonomy, palaeoclimatic reconstructions for the past 18,000 years, coastal and shallow marine ecosystem dynamics, Sea Level fluctuations, Pollution studies and Environmental Impact Assessment of coastal and marginal marine ecosystems.

Animator & Graphic Designer, Rashmi Borole (LF-2006)

has been quite active with her NGO Art-Pitara ever since she returned with a Masters in Animation from the USA. Her NGO aims towards developing creative potential in underprivileged children and conducts free art workshops for them in different parts of the country. Over the past couple of years, she has been reaching out to students and underprivileged children in remote regions of Leh-Ladakh and those along the Indo-Pak and Indo-China Border.



In December 2011, she was invited to the Asia Pacific Feminist Forum in Thailand organized by the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development where women from different countries working for betterment of girls and women met. She conducted a session where she helped the participants bring up feminist issues by means of art. She is looking forward to do some similar kind of work with the schools in Pune.

Radiologist, Dr. Supriya Kulkarni (LF-1998)

works as a specialist in Breast Imaging in one of Canada's premier cancer care hospitals, the Princess Margaret Hospital, Toronto. In December 2011 she visited a cancer hospital in Kuwait for a 10 day official visit. She was part of the 'Breast Team' comprising of surgeons, a pathologist, an oncologist, a radiologist (herself) and some more representing her hospital, which is helping them to develop their Oncology centre. For Supriya this project promises enriching experiences and challenges.



Singer, Kasturi Paigude (LF-2004)

has been nominated by Marathi Chitrapat Parivar for the 'Chitrapadarpan Puraskar' in this year's non-filmy album category as the 'Best Female Singer' for her album 'Mi Premika'. Others nominated with her in the same category are renowned and experienced singers in the industry, Bela



Shende and Anandi Joshi. A nomination on her maiden recording is highly commendable! Our best wishes are with Kasturi and we hope she bags this one!

Indian Classical Dancer, Rutuja Kulkarni (LF-2011)

received her LPF scholarship to pursue her MA in Kathak from the Department of Performing Arts Lalit Kala Kendra at the University of Pune. She has been learning Kathak for the past 8 years. In December 2011, she got the most coveted opportunity to perform at the 59th Annual 'Savai Gandharva (-Bhimsen) Mahotsav', one of the most reputed and celebrated festivals on Indian Classical Music in the country. Every year, only two dance groups receive the honoured opportunity to perform at this event. This year, Rutuja was a part of the group representing her dance school 'Naadroopa School of Dance' under the able guidance of her guru Smt. Shamatai Bhate. Performing in front of a 18,000 plus strength of audience and many stalwarts in classical music, makes it one of the most memorable and gratifying achievements for Rutuja.



Entrepreneur, Preeti Joshi (Nagarkar) (LF-2002)

and her husband head MAPYN, an IT service provider company which provides IT solutions, Embedded Systems Engineering solutions as well as Manufacturing solutions in Hardware & Software across a variety of domains. Preeti was selected for the fully funded '10,000 Women Entrepreneurs Certificate Programme' at Indian School of Business at Hyderabad. Launched by Goldman Sachs, 10,000 Women Scholarship is a global initiative that aims at increasing the number of under-served women receiving business and management education. This 16-week program was designed to provide world-class education to selected women entrepreneurs with 3 weeks of classroom sessions and 13 weeks of mentoring support on the job. As a part of the course, Preeti was required to prepare and present business plan of her current venture. She presented the MAPYN business plan and won the "Best Business Plan" award.



Computer Engineer Haripriya Rajagopal (LF-2003)

was part of the team that successfully helped the release of VMware's biggest product, 'vSphere 5'. At the launch of this product, she received the 'Hero of Cloud Infrastructure' Award. This award was given to the top 10 out of the 2500+ people who worked towards the realization of this release and went above and beyond their calling.



Valparai - The Seventh Heaven

I am Minal Marne (LF-2007, PA-2011). After completing my Masters in Biotechnology, I spent a short time as a researcher at the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), a CSIR Lab at Hyderabad. Through this article, I am sharing with you an account of my Jungle Safari, while working on the conservation of an extremely endangered species, the Lion-tailed Macaque (*Macaca silenus*). The Lion-tailed macaque is a monkey, endemic to the Western Ghats of South India. Over the past century and a half, the vast expanse of forest cover in the Western Ghats has fragmented into small forest patches due to tea and coffee plantations. I was interested in studying how this fragmentation is affecting the genetics of the lion tailed macaque; whether this fragmentation is causing stress on their reproduction, resulting in increased inbreeding within the population, and how could my study help in the conservation of this species.

In the month of December 2010, I went to the 'Annamalai Tiger Reserve', Tamilnadu on fieldwork with one of my colleagues. It is a tropical evergreen forest with a thick canopy, making even the penetration of sunlight difficult at some places. This forest is highly fragmented due to tea plantations.

I stayed in Valparai, a hill station in Coimbatore district located 3500 mtrs. above mean sea level. It is a heavenly place surrounded by hills, covered with tea plantations and meadows. I used to get up early morning in those misty days of December and walk for 15-20 km at a stretch without getting weary! Exploring the deep forests was an amazing and thrilling experience. Initially it was a bit intimidating. But, I think the serenity of the nature calmed my nerves and gave me the courage I needed.



Annamalai



Dense forest

Each day held thrilling surprises for me. Each fragment of the forest is unique in its flora and fauna. I was awestruck with the beauty of the Western Ghats. I was even reluctant to blink my eyes.... afraid I would miss something!

Crossing the stream to get into the Chinnakalar forest fragment was another rather difficult experience; first because the water was extremely chilled and second because the bottom was full of rounded stones covered with moss! In Korangmudi, another forest fragment, I walked through the swamp and my shoes and jeans were full of mud.

Punnimedu is a very dangerous fragment because there are no tracks to guide your path! We had to carve our own



Forest path

paths by cutting out bamboo trees that thronged our way. In forests, not only animals, but even plants are dangerous. We were always aware of the many toxic plants and poisonous snakes around us and so we were extremely alert and careful as we

crossed the jungle.

Rainforests are home to millions of leeches and ticks. Ticks bite, cause itching and give wounds. But leeches! They unknowingly crawl onto your shoes, creep into your shoes and socks, attach themselves to your body



Tea factory

and secretly devour your delicious blood! There is literally no escape from these bloodsuckers. The speciality about leeches is that they suck blood without giving you any kind of pain or sensation. So, when I returned to my room and

removed my shoes, I was shocked to see what an awesome party the leeches had had that day!

On the very first day, I spotted a **Wild Gaur** who gave a pose for my camera. Subsequently I saw the **Malabar**

contd...

Explorer...



Valparai a Heaven



Wild gaur inside tea plantation



Malabar giant squirrel



Mist of December



Leech bite



Chinnakalar stream



Lion tailed Macaque



Mom love



Malabar great hornbill

Giant Squirrel, the very special Flying Squirrel, Dusky Palm Squirrel, Stripe-necked Mongoose (the largest Asiatic mongoose), **Sambar Deer, Wild Dog, Nilgiri Langur, Bonnet Macaque, Wild Boar, Black-naped Hare** and of course the **Lion Tailed Macaque**. The Western Ghats are also an abode to many species of beautiful birds, butterflies and insects. I was lucky to see the **Malabar Great Hornbill**, a beautiful, huge bird that sounds like an approaching aircraft as it flies past! The flora of the Annamalai is as amazing as the fauna. In ten days, I saw so much and that too for the very first time in my life.

The Annamalai Tiger Reserve is just the right destination for nature and wildlife lovers, who are looking for

adventure. And yes, how can I forget the most interesting part? Food! Yes. I hogged on authentic South-Indian food for all three meals of the day, everyday- right from pongal, to a variety of dosas, uttappams and fish! This field experience of mine, not only made me confident and capable, but also made me more responsible towards our ecosystems. I have actually witnessed the real world that nature has created for us. I now understand the importance of wildlife and its conservation in the true sense.

■ - **Minal Marne**
(LF-2007 & PA-2011)

Inspira Health Capsule...



Dr. Tanveer Khan is a successful consulting dental surgeon and specializes in aesthetic dentistry. He runs a multi-specialty clinic along with a panel of specialists in all the disciplines of dentistry. He holds a Bachelor's in Dental Surgery from the University of Pune and has been practicing for the past 13 years. He is better known to us as the husband of our very own Lila Fellow Mubashira Shaikh Khan (LF-2003) and conducted a module on dental care at the Health Awareness Workshop the Foundation organized for Lila scholars, more importantly for their mothers on 24th July 2011. As promised, Inspira brings you the gist of his dental health care module, for the benefit of those who missed the workshop!

Ever wondered when you face a camera, which of your attributes makes your photograph perfect. Your looks? Your clothes? Your hair-do? No. It is your smile! And we know, to have a dazzling smile, we need to have great teeth. And great teeth mean strong and healthy teeth and gums.

Dr. Tanveer Khan emphasised on simple, daily oral care that everyone can follow for healthy oral health:

- ▶ Using the correct brushing technique
- ▶ Using dental floss after brushing teeth
- ▶ Brush teeth twice a day, once in the morning and once at night before going to bed

He also elaborated on the dental problems faced by us, especially children and pregnant ladies, such as:

- ▶ Swollen, bleeding gums
- ▶ Dental plaques
- ▶ Pregnancy tumors

He explained that pregnancy tumors are seen in some pregnant women in the 1st and 2nd trimester, due to ongoing hormonal changes. Dr. Khan stressed that one should never neglect any dental problem, but instead consult a dentist for treatment, without any delay.

Dr. Khan also shed light on some dental myths as listed below.

- ▶ Avoid scaling, as it creates gaps between the teeth, making them weak and sensitive.

Fact: Scaling only involves the removal of dental tartar and does not create gaps between teeth. Rather it prevents inflammation of the gums.

- ▶ A root canal treated tooth does not decay and the treatment is life-long.

Fact: A root canal treated tooth can also decay if proper oral hygiene is not maintained.



- ▶ Tooth filling and crown stay life-long and fitting a crown weakens the tooth structure.

Fact: A crown is used to preserve the filled tooth structure. Metal based filling or crown may weaken the tooth, if proper oral care is not taken.



Dr. Khan also discussed advanced dental treatments that make our teeth stronger and attractive. These include:

- ✧ Metal-free Crowns- Usage of Zirconium crowns
- ✧ Dental Implants - For proper growth of the root canal
- ✧ Lasers in Dentistry - For trimming overgrown gums
- ✧ Laser Gum Depigmentation - To remove the pigmentation of gums
- ✧ In-office Teeth Bleaching - For shiny white teeth using bleaching agents

Apart from biting into our food and chewing on it, our teeth are extremely important for right diction and speech during communication. Thus, Dr. Khan stressed that it is essential that we visit the dental clinic regularly to keep our teeth healthy.

Dr. Khan ended the session with useful tips to be used while visiting a dental clinic -

- ▶ Do not choose a dentist by the fee that the dentist charges; instead check the experience of the doctor.
- ▶ Choose a dentist whose waiting room is not crowded.
- ▶ Choose a class practitioner and not a mass practitioner!
- ▶ Look for and insist on sterilized instruments and hygiene.

We thank Dr. Khan for conducting such a helpful and informative session on dental care, especially for our mothers, who place everybody else's health ahead of their own. Have a happy and healthy smile!

■ - Nisha Pandya and Jyoti Otageri

Special Feature...



"The Spirit of Being Peace Ambassadors"

The fourth batch of Peace Ambassadors recently returned from the "Wholesome Leadership Training Programme" at Asha Centre, UK. Looking back, every one of them appreciates where they had been, and how far they have come. They wish to share their experiences of the expedition and the life lessons that they learnt at the Asha Centre.

The airhostess announced, "All the passengers are requested to fasten their seat belts!!" Our excitement and joy had reached the pinnacle. Lila Poonawalla Foundation and Asha Centre had made the dreams of the next batch of 14 young Lila Fellows of visiting the UK come true. We were not only on a journey to tour UK, but set out to learn lessons for life too. It was a Wholesome Leadership Programme of 21 days. We were equipped with the orientation session arranged by the previous PA batches. We were now ready to take the flight and experience the change!!

Metamorphosis at the Asha Centre Begins:

The lush green Forest of Dean and the beautiful garden are what we first noticed, when we alighted at the Asha Centre. The cottages at Asha Centre are just what we ever imagined or read about in our childhoods. We noticed the cleanliness and tidiness and the way everything was decorated and coiffured tastefully.

Our learning sessions were interwoven with fun-filled and interactive sessions full of energetic activities. None of the trainers ever made do with a 'chalk and talk' session. Each sunrise brought forth new hopes and aspirations and we looked forward to each day at the Asha Centre. We learnt many new lessons and skills. We learnt, observed, talked, asked questions, shared and lived every moment. The sessions at Asha Centre were so thought provoking and perfectly managed that they not only taught us new skills, but also instilled in us the true spirit of Interfaith and Peace, which would help us become true Peace Ambassadors.

Professional Skills:

1) Leadership Session with Ananda & Paul: The Lucca leadership Programme, "Leadership in Action" through change, was a two day session which taught us about transformational leadership, human framework, emotional intelligence, different forms of energy, etc. It was practically demonstrated to us how different forms of energy can be put to effective use. We were given a "Toolbox" of leadership. Effective use of the different styles of Leadership was discussed. One of the activities was completed in a record time of 9min 14sec, with team effort and effective leadership, which otherwise required 13-15mins for most of the other groups.



Peace Ambassadors-2011



Forest of Dean



Asha Centre



Dining room



Leadership activity

Special Feature...



2) Mrs. Zerbanoo Gifford's Experiences: Mrs. Zerbanoo shared anecdotes about how she developed into a young politician. The lessons that she learned at every stage of her life and sometimes just through daily routines, really inspired us. She shared her thoughts on making the first impression a lasting impression, by giving due attention to our attire. She distinguishes herself by being a daring lady. She advised us to identify our unique quality that will distinguish us from the others. The heart-to-heart chat with her will always be inspiring for each one of us.

3) Four Temperaments with Adrian: At the outset we were made to understand that our Temperament is not our personality. It is what we basically are. We PAs were helped in identifying our Temperament as sanguine, choleric, melancholic or phlegmatic. It was clear to us that generally, personalities are a combination of two or more types. We were convinced that it can be effectively used as a tool at workplace, where it may help us identify the temperament of a person, and accordingly deal with the person.

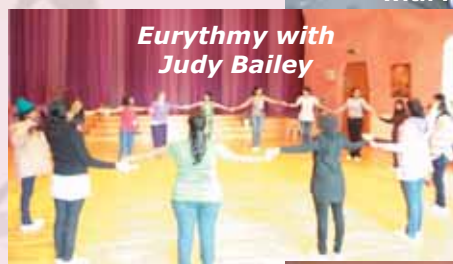
Takeaways from Art and History Sessions:

☞ **History with Dr. Kusoom Vadgama:** We had a lively session with her, wherein we came to know not only about the British Houses of Parliament, but a lot about the museum we visited as well. We were also lucky to visit her residence. She also gifted us a book authored by her. We became aware of international culture, Britain-India relationships and also of Dadabhai Naoroji's significant contribution to the British Parliament.

☞ **Eurythmy with Judy Bailey and Caroline:** We were made to understand the different forms of Eurythmy, our sun signs and how grateful we should be towards Mother Nature. We were also shown some films on eurythmy. We are now more graceful, confident, free and peaceful individually, as well as a group. We learnt to identify and appreciate the rhythm of silence.

☞ **Poetry & Drama with Adrian:** Poetry sessions were always looked forward to, because it was learning with fun. He taught us the right punctuations, emphasizing the right word, correct pronunciations and voice modulations with the right gestures. We got the opportunities to demonstrate our learning by reciting a poem at the Michaelmas Festival at the Grange and on the day of our graduation.

☞ **Painting Women's Rights with Jeroo Roy:** Painting sessions with Jeroo Roy taught us innovative ways to express our joys, sorrows, anger and other emotions through paintings. This added colours to our stay at the Asha Centre.



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Life Lessons Special Feature...



Life Lessons:

- Wheel of Life, Making Links & Sharing Circle with Sandy:** The 'Wheel of Life' helped clarify priorities in our lives. We played various games, went for a walk on a starry night in the dark streets of Gloucestershire, exploring the sky. These sessions created a bonding between us. They also made us empathetic. We became more responsible and could understand our duties better, taking them in our stride.
- Chi-Gong Meditation, Stress Management & Self-Valuation with Jason Lee:** Jason helped us unwind from the back-to-back sessions at the Asha Centre. We learnt new techniques of meditation. This soothed our entire nervous system and helped us gain control on our breathing. The sessions guided us on healthy eating habits. The self-valuation sessions made each one of us OUR OWN FAVOURITES! It also emphasized the need to exercise and maintain our body.

Various Activities Undertaken and Learning Achieved:

- Basket making with Lita:** We learned to develop patience, to keep going even if things are not as clear as we want them to be. We also learned about our personality from the shapes of the baskets we made.
- Blessings taken from Sun, Water and Fire:** We enjoyed the way the blessings were taken from each of them.
- Making Scones & Cakes with Lucinda:** These were new English recipes, which pleased our taste buds. Only then we realized why the British go crazy over them!
- Biodynamic Gardening with Rachael:** It made us aware of the natural ways of farming, gardening, making fertilizers and we realized that working in a garden is both, effort and fun. If we wanted a fruit, all we had to do was pluck an apple from one of the trees. Is it possible to experience this in our cities now?
- Achieving excellence together:** We learnt to respect, care, share and learn new things, which can help us achieve excellence each day!



Meditation



Making links



Basket making



Blessings from Water - part of meditation workshop



Biogardening



Cakes and Scones making



Heal the world



Swapping cultures

Special Feature...



People at the Grange and the various trainers we met: While celebrating Michaelmas Festival, people at the Grange performed a play in which we recited a poem "Theseus", and sang a song too. They joined us in the Indian Dance on the beats of "Koi Kahe Kehta Rahe" and "Garbha" during the Tea Party. They are happy and jovial people, who live together and by helping each other they overcome their shortcomings. They engross themselves in gardening, pottery, basket making, etc. They also loved the delicious Indian snacks prepared by us for the tea party.

All the trainers interacted with all of us and displayed such amicable conduct that they were nothing less than role models for us!

The Pride of PA batch 2011:

Our visit to Shakespeare's birthplace, Stratford and watching the play "Mid-Summer Night's Dream" at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre were the highlight of our trip. Mr. Richard gave us an overview of the Shakespearean Era. We saw the house in Stratford where Shakespeare was born and brought up, learned how he was raised by his parents, about his lifestyle and the plays he wrote. It was also a proud moment to see the statue of Rabindranath Tagore in it's' amidst. In the garden outside the museum, all the flowers that Shakespeare has addressed in his writings have been planted decoratively.

For watching the play "Mid-Summer Night's Dream", we all dolled up in Indian costumes, wearing colorful Punjabi suits. The play was a play within a play. The theater engulfed by its atmosphere was something than can only be felt by visiting it! The play was a modernized version. The dialogue delivery of every single actor was clearly audible and impeccable. To our amazement the theater was rectangular with openings on all sides. Later, we also enjoyed discussing the various characters in the play.

We not only liked the play, but also performed the '**Fairy World**' on our Graduation day!! The quotes of Shakespeare are full of passion and are relevant even today, surpassing the boundaries of that Era! Quoting from Mid-Summer Night's Dream, "**The course of true love never did run smooth**".



PA group with the Mayor and Grange people



Rangoli by Rita Shetiya



Everyone performing Garbha



Guests at the tea party



Serving the guests



Shakespeare's birth place



Shakespeare's statue at birth place



"Fairy World"

contd...

Special Feature...

LONDON: The Melting Pot of Cultures

The sessions were mixed with some tours of the City of London. We spent the first two days and the last two days of our trip, in London with Lila Mom and Firoz Dad. Each place we visited was a marvel. Some prominent places that we visited were:

- Oxford University
- British Houses of Parliament
- Thames River Cruise
- London Eye
- Tintern Abbey
- Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum
- Sally Bun
- Roman Bath
- Others: Big Ben, China Town, Rainforest Hotel, City of Bath, Ashmolean Museum, various shops who displayed their wares immaculately and toy shops, etc.

Visiting these places and exploring London made us realize that it is a city of mixed cultures of the east and the west. People from all religions, Muslims, Christians, Hindus, Sikhs lived in harmony. We also learnt more about Interfaith at the Asha Centre. London accommodates all kinds of people, be it the blacks, the whites, the handicapped, the old, or the young lovers. Lined with small shops, the streets of London were lively with musicians playing guitars or singing. Each house in London is characterized by a very well maintained garden around itself. The falling roofs of the houses and their architecture were every onlooker's delight. The experience of travelling in London's underground tubes, reading the routes at the stations and shopping in that City were all equally exciting!

The Sunset:

The graduation day witnessed the 34th issue of *Inspira* being released at the hands of the Mayor of Cinderford, Max Coburn. He was the Guest-of-Honour at our Graduation ceremony, held at the Grange Village Theatre on October 5th, 2011. He was impressed by the Indian dances and songs, which we performed in Indian traditional costumes, which he expressed as, **"This is one of the highlights for me this year. I wouldn't have missed it for anything. It's wonderful to see such accomplished young women from India sharing their culture with us in the Forest."** On the graduation day, Yogada Deshpande's singing was complemented by Pooja Thorat's graceful dance. All the 14 PAs presented eurhythmy and 'Fairy World' from the play Mid-Summer Night's Dream. The audience applauded the *Lawani* performed by Madhura Kanade, Dipali Bhosale, Tejashree Jadhav, Rita Shetiya, Varsha Shirke and Sanchita Satalkar. "Heal the World" seemed to be the perfect song to end the graduation day.

We part to meet and we meet to part. By being a true Peace Ambassador, undertaking the oath to make this world a better place to live in, imbibing the teachings of peace, love, and care and by spreading kindness throughout the world, we shall strive to take the mission ahead.

■ - Sanchita Satalkar (LF-2005)
(Group Leader PA-Batch 2011)

(Photographs by PAs Madhura Kanade, Minal Marne and Yogada Deshpande)



Oxford University



In the London Eye



The Big Ben



On the river Thames



Sally Bun



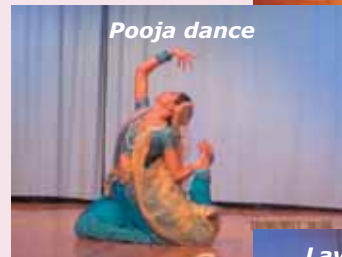
Roman Bath



Tintern Abbey



Group at Graduation day



Pooja dance



Lavani performance

Inspira Editor's Desk...

I dedicate this issue's editorial to our Founder Trustee Mrs. Maya Thadani, who I very fondly call Maya Aunty. She has been the canopy of Inspira since its inception in year 2000 and seen it grow to its present stature. It was her birthday on the 27th of January and she has aged like wine over the past 74 years. She is a rare combination of class, grace, dignity, affection, and commitment - an aide memoire of the discipline of the yesteryears, which only leaves us



aspiring to be like her. As she takes on bigger responsibilities on the Advisory Board of LPF and as the most beloved grand-mom to her two grandchildren, we at Inspira are going to see less of her personal touch in each of our articles. I take it for granted though, that she will be available to us whenever we seek her advice. On behalf of all

my teams that have changed over the years, I extend deep gratitude to Maya Aunty for her personal involvement with Inspira, irrespective of her social-, professional- or personal commitments.

I also take this opportunity to thank the Honourable Mayor of Cinderford, Mr. Max Coburn, for doing us the honours of releasing our past issue of Inspira at the valedictory function of the Peace Ambassadors at ASHA Centre, Gloucestershire, England. It is indeed a highpoint in the life of Inspira, for which we thank Ms. Zerbano Gifford who facilitated this event.

This has been one of the longest and busiest trimesters at LPF, the account of which, you all have read in Mrs. Poonwalla's column. I found 'Zenith' in this issue already exhaustive! However, whilst many other Lila Fellows have received their Doctorate and Master's degrees this year, some others got great jobs, and yet some others are busy publishing/patenting their research and are globe-trotting on their jobs! You will continue to get updates on such continual achievements of our girls at LPF through Inspira.

At one point of time, we used to pursue our LFs scattered over the globe to write about their experiences in Inspira. Now we have reached a stage wherein we have to stall articles for lack of space and schedule them for printing in a future issue. Our readers might have realised, we now find 'Leading Ladies' and stories for "Leading Life With a Difference" for Inspira amongst our own Lila Fellows. The younger awardees find it easier to identify with such success stories that belong to their genre. Our past Crusader, LF Sunetra who has relocated to Bangalore has assured us to maintain a network of the Bangalore based girls and send us an article each issue. Even LF Lubainah Vapra in the US is trying to devise something on the same lines

To help with the ever-rising workload at Inspira, I invited Ms. Jyoti Otageri (LF-1998 & PA-2008) on the Editorial Board of Inspira, as the Associate Editor. She has, in the past been a Crusader on the team of Inspira. She is deeply involved in many activities of LPF since the past 14 years. That is why she empathises with the Foundation the way I do, which I believe is the main qualification required to work with Inspira. I am glad she accepted my invitation and welcome her onboard. I hope, I will soon be able to pass on more of my load to her table!



34th Inspira released at the hands of Mr. Max Coburn, Mayor of Cinderford

Our loving Dad, Mr. Firoz Poonawalla was undergoing magnetic therapy for his knees at Bangalore for a month. This is a communication package of

the LPF. So, I must place on record the very many "Get well soon" prayers that girls poured in to wish him a speedy recovery. He is the dynamo that spins the Foundation and we are all looking forward to see our 'Good Old Dad' back in action.

It is very true that "Work is worship" but at the same time it is also true that "A healthy body houses a healthy mind". Signing off on this note,

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