

Inspira



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FROM MY HEART

My Dear Lila Fellows,

We are in the midst of adding yet another batch of **young, intelligent, highly motivated and aspiring** girls to our Family of Lila Fellows. To select the most needy and very brilliant Lila Fellows has become a Herculean task. The selection surely is tough. The number of aspirants for the Scholarship award has increased. Both for overseas as well as for India. Normally overseas applications are for going to USA. But this time we have applications not only for **USA**, but also for **Canada, Australia, Germany, United Kingdom and France**. So our young one's are **flying all over the Globe**.

We had a unique meet at **The Royle I at Le Meridian**. The meet was for the release of the **6th issue of 'Inspira'**, the newsmagazine of the **LILA POONAWALLA FOUNDATION** at the hands of our new **Mayoress, Mrs. Dipti Choudhary**. We are also happy to have **Mrs. Uttara Dasgupta** as a new trustee on the LPF board.

The function commenced with a welcome song sung by **Madhavi Prabhumirashi Lila Fellow of 1997**, followed by **Jovina Amor Lila Fellow of '98** sharing her experiences of studying and then working in USA. While releasing the issue the Mayoress appreciated the work being done by the Foundation, that of assisting young women to pursue their Dreams. She congratulated the Lila fellows and admitted that she was proud to be among many dynamic young girls. She also emphasized the importance of focusing on one's career and not taking it lightly. She wished all the Lila Fellows, **even those who could not make it to the function**, good luck.

I have been receiving news from many Lila Fellows of completing their graduation in the months of May and June.

In fact **Mrs. Thadani**, who is currently in USA has also had the opportunity of attending a couple of Graduation Functions. She



has been sending the Foundation news of all the meetings and contacts she has had with a number of Lila Fellows in USA. I am sure that by the time she returns to India, she will have contacted each and every Lila Fellow in the USA. She will certainly write all about her exciting experiences in a following issue. In September, I will meet all the Lila Fellows who are in UK. I am planning to have a get together of all of them in London.

In the coming months there will be many festivals. Many of you will come home from far and near. I am sure all outstation girls will certainly contact me when they are here. The girls in Pune are regularly in touch. We are planning a few **get together** programs during the festival season, a **Dandiya party at Dessera**, a **fireworks display at Diwali**, and a **Dance party to welcome the New Year**. It would be wonderful to have all Lila Fellows participate in these celebrations. This will give us not only an opportunity to have a lot of fun, but also to network. So keep looking up your mailbox for communication.

Wish you good luck and may all your dreams turn into reality. Take care of yourself and all your loved ones. **Happy Festive season.**

Lila Poonawalla
Lila Poonawalla

SHORT TAKES

SNEHAL MAHAMUNI and **MAHESHWARI JHALA** take pleasure in introducing **Mrs. SURABHI NAG**, a truly charming and humble lady...



Mrs. Surabhi Nag needs no introduction to the Lila Fellows, as she is not only a trustee of Lila Foundation but also a guiding light to many Lila Fellows.

We had an opportunity of interviewing Mrs. Surabhi Nag where she talks about various art forms, philanthropic activities & social institutions in Pune with which she is involved.

Mrs. Surabhi Nag was born in a Gujarati Family. She studied in Calcutta, Mumbai and graduated from Sophia College Mumbai. After her graduation she went to London to do Law where she attained her Barrister at Law Degree. It is this phase she believes that brought about a global perspective. She came to India, practiced Law at Mumbai High Court. During this phase she got married to the late KK Nag. From Mumbai Mr. and Mrs. Nag moved to Pune to set up a new business in which she was involved from the grass root level. The business grew from one run from a bungalow to a big business with offices in Mumbai, Chennai and Pondicherry. As there was no encouragement to the budding artists in Pune, Mr. Nag felt a need to start a foundation for them. This resulted in the birth of the Nag foundation, which is a launching pad for local artists, who display their art and are also informed about various other art forms, and styles through seminars, talks, slides shows. Mrs. Surabhi nag is actively involved and wants these local artists to widen their horizons. For that she is keen on striking

partnership with various embassies like the French and German. In Pune KK Nag foundation's artist displays their work of art at the Shyam Ahuja showroom and also at the HSBC art gallery. Moreover she has been an active member of Poona Women's Council & Inner Wheel which again are social organizations looking into the Issues of Health & Education of women and children and looks after the vocational training for women whereas Inner Wheel promotes National and International Friendship programs. She is also involved with International Women's Council comprising of equal number of Indians and Foreigners and where talks on Health, Religion, Psychology and History are held. Besides being actively involved with various organizations she keeps a constant view of the business and ensures that the employees and employers work as a family, she again is involved with co-operatives of the factory and counsels the children of workers from social issues to education. She has been actively involved in setting up around 8 quality Circles in her Company to ensure a good rapport between the workers and employers. Mrs. Surabhi Nag from her busy schedule takes out time for her interests which involve travelling, gardening, reading Moreover she has been a freelancer for 40 years writing a legal column in Femina and articles for various other magazines including Reader's digest. Being a trustee on the board of the foundation she ensures that the best of the students with a good academic record and a strong desire to do well for the society at large with a financial support, gets her interested.

Mrs. Surabhi Nag believes that "One should give the best to what Life has to offer to us, aim for success but keep societal well being in mind as well". She advises Lila fellows to be committed in what they are pursuing and give it their best shot.



MEMORIES ...



I remember myself at the age of 16 years... When I used to see some women standing on the streets giving expressions to men, which were unknown to me as I was told that I am not suppose to do these kinds of movements but no one gave me explanations.

When I used to see beggars on the streets, where it was easy to give them money and forget what happens to these beggars next. Again there was a question why some of us have more than what we need and some of us cannot even fulfill basic needs. But whom was I to ask? It seems like questions like this have no answers. While coming from the school, I used to see mentally ill patients, who used to make faces and wave hands at us children, I asked who they were? Why are they in such a condition? The answer was- don't look at them, ignore them, as they are not from your society.

On getting older I started realizing that, this is the attitude of the society towards these issues, people have stigmatized them. There is a class system in the society and no one cares to see what happens in the lower classes, but I wanted to know and also wanted to help them by using my potential. This became more and more concrete as I was getting older. But it was not easy, as my parents like all others wanted their daughter to become a master in computer science or a master in business management and such career opportunities which will give their daughter money as well as fame. My father asked me why I wanted to go where no one went, rather than earn my money. I wanted answers for my questions I wanted to help those who are not able to get things, which were easily available to me. So I decided to make a career in social work. My teachers explained to me that one needs the inner spirit to help people and also training so that one doesn't make them dependent on one. I got a new insight. Helping people to help themselves.

While doing MSW I had various experiences, met different kinds of people, tired to help them. I am also taking this opportunity to share these experiences with my fellow readers as this scholarship gave me the confidence that what I am doing also has a value, this scholarship also helped me work more confidently. When I was working in a mental hospital, as part of my college curriculum there was a patient who was cured but was not able to go home because her brother was changing the address continuously and was not informing the hospital about this. The responsibility was given to me to look for that address. I went to her brother's house. His wife was there. I introduced myself and the moment I mentioned the purpose, she asked whom I wanted to meet. I told her, "Mr. Pawar". She said, "sorry we are not the Pawars but the

Shindes". I told her that the neighbors had told me that they were the Pawars but she went on denying it and at last banged the door on my face. I felt very insulted, but more than that I was feeling sorry for that patient because everyday she used to ask me about her brother. It was impossible for me to forget that face, who was waiting to go back home and I decided that anyhow I would confirm the address. An idea crossed my mind. I telephoned her brother, changed my tone and voice and said, "hello, I am going to ask you a question, if you answer it correctly you will get a prize". Then I asked her a simple question which she answered correctly. I congratulated her and told her to give her name and address, so that we can give her the prize. She gave me her name and address, immediately. When I told her my name and that now she would not be able to deny her real identity. I explained to her that I was not there to expose her but just to inform that their patient was all right. And she can come back home. I also listened to her problem and reasons why she was not accepting her sister-in-law. I gave answers to her questions, solved her problems first and then she was ready to bring her patient back home. The happiness that was there on their faces while leaving the hospital, gave me energy to work more so that the smile can be passed on to more people.

For my block placement, I was to work in an organization as a professional worker so I went to 'SEARCH' which is an organization working on tribal health. That was again a totally different experience as for all of us living in the city. We never worry about people living in forests far from our civilization. People always want tribals to behave like city people, to follow the so-called developed culture but while working there I experienced their culture was healthier and richer than ours. Among the tribals marriage is decided by youngsters who wants to marry, not by the elders. One very interesting part was that all the villages were very clean and very much in order. There is tremendous unity amongst the tribals. When some body marries then all the people from that particular village participate in the marriage and carry all the ingredients for their food, so that the couple don't suffer.

Various experiences of various set ups have made my life richer. After completing this course I will be working. I know that I won't be able to change attitudes of all people in the society but I can definitely change my attitude and the attitude of people around me. I know many of you also have these kinds of questions in your minds just as I use to have. To help people you don't always have to become a social worker. You can help them just by being sensitive to wards these issues and sharing your extra resources with these people. More than a rupee your words of love matter a lot.

-Sadhavi Salunke





She has won scholarships from The Atur India Foundation, The Gokhale Trust, The Lotus Trust, The RD Sethna Trust, MK Tata Trust, and The Ratan Tata Trust along with The Lila Poonawalla Foundation.

That's Jovina Amor for you. The extremely focussed lady is now working as a Project Manager with J.G. Johnson Architects at Denver, Colorado. She did her schooling from St. Anne's and she studied Architecture from Marathwada College. She has worked with Mr. Kirit Vora and Mr. Raja Acederi, an architect in Mumbai for several months.

She has renovated a sanctuary too and if you are wondering where all this inspiration comes from, it is from her grandfather. Her grandfather was an architect and she did not think of any other option. Has it come to her like a piece of cake? The answer is NO.

How did she go about getting her degree? Jovina had only her first semester fee when she left for the US. There were living expenses too to be taken care of. She worked for more than 20 hours and halfway down the second semester, she was aided. Her eyes are moist, as she narrates her past experiences. It is obvious that the journey was difficult.

What is the lively lady's future plan? Jovina is hoping to get a license in a year or two and the good news is that her firm has sponsored her licensing exam. She also wants to come back and start a firm in historic renovations.

Her message? "If you try hard enough, it always opens up that small possibility and chance. There is always hope, you just have to give it your best."

Here is hoping that she does her best in whatever comes her way.

- LUBAINAH VAPRA

I became a Lila fellow when I was awarded the scholarship during my second year of MBA. That was just the beginning. Through the years I experienced the generosity of Ms. Poonawalla and all the trustees in the foundation. It became very clear that this was a unique scholarship, weather that meant organizing events for the personal and professional development of the girls or individually guiding the fellows as and when they needed it. The trustees were there for the girls. For that I would like to thank the entire foundation.

I chose to study food technology, as food has always been my passion. I loved experimenting in the kitchen, I love eating and I come from a family with a strong awareness of food and nutrition. Also in my family there was never any pressure to take up the "so called professional" courses like medicine or engineering. I was always told that if I did what I loved and did it well success would follow. I did my BSc in food science and quality control from SNDT Pune. The course has a strong science background and also involves a lot of on job projects or internships. I found the internships particularly interesting. In terms of openings, well as in any other course you can basically steer your career in the direction you want to.

Then I went on to do an MBA in marketing and a MSc in Food Production Management in UK. The year I spent there was great fun. I made a lot of friends from all around the world. For the first time in my life I stayed on my own, away from my family, and with gods grace every thing was wonderful. In terms of academics Nottingham is ranked number 1 in food and biosciences in UK. So it had a lot of research funds, and I got the opportunity to work with some of the latest technology and on pioneering projects. To say the least it was great. At the end of that year I stood first in my course and was offered a fully funded Ph.D. I also had my mother stay with me for a few

Months and we went around Europe for a month or so. In all it was a very successful period for me.

Today I work with Nestle, Switzerland at their International Head Quarters in Vevey as it is one of the very few companies which offer's the kind of job that I was looking for. I have always wanted a job that would give me the opportunity to learn and grow continuously, a job that would challenge me at every point and required both a strong background in management and food science. In a company like Nestle, especially in their global HQ the opportunities you have and the exposure you can get is remarkable. I work for the Center in the Industrial Performance Department as an Operations Development Specialist.



Life to me has always been an opportunity to learn more. I try to view every situation I am in as a challenge. This attitude helps me excel wherever I go.

I have always been flexible in life and so I don't have any fixed ideas about what I would like to become in the future. My success would be to grow with time, personally and professionally, to challenge my limits at every opportunity and to be happy and hopefully be the cause of happiness of the people around me.

- RUTA INAMDAR.

PUNE HERALD

PUNE, MONDAY, APRIL 29, 2002

Checking the increasing incidence of cancer among urban women

MH News Service

A shocking figure of one in eight women in the US face a life time risk of breast cancer, compared to one in nine in Canada. The dreaded C is growing at the rate of 1.5 percent per year and is still increasing. In India the figures are slightly lower in the rural population, while touching 1 in 58 in urban areas.

The rise of breast cancer is attributed to the increasing Westernisation of culture and other environmental factors. South Asian women staying in countries other than India have shown a greater incidence to breast cancer in the second generation. An excessive caloric and fat content leads to obesity and triples the risk of breast cancer, were among the findings revealed in the breast cancer survey. Giving details of the findings was Dr Supriya Kulkarni, a Toronto based radiologist who works in Mt. Sinai & Princess Margaret hospital. Dr Kulkarni is also a 1998 Lila Poonawalla awardee and won a scholarship to Australia to study her favourite subject there.

Acknowledging the fact that incidence of breast cancer in Toronto is very high and stands at 20 percent of the populace, she points to a genetic predisposition. "If mothers have it, most of the daughters have it too. Comparatively little research is done in India, mostly at the Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai. The incidence of breast cancer is increasing in cities such as Mumbai, Pune and in the surrounding areas."

"I am most proud of the fact that we assist in the core biopsy of tumours (which is not done in Pune). This helps in faster detection of tumours. I am working as a consultant in Toronto and our costs are funded by the government. The process costs Rs. 1000-1500 per examination. What is comforting is the fact that the patient is approached by a whole team of people, all the consultants unite to decide the best possible approach. The patient obtains maximum benefit, there is greater communication between all of us."

What are the safest diagnostic techniques to discover cancer before it kills women? "Mammography, just coming up in India, is by far the safest. In Western countries



and UK it is a known instrument of detecting breast cancer, and its use is much more common. With mammography, one can detect cancer at a very early stage. Cancer causes minute calcification which can be picked up early enough to minimize surgery. Techniques such as the ultrasound or when the tumour is palpable to the hand are detected much later. Therefore a mammogram should be used as a screening modality at least annually by

women over 40. Fortunately there is no known relation between heart disease and breast cancer. However, due to the high fat diet of Asians, an increased risk of the cancer of the bowel, ovarian cancer, plus breast cancer is indicated."

Commenting on the standard of medical equipment in Pune, the lady says, "It is pretty good in Pune. (So if you had to diagnose a cancer, you would detect it as fast here as in Toronto). I have worked as a radiologist in KEM hospital and Medivision. I have had no complaints with the equipment there. I have not had a chance to take a look at the mammography centres here, since I have been abroad and they have developed in the last few years. But in Canada they are well established. There are very high end ultrasound machines & breast Medical Resonance Imaging scans done there.

Speaking about the Lila Poonawalla award winning experience, the lady is very excited. "In 1998 I won a scholarship to Australia. I had seen the advertisement in Maharashtra Herald, and had applied. I was interviewed by the trustees of the foundation then and awarded Rs. 25,000. I obtained funds to continue with my education after I reached Australia. I did not have a lump sum to take with me. It was very homely atmosphere. The trustee came to meet me in a place where I did not know anyone else. Maya Thadani, another of the trustees arranged a get-together too. I am flying soon, or else I would have attended the release of Inspira a magazine by the foundation today at Le Meridien. I did get the last couple of issues of Inspira and I found them nice. My parents, brother and sister, are all proud of me today, that I have achieved so much despite being 33 and single."

Designer dreams

With determination and help from the Lila Poonawalla Foundation, young Jovina Amor has been able to achieve her goal of becoming an architect interested in preservation of historic buildings.

It seemed as if fate had intervened at just the right time. Back in 1998, Jovina Amor had almost given up hope of pursuing higher studies in her preferred field of study, preservation of historic buildings and environmental architecture, when it was declared that she had been selected by the Lila Poonawalla Foundation's scholarship for girls.

Today when Puneite, Jovina, now working in an architect's firm in Colorado, USA looks back to her student days in Pune, it is with the conviction that things finally work out right.

An academically bright student from a family of five, Jovina always wanted to be an architect. "My grandfather was an architect and I had always wanted to follow in his footsteps," states the chirpy girl.

Her early flair for drawing, her determination and academic record saw her graduating from the Marathwada Mitramandal College of Architecture, among the top five in the University of Pune.

Her first assignment came quite by chance, a few months after graduation. After the mass at her church, Church of Our Lady of Immaculate Conception, at Quarter Gate there was an announcement that the parish council wanted the sanctuary of the church to be redesigned. "They wanted the church to look people-friendly, for the sanctuary which was in the inner recesses to be brought forth. The church is an old structure, it had its own limitations, which meant that I had to work the design around what already existed." Her design of an outward halo-like structure on the ceiling of the sanctuary and semi-circular steps leading towards it, appealed to the parish council.

"I was a fresh student and I didn't think they would accept my design," she remembers. Thrilled that her first project had been accepted, she stayed on waiting for it to be completed until January 1998 before starting to apply for studies abroad.

"The study of historic preservation appealed to me much earlier when I was in college and I wanted to study abroad to specialise in this field," she says.

While she got admission into the University of



Colorado, Denver, USA, getting funding for her education was not so easy. "My father had retired, my mother ran an interior designing concern, and while both were willing to pool in their life savings for my education, that amount did not even make up the fees for my first semester. I had got a few gift and loan scholarships, but they were simply not enough. I had given up hope," she remembers. That's when she read about the Lila Poonawalla Foundation Scholarship for girls and applied for it. "When I got through, I was thrilled! I could finally go," she remembers.

Opportunities were waiting for her to explore once she reached the USA. In 1999, Jovina was among the two students selected from the United States for six months stay in Prague, the capital of the Czech republic at the invitation of the Czech government to help plan the renovation of its old quarters.

Today she continues to do what she likes best, work on historic renovation on heritage buildings. She plans to come back to Pune, after another three years in the US to use her expertise on Indian heritage buildings.

"While it is challenging to conceptualise and design a building form scratch, I find it most challenging to work in old buildings, because you get to work while facing restraints," she says. As in architecture, so in life, today Jovina has been able along with her brother, also studying in the states, to get both her parents for a trip to the USA. Says her mother, Joyce, "We are very proud of her!"

Aishwarya Mavinkurve

Down Memory Lane... SNIPPETS



6th Vol of Inspira being released by the Mayoress of Pune, Ms. Deepti Choudhary at Le Meridian.
(L to R) Senior Trustee of LPF Mrs. Frenny Tarapore, Editor of Inspira & Lila Fellow Uzma Kazi, Mrs. Lila Poonawalla, Chairperson LPF, Ms. Deepti Choudhary, Mayoress of Pune & Mr. Firoz Poonawalla, Trustee LPF



LPF Trustee at the evaluation meeting for the 7th Scholarship Award (Aug. 2002)



New Trustee Mrs. Uttara Dasgupta being welcomed to the LPF family



LF Jyoti Dalvi on receiving her 'Doctor of Philosophy' degree, seen here with her supervisor Prof. Sinn, Committee Member Dr. Collier and Kamal



Trustees with Supriya Kulkarni - LF 98, Jovina Amor - LF 98 during their visit to Pune April 2002



Madhavi Prabhumirashi - LF 97, performing at Le Meridian at the release of the 6th Vol. of Inspira



Jovina Amor - LF 98, sharing her experience with all present at Le Meridian

LEADING LADY

When one tastes success, it is said that one settles for nothing less than best. **RAJANI PANCHANG** talks to an Embryologist turned Banker, who states, "I have never been second!" The lady featured here has a success story with many stepping-stones, which she used to her advantage. Ambitious and composed, yet charming and modest, **MRS. SHUBHILAKSHMI PANSE** who is very generous with her smiles all through the 75-minute interview seems to fit in just perfect as Deputy General Manager, Information Technology Department, Bank of Maharashtra.



Q. Embryology to Banking! How did this happen?

A. I had this inclination towards biology always and aspired to become a surgeon, but I could not. So I took up B.Sc. Zoology at the Nowrosjee Wadia College. Further I took up M.Sc. Embryology at the Zoology Department of University of Pune, as it was the closest I could get to my passion for life sciences and medicine. I have never been second, always ranked first. Those days, meritorious students in the board exams were given this National Scholarship and I too was an awardee. My performances had got me double-promotions twice in school. Owing to that I completed my post-graduation at the age of 21. Immediately after that I got married and also enrolled for Ph.D. at the University of Pune itself. My brother-in-law was appearing for a banking examination and just for the heck of it I too joined him. I cleared the examination and the interview and at the age of 22 in 1976, I got appointed as a Probationary Officer at the Bank of Maharashtra. Ever since I have earned about 26 years of experience in banking with the same public sector bank.

Q. But your interest had always been life sciences...did the interest shift to banking later, or did you continue doing it just because now you had a job?

A. I was never a career person. I wanted to settle down at home and raise a family, be an ideal wife and mother. Having a chance between continuing in my doctorate studies and this job, the latter lured my conveniences and priorities. I had planned that I would do the job for a couple of years, have a baby and then quit working. But unfortunately, in the first 5-6 years of my career, we lost 4 full-term babies, which was a big blow, and we gave up, fully accepting that God had different plans in store for us. These were times that drowned me into episodes of depression. My job kept me most occupied and I kept getting promotions and my career in banking progressively strengthened.

Q. But with the kind of academic background you had, did you not face any hurdles?

A. I kept clearing the subsequent interviews and also got my first three promotions without any hassles. Then, I felt the need to do a relevant course in Banking and completed my C.A.I.I.B. i.e. Certified Associate of the Indian Institute of Bankers. I also did a DBM with specialization in Bank Management and a MMS with specialization in Financial Management, both from the University of Pune. In 1994 I was promoted to an executive cadre and made the head of the second largest bank in Mumbai.

Q. What has the experience been like leading such a huge organization as Deputy General Manager IT?

A. Leading a large group, I have realized that leadership is not just about 'heading' a group but involves 'building' a group! I feel a woman can manage this duty very well... That is because she can do ten jobs at the same time, and make decisions for all of them. She has a motherly instinct, she inspires and is compassionate. All these qualities have made me a better team leader, because I have learnt that team leadership involves grooming and complete personal and professional development of each member of the team.

Q. What is IT-banking and how has it helped the banking industry?

A. IT-banking was introduced about 10 years back with the advent of globalization and liberalization. In the last two years it became a support function and now a business enabler. Be it any business goal it can be met, as IT-banking strategy and business strategy go hand in hand. IT banking is a customer's delight. It has now opened up the 24/7 i.e. 24 hours, 7 days a week banking system which was not earlier available. ATM satisfies the basic needs of the customer, and plus the use of plastic cards. Now there is E-banking, Internet banking, Tele banking, Mobile banking...use of any delivery channel.

Q. Bank of Maharashtra has a slogan 'Jivhaalyaachi Bank'. Why so?

A. A 'personal touch' adds to business and banking with BOM is much more than just business relations. This bank was started by the coalition of common people for a common cause of serving the common man, and so the slogan. Our priority sector is lending finances for development of agriculture. We offer government schemes for public below the poverty line. We have a trust especially involved in the social upliftment of women and the children. We give finance for entrepreneurship and marketing their business. We have about 250 such self-help groups where women come together for a common cause.

Q. What kind of an environment is a bank to work in, for women?

A. It is the safest for women, especially the public sector banks. You have an educated crowd and the industry is protective about women. I have never felt threatened. The banks are also benevolent towards the women, in the sense most of the women get placed in cities, keeping in mind that sending them out would make it tough for them on the home front.

Q. A Woman Boss. How have your subordinates taken you?

A. Men at times would not like to work under you. But it depends upon how you portray yourself. I have never expected to be, treated differently just because I am a woman. If you carry yourself as a human being first and do not show that you are exceptional, then people also do not treat you like a woman. Secondly, career is a pyramidal structure. At the base your colleagues are your friends and at the peak you are alone, probably the friends are no more the same. I have taken time to understand this fact and take it into my stride. I hate wallowing in self-pity.

Q. Your hobbies... ?

A. Cooking is a de-stresser for me and I enjoy it. I love every kind of embroidery and do it. I love painting and spend lot of time gardening. All these hobbies of time have stood the test of time and I still continue to spend time in all of them, despite my job.

EVE'S VOICE



Madhavi holds a Bachelor's Degree in Chemistry from Pune University with a first class to her credit and till recently worked for a MNC as a HR coordinator. A very fulfilling job with an elaborate job-profile...but why did she gave it up? She never wanted to be in this industry despite the kind of formal education she had! As a child, Madhavi had decided that she would take up her hobby, her sole passion, singing and music as her career in life.

Ever since she was a child, Madhavi has been learning the harmonium and Indian classical singing from Dr. Rohini Chandekar, under whose guidance she completed her 'Sangeet Alankar' (equivalent to M.A. Degree) in 1996. Next, she wanted to pursue a Ph.D. in singing, and that is when she hit upon the LPF ad in the newspaper. At the interview the trustees asked her to perform and she impressed all such that she was requested to sing at the same function in which she was to be awarded the scholarship, by singing "Bhini bhini bhor..."

Finally, Madhavi singing two songs from the album 'Saaz' further enhanced the function, which was graced by eminent personality, Shabana Azmi.

Expressing her love for singing she vouches for the very old belief that practicing any art form helps master the mind, body and soul. She says, "Singing is a very effective medium of expression, a good exercise to keep healthy and also helps in relaxing tension and strain".

Madhavi sang her way to the hearts of the judges during the LPF interview, proving how deserving a candidate she was, to be considered for a scholarship to earn a doctorate degree in Indian Classical Singing.

After the scholarship was granted, she went on to learn 'Gayaki' from Ms. Usha Chippalkatti and formal lessons in 'tabla'. Madhavi started performing in a Marathi orchestra 'Tinh Saanja', which took her, places...Pune, Nasik, Sangvi, Jabalpur, etc. and that was her first big break in the world of singing. Her performances need a mention because they include prestigious events such as the inaugural song at the 'Karnatak Rajya Marathi Sahitya Parishad' at Humnabad, 'TVS Sa Re Ga Ma' on Zee TV, 'Yuvawani' on 'Akashwaani' Pune and the inaugural song at the convocation ceremony of the 'Institute of Company Secretaries of India'. Again she sang for the foundation at the release of the 6th issue of Inspira at the Hotel Le Meridien recently.

Apart from singing, Madhavi proved her other potentials by handling the complete HR department of Fosco India Limited, as HR coordinator for more than two years with complete sincerity. Madhavi, in 1999 got married. She had been conducting singing classes for little girls for almost two years now. Remembering the experience she says, "Teaching such young girls and training their voices only made the foundation for my singing more firm".

Her musical journey has been accompanied by complete support from her family, husband and in-laws. Presently settled in Hyderabad with her husband, she continues her regular 'riyaaz'. In her free time she enjoys listening to music, experimenting with cooking and playing with her baby, Gayatri.

Her future plans include coming back to Amche Pune and devoting herself completely to singing. And talking about dreams she says, "I want to sing at the 'Sawai Gandharva' and the 'Pune Navratra Mahotsav' and evolve into a full fledged classical singer."

Yes, Madhavi, you will, because success is where the heart is!

Coming from a conservative Muslim community, and a very humble family, if it was not for an illiterate but very determined mother and a grade 12 passed, inspiring and supportive father, Nusrat Sheikh's potentials would have been nipped in the bud. This Lila Fellow is today a highly ambitious, confident, skilled lecturer at the Abeda Inamdar Senior College for Girls and she dedicates the LPF Scholarship award to her parents and teachers who recognized and nurtured the spark in her.

A meritorious girl at school, Nusrat wanted to contribute to society in form of social work and so had decided to become a physician. But a mere 78% in PCB group in class 12 left her hopes for admission to a medical seat shattered! Nusrat's father works as a Supervisor in a private company and his friend once came up and informed him about a subject called 'microbiology'. He had said, "She has 89/100 in biology! So what if not medical, this is a paramedical course". Then what followed was admission to the Abeda Inamdar Senior College for girls.

Hard work followed to the extent that in her T.Y. for about 2-3 months she stayed at her friend's

home so as to concentrate on her studies. Effectively, she ranked 1st in college, closely missing a distinction. Next stage was M.Sc. in Microbiology, which was taught only in 3 colleges under Pune University, with an intake capacity of 45. Nusrat finally made it.



Contd.. on Page No. 8

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She completed her first year of Master's and one fine day her father came home speaking about some ad for a scholarship in the newspaper, "I neglected it. Forget it, you never get it. The ad was in some English Newspaper that we didn't have. But the thought caught my mother's mind and she was very persistent. Finally, I submitted the required documents in a hurry and today I owe LPF the scholarship to my mother!" says Nusrat.

Immediately after M.Sc., even before the results were declared, she got the present job. She says, "The job was created! There was no vacancy, but when I was in my T.Y.B.Sc, my HoD had seen my presentation and was impressed. That is when he had told me firmly that he wanted me to join the department as a faculty, no matter what other or better opportunity I got. So soon after post-grads I was there... in a job specially created for me!"

Speaking about her 5 years long teaching experience, she says, "I took up teaching not as a choice or a selection made out of despair, but my second choice of a career had always been teaching as it also is a service to mankind and a noble profession. A basic liking for the profession and seeing the delight of the students keeps me going. I am surrounded by new pretty faces each year (...she smiles) and it is so very refreshing! Plus teaching is a very convenient job for women; it takes up only 5 hours of mine in a day. The pay scales are good and help making the women folk financially independent."

"I believe that though the times have changed, yet the girl child is most neglected. The fact remains that if one girl is

educated, the whole family is educated. So in the garb of a teacher I have been involved in lots of social work. I am in-charge of the 'Earn & Learn' scheme in my college, and have thereby been able to get jobs for needy girls to fund their own higher education. We counsel girls weak in academics and also those with problems at their home front. We also go to the girl student's homes and counsel parents into being carefree about sending their daughters to college, it being a completely girls college with adequate security measures. Through my profession I am inculcating these values".

Her passing the SET exams in 'Life Sciences' in 1999 is an achievement. She feels that though her present job has kept her in contact with the syllabus, gradually it leads to stagnation of knowledge. So she aspires to clear the UGC-CSIR examinations and earn a fellowship to pursue a Ph.D. in Molecular Biology.

Her ending note moved us... "Unfortunately, my demanding job has kept me from many a recent gatherings of the foundation, but I have been a part of each of them through 'the very effective communicator-Inspira'. The pictures in them clicked here and abroad acquaint us with the people featured, their lives and each event related to the foundation. I wonder how Mrs. Poonawalla finds time for all this simultaneously. It seems like she is not housed in a human body! She is a perfect blend of beauty and brains and is my role model. Some day I too want to contribute to the development of girls and society in a way similar to hers".

- Sunetra Chaphalkar &
Rajani Panchang

YOUR'S TRULY

April 2002 saw the release of the 6th Vol. of Inspira at the hands of the dynamic Mayoress of Pune, Ms. Deepti Chaudhary. In her address to the Lila Fellows, she said she was proud to learn that the Lila Fellows were doing exceptionally well in their chosen fields and also that the Lila Poonawalla Foundation was doing justice to the mission it has set out for itself and the society. She emphasised on our performing our duties towards the society as its citizens. She also offered help to the foundation in her capacity as the First Citizen. Here's a big THANK YOU to you ma'am!!!

It is truly a boon to have Mrs. Uttara Dasgupta as a new trustee for our foundation as she is from banking sector and is pleased to guide LF's with regard to acquiring "student loans". Welcome to our family Ma'am!

With the release of the 7th vol. of Inspira, we are hurtling towards the new academic year which also means

new members being added to the Lila Family. We look forward to meeting them. Not many programs could be arranged for the Lila Fellows in the last few months as they were busy with their examinations. Need I say that they have come out with flying colours? Congratulations to all of them!!!

Another good news is that several Lila Fellows have sent in their write ups. We are very happy with their response and hope more will write for their very own Inspira.

Great going guys!!

Keep it coming!!!

-UZMA KAZI

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