

Stepping Stones



2007 Fall/Winter Edition

Christmas/New Year's
Issue

LIFE INSTITUTE FOR GIRLS

Message from The Visram Foundation:

On behalf of our Foundation, we would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of our Donors and Supporters who have assisted us through out the past 2 years in order to take the objectives of our Foundation to the next level. It is because of your kind and generous donations and support that we have enhanced significantly the day-to-day lives of our girls at the Institute. This newsletter provides you with some of the most salient events over the last year and what our objectives are for the future. We thank you for your continuous support and donations.

Truly, the product of our achievement is as much a part of you as it is ours. We thank you and wish you the best of the Holiday Season for you and your loved ones.

Sincerely,

Amin S. Visram
The MSFV Foundation
www.visramfoundation.com



The current issue of "Stepping Stones" provides you with the news and update at the Life Institute for Girls in Pune, India. Due to the fact that we try to limit our newsletter to 2 pages, we will give the highlights of what we have achieved in 2007 and what it is that we are targeting to achieve in 2008. In addition, and as usual, we feature our girl of the month at the Institute.

The Institute completed the renovations in time for the school year 2007-2008 and welcomed 20 new students on board. Programs such as gynaec, regular health care including dental and eye care, basic hygiene, class competitions and many others were implemented. We have also hired extra curricular teachers, who come after school hours to provide extra tutorials to those students seeking additional help. We are finding that based on such activities, our students are performing better at school and a lot of them are excelling.

In addition, as hobbies and certain other types of activities, we have introduced courses in stitching, glass painting, knitting, drawing and dancing. You may be well aware we had a computer laboratory, which is functional, although some of the computers are becoming outdated. This is a capital requirement for next year and we intend to buy another 10-15 computers.



This year particularly, we did not have the children leave for their vacations to go home. We have found that while the children do go home for functions like Diwali, a lot of them

like to stay at the Institute. Accordingly, the introduced programs mentioned above were implemented during vacation time as well as to keep our children occupied.

In so far as the renovations are concerned, we have completed the program of the rooms and created more showers, privacy and other updates to the building. This was previously announced in our newsletter. This is an on-going program and we are now finalizing and constructing out guest quarters so that visitors to our Institute can stay the night if they so choose. Apart from the extensive renovation (security gates, screen windows, additional washrooms and some internal walls were knocked down to give room for more beds, ventilation and light flow), we were focused on operational efficiencies in 2007.

Such examples of operational efficiencies include a capable bookkeeper being appointed, as well as a fulltime Office Administrator, additional Cooks and Cleaners. The Institute has also purchased a school bus to ferry the girls to school and for weekend trips. We have enacted a program where we now have a team of doctors (also tied up with some hospitals) who come at regular intervals to check the girls' physical health.

Our development plans for 2008 among other objectives involve making sure that our library systems remain current and a complete and brand new computer laboratory is installed as well as new computer systems are purchased. In addition, we would like our girls to make sure that they enroll in certain extra-curricular courses outside of school and take those courses that they believe they can excel in and at the same time tap into their inner potential. We believe that nurturing education and also their hobbies would be the best mechanism to allow these girls to flourish. Of course, we have an ongoing deferred maintenance program to upkeep the property in all aspects. Enclosed are some pictures taken for birthday parties and celebrations as well as our children at the property. Also our girl of the month "Amreen's" profile is included.



We hope you enjoy reading our Christmas/New Year's issue of Stepping Stones and wish you all Happy Holidays and Prosperous New Year !



Student of the Month
AMREEN MERCHANT



Amreen was born in Mumbai and is currently a student of the prestigious, Stella Mary's High School in Pune, India. Amreen has been at the hostel for five years, and is in the 8th standard. Amreen scored excellent grades in her final exams last year. She is indeed very helpful at school as well as at the hostel. She is always ready to do extra work given to her and takes care of younger girls in the hostel. Amreen is very creative and enjoys drawing; she is also interested in reading books, playing basketball and Dutch ball and loves to dance. In her words, she wants to be a "Sports woman" and have a career as a basketball player when she is older. She dreams of being a famous sports personality. She won a gold medal in running and basketball last year at the school sports day. The person that she most looks up to and greatly idolizes is Sania Mirza, the famous Tennis player from India.

Amreen, who hails from a dark past of a broken family, looks to the future with an incentive of making her mother and grandmother who looked after her, very proud. Due to financial constraints, Amreen's mother and grandmother cannot afford to pay for the hostel and, accordingly, she is being housed free of charge.

Amreen has faced certain traumatic events before she joined the Institute, which brings tears to her little innocent eyes when she remembers the same. Amreen's mother feels the Life Institute for Girls has shaped Amreen's future very positively with the care and education she is receiving which makes her a very determined and upbeat girl. Amreen was out of school for a year after her parents separated and her mother could not afford to school, feed or clothe her. Amreen's mother now feels happy, thankful and content that the Life Institute for Girls has given Amreen a new life and future.

Amreen has a message for our readers: **"Please educate the girl child as she is going to change the future generation. I want to become a famous sports person and make my mother proud of me. I, Amreen Merchant on behalf of all the girls at the Life Institute for Girls, thank you with all my heart and soul for taking a keen interest in us. We all pray for your success and well being"**.

Your living is determined not so much by what life brings to you as by the attitude you bring to life; not so much by what happens to you as by the way your mind looks at what happens.

- Kahlil Gibran



Please note: Donations may now be made on line at www.visramfoundation.com



Your generous gift will keep our children's faith alive. Dreams will become realities!

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