

IWA DHWANI

Indian Women's Association

May 2014 • MCI (P) 143/05/2013

Sounds of IWA, Singapore



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IWA Dhvani

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Book Club - Sukanya Pushkarna

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KidzVenture Club - Gauri Savadi,

Monali Rudra

Let's go Green Club - Purna Rajpal

Music Club - Raji Viswanathan

Scrabble Club - Mohini Kumar

Writing Enthusiasts' Club

Tara Dhar Hasnain

Indian Migrant Workers and IWA

At the behest of the Indian High Commission of Singapore, IWA is pleased to announce its support this year for 'The Indian Migrant Worker'.

There are about 80,000 Indian migrant workers in Singapore today. IWA plans to work as a social and cultural bridge integrating them into mainstream society. A number of us have come on board to conduct Meditation, Physiotherapy and Orientation programmes. IWA is working closely with the Indian Migrant Centre. We, in the course of this year, are also planning to raise funds for humanitarian assistance for migrant workers.

Please support us by buying raffle tickets at the IWA Summer bazaar on 9th May, 2014 OR by donating to/ joining our 'Migrant Worker Team'.

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IWA HAS TWO NEW CLUBS!!

Let's Go Green Club

It's all about "TAKE ACTION - GO GREEN"

Let's get together to make a "Green Team" to help us understand better – how to reduce, reuse and recycle.

Whether it's the workplace or home, "going green" can have a big impact, so let us work together to learn how individual acts & community acts can help the Green Scene. The Let's Go Green club is also about helping young people take control of their footprint by raising their awareness through recycling workshops and engaging their CREATIVE SIDE. gogreen@iwasingapore.org

Writing Enthusiasts' Club

All you writing enthusiasts.... who write, would like to write, and appreciate good writing, we have just the place for you to give form to your words & imagination. We plan to meet once every two to three months

These are the broad plans for our get-togethers:

- Appreciate a particular genre of writing, be it memoirs, stories, poetry, drama, travel writing, journalistic articles, children's writing - anything that the members would like to explore & experiment with.
- Thematic writing - Writing together either on a set theme/topic, or free writing, in whatever mode is appealing w- a poem, a story, a haiku etc.
- Invite well-known authors to speak about different kinds of writing, as and when possible.
- Arrange sharing sessions as also tips for editing one's work.
writing@iwasingapore.org

Letter from the PRESIDENT

Dear Members of the IWA Family,



I am reminded of Ma Durga with five pairs of hands whenever I think about the different roles our members juggle on a daily basis. Much like the Divine Goddess, our ladies effortlessly take on varied roles that simply being a mother, a wife, a woman bestows on them. Some of them, like me, arrive in Singapore as “trailing spouses”, leaving behind families, friends and careers. We have a choice to sit and sulk or find new friends, cultivate a new interest or pursue a talent. In Singapore one can find groups who share our interests or teachers who can take our talent to the next level.

In IWA I have seen a banker turn to classical music; an architect became a successful entrepreneur; and a brain surgeon a social worker. An association like IWA provides a platform for them to share and celebrate their talent but it is their desire and ability to constantly reinvent themselves that need to be lauded.

When a jewellery designer and an artist/computer engineer from our IWA family came together to design a giant rangoli at the Art and Science museum, the result was so stunning the Singapore Tourism ministry decided to make it a permanent exhibit.

Another Life Science Major who is passionate about “going green” is working with children from underprivileged homes to create treasures out of trash. A former lawyer is working with the elderly while a pharmacist and a dress designer are using their skills to create awareness about Indian Migrant workers.

Our Singaporean members’ inputs are invaluable. One of our most delicious events was a Nyonya cuisine demonstration organized by our Gourmet club. An interactive Book event with five Singaporean authors and poets showed us how to look at this beautiful city state, with fresh eyes.

Each of these talented women share their time, skills, and ideas voluntarily for the common good and are for me symbols of Shakti, of Women Power. This issue of IWA Dhwani is dedicated to them.

Piu Lahiri

President, Indian Women's Association

On the cover: SONY-IWA Woman of the Year Award 2014 being presented to Bhavani Prakash by the Indian High Commissioner, Her Excellency Vijay Thakur Singh

Back cover: A model walking the ramp during IWA's iconic event “An Indian Affaire”

IWA Dhwani editorial team: Lakshmi Padmanabhan, Lakshmi Raghavan, Rashantha Therese Devanesan, Sudeepta Dasgupta and Sukanya Pushkarna (editor)

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We hope you like this issue of IWA Dhwani. If you have any feedback or suggestions regarding articles and features or if you would like to contribute articles or artwork to our magazine, please write to editor@iwasingapore.org



SONY-IWA

Woman of the Year Award 2014

Address by Nirupa Parthasarathy

A warm welcome to our chief guest, Her Excellency Mrs Vijay Thakur Singh, High Commissioner of India in Singapore and other distinguished guests. I would like to start by thanking SONY Entertainment Network for joining hands with IWA to create and sponsor the trophy for the Women of the Year Award 2014.

The quest for "The Woman of the Year" is IWA's attempt to salute excellence, to create awareness, and to inspire eminence. It is a sincere, and well-meaning effort to add "Inspire & Empower" to IWA's "Care, Connect, Celebrate" motto.

The focus of the 2014 SONY-IWA Woman of the Year Award is based on maximum social outreach. We have identified women who have not only strived towards self-betterment, but who, in spite of varied personal challenges have generously extended their arm of support to social causes. All our top 16 shortlisted candidates met these criteria. It was indeed a tough task for IWA and Sony to pick our top five semi-finalists from a very strong group of accomplished contenders.

Shortlisted Nominees: Shilpa Sharma, Soundarya Sukumar, Kirtida Mekani, Manisha Sarkar, Bhavani Prakash, Preeti Bhagat, Shhanya Madan Bhatia, Ramya Nageswaran, Sreyashi Sen, Sumiti Khosla, Jagir Kaur, Mrinalini Kumar, Alka Mehta, Manjusha, Balekundri, Dr. Kalyani Mehta



Some of the women we celebrate here, have been introduced by their friends, some we meet in their own words and the rest are introduced by our Dhvani editorial team.

SEMIFINALISTS

Sreyashi Sen

by Joyotee Ray Chaudhuri



I must have met Sreyashi Sen (I call her Sreya) during one of the Durga puja sessions at Tessensohn Road in 2008. We hit it off right away and soon became good friends.

Shreya was one of the earliest champions of the foreign workers in Singapore. In the midst of great personal challenges in her life, she was one of the few who “walked the talk” when it came to social work. This commitment

comes from a strong and solid foundation laid by her parents.

When Shreya was working at UNIFEM, she encouraged me to sign up for the “Take a step to make a change” and got me walking regularly after that.

I have greatly admired the spirit and courage Shreya has. When life throws her lemons, she doesn’t shy away from making lemonade, and having a party with it!

A few years ago, Shreya started a movement-**Darpan**, the first of its kind in film festivals with “integration through the arts” as its motto. It is in its third year and has proved a huge success. She has a show for foreign workers as part of her charitable cause.

While she is well known in the Bengali community because of Darpan, the expat community at large knows her for her social work. Over the last 10 years, Shreya has rescued minor girls from being trafficked and helped repatriate workers in difficult circumstances. She is a volunteer counselor and translator for the Singapore courts and other NGO’s that work with migrant workers.

To me, Shreya is an inspiration to young girls. Her guiding principle is: Learn from your mistakes, move on, and make the most of what life offers you, and while doing so, never shy away from helping others in the community. And Shreya does this with style and flair.

(Joyotee is a Singaporean artist, of Indian decent. Her art reflects her colorful and vivacious personality and multicultural background. A free spirited and spiritual being, her greatest motivation is to create without inhibition.)

Ramya Nageswaran

by Dr. Vinisha Khemani Kanjilal



Ramya Nageswaran entered my life serendipitously nearly 10 years ago when I chanced upon her twinkling eyes so full of life embedded within a face of sheer goodness and kindness at a Focus India Forum (FIF) meeting. I did not know her but as I saw her quietly stand against the wall of the Yong An function room ...I thought to myself...the day I am able to give to a cause I would do it through this woman. Her honesty in thought and in action was apparent, as was her

genuineness at wanting to make a difference in the lives of those less fortunate.

Ramya is a trained lawyer, who has stood by Ananth, her economist-banker husband from his Ph.D days in Amherst, Massachusetts to his first job in Switzerland and their subsequent move to Singapore nearly 16 years ago. Along the way she has become a mother to 2 beautiful children, Dhanya and Vyas.

What to me is hugely commendable is her commitment towards financial inclusion in action while recognizing the gaps in the sector.

From the inception of FIF over a decade ago to Bridgeable that raised over 100,000 SGD/- towards SINDA last year, she has operated on minimal administrative overheads. Ramya et al have managed to crowd source small to large amounts of funds & provisions to support myriad worthy causes in India including Goonj, St.Judes Childcare Centre, Unnati, Manav Sadhana and others.

I have seen her arouse the giving quotient in hundreds of young and old people within the Indian community and beyond. Every time she has brought awareness to the forefront she has received from the community at large. It’s almost as if the divine is paving the path for her to perform at greater heights for greater good.

(The writer Dr. Vinisha Khemani Kanjilal is a Ph.D in molecular biology who founded two ventures that embody her passions viz: Green Dots Learning SEAMlessly (www.greendots.sg) and Better Breads (betterbreads.sg@gmail.com)

Mrinalini Kumar

by Catherine Wu



I am a trainer at Aidha, a non-profit organization that transforms the lives of female migrant workers through financial education. Mrinalini Kumar has been volunteering at Aidha since March 2011 and believes that education is the most powerful tool to help women achieve financial stability in their lives and become independent. Mrinalini Kumar is

a very well rounded woman who has contributed enormously to our organization, Aidha, in spite of a very demanding day job.

Mrinalini graduated from the National University of Singapore with a degree in Civil Engineering. She is currently working in the Oil & Gas Industry as a Marketing and Commercial Coordinator. Mrinalini's success as an engineer in the offshore Oil and Gas industry is very impressive, and particularly so because the industry is heavily male-dominated. I would like

to highlight her experience as an offshore field engineer in South China Sea, where she led an entire team of 200 men through a successful installation of the oil platform.

In addition to her professional commitments, Mrinalini's contribution to Aidha over the past three years has been enormous. She has trained mentors and over 30 students during this period, five of whom run their own successful businesses across the Philippines and Indonesia. She is currently working with the Yale-NUS collaboration to design courses on migrant immigrants and spread awareness about Aidha.

Mrinalini was also selected to feature in a documentary film called Remittance directed by the famous duo Daly and Fendelman. Mrinalini plays a key role in the movie, centered on foreign domestic workers in Singapore.

Mrinalini is one of the best representations of the modern Indian woman who is able to balance her professional life, personal life and volunteer work very well. I firmly believe her contributions make our society a better place.

(Edited by Sudeepta Dasgupta)

Dr Kalyani Kritikar Mehta

by Sudeepta Dasgupta



Dr. Kalyani Mehta was born in Penang Malaysia and came to Singapore to study for her bachelor degree in Social Work as she wanted to be a professional social worker. After completing her degree, she was married to a Singaporean Engineer and settled down in Singapore.

She worked as a part-time school social worker before taking a six-year break to devote herself to her young children and ailing in-laws.

Dr. Kalyani Mehta went back after a break to complete her Masters degree with a focus on 'Suicide Attempts of Indian Women in Singapore' followed by a Ph.D in Social Work. Her doctoral thesis was on 'Dynamics of Adjustment of Very Old Persons in Singapore.' She did all this while still taking care of her children and an extended family.

Dr. Kalyani Mehta has researched and taught on the subject of Gerontology, which is very relevant for aging societies. After retiring from NUS, she joined SIM University, as she strongly believes that women should continue to contribute to the economy and the society, as long they are capable of making a difference.

As a social worker by profession, Dr. Kalyani has made a great effort to contribute to the disadvantaged and dysfunctional families in Singapore, particularly within the Indian community.

Dr. Mehta has held several important posts as board member of important committees and panels, including the Indian Heritage Center Concept and Content Committee, Singapore Anti-narcotics Association and others.

She is currently a Justice of Peace and a lifetime member of the Singapore Association of Social Workers.

Inspired by the women of substance, An Cee presents the Chantelle range of exquisite dressing for the discerning women. Each unique piece, in this collection is created to glorify the ethos of nature and evoke the beauty of the elements of the Earth by paying homage to the eternal beauty of every woman.

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SONY-IWA Woman of the Year Award Ceremony
March 2014





SONY-IWA WOMAN OF THE YEAR: *Bhavani Prakash*

Interviewed by Sukanya Pushkarna

On a warm and lazy afternoon in April, Bhavani Prakash and I strolled down Orchard road and chatted about her life. Here is what this soft-spoken yet passionate environmentalist had to say:

Q. Tell us something about your childhood and growing up years?

As a child I spent a lot of time in Nature, especially during my five years in Africa when I was between the ages of 9 and 13. There wasn't much to study, so I'd be outdoors daydreaming in the company of trees. We saw a lot of wildlife there, and also had compulsory gardening in school, which at the time, I was terrible at. My Zambian friend would tease me, 'What's the use of being good in maths if you don't even know how to dig the soil, if you can't even grow your own food?' " I

think that must have seeped into my subconscious somehow because I now advocate growing one's own food organically in a big way!

Q. Did you always know you were going to be an environmentalist?

Oh no, actually, I got an MBA in finance from IIM Calcutta and a second Masters in Financial Economics from the University of London, in preparation for a career in the banking sector.

Q. So why and when did you shift your focus from that career in banking to what you do now?

I came to Singapore with my family in 2003, and during my first visit to the Singapore Botanic Gardens, I stumbled upon a guided tour of its rainforest section and loved it enough to become a volunteer tour guide there. My interest and awareness of environmental issues broadened and deepened over the years but I was still drawn to a full-time career in the financial sector.

An epiphany came in 2008 at a leadership seminar where I did a thought experiment. I had to visualise myself on a rocking chair as a grandmother during the twilight years of my life, and observe the world I saw. It did not look pleasant at all — a bleak planet, dilapidated habitats, barren land, polluted water and soil, and great suffering for untold billions.

At that moment, it hit me that I have one precious life to live, and I could choose to use it to do the things that are really important, not just for myself, but for my children, my community and the planet. A career in banking paled in comparison. What really mattered now was to raise my own consciousness and awareness of my thoughts and actions.

That is when I decided to set up ECO WALK THE TALK (EWTT). I felt a sense of urgency to raise awareness about various issues regarding our environment, especially in the Asian context, because Asia is particularly vulnerable to the impact of Climate Change.





My audience is mostly urban-so I talk about what people can do in their own homes to make a difference. I have written a free eBook called '50 Ways for an Eco-friendly Home,' and home is a metaphor for the earth. I encourage people to consume less, recycle more, compost waste, use public transport and even grow their own food.

I now also work actively to engage with industry through Green Collar Asia (GCA.)

The world's top 3000 companies cause \$2.2 trillion dollars worth of environmental damage, so it is critical to engage with businesses if you want to really make an impact.

I've actively embarked on speaking, training and coaching because unless you engage directly with people, one can't really understand and experience human behaviour.

Q. How about family time?

Balancing family and work has been a challenge and I could not have done any of this without such a supportive family - a really caring husband, two wonderful girls and a diligent helper. I do sometimes wish I could spend more time with my family but I know the work I am doing is important for all of us.

I would love to leave a beautiful world for my children's generations and those to come. I would love for the earth to be rich in biodiversity, where its entire species can thrive. That is my deepest desire.

Q. Any tips for our readers today?

I have three tips for a greener, healthier and happier life:

1. REDUCE ONE'S FOOTPRINT – It's important to pay attention to how much we're consuming. Everything we buy or eat or wear uses up scarce natural resources, and if we're not careful, we might generate waste that may end up in the air or oceans thousands of miles away.

2. CREATE A POSITIVE MINDPRINT

Mindprint is the impact we create on people around us through our thoughts, feelings and behaviours. We don't have to mirror the intensely consumerist culture of having to



buy the latest gadgets, or new clothes and accessories for every event. We should ask ourselves if we are perpetuating that very same consumerist culture, or one that values and spreads a simple but meaningful life?

3. GENERATE A KIND HEARTPRINT

Several studies show that practising kindness has a profound positive effect on our happiness. We practice kindness by saying kind things to the people around us and also by being mindful of the impact our food choices and purchasing decisions have on people who are out of sight. Does food come from industrial factory farms, which are cruel in their treatment of animals? Does the cheap T-shirt we buy support sweatshop labour where workers are paid poorly and are made to work in dangerous working conditions? Caring generates a kind heartprint. Just caring more for the quality of what we bring into our lives, will go a long way in caring for others with whom we share our planet.

By the end of our walk, talk and a refreshing fruit drink, I felt I had found a new friend, from whom I could learn so much not only about living but also about giving. We have a truly worthy winner of the Woman of the Year Award in Bhavani Prakash. For more on Bhavani, please watch her TedTalks and visit her EWTT and GCA websites.



Women of Substance -The Judges



Daisy Irani

Daisy Irani introduces herself as "a daughter, a wife, a mother, an actress, a producer and, a director."

Daisy who hails from Mumbai, India, is now a Singapore citizen. She followed her husband and fellow actor Subin Subaiah, to Singapore 12 years ago. Born in a Zoroastrian family in India, warm and vivacious Daisy is best known in Singapore for appearing in the role of Daisy in the popular Singapore TV series Under One Roof.

Daisy Irani, who previously held the position of the executive producer for MediaCorp Studios English Entertainment Productions Division, is currently the Vice-President of Content, MediaCorp Studios. Daisy is also the Creative Director of Hum Theatre.



Constance Singam

by Vidhya Nair

Constance Singam, born in Singapore in 1936 is well known as the nation's mother of civil society. Her foray into public life came in 1978 upon the demise of her journalist husband. Singam's letter to the Straits Times' Forum questioning the quality of patient care in public hospitals, created a furore, prompting scrutiny and government intervention. To rebuild her new life, she delved into achieving many personal milestones from learning how to drive, pursuing higher education with several degrees in English Literature and her passion for the culinary arts.

This journey of independence and intellectual pursuits brought Constance to AWARE, the leading gender equality advocacy group in Singapore. She went on to serve as AWARE President for three terms. She was also the President of the Singapore Council of Women's Organisation (SCWO) from 1990-93. She played a pioneering role in the effort to end violence against women at home and outside. This resulted in increased police intervention in domestic violence, enhanced hospital and police procedures for handling cases of violence against women including rape and heightened public awareness and debate on these issues.

Constance has been a tireless advocate on issues of gender inequality. She has also been a consistent voice of social justice by mobilizing Singaporeans towards concerned citizenry and activism.

As an Indian woman in Singapore, Constance is proud of her Kerala roots and considers her childhood years growing up in her family's ancestral home as a mark of distinction. She has also actively written for publications and her works include A History of the TWC: Building Social Space in Singapore, Singapore Women Re-Presented. In 2013, she released her memoir Where I was: A Memoir from the Margins and writes a regular blog at: <http://connie.sg>.



Gauri Krishnan

Gauri Krishnan specialises in South Asian art history and performing arts. She obtained her Ph.D in art history from the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, India where she taught art history and aesthetics before moving to Singapore. She developed the Indian collection as the founding Curator for South Asia at the Asian Civilisations Museum and was the Deputy Director for Research and Publication at the museum. She is currently engaged in the development of the Indian Heritage Centre project of the National Heritage Board, Singapore as its Centre Director working closely with the Indian community. She received Singapore Government's Commendation Medal Pingat Kepujian in honour of her contribution to the development of the Asian Civilisations Museum's collections, galleries, exhibitions and publications. She is the recipient of research grants of the Victoria & Albert Museum, London; the American Institute of Indian Studies, Gurgaon; Monash University, Melbourne and the National Heritage Board. Gauri has curated many seminal block-buster exhibitions, lectured on Indian art and the diaspora; and published extensively in reputed journals; Within: Art and Living Culture of India & South Asia (2006); On the Nalanda Trail: Buddhism in India, China and Southeast Asia (ed. 2007); She has recently published a large volume on art entitled The Power of the Female.



Rashmi Gogna

(IWA Representative)

Empowerment Chair IWA and CEO of Pure Earth, Rashmi uses fashion as a powerful tool to raise awareness and funds to support various non-profit organizations in India and Singapore. She has been an active member of IWA Singapore since 2002. She has been IWA Vice President for two terms (2011 and 2012) and is currently the chair of IWA Adda Club.

Rashmi Gogna is a recipient of the prestigious Spirit of Enterprise Award in Singapore



Sathya Karanth

(SONY Representative)

Sathya Karanth is the Head of Marketing Sony Entertainment Television Network South East Asia. She actively volunteers with ISHA Foundation. She is a partner in a start up "The Project Green Hands" which makes sustainable eco-friendly promotional packages. She has been instrumental in transforming IWA's vision of SONY-IWA award into reality.

Talents abound among the women of IWA and our patrons, partners and friends. In the next few pages we will introduce you to three extremely gifted daughters and three enterprising partners of IWA. This will be a regular feature in future editions of Dhvani and we hope to feature many more talented sons, daughters, and friends of IWA.

Daughters of IWA



Cheryl
Bains

My very first memory of singing at 5 yrs is imitating the opening tune of Hindi soap operas. The intricate 'Harkat & Murkis' in the songs interested me and I was imitating so well that mom decided to put me under vocal training with Guru Ustaad Sharafat Khan Sahib.

I train in both Western and Indian Classical music, and can't choose between the two for their challenges are incomparable and equally demanding.

Music brings me immense happiness from my achievements and progress; grief from sad songs; anger and frustration from difficult pieces; physical activity from vocalizing & singing; language skills from western art music and performance directions. I sing in French, Italian, Spanish, Latin, German, Portuguese, Hindi, Mandarin, Korean, Japanese and English.

Though I've been learning Hindustani Classical Music since I was 5, I've begun to really appreciate and love Hindi film music in the past year. I recently participated in a contest to meet the Titans of Bollywood – Vishal and Shekhar. During

this meeting, my eyes were locked with Vishal and Shekhar as I sang a mash up that I created of 'Bin Tere' and 'Nella Fantasia'. It was euphoric.

I have given countless concerts over the years but the performances I cherish the most are the *Christmas Concert* with The Mozart Children's Choir Of India at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in Dec 2011 and *Don't stop believing* Summer Concert at the Esplanade Concert Hall in 2012.

My upcoming performances include *The Lord of the Rings* at the Star Theatre, *Mid-year Recital* and *Christmas Concerts* at the Esplanade Concert Hall and some private concerts.

My gratitude to my Gurus & Conductors and my elder sister Trpta who brings out the best in me. I'll go wherever my music takes me. I hope to create something magical each time....

I am a 9th grade student at UWCSEA.

Cheryl Bains (Daughter of Manjula Bains)

LAVANYA PRAKASH

Hi! My name is Lavanya Prakash and I'm 13 years old. I have a passion for nature and photography. I love exploring and taking photos, whether it's on my rooftop garden or in parks and forests!

I discovered my love for nature through photography. It really opened my eyes to the beautiful natural world that we have around us. Through my journey in nature, while learning a lot about the natural world, I realise that so many children do not spend enough time outdoors but instead are glued onto a make-believe world through screens of televisions, phones, etc. I hope to spread the message and inspire people to connect with nature and explore the amazing WILDERNESS!! Apart from spending time in nature and photography, I enjoy a variety of activities, including- singing, dancing, playing the violin, writing short stories, reading, and most recently- blogging. I enjoy writing down my feelings and experiences and my blog www.mynatureexperiences.wordpress.com has helped me document all my experiences with nature, and my photographs help to keep them interesting and exciting for myself and readers.

Personally, I don't like when people ask me what I want to "be" when I grow up. I would just like to continue my passion, and do what I love- but most importantly, I want to make sure that children can discover the infinity of the natural world and hopefully our home and education will allow that for us from a young age. Let's go out and EXPLORE!

Last November I had the honour of speaking on TedxYouth Singapore. It was a great opportunity to talk about "Reconnecting children with nature."

My message is mainly that more children and young adults should spend time in nature and learn to explore and discover the beauty of nature and what it has to offer and teach us.

I blog almost every week, and put out 3-4 blog posts a month. As of now I have 79 subscribers on my blog and over 14,200 views to date. I mainly do nature blogging, and occasionally put up some 'creative' pieces like poems that are related to nature but in the future I'd love to write about my other passions and interests.

I am currently studying at NPS International, and I'm in the 9th grade. (Daughter of Bhavani Prakash)



Ruha Devanesan

Ruha, a former student of UWCSEA Singapore, graduated *summa cum laude* from Rutgers University in 2004, with a major in Journalism and Political Science. She went on to get her Juris Doctor degree from Boston University and also completed her Master's degree in International relations at the same time.

Ruha is the Executive Director of the Internet Bar Organization, a nonprofit organization working to improve access to justice through technology. In her capacity as Executive Director, she has led the design and implementation of several tech-focused social justice initiatives, of which PeaceTones is her personal favorite.

The PeaceTones Initiative helps talented, unknown artists from developing nations build their careers while giving back to their communities. Through PeaceTones, Ruha and her team are looking to rework the traditional record label into

something more fair to the artist, while teaching musicians the legal, marketing and technology skills they need to succeed as social entrepreneurs of their own making. PeaceTones has run projects in Brazil, Sierra Leone and Haiti, breeding successful musicians with positive messages around the world. The artist they mentored in Haiti, Wanito, is now one of that country's biggest stars. Ruha just led a team of lawyers, photographers and grassroots community leaders in Nairobi, Kenya, training over 250 musicians in their rights and auditioning them to find PeaceTone's next social justice ambassador. You can learn more about the work she is doing at www.peacetones.org.

She was called to the NY Bar in 2012.

She has sat on a panel at the World Justice Forum in The Hague in 2013 June and also gave a TEDX talk in Montreal in October 2013. (Ruha is Rathantha Devanesan's daughter)



Partners & *Friends* of IWA



Roshni Mahtani - entrepreneur

Five years ago, then 25-year-old Roshni Mahtani founded an idea that would resonate with over 1.3 million Asian parents: the online parenting magazine called theAsianparent.com.

The idea came to Roshni after babysitting a particularly willful toddler in New York City. While searching for solutions to end the power struggle, she realized how different Western parenting techniques were from Asian parenting. She recognized the unique position of today's Asian parents who wish to embrace their traditional upbringing and merge it with modern parenting philosophies. She launched theAsianparent.com, an online portal for modern Asian parents to raise happy and confident children.

Today, Roshni is the CEO and Founder of Tickled Media, the publisher of three of Asia's largest parenting sites – theAsianparent.com, pregnant.sg and kidlander.sg – which reach over 1.3 million Asian parents. Her company, which

employs over 50 people, has operations in Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines and Indonesia and is looking to expand into India and Vietnam in the next 18 months. In 2012 Roshni also founded the Singapore Female Founders Network with the aim of empowering women to achieve their full potential.

Roshni sits on the board of TiE Singapore, which fosters entrepreneurship amongst South Asians and provides mentoring at JFDI, a startup incubator in Singapore.

Roshni would like to see theAsianparent.com reach even more parents around the world and keep working closely with female executives to encourage them to dream big, see more women leaders in organizations and more equality at work and home.

by TiE Singapore

Vidhya Gnana Gouresan -art curator



Vidhya Gouresan is a Singaporean curator of art, who is the Curatorial Director and Co-Founder of Gnani Arts (a leading contemporary art institution in Singapore and the region), through which she has curated several monumental art exhibitions in Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Chennai, Bangalore, Mumbai and New Delhi. She holds an M.A. in Asian Art Histories and

a B.A. in Arts Management. From 2000 to 2006, Vidhya had researched for the South Asia Department of the Asian Civilisations Museum (National Heritage Board) and for the Singapore Philatelic Museum (National Heritage Board). She was the first curator of the multimedia-based SGH Museum.

She has edited and written for several catalogue publications and writes for the Singapore Art Gallery Guide under her column, 'Aesthetic Awakening'.

Her research interests revolve around the aesthetics and dynamics of image making (individual and communal), and the impact that this generates on historical and contemporary visual cultures. Vidhya has guest-lectured on Hindu Art at the Sotheby's Institute of Art (Singapore) and she continues to lecture at LASALLE College of the Arts intermittently.

"This existence of mine is ruled by the necessity to recognise and respect differences, in people and in situations. This is my foundation for positivity and pro-activity. In the same spirit, IWA proves to be a responsible organisation that exudes great strength, compassion and integrity in its pursuits."

Sangeeta More

– Jewellery designer



Sangeeta was born in Mumbai and grew up there. She got a Bachelors degree from NM College and moved to Hong Kong shortly after getting married to Vinod More, who was in the gemstones business. "I learnt a lot from Vinod about the business and he is a great partner," says Sangeeta who also went through training in Hong Kong to acquire the knowledge needed to run a Jewellery business.

She and her husband moved to Singapore 21 years ago from Hong Kong.

Sangeeta's love of painting and keen eye for detail has been a huge asset in growing the business. Being patient and a good listener, she shares a good rapport with her customers and this helps her recommend the right piece of jewellery to them. "Being a woman has been an advantage as I can understand exactly how another woman thinks and translate that to grow the business," she says.

Sangeeta and her oldest daughter Nikita (23) opened their new venture ARIZMA last year. "It is a great feeling to have your daughter join you and take the business forward." Her son goes to university this year and younger daughter Navya is in grade 8.

Sangeeta More's main mantra in life is 'Think good and good happens'

The Mores would like to expand their retail brand Arizma, locally and overseas and on the personal side do some more volunteer work with the elderly on a regular basis.



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Inviting

Contributions

IWA Dhvani is your quarterly magazine and we want you to showcase what excites and interests you. Please send in your contributions to editor@iwasingapore.org.

Cover Picture Contribution

We invite contributions of artwork or photographs for the next issue's cover picture. If you find something you would like to capture please send in your original work to us.

We request that the artwork or photograph be horizontal, at least 300dpi and at least 200mm in width. We discourage photos taken on camera phones. If you can, please send a description of the photograph in a couple of lines.

Celebrating Talent

Please send a 300 word essay on talented children, men and women who are members, partners or children of IWA to editor@iwasingapore.org

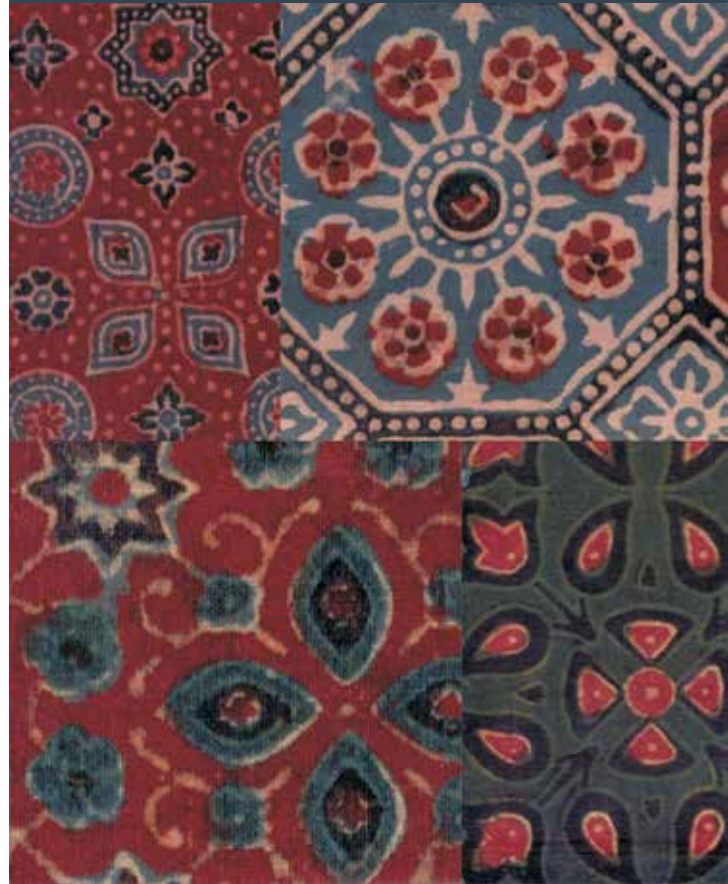
Kidz Corner Contribution

IWA is not just about women but also about our families and in IWA Dhvani we are hoping to create a special space for IWA children.

We invite members' children to contribute a 400 word essay on any aspect of life in Singapore which excites or interests them. For example among other things it might range from people they have met, places they have visited in Singapore, new food they have tasted or a talent they have had a chance to hone in this land. An accompanying photograph (no phone camera photographs) or original corresponding artwork should also be submitted.

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welcoming a new member



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