

Shanti Hastkala

Empowering Women as Peaceful Agents of Social Change

Issue Two, June 2009

www.shantihastkala.org

JAI GURUDEV

WELCOME to the June issue of Shanti Hastkala newsletter.

In this issue we have two more people profiles of the SHK team, plus Vanya Cullen from the southwest of Western Australia has sent in two stories.

If you would like to read other stories and view more photographs click on this link www.shantihastkala.org

Our people profile – SHK team in Magod



SEEMA has been with us from the day we started SHK four years ago. She had just delivered a baby boy and we were unsure if she would be able to work.

Seema said to us “please give me work and I will not fail in my commitment.” She has worked extremely hard to fulfill her commitment to SHK.

In the process Seema has learnt many different skills making a variety of items including envelopes, photo frames, paper mache plates and paper lamps. At the moment she is learning to stitch.

Seema is very happy working for SHK as she can work a few hours per day in between caring for her two sons and completing her housework.



SARLA has been working for SHK for the last year. When she first arrived at SHK she was very shy. We have taught her to stitch. Gradually over time Sarla has gained confidence by perseverance and patience in stitching slowly and carefully under our guidance.

Today Sarla is one of our valued and very competent workers. Sarla fits in SHK work around her family and housework.

FOUNDATION DAY TALKS: On the first of January 2009, the ashram in Magod celebrated Foundation Day. Two women working with SHK were invited to share their experiences at the celebration. Both women were comfortable and confident speaking in front of an audience of approximately three hundred people. The villagers attending felt happy and proud that the women represented their village and spoke so well. Chideshwari relates their stories below.

Vanya & Chideshwari’s Village Visit



November 2008 – Report from Vanya Cullen, Margaret River

The last time I visited Magod ashram I had a tour of the Shanti Shanti Hastkala operations at Shanti Mandir. There are now two large rooms where approximately thirty women from surrounding villages work on various orders from around the world.

The next day Chideshwari and I traveled by car to visit the working hands of Shanti Hastkala at home in their villages. As we traveled around the villages I asked Chideshwari some questions.

How many people from local villages near the ashram work for SHK?



We have sixty-five villagers working for us. At first we had to talk and coax them to come and work for SHK. Now they come and ask for more work.

Some villagers from far off villages such as Dongri and Hariya cannot come to the ashram as there is no direct means of transport for them to travel here. We travel to those villages once a week and give approximately twenty five villagers some work.

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Can you tell me the story about Bipin? (pictured)



Bipin does warli painting for us. He lives in a village called Hariya. One day we were roaming from one village to the next. Upon reaching Hariya we decided to stop there to demonstrate painting, paper craft and needle work to the villagers.

Bipin attended the demonstrations and proved to be extremely talented with warli painting. He very quickly picked up the art. It was perfect for

him as at that time he had no work and needed to support and take care of his mother.

He has now found employment and paints for SHK when he comes home from work. He has been warli painting with us for two years. Bipin always looks happy when we see him. He hopes the time will come when he can work for SHK full time.

Who is the beautiful lady with the child we just met? (pictured)



Her name is Manisha and she is from Hariya.

After a difficult marriage ended Manisha moved back to her parent's house. She was seven months pregnant.

Manisha had just given birth when we first met her. She slowly started to work for us. After working with us for a year she has managed to find a job in a doctor's clinic. Now

she works for SHK and at the doctor's.

Manisha's mother has started to work for SHK to help support her daughter and grandchild. Both Manisha and her mother make kurtis and bags for us.

November 2008 – Curry Day at Cullens



Vanya Cullen is the managing director of Cullen Wines in the southwest of Western Australia. Vanya visited Magod Ashram three times in 2008. She was so inspired by the work of the SHK team she ordered some goods to be sold at a curry day to be held in the family vineyard. Here is her story.

BEING INSPIRED by Gurudev, Shanti Mandir and Shanti Hastkala we decided to host an Indian extravaganza at our vineyard restaurant in

Margaret River. This felt like a good way to see how SHK products would sell in Australia.

Chideshwari and I worked out an order together. Straight away many SHK workers went into action. Some months later nine boxes of very colorful and sequined SHK products arrived on my doorstep.

A pre curry day shop was set up at my house displaying the Shanti Hastkala products. It was a full day as Kailas, Camilla and I worked hard to get everything ready. We had only just finished pricing everything when people started coming through the door. There was great excitement in the air. Everyone loved the clothing and handicrafts.

Two days later we transported the goods down to the restaurant and set up shop for the Indian banquet. There was a real buzz as racks were gone through and baskets rummaged. We felt truly blessed.



Our Sous Chef Sathish Kumar originally from Trichy in Southern India had spent fifteen hours making a bright pink Ganesh which was displayed in the restaurant during the luncheon.

As well as fantastic food and friends, Dinesh had given us some beautiful classical Indian music which was played in the background giving a lovely ambience.