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TIMES

A QUARTERLY UPDATE FROM CREATIVE HANDICRAFTS



Creative Handicrafts

Women's self employment center



Dear Friends,

It is exactly six months since our founder, Sr. Isabel Martin, left us for her heavenly abode. As I wrote to you earlier, these were difficult moments for all, the women, the staff and all her friends and dear ones.

During these last six months the thought that kept haunting us - the trustees, staff and the women members, was, "how to keep the spirit of Sr. Isabel Martin alive and throbbing". The trustees met a couple of times and were keen to identify what was the most important value, the principle that was very dear to Sr. Isabel Marin. Sr. Isabel always liked the organization to work towards a community, a world "where women live in dignity and stand on their own feet, both economically and socio politically". The board of trustees thus resolved that the organization will stand firm behind this single goal and all efforts would be made to achieve this end. The trustees also acknowledged that the ways of realizing this dream might vary from time to time to keep abreast with the change of time but the main goal of the organization shall remain un-wavered.

It was also felt important to have the images of Sr. Isabel put up at all our work places to remind us constantly that we are striving hard, every day to fulfill a dream, the dream that Sr. Isabel Martin had for the women. The women found a novel way of reminding themselves by gathering around the image of Sr. Isabel every morning and reading that dream which is inscribed on her photograph and hung in each of the cooperative.

To keep in touch with you all on a regular basis we have come up with this quarterly newsletter. This is the first issue and the next one will be in December 2013. Our social work department tries to put together the news and views from the various programs that we are engaged in.

Thank you,

Johny Joseph
Director



CREATIVE HANDICRAFTS
**GUARANTEED
FAIR TRADE**

Creative Handicrafts has been growing as a Fair Trade organization, standing for the values that put people and the environment first in every transaction. Creative Handicrafts has been one of the 10 pilots who have been awarded with the WFTO Fair Trade Guarantee System product Label. This guarantees that whenever you purchase a product of Creative Handicrafts, you are assured that the product has contributed to the dignity and economic independence of the women who made it.

Social Awareness Programs

Various awareness sessions are conducted for the women at Creative Handicrafts each month. Keeping in mind that reproductive health and awareness is an important aspect of their well being, sessions were conducted in the month of July on Reproduction and Contraception for all the women of the cooperatives.

In August a session on Parenting dealt with various challenges our women face as working mothers and how they can resolve these issues.

Women have been silent sufferers of extreme violence perpetrated against them at all stages in their lives. This constant discrimination and continued violence have made women believe that "life is like that" and there is nothing wrong with it. However, the recent instances of rape and killings of women in different parts of India and the protest that it has evoked helped us to draw the attention of women and work on the same. Domestic Violence was the topic of discussion and debate at Creative Handicrafts during the month of September. Women were urged to break the silence on this topic. Steps towards resolving such issues and tips about authorities who could help were provided during the workshops organized with the help of women activists working for a safe India for women. (h)



A Step Forward

At present 23 women are training with CH to acquire basic skills in sewing. In the month of September, four women successfully completed their training course and went on to join the income generating cooperatives. One woman shares her story, "This is the first time I'm leaving my house to work. My husband lost his job recently and we were going through very difficult times. It is because of my job here that we are able to educate my 3 children. I'm very happy for this opportunity!" (h)

FAIR TRADE EXHIBITIONS



Creative Handicrafts conducted 6 exhibitions at various locations in offices like Akruti Trade centre, Bandra, and colleges like St. Xaviers College. The exhibitions are held in a single day or over the period of a week. It is an opportunity for the women from the income generating cooperatives to know about the people who purchase what they make. It is also a good opportunity for people to interact with them. (h)

Independence Day Program



The Independence Day program held on the August 17 witnessed a mix of patriotism & camaraderie. The women participated in a patriotic song competition & various games that tested their knowledge about our national leaders. It was a day of joy with all the groups coming & mingling together. (h)



To serve with love

The teachers from the Balwadis and Bal Vikas Kendra were honored with a day of enjoyment on September 5, 2013. They were taken for an outing to "KeshavShrushti" in Uttan, Bhayander. They spent the day in the herbal garden learning the identification and use of various herbal medicines. Since most of them stay in forested tribal areas, they found this added knowledge useful. (h)