FRIENDS OF LIFE GLOBAL AU

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

With Gratitude

Welcome to our first newsletter celebrating women from around the world on International Women's Day. Where we don't just dare to dream but work actively to build a "gender equal world. A world free of bias, stereotypes, and discrimination. A world that's diverse, equitable, and inclusive. A world where difference is valued and celebrated. Together we can forge women's equality". The Life Global Australia (LifeGA) team will use the newsletter to keep readers informed of our activities, accomplishments and aspirations. We will also take the opportunity to introduce the people whose lives have changed through our support, the donors who make these changes possible, and the volunteers who operate behind the scenes. Finally, we will offer you some extra reading on the work of LifeGA.

A life changed

Reshma Khan is from an extremely poor family. Her husband's work as a driver earns very little, so Reshma worked as a housemaid as well as caring for their two children. She was exhausted and despairing when she first heard of the Women's Empowerment Programme.

"I received training in beauty parlour practice. Project *Life* allowed me to dream of starting a beauty parlour and making my home financially strong."

Reshma's training included self-defence classes and education about gender equality, a subject unknown to her and many of her cohort. Reshma has been empowered to become a successful businesswoman operating Angel Beauty Parlour from her home, and giving classes herself.

"Now I live with dignity. I can provide better education for my children."

Reshma credits the donors and founders of LifeGA with making her family financially strong and giving her new hope. She presented to the LifeGA team an accomplished and confident businesswoman.

"I pray that LifeGA continues to help sisters like me."

It only costs $450 to identify, enrol, train and equip a woman living below the poverty line.

Watch Reshma's full story

Learn more about LifeGA's Women's Empowerment Programs

Making it possible

Kamini Patel first learned about LifeGA through Dr Dipti McGowan, LifeGA's founder. Curious about Dipti's motivation and the work of the charity, Kamini went to the LifeGA website and did some research. She was immediately drawn to the Women's Empowerment Programme.

"As a woman, I feel it is part of my journey to help other women. It is important to me that women can be independent. I have had the privilege of being independent since finishing my studies and I know what living life with confidence feels like."

On her birthday, Kamini asked friends and family to donate to the Women's Empowerment Programme instead of buying her gifts. She committed to match the total donations made. The first to donate on that day were her daughters, aged 12 and 14, who raided their piggy banks to contribute.

"Donating to the LifeGA Women's Empowerment Programme is an opportunity for us to help women become independent and for me to set an example for my daughters that, when we can, we should help other women."

Kamini is very proud of her daughters and excited that in the future she will be able to go to India with them to meet the women that they have sponsored.

Operating behind the scenes

Rachel Thompson has been a Director of LifeGA since 2019. She saw the profound impact the charity's work has, and joined so that she could contribute to real change in the lives of those who lack the opportunities readily available in Australia. Rachel felt she could employ her privilege in a way that significantly benefitted others.

Rachel has focused on building the LifeGA team. Her strength lies in identifying the right individuals, recognising the potential value of their work, inspiring them to join the cause, and bringing them all together. Rachel uses her extensive education in psychology and sustainability to engage individuals in dedicating their time and resources. She has encouraged donors to sponsor events, contribute items for silent auctions, or give financial support to LifeGA's programs. Inspired by the knowledge that even a single dollar can have a positive impact, she shows donors the transformative power of their support.

Balancing her responsibilities in a not-or-profit organisation with a fulltime job has been challenging for Rachel. However, she finds her role very rewarding.

"My volunteer role with LifeGA provides me with a sense of purpose I hadn't experienced before."

Activities, accomplishments and aspirations

Since its foundation four years ago, the work of LifeGA has been gathering momentum.

After achieving registration with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission in 2020, activities were stalled by the global pandemic. The pandemic did, however, provide the impetus for the first donation to LifeGA's partner charity, Project *Life*, in 2021. The $8000 supplied to the Pandemic Crisis Appeal funded hygiene and vaccine awareness, and hygiene kits, for three rural villages in Gujarat.

The enforced hiatus also gave LifeGA time to raise awareness of its mission and vision, and to build a strong team. By the end of 2023, LifeGA had established an Advisory Board; held launch events in Brisbane, Gold Coast, Sydney and Melbourne; developed community connections and attracted corporate sponsorship. LifeGA received donations ranging from $2 to $10,000 from over 40 donors during the launch week. Since directors and sponsors cover administration costs, all of this money went into our Education, Health or Women's Empowerment Programmes. This means over 70 women living below the poverty line received training which allowed them to become financially independent, and the Project *Life* Blood Bank in Rajkot was able to provide 100 blood transfusions and 500 Thalassemia screening tests free of cost to those in need.

2023 also saw the first educational and philanthropic trip to India, in which directors and donors saw firsthand the transformative effect of their support. They visited Project *Life* headquarters in Rajkot, and saw Mulchand village school which was built through donations, the Project *Life* Blood Bank, and the Women's Empowerment Programme in Junagadh. The Australian visitors also visited Gandhi's High School Museum, Gir Forest and Gir Mountain, amongst other cultural and natural wonders.

Much is planned for 2024 and beyond. The second educational and philanthropic trip has already taken place. This year, donors and directors were able to speak to several women whose lives have changed forever after their training, to lifelong recipients of screened blood donations, and to the staff and students of schools built since the devastating earthquake in 2001. They also visited the Earthquake Museum, the world's largest cricket stadium and the Gandhi Ashram on the Sabarmati River.

Our ambitious goal is to raise money for building a school, and to fund the training of another 50 marginalised women. We will also continue our support of the Project *Life* Blood Bank.

A little goes a long way

Life Global Australia was only founded four years ago. The charity has only a handful of volunteer directors and no employees. And yet, it has attracted donations totalling over AUD$40,000, enabling 75 women to achieve economic security, 100 units of blood to be given to needy recipients, and 500 Thalassemia screening tests.

"A little goes a long way in India," Founding Director and Chairperson, Dr Dipti McGowan, said.

Full article available here

Thank you for your continued support and we look forward to what the rest of 2024 has in store.

If you would like to keep up-to-date with Life Global Australia, enter your details at here.

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