

University Women

Monthly Newsletter of Women Graduates Union



University Women
June 2019

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PRESIDENT'S NOTE



Bina Thadani

Dear Friends,

Summer is a quiet season in Mumbai, many of our members take the opportunity to visit children and family members abroad, others have been holidaying in cooler climes and beginning to return. Looking back at the year gone by, I am glad to note that our events, discussions, celebrations of last year drew large audiences to WGU, and that a number of new, younger women have joined us as members. An encouraging indication perhaps, that we are talking about contemporary issues and developments of concern to all women. Happily, some more of our members have volunteered to join hands in our endeavours. Let us all come forward and interact to make our premier women's organization more and more vibrant.

In this quarterly issue of University Women read our special feature on WGU's Hostel, now in its 45th year of serving the needs of young women who come here from all over India to work. On page three read the interview with the well known Bombay artist Brinda Chudasama Miller who has long been associated with the Kala Ghoda Festival and shines the light on Public Art and the City. A number of women, boys and girls have started learning from the Coach at our Computer Centre, the assortment of learning packages available are featured here.

This monsoon season, we look forward to meeting you at forthcoming events at WGU. We also invite you to visit the library, and to drop by and tell us about your interests and suggestions. ■



A soothing retreat from a hectic workday



When the WGU working women's hostel The Seth Purshottamdas Hostel (named after a generous donor) opened its doors for the first time in 1974, it was in reality the fruition of a pioneering and resilient effort that began far back in 1959. This was out of a concern about the lack of suitable living facilities for working women, particularly for those from other towns obtaining jobs in Mumbai and having to hunt for accommodation in the city. WGU took up the challenge of establishing a hostel that would serve as a safe and congenial boarding accommodation for young women far from home. Members of WGU took charge of this project with determination, courage and imagination, started a fund raising initiative, and with help from the Union Government, state leadership, city philanthropists, corporate houses, legal professionals and friends a dream took shape. A familiar place now, over the years many women have started their work life from here, several of them going on to become corporate leaders, well known journalists, and others flourishing in their chosen fields.

University Women spoke to a few young women from all parts of the country currently living here, truly a microcosm of India with a fascinating range of occupations. Read about them and what they say.

- With contributions from Suman Bakshi, Khorshed Nayak, Bina Thadani



NISHA SARATH

After a day on-site at the Naval Dockyard, comfort awaits

Nisha Sarath works as a civil engineer with a contractor on an on-site project at the Naval Dockyard.

Her early education began in Kerala, her home state, then she did her Master's in Mangalore, followed by research work in IIT, Chennai.

When selected to work as a civil engineer in Mumbai, she was warned that 'Mumbai life is local train life, you set your clock as per local train schedule!' That had her worried. But then she

10 Life Lessons for a Happier Life

You are a category of One

Other people were born to be them; you were born to be you. When you compare yourself to other people, you are missing the point of your life - to be you. Embrace your uniqueness. Don't be afraid of being yourself. "Happiness is when what you think, what you say and what you do are in harmony." - Mahatma Gandhi.

Listen to your heart

Deep life satisfaction comes from purpose and passion. Your heart knows the way to your dreams but cannot explain or justify the path to you in logical terms. Instead, it speaks in nudges and feelings and inner knowings. You have to learn to trust it.

You are not in this life alone

There is a powerful intelligence at play in the cosmos which is constantly trying to lift you up, bless you and bring you miracles daily. Whether you call it your higher self or you call it God or you call it the Universe, just make sure that you call on it. Invite it into your life to guide you.

Life is now

The present moment is the only time you can truly experience the juiciness and sparkle of life. Even all of the grand beautiful things you dream of doing in the future will occur in the present

moment. Be here now, or you will miss out on everything. "Realize deeply that the present moment is all you have. The primary cause of unhappiness is never the situation but your thoughts about it" - Eckhart Tolle.

Self-love is essential and worth fighting for

How can you get through the roller coaster of life, or find the courage to go after your dreams, if you don't love yourself first? Not loving yourself also prevents you from fully loving others because you can't give what you don't have.

Fear is not a stop sign

It is a sign that something is outside your comfort zone, which actually means you should do the thing you are afraid to do because the rewards on the other side are growth and freedom. You are more capable than you know. Most of your barriers are self-imposed. You will surprise yourself.

Don't believe everything you think or see

As the great Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius said: "Everything we hear is an opinion, not a fact. Everything we see is a perspective, not a truth." We think we are dealing with reality when really we are

dealing with the stories in our head we have plastered on top of reality. When we shift our perspective, what we see changes.

Don't be afraid of failure

Even if you fail on an external level, you gain on an internal level in the form of valuable lessons and personal growth — which sets you up for greater success tomorrow. Don't be afraid of failure; only be afraid of not trying in the first place because then your chances of success are zero. "Have faith in yourself—all power is in you..." - Swami Vivekananda.

Life is not a race

Slow down. Take a breath. Taste your food. Really listen to your loved ones. Notice the flowers blossoming in the spring time. Spend time in nature. Meditate.

Play and imagination are not just for children

Don't die before you die by forgetting to have fun and enjoy life! Take yourself lightly and add more play to your day. Use your imagination to envisage a greater and greater life for yourself — and then take steps to create it. ■



A Novel Gifting Idea Give A Gift Of WGU Membership

Thinking of a birthday or anniversary or occasion gift For a sister, a daughter, a lady friend or neighbour or colleague? Give a gift that gives in return.....gift a WGU membership!

Life Member (Graduate)

(includes additional membership of IFUWA and of Graduate Women International- GWI)

Rs. 12,000 only

Ordinary Member (Graduate)

(includes additional membership of IFUWA and of Graduate Women International- GWI)

Rs. 1,000 per year

Associate Life Member

(graduate or diploma holder)

Rs. 5,000 only

Associate Member

(graduate or diploma holder)

Rs. 400 per year

Download a membership form

WGU website : www.womengraduatesunion.org
Or Contact on 22151947 / 22186220 • Email : wgu1915@gmail.com

Picnic Fun For Study Centre Children



Enjoying the Picnic at Kamala Nehru Park



Garden view of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Museum

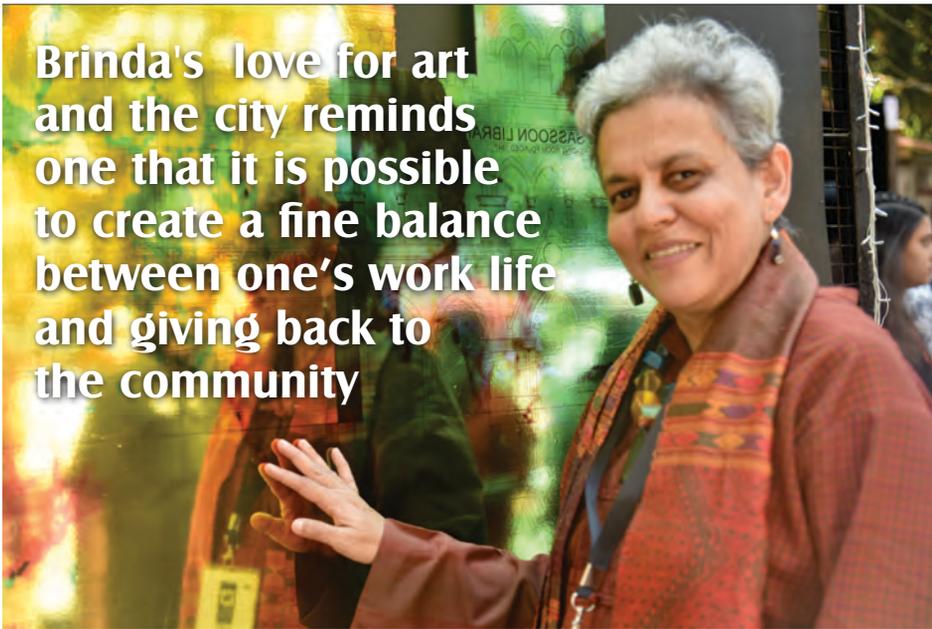
Children of the Study Centre, 36 of them, had a double treat on 19th January, 2019.

First off, they visited the Museum, that is, the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya. Hon.Secretary Mrs Dinoo Vasunia had kindly arranged for free entry to the Museum for all the children.

There was more to come. The next stop was the Kamala Nehru Park which has been newly renovated and is a delight for the children.

INTERVIEW

Brinda's love for art and the city reminds one that it is possible to create a fine balance between one's work life and giving back to the community



Catching up with Artist Brinda Chudasama Miller .. a long journey, bringing Art to life in the City of Mumbai

Brinda Chudasama Miller is a familiar name in Mumbai. A dignified, understated presence, she exudes an air of quiet confidence. Brinda is a much admired, highly respected mixed media artist with as many as eighteen solo shows at major art galleries in Mumbai, Delhi and Baroda as part of her many successes, besides participation in numerous international shows and workshops. A recipient of several art awards since her school days, she stood First in Maharashtra, from Sir J. J. School of Art, in Textile Design and later studied Drawing and Painting at the Parsons School of Design, New York where she excelled. These achievements apart, what really stands out about Brinda is her contribution to bringing Art into the life of the city in many different ways, her public spiritedness and her deep identification with the city of Mumbai. Brinda is truly of Mumbai, for Mumbai and defined by her love for Mumbai.

Chatting with Bina Thadani, Brinda spoke about her immersive involvement with the city.

Brinda, you have been one of the founding members, from about 20 years ago and later on Festival Director of the iconic

Kala Ghoda Festival. What in your mind was the purpose of starting this annual event?

I was keen to create awareness of the art and architectural, and cultural heritage of the city. Here there has been a general apathy towards heritage unlike in other cities where great pride is taken in their aesthetic heritage. Kala Ghoda is surrounded by extraordinary Architectural beauty, such as the restored David Sassoon library, Elphinstone College, the CSMVS Museum, the UNESCO awarded Bombay Natural History Society, St. Thomas' Church and others. A number of these

were restored through the initiatives of the Heritage Committee and the Kala Ghoda Festival committee with the help of restoration architects. Major art galleries like the Jehangir Art Gallery and the National Gallery of Modern Art too had their presence in this area. I was concerned about bringing appreciation of the art, culture and heritage of our city to all, students, working people, families, to the common man. We were a likeminded group and so worked hard year after year to create an Art District in the heart of Mumbai. Today Kala Ghoda is buzzing with cafes, restaurants, boutiques etc. and the Festival draws large crowds from out of town too. I am happy that young people are able to get exposure to art and culture.

Why is art important and what role does art have in a city?

I believe that Public Art is important for any city. Art and architecture, urban design, green spaces make up the soul of a city. I feel everything functional should also have beauty. That is why I volunteered to create a number of murals around the city, like the Naval Dockyard mural at Lion's Gate, the restoration of five police Chowkies with artists' murals, the street wall murals in Kala Ghoda and others.

What does Art mean to you personally?

For me art is meditation. It is my passion, not like work that I have to do. Even in my free time, I'm always making sketches, drawings, painting, working with mixed media like fabric, acrylic, always experimenting with something!

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Contd. from Page 1

moved into the Hostel. Here's what she says," Our Hostel is a super accommodation with a good crowd. Close proximity to the lush green BPT garden. A bunch of good hostel friends. Caring wardens who never interfere in inmates' space, but are always there when we need them. Dutiful security guards and housekeeping staff, spacious sea view rooms. Good catering in the mess. Amenities like the library, newspapers and magazines, the TV room and lounge. My workplace is nearby and I commute on my two-wheeler. Yes, truly a home away from home."



DISHA HIREGANGE

Life Sciences Research is demanding, a haven is the upside

Disha was born in Karnataka, but her childhood and schooling was in Mumbai. She was always fascinated by Biology and the why, what and how of this subject. She did her Bachelor's degrees in Biotechnology and in Biochemistry from Mumbai University and pursued her interest to establish a career in research. Selected for a Master's by Research Degree in Life Sciences at the prestigious Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, she is presently a Junior Research Scholar there in the field of cancer biology.

What's more....she will be soon joining as a PhD student under the guidance of Prof. Ada Yonath (a Nobel Laureate in Chemistry 2009) at the Weizmann Institute of Science, in Israel!

Disha says, "the Hostel is like a haven, you feel so relaxed on going 'home' after a day's work."

Her several interests include volunteering with NGOs.



ANCHAL KHANSIL

Pursuing the call of a musical career from a happy place

Anchal is a young music teacher of Indian classical vocal. Presently she is teaching students individually and in a group, ranging in age from 4 to 40 plus. She has been in Mumbai for one and a half years. What brought Anchal from distant Darjeeling to Mumbai? She is aspiring for a career in playback singing. She has given performances here and in Delhi and has dubbed for advertisements and for short films. Music and dance go together, so Anchal has trained in Kathak. She advises that singing is good for health and calms the mind.

"The Hostel is very comfortable with good natured superintendents and staff. A happy place to live in. It's very conveniently located for me as my students are in Colaba and Churchgate."

“*Being the Chairperson of Sir Purshottamdas Thakurdas Hostel has been an enriching experience for me. I have had the advantage of meeting young women, who come to Mumbai from all over India and abroad for staying with us. They are from different professions, backgrounds and cities.*

Neelima Patkar



RASHMI AHLAWAT

Diet counseling from a feeling of belonging

Rashmi is a Post-Graduate in Food & Nutrition and is working as a nutritionist at Healthspring centres in Colaba and Kemp's Corner. She provides diet counselling to patients based on their blood group and reports. She has also

completed an MBA along with her job. She belongs to Haryana State, but being from a defence background she has lived in various places in India, mainly in Kerala. "It's a very nice hostel. I have been staying here for the past one year. I really like it here. It gives me a feeling of belonging, more so as its location is close to the defence area."



SHAMBHAVI JOSHI

A friendly environment after long working hours

Shambhavi Joshi is quite at home in Mumbai, especially Colaba, where the WGU Hostel is located. Her father, an army officer had a posting here in the Colaba army area Mumbai for a few years. Today Shambhavi works in the PR Department of the Dentsu Aegis Network, who does Image Building for Companies, Brands etc. Image-building is a long-term process of influencing the surroundings - creating and influencing personal and media image, to support the overall brand image of a company, product or personality and distinguishing the brand from the competition. She loves her work but as the hours are long and she only gets back at about 8.30pm, it's difficult meet the others in the hostel.

"Living in the WGU hostel is a boon", she says. It is in the heart of town, travelling anywhere from there is so easy and all essentials well within reach. No complaints about the food either. "Our food is really good and the wardens make sure the hostel is kept clean. It's good to come back to a secure, friendly environment."



TRISHILA GOYAL

Designing furniture in a hectic city, living hassle free

Trishila Goyal grew up in Calcutta. She did her Masters in Furniture Design at Indian Institute of Crafts and Design, Jaipur, after which she got a job in Tianu, a unique independent design store which produces and retails premium quality contemporary furniture. Being a small company, the designers are encouraged to handle not just designing but purchase, marketing and to be involved in the customers' selection process. This gives them an overall experience in the business of furniture. "I am very happy where I am right now" says Trishila. "I find my work exciting, and I love it!" Though she comes from the big city of Calcutta, she still feels Mumbai is hectic. "People are always running", she laughs. "I have lived as a paying guest before and this hostel life is so much more clean and comfortable in so many ways. No grocery shopping for one and good clean food! Finding a place like this to live in Mumbai city, is wonderful"



ISHITA PANDYA

Respite in a neat space for a students counselor

Ishita Pandya from Gujarat says she was always a good listener and found that people wanted to confide in her and seek her opinion. After graduating in Psychology, she decided to do a Counseling Course at St. Xaviers college, Mumbai. She found herself loving the energy of the city. "Mumbai offers more

opportunities in my profession, the importance of which is still not fully understood as yet in India. Counseling for children has become so necessary, now more than ever before. Most children with problems really need someone to listen to them and give them quality time. Today life is hard for parents as well, since economic pressures demand that both parents work". Ishita now works as a school counselor in Girton High School and enjoys her work with them. In due course, she would love to do personal counseling especially with the elderly population who are sadly neglected today. She loves staying in the WGU hostel and has made some friends. The superintendents make sure the rooms and the bathrooms are clean. The rest of the staff are also so nice, says Ishita.

“ The experience of taking decisions regarding their food and stay has been rewarding. Working with members of the Hostel Committee and the staff and the Mess is something that I thoroughly enjoy. I wish to thank the WGU for giving me this opportunity!! ”

Neelima Patkar



SNEHAL KAMBLE

As at work so at the hostel, freedom and responsibility go together

Snehal Kamble comes from Pune and works as a software developer in the Mantralaya. Snehal works with National Informatics Centre (NIC) which designs and provides nationwide ICT infrastructure to support e-Governance. She says NIC has helped e-governance applications in the governmental departments at national, state and district levels. This makes work more efficient and fast between offices and the various departments and allows a wider transparency of government services.

"I was very worried at first about what it would be like to stay alone and manage

my life in the big city of Mumbai. But being in the WGU Hostel has been a dream come true." Her work place is close and easy to get to from the Hostel. This hostel gives the girls freedom along with responsibility and provides for them the security of a home. She enjoys chatting with girls from different backgrounds and towns in the hostel canteen. "It broadens your outlook." She enjoys the library and sometimes watches current news on the TV. The staff keep the place very clean.



RADHIKA M. M.

A quiet place to study Pure Math

Radhika is really enjoying her stay at the WGU hostel. After obtaining her PhD from the Indian Institute of Technology, Mumbai, (IIT), she was on the look out to move to a suitable hostel accommodation. A senior colleague warmly recommended the Women Graduates Union hostel. Says she, "I really appreciate the cleanliness, the surroundings are well maintained, and if you don't keep your own room tidy, you are chided by the superintendents!" "In this hostel, there is no need for parents to worry that their girls might get lazy"! She feels that WGU is an organization that cares for young women who are really in need of such accommodation to afford living in this city at the start of their work life. With her family in Kerala, she feels safe and secure here. The supervisory staff are well liked and prompt in responding to queries or requests. A post-doctoral research scientist in Pure Math at the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Radhika loves the peace and quiet that enable her to study until late in the evenings. Meal times are for chatting with other young hostelites. ■



Inauguration of Newly Renovated Balwadi Classroom



Newly Renovated Balwadi Classroom

Balwadi's Class room has been newly renovated. Chairs are colorful, surrounded by new aquatic wall tiles with swimming fish.

Mr. Cawas Lalkaka, Trustee of the Lalkaka family fund, inaugurated the new look class room along with family members.

They have gifted a music and DVD system with a TV console to the Balwadi for educational entertainment of the little ones.



Newly Renovated Balwadi Classroom



From Right to Left : Mr. Cawas Lalkaka-Trustee of the Lalkaka family fund Trust, Kerissa Lalkaka, Melissa Lalkaka, WGU President-Bina Thadani, Navaz Patuck, Balwadi Chairperson-Havovi Gandhi, Sherene Vakil, Aban Mukherji.

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Your Father Nana Chudasama was a public figure, as Sheriff of Bombay and as a city Father known for his 'I Love Bombay' projects. Did he influence you in any way?

Yes, definitely, he loved Mumbai and took up numerous initiatives for the city. One such was distributing saplings to encourage tree planting for a greener Mumbai. I was inspired by him. He would always tell me I should do something for the city I love. He also advised me never to quit any undertaking even if the going was tough. I was quite shy in my youth, but as I developed in my art creation, especially after my study at Parsons, New York, my exhibitions were very successful. The fact that people really liked my work gave me much confidence and I have never looked back!

Brinda, your professional success, your involvement in the city, all suggest that women can be achievers and contribute value to their surroundings by bringing their perspective to urban design and other areas of public life. What advice can you give young women to be empowered today?

I was lucky to be encouraged by my parents and family to pursue my passion. I definitely think women should be supported to be a strong voice in all aspects of policy and planning. Today competition is intense; besides being good at whatever you do in these times, communication is very important. Being articulate and being able to express your ideas well are essential for getting ahead.

It's still a man's world and women have to assert themselves more. I feel there is a solution to everything. Despite all of life's twists and turns, we ourselves have to make our lives work for us.

Art is also educative, it stimulates the imagination, creativity, reflection, innovation. Are you involved in this area as well?

I am currently the Education Consultant to the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Museum. We recently showcased an exhibition 'India and the World' in collaboration with the British Museum for public viewing. The new Children's Museum too involved me to some extent; besides, knowledge sharing programmes for the Museum's Visitors Centre are curated by me. ■

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Remembering



Dr. ARNAVAZ HAEWALA

late vice President WGU
WGU lost its dynamic and valued Vice-President and Chairperson of its Program & Fundraising Committee, Dr. (Mrs.) Arnavaz Havewala on May 9, 2019.

A Condolence Meeting was held on May 23, 2019. Letter of Condolence has been sent to the family of Dr. Havewala. The Managing Committee has passed the resolution

"Be it resolved that we the members of the Women Graduates Union recognize the remarkable achievements of Dr. Mrs. Arnavaz Havewala and show our love and support to the family as we mourn her untimely death together. She had contributed to the Organization and for the betterment of the society. May Her Soul Rest in Peace in the Heavenly Abode."



RENU PATEL

Renu Patel was a dear friend and generous donor of the Balwadi. Her annual Diwali gift will be fondly remembered - a pack of Complian for every child to ensure that they continued with their daily cup of health even during the holidays. She will remain alive in our memories and admiration.



Government at work to give Women A Bigger Role

WGU welcomes the government's announcement of the proposed policy to increase the participation of women in the workforce and looks forward to its early implementation.

The government has begun work on a comprehensive policy to increase the participation of women in the workforce over the next five years to at least 30%, in line with the Bharatiya Janata Party's poll promise.

Under consideration are tax incentives for companies that employ women above a threshold, implementation of existing legislation in the informal sector and liberal policies to enable women to return to work, among others.

Besides, the government will seek to ensure a minimum set of gender-sensitive provisions such as access to privacy, minimum wages and maternity benefits as well as leave and grievance redressal for female workers in the informal sector.

The idea is being internally deliberated and the policy could follow soon considering it is one of the priorities of the government, said a senior government official aware of the discussions.

A recent Deloitte report showed that women's employment in the Indian labour force has fallen to 26% in 2018 from 36.7% in 2005.

Source: Economics Times, June 5, 2019



WGU COMPUTER CENTRE

WGU's computer learning and practice centre has students of various ages

Take your pick from these Short courses for all ages learn from the comfort of WGU's Computer Centre.

Take your pick from these short courses for all ages, easy to learn from our dedicated coach - from the comfort of WGU's Computer Centre. What's more, kids too can have a fun time this summer practicing and learning from the especially designed Smart Kids Package.

MICROSOFT OFFICE PACKAGE

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- MS Word 2013 • MS Excel 2013
- MS Powerpoint 2013
- Practice Session

Age - above 15 years • Duration - 60 Days



SMART KIDS COURSE

- Introduction to Computer • Paint
- Notepad • MS Word 2013
- MS Powerpoint 2013 • Practice Session

Duration - 15 Days



WOMEN /SR. CITIZEN COURSE

- Introduction To Computer • MS Word 2013
- Net Surfing • Email Account • Video Calls
- Smartphone Features • Google Maps
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Age - Any • Duration - 30 Days



INTERNET COURSE

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**The 5 AM Club:
Own Your Morning.
Elevate Your Life**
by Robin Sharma



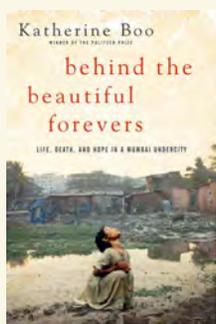
Legendary leadership and elite performance expert Robin Sharma introduced The 5am Club concept over twenty years ago,

based on a revolutionary morning routine that has helped his clients maximize their productivity, activate their best health and bulletproof their serenity in this age of overwhelming complexity. Through an enchanting—and often amusing—story, The 5am Club will walk you through:

How great geniuses, business titans and the world's wisest people start their mornings to produce astonishing achievements.

The 5am Club is a work that will transform your life. Forever. ■

Behind the Beautiful Forevers
by Katherine Boo



From Pulitzer Prize-winner Katherine Boo, a landmark work of nonfiction that tells the dramatic and sometimes heartbreaking story of families striving toward a

better life in one of the twenty-first century's great, unequal cities. In this brilliantly written, fast-paced book, a bewildering age of global change and inequality is made human. With intelligence, humor, and deep insight, Behind the Beautiful Forevers carries the reader headlong into one of the twenty-first century's hidden worlds, and into the lives of people impossible to forget. ■

Graduate Women International observes Menstrual Hygiene Day

GWI recently marked the annual Menstrual Hygiene Day, a reminder that women and girls across the world continue to face a variety of unnecessary challenges due to their menstruation. GWI is once again collaborating with the Menstrual Hygiene Day organisation in their efforts to raise awareness about Menstrual Hygiene Insecurity (MHI). The theme for this year, 2019 is “Leave No Girl Behind: Action for Menstrual Hygiene Education”. GWI and Women Graduates Union, Mumbai actively support raising awareness of the detrimental impact of MHI and the

importance of providing every woman and girl with safe, universal and equal access to Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM).

WGU encourages the participation of all in preventing MHI, to galvanize support and empowerment of women and adolescent girls. ■

JOB VACANCY IN WGU for a SOCIAL WORKER

WGU is also looking for a qualified Social Worker (Female Candidate) Graduate with some experience. This is a part - time position to run the Counseling & Guidance Cell as also outreach to the local community.

Interested candidates may send their detailed resume by email or post to

Email: wgu1915@gmail.com

Members of WGU --- if you know of any suitable lady candidates for the above 2 posts, please inform them to apply.

JOB VACANCY IN WGU for an ASSISTANT ACCOUNTANT

WGU requires a qualified Accountant to assist in general office accounts.

Some work experience and a knowledge of Tally is necessary.

This is a full time position with a 5 day work week.

Address: Women Graduates Union, Women Graduates Union Road, Colaba, Mumbai 400005.

Readers We'd Love To Hear From You

Express Yourself in Your Newsletter

Give us your feedback and comments on the Newsletter. Share with us your ideas and concerns on women's education and empowerment. Contribute to the Newsletter by way of viewpoints or how you tackled a civic or consumer or community problem.

Send us information (with source) or contact details which are useful to readers. Thought provoking quotations, even humorous ones are also welcome.

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