

Issue # 07 - January 2024

Rotary Club of  
**Thane Hills**

Bringing Leaders Together



# HILL ECHOES

Club Bulletin of Rotary Club of Thane Hills, RI District 3142

**Gordon McInally**  
RI President, RY 2023-24

**Milind Kulkarni**  
Dist. Governor, RY 2023-24

**Govind Khetan**  
Club President, RY 2023-24

**Dr. Anagha Karkhanis**  
Club Secretary, RY 2023-24



*January : Vocational Service Month*



**Govind Khetan**  
Club President



**My Dear Hillers,**

Thank you very much for your relentless efforts and steadfast commitment in the month of December.

Nothing can match the joy we Hillers feel in hosting the Triumph Run. In this year's Triumph Run, we were fortunate to be able to host 1470 specially abled children along with 800 parents and 300 teachers. An endeavour of this magnitude could only be pulled off by the heroic support of 150 Hillers and Anns who worked tirelessly to ensure that every small detail was taken care of.

I feel so proud and privileged to be a part of this committed group of individuals who excel in all that they do, every time. The teamwork was fabulous, like a symphony unfolding at Holy Cross School, amidst loud cheers and exclamations of joy from the kids who participated enthusiastically in races, games, music, dance and savoured their favourite delicacies.

The smiles on the faces of these wonderful kids gladdened our hearts no end and there could be no better reward than the blessings that were showered on us Hillers by the grateful parents and teachers.

**Long live RCTH .. Long live Triumph Run !**

On 14th December 2023, we hosted another landmark event – the Nation Builder Awards – to recognize, felicitate and encourage meritorious teachers from Municipal and Zila Parishad schools. Teaching is arguably the noblest profession and the most revered vocation of them all. It was our pleasure and honour to have in our midst 12 invited teachers who were selected by their students and school Principals through a rigorous selection protocol.

Words of wisdom shared by these teachers were heartwarming and brought tears to a lot of our eyes. Our nation is indeed in safe hands with these committed souls who selflessly pursue their vocation in the face of several constraints, instilling values and education to our beloved children.

Rotal 2023 saw stupendous performances by our super talented Hillers, Anns, Annas, Annets and Rotaractors across all singing and dancing categories.

Friends, as we step into the new year, let us remember that hope, resilience, and a positive attitude can overcome any and all challenges that come our way. Our dreams are big as we renew our solemn resolve to support the less fortunate in our community and in our eco-system.

I wish you all a fabulous 2024. May this new year bring along loads of happiness and fulfilment to all of you, your families and your loved ones.

May we spend beautiful times together.

May we create wonderful memories!

**Thank you !**



**Dr. Anagha Karkhanis**  
Club Secretary



**Dear Hillers,**

Wish you all a happy and a prosperous New Year! As we embrace 2024, let us embark on a journey of service, knowledge, and camaraderie, heralding the Rotary Month of Vocational Service.

**‘Because She Matters’ Webinar - January 6, 2024**

In solidarity with the World Health Organization's recognition of January as Cervical Cancer Awareness Month, the Rotary Club of Thane Hills proudly announces a pivotal initiative. On January 6th, our club will host the webinar, ‘Because She Matters’ to illuminate the significance of cervical cancer awareness and HPV prevention. This event is a collective effort to empower our community with knowledge, dispel myths, and stress the importance of preventive care and early detection in saving lives. As we unite in this critical conversation, let us make January a month not only of impact and enlightenment but also a month dedicated to the cause of saving lives. ‘Because She Matters,’ and together, we can contribute to the global mission of eliminating cervical cancer as a public health issue.

**Saevus Quiz Spectacle - January 13, 2024**

The stage is set, the buzz is palpable, and the Sulochanadevi Singhania School auditorium is ready to host the 7th edition of the Saevus Eco Achievers Quiz on January 13th. Under the leadership of Convenor PN Samir Limaye, this intellectual extravaganza will see the participation of an estimated 75-80 teams from different schools. Join us on this eco-conscious odyssey, where knowledge meets passion, and together, we foster a generation poised to make a positive impact on our planet.

**Run for Brain and Spine Awareness - January 14, 2024**

Rotary Club of Thane Hills stands shoulder to shoulder with the community's health and well-being. On January 14th, we proudly support the Run for Brain and Spine Awareness marathon, organized by the ACT Foundation in collaboration with Solaris Hospital. Strap on your running shoes for a journey that goes beyond the physical realm, aiming for both awareness and unity.

**Biz Quest: Navigating Corporate Wisdom - January 20, 2024**

Come January 20th, the Kashinath Ghanekar Mini Auditorium transforms into a battleground of corporate wits with Biz Quest. Led by Rtn Sunil Gwalani, this corporate business quiz aims to bring together 40 corporates and management institutes. So, brace yourselves for a day of intellectual fireworks and networking.

**Fireside Meeting - January 28, 2024**

On January 28th, fireside meeting for new members will welcome fresh energy into our Rotary family. It will serve as an opportunity to connect, share experiences, and further integrate into our vibrant community.

**Thoughtful Thursdays:**

Amidst the eventful month, our Thursday weekly meetings promise to be fulfilling as always. Curated with intriguing topics and captivating speakers, these gatherings are going to be the crucibles of ideas and inspiration.

In the spirit of Vocational Service, let us come together to make January a month of impact, enlightenment, and connection.



**Shrirang Date**  
Bulletin Editor



What is 'Triumph'? Dictionary meaning is a *great success, achievement, or victory. Triumph is a feeling of great satisfaction and pride resulting from a success or victory.*

What would 'Triumph' mean to the children who are specially abled? To walk normal? to eat normal? to communicate properly? or all of it? This and many such questions gather in my mind whenever I attend the signature project of RCTH 'Triumph Fun'. Trying to bring smiles on the faces of these children is one such attempt made annually by the RCTH family. It is an event which is very close to our hearts. This one day in year, the entire RCTH family gather to be with these children and their families/ teachers. Needless to mention, children enjoy the day to fullest.

Friends! Pleasure in presenting yet another colourful and informative edition of our Club Bulletin 'Hill Echoes'.

This time we bring you the accomplishments of our two Anns. Ann Jayashree Mane and Ann Aditi Date.

Ann Lata Gwalani, in her monthly column 'Bookmark', has brought us yet another interesting book review – **'Independence by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni.'** It is the saga of three sisters born into a Bengali family of modest means but high thinking. The story is set against the backdrop of the country's struggle for independence. The review provokes you to pick up the book and read it instantly.

In this edition, we have an article from the talented Annet of RCTH family, Gandhali Bhide, daughter of PP Atul Bhide. *Gandhali is a Research writer in the field of art, culture, cultural relations, history and the 'joy of everyday life'.* In her brief article **'The unusual friendship and the Sense of an Ending'** she is worried about her friend, the mountains, who will be soon out of her sight due to construction of skyscraper.

ROTAL - Rotary Talent Search in Vocal Music and Dance – is a much-awaited event for Hillers. Every year, the singers and dancers in the Hiller family participate with zest in this competition and try their best to win laurels for themselves and RCTH. In this Excellent Year, RCTH won a total of 16 trophies in singing and dance. Congratulations to all Winners!!

The 'Nation Builders Awards' presented to 12 teachers from Municipal and underprivileged schools by RCTH aims at encouraging hard working teachers in lesser known schools ; these teachers truly shape their students' and the nation's future!

The seminar on 'Dementia and 'Alzheimer's Disease' organised by RCTH was another step taken by the club towards the mental well-being of citizens.

This issue of Hill Echoes has covered a wide range of topics, projects and events...

Happy Reading! We do solicit your encouragement and feedback.

Regards !



## IMPACTING LIVES WITH CARE - CREATING HOPE

### Food Donation Drive for the Visually Challenged:

The 'Help Blind Welfare Association' has been organising a food donation drive for the visually challenged people, every Amavasya at Yogi Hills, Mulund. This drive was organised on 12th December, 2023 for this month. As in the previous months, Rotarian Pawan Adnani coordinated and led a group of Hillers who distributed rice, chana dal, poha and sago to almost 900 visually challenged people gathered at the venue. Some other groups contributed a variety of pulses, sugar, jiggery, sweets, snacks and clothes.

President Govind, Rotarians Pawan Adnani, Satish Shetty, Prashant Ojha and Nilesh Pitale as well as Ann Radhika Padmanabhan participated in the camp and volunteered at the venue from 7.30 a.m. to 9.30 a.m.

**Radhika Padmanabhan**



## IMPACTING LIVES WITH CARE - CREATING HOPE

### Presentation of Nation Builder Awards:

It is said, "the Destiny of a Nation is built within the four walls of a classroom ". We, at RCTH, truly and completely believe in this fact. The Teacher Award Ceremony organised at Thirani School on 14th December,2023, was named aptly as the 'Nation Builder Award'. When President Govind Khetan assigned me this project of identifying deserving teachers from the Municipal, Zila Parishad and Government Aided Schools, the motive was clear ...identify the unsung heroes in the business of teaching. The teachers in these little known schools work against all odds but discharge their duties diligently. They certainly shape the future of our country through their students.

I am very grateful to President Govind for opening my eyes to a new world and looking at schools and teachers in a new light, as I visited these schools. The awardees have walked the extra mile to make a mark in their respective institutions. These teachers were rated highly by their Principals and students. Based on the combined scores, they were selected for these awards. They deserve every bit of encouragement to move ahead in their profession and perform more and more strongly in the years to come.

### The awardees were:

1. Mr.Subhash Yadav from Mahatma Hindi Vidyalaya, Gandhi Nagar, Thane.
2. Mr.Diwakar Tripathi from Prithviraj Hindi Vidyalaya, Thane.
3. Mr.Shankar Bhaskarrao Borulkar from Shiv Samarth Vidyalaya Secondary School, Thane
4. Mrs.Monika from Prithviraj Hindi School (Secondary) at Nalpada near Tulsidham, Thane.
5. Mr.Sabane Maruti Shivaji from Shivai Vidyalay Marathi Madhyamik School, Shivai Nagar, Thane.
6. Mr.Vinodkumar A.Yadav from Mahatma Gandhi Hindi High School , Thane
7. Mr.Yogesh Ramchandra Thakur from Dr. S. V. Samant Vidyalay, Turbhe
8. Mrs.Pushpalata Gadhave from TMC school no.133, Vasant Vihar,
9. Mrs.Darshana Shinde from TMC school no.128 (Primary Section), Manorama Nagar, Thane.
10. Mrs.Sunita Karpe from New English School, Thane.
11. Mr.Vinayak Kongere from Sanket Vidyalaya, Manpada, Thane.
12. Mrs.Sunita Dhangar from TMC school no.6, Dhokali, Thane

The 'Nation Builder Award' is a small yet significant step taken by our club to provide the much needed thrust to motivate teachers from small schools.

**Radhika Padmanabhan**





## IMPACTING LIVES WITH CARE - CREATING HOPE



# IMPACTING LIVES WITH CARE - CREATING HOPE



**Triumph Foundation** has been organizing Triumph Run & Carnival for the last two decades for specially abled children. The event provides equal opportunity and creates an inclusive society for these wonderful kids.

The event held this year on 9th Dec 2023 at Holy Cross School, Thane had two main sections – Triumph Run and Carnival. The track and field fun run symbolize the hurdles and triumphs that special kids face daily. The vibrant, inclusive carnival brings joy and merriment to these differently abled students.

More than 1500 special children participated along with 800 teachers and parents. More than 150 Rotarians and family members volunteered to make this mega event a grand success. More than 45 schools from the districts of Mumbai, Navi Mumbai, Palghar, Thane, Kalyan and Raigad districts participated in this unique event. There was March Past, Sports, Fun Games, music and much more! The special kids sang and danced to their hearts' content. The highlight of the entertainment section was a band performance from the visually challenged students of Pragati Anndh Vidyalay (Badlapur) for our special guests.

Under the leadership of Club President Govind Khetan, the entire club welcomed the Dignitaries and Guests. The Chief Guest of the event was PRID Ashok Mahajan and the Guest of Honour was DG Milind Kulkarni.

The children and the guests were treated to a sumptuous lunch. All the teachers and children also received gifts for their participation.

The event concluded with the presentation of awards, medals and trophies to the special kids and their schools. The smiles on the faces of the special children were a visual treat for everyone present.

St. John the Baptist Special School, Thane was awarded for maximum participation. The Winner's position was bagged by Swami Parijnanashram Special School, Virar. The First runner up prize was presented to the Rotary school for Deaf, Dombivli. The Second runner up prize was won by Holy Cross Convent Special School.

In all, the event was a runaway success. This was a day to cherish...not just for the special kids but also for the members of the Rotary Club of Thane Hills as it was a wonderful opportunity for them to reach out to the community!







## IMPACTING LIVES WITH CARE - CREATING HOPE



## Ann Jayshree Mane's journey in 'Pratham':

Ann Jayshree, spouse of PP Vikram Mane, worked with Haffkine Institute after completing M.Sc in Microbiology. After working for a few years, she had to take a hiatus from her job. In her second innings of her career, she joined the N.G.O. PRATHAM in the year 2005.

Pratham is one of the largest NGOs in India with the mission – 'Every Child in School and Learning Well'. Pratham has its main focus firmly placed on providing quality education to the underprivileged children of the society.

Jayshree is the Head, Science Programme at Pratham. For initiating the Science program, the prime challenge was to find a method which was low cost, scalable and replicable (like all other programs in Pratham). It's been 18 years now and the Science learning program has scaled up very well with Jayshree at the helm of affairs. The Science program also supports the 'Second Chance' program which focusses on women in rural India who have dropped out from mainstream education due to reasons like early marriage or economic constraints. Jayshree says, "Under this programme, innovative methods are designed to help these women learn the basics all over again and clear the SSC examination". This certainly opens the doors to more opportunities in life for the disadvantaged women.

For Ann Jayshree, the entire journey has been immensely satisfying and joyful- whether it is the confidence with which children from remote villages make various science models and explain the scientific concepts..... or the amazing passion and motivation of the rural women in capturing abstract topics like 'atomic structure'. Her journey in Pratham continues to be a learning experience for her, she confesses!

Jayshree, your sterling efforts in taking science to the kids and women in remote places is commendable. The Hiller family is proud of your silent but significant contribution. Keep it up!

## Ann Radhika Padmanabhan



## **Ann Aditi Date, spouse of Hiller Shrirang Date, has been donning many hats!**

Her interest in environmental conservation was transformed from an approach of individualism into collectivism when she joined Hariyali – a reputed NGO of Thane, as one of the founder members, more than 25 years ago.

At Hariyali, she was an active member in all their projects, including seed collection, sapling making and plantation.

Unfortunately, in 2008, she met with an accident which restricted her physical involvement in the plantation projects. However her determination, commitment and dedication led to her appointment as one of the Board members at Hariyali and subsequently as one of the Trustees as well.

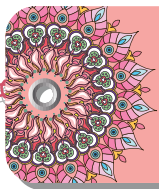
Aditi has also been associated with Samarth Bharat Vyas Peeth, another old and reputed NGO, for the past 10 years. Currently her focus, as one of the Directors, is on three projects, a.) Dry Waste Management and b.) Signal School and c.) Briquette Making

The Hiller family is very familiar with Aditi's artistic talents. In the last 20 years, she has been making handmade Shadu mati Ganpati. Every year, she teaches more than 200 school students, and the residents of housing societies, the art of crafting eco-friendly Ganpati idols, totally free of cost.

Aditi, please continue doing social service and pursuing your artistic interests with gusto!

## **Radhika Padmanabhan**





## BOOKED FOR LIFE



### *Independence by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni*

Unlike its title, the story bound me to it, almost like a slave!

Independence is the saga of three sisters born into a Bengali family of modest means but high thinking, during the country's struggle for independence. Set against this backdrop, the storytelling moves back and forth, as it traces the lives of Deepa, Jamini and Priya. The three are as different from each other as most siblings are, yet there is a common thread of sorrow, challenge, desire, passion, and futility that binds them inextricably.

Truth be told, I picked up the book apprehensively because the earlier work of this author, whom I admire and respect – *The Last Queen* – disappointed me. But, with this book, the disappointment is but a blur. I could not put down the book. A literal page-turner. I laughed with the sisters, I cried with them, and I held my breath and said a silent prayer as they encountered life at its worst. I wished them the best in life, and my heart twisted in agony when life mired them in its dark web.

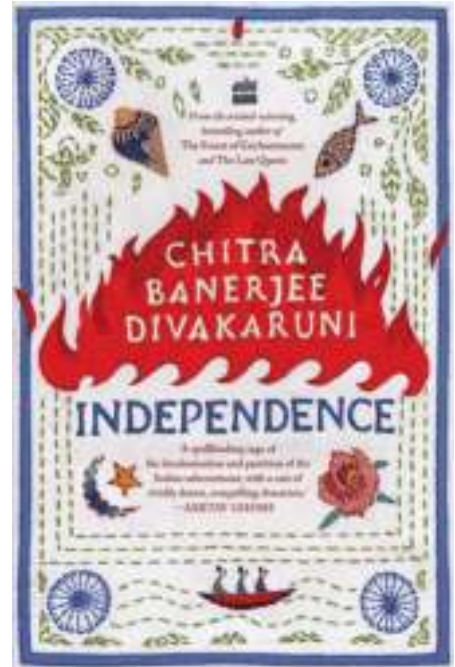
While there are other powerful characters - men who leave you yearning for them, a village, a city, and a river, not once does the story shift focus from the sisters. I loved this consistency. As the country rejoices in its new-found independence, each sister tries to carve a niche of that independence for herself. Does she succeed?

Through the pages, I lived in Calcutta, and in a remote village in Bengal. I walked the narrow, bustling lanes of New Market. I sat on the banks of the river and immersed myself in the faint strains of Rabindra Sangeet that formed ripples on the water. I inhaled the flavours of khichuri cooking on the stove. I watched aghast, helplessly as people butchered their own neighbours driven by the panic of partition.

There were a few editing oversights, commas missing, prepositions missing. But these fade away in the face of the writing which is nuanced and powerful. There's a prologue at the start of each part, composed of metaphors. I loved this.

At the end, a beautiful story held between covers depicting beautiful kantha embroidery, told in a beautiful way.

**Ann Lata Gwalani**



# THE UNUSUAL FRIENDSHIP & THE SENSE OF AN ENDING..



The vast stretches of mountains are a part of my story. I had never thought of it as a privilege until quite recently, or that it would cease to exist.

But I realize, it indeed is... It's a privilege to be able to have an unrestricted view of the mountains from your balcony. Living in a city, for the past 13 years, these two things had not been at loggerheads with each other. Now that they are, I sit with a book and a pen writing about it.

An under-construction skyscraper right between the mountains and me threatens my belief... my belief in mountains being my constant companions... This tangible concrete structure will soon ensure 'the view' doesn't continue to be the same. But how I should tell them that its so much more than that.

These enormous chunks of Nature had unknowingly been my companion. They had seen me as a teenager, a young adult and now adulting in my mid-20s.

I have enjoyed their company for all these years. Every time I sit by myself in my balcony staring at them, I catch myself really thinking. Have a random thought sometimes, or at times just be grateful for what I have. At the end of a long day, they had been there for me, patiently waiting for me to admit, I need some non-screen time!

I never felt it was a monologue when I spoke to the mountains. Their medium of expression, I had come to learn and tune into. It wasn't always jolly, we had our share of forest fires and harsh monsoons, but they too passed as we weathered along.

There is one mountain on the left in the foreground, that slopes gently on the right to form another hill. Then there are three in the background. They are the ones I looked at, trying to find answers sometimes. They have their own life and identity and I approached them with different problems and realities of life.

A few days from now, I won't be able to see them, talk to them, listen to them or tell them about my day.

Something inside me begins to hurt... Hurts to accept...

With my all being, I wish change wasn't a constant just this one time!

**Annet Gandhali Bhide**

(Daughter of PP Atul Bhide.



## IMPACTING LIVES WITH CARE - CREATING HOPE

### Seminar on 'Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease' organised by RCTH:

Upon request of the Senior Citizens Club of Thane North which is a Prestigious Club in Thane with a legacy of 36 years, the Rotary Club of Thane Hills organised an Audio -Visual Seminar on 'Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease' on 14th Dec 2023 at Hitwardhini Sabha Hall, Uma Neelkanth Vyayam Shala, Brahmin Society, Thane. The event was organised by Dr Atul Gupte. Dr Vijay Kulkarni had brilliantly conceptualized this seminar and was one of the speakers. The other speakers were Dr. Nikhil Kadam (Neurologist from Bethany Hospital and KMF Hospital) and Ms. Siddhika Panjwani, an eminent expert in Cognitive Testing from Global Hospital Mumbai. This seminar was a much needed session as Dementia and Alzheimer's disease is on the rise.

Our President Govind Khetan, Club Secretary Dr Anagha Karkhanis along with PP Shirish Songadkar , Samir Korde, Ann Dr Neeta Kulkarni and Ann Payal Gupte graced the occasion which was attended by over 180 Senior Citizens. The Seminar was a huge success and was well received. RCTH has been invited to conduct many such seminars on various medical subjects in future.

### Dr. Atul Gupte



## IMPACTING LIVES WITH CARE - CREATING HOPE

### Felicitation of Pawar Public School, Bhandup:

On 21st October 2023, RCTH and Triumph Blood Bank and Thalassemia Day Care Centre organised a blood donation camp at the school premises. The response was overwhelming; 58 units of blood and a sum of Rs 69,497/- were collected from parents and teachers.

As a token of gratitude, Club President Govind Khetan, Rotarian Satish S Shetty and Ann Radhika Padmanabhan visited the school on 21st December, 2023 during the school Interact Club meeting and presented certificates to the eighteen volunteers from the School Interact Club and the two incharge teachers.

A framed 'Thank You' letter was presented to the Principal Ms. Suma Das and a citation was awarded to the institution for the invaluable contribution.

In her address to the Interact Club students, Ms. Radhika Padmanabhan urged them to try their best to give back to the society in future.

### Ann Radhika Padmanabhan



# ROTAL-2023: HILLERS CELEBRATE MUSIC & DANCE



**ROTAL** - Rotary Talent Search in Vocal Music and Dance – is a much awaited event for Hillers. Every year, the singers and dancers in the Hiller family participate with zest in this competition and try their best to win laurels for themselves and RCTH.

The age group of the participants ranges from 5 years to 60+ years across the categories -solo, duet and group- both in song as well as dance events (both Marathi and Hindi). There were three stages in all - Elimination, Semi-finals and the Final Round. Experts in music and dance were invited to judge the competition. Rotary Club of Thane (Main) were the chief organisers. The Finals were held in Sahayog Mandir Hall, Thane.

This year, there were around 300+ entries in District 3142. Team RCTH comprised about 40 members which included Hillers, Anns, Annets, Innerwheel members and Rotaractors.

Practice sessions with musicians were arranged for singing prior to the competition. Choreographers supported the dance events.

In this Excellent Year, RCTH won a total of 16 trophies in singing and dance.

Rtn. Shailesh Mulye was the RCTH Convenor for Rotal and was well supported by PP Sucheta, PP Vikram, Ann Shreyasi, Prez. Govind and First Lady Sangeeta besides many others.

Ann Anuja Kulkarnii and Ann Nileema rendered complete support and proved instrumental for our success in Rotal.

While Ann Natasha Adnani provided the venue for dance rehearsals, Rtn. Sujit Gawayi provided the studio setup for the singing rehearsals. Their contribution needs to be acknowledged.

The proud prize winners for Rotal 2023 from RCTH were:

### List of RCTH Rotal Prize Winners -

- Dance :**
1. Mayank Gadkari
  2. Hemant Malla
  3. Neha Banik
  4. Noopur & Prajit.. (Pair)
  5. Noopur (Group)
- Singing :**
1. Sameer Limaye ... Hindi Solo
  2. Sameer Limaye and Ann Shreyasi Mulye... Hindi Duet
  3. Jayant Nagavkar... Marathi Solo
  4. Asawari Palwankar..Marathi Solo
  5. Asawari Palwankar and Hemant Jadhav.. Marathi Duet
  6. Rotaractor Ananya.....Hindi Solo
  7. Rotaractor Pratik Vidhwans.. Marathi Solo
  8. Rotaractor. Pratik & Rotaractor. Omkar.. Hindi Duet
  9. Inner Wheel member Dhanashree.. Marathi solo
  10. Dhanashree.. Hindi solo
  11. Dhanashree ...Hindi Duet

Hillers, let's magnify the spirit of Rotal year after year by coming out with flying colours in the keenly fought competition.

**Radhika Padmanabhan**

