

SMCDRIVE, the Stella Maris Centre for Development of Resources for Inclusion and Vocational Enrichment, inaugurated the Livelihood Project on Tuesday, 15 November.



The Principal, Dr Sr Jasintha Quadras, fmm, in her welcome address, spoke of this project as the realization of a long cherished dream, which has its origins in the mission of the Foundress, Blessed Mary of the Passion. She was the first woman to found a missionary community of women, dedicated to a universal mission. Her missionary zeal knew no limits in the context of responding to the needs and empowerment of women and for social justice.

This led her to open educational institutions, health care services and self-supporting initiatives.



The Principal, Dr. Sr. Jasinth Quadras lights the lamp and addresses the gathering.

In continuation of her primary objective of empowering women to become self-sufficient, the Livelihood Project aims at capacity-building for underprivileged women from neighbourhood communities in the vicinity of the College through skills training in specific areas. Tailoring classes will be on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays while block printing will be on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from 10 am to 1pm. Mr.Dakshinamurthy, a national Awardee, will train the women in block printing and a professional tailor will train the women in cutting, tailoring and designing.



The Principal honours Mr. Dakshinamurthy



The Principal honours Mr.Mohammed Nazeer

The Chief Guest, Ms Latha Pandian, Director, MaFoi Strategic Consultants, Chennai shared her joy in kindling with sensitivity and support, the spirit of enterprise that lies deep down in the hearts of women. It was almost as if the warm glimpses she offered of women, so touched, were part of the collective experience of those gathered.



The Principal honours the Chief Guest, Ms. Latha Pandian



Ms. Latha Pandian addresses the gathering

The Livelihood Project has become a reality not only through the commitment and initiative of the religious order of the sisters of Stella Maris, the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, but by the sheer strength and joy of giving that the alumnae of the College have invested in this venture.



Alumnae and others

Mrs Usha Krishna, founder of Kaivalam Foundation, which is facilitating the project, is not an alumna herself but her three daughters are; the youngest is Ms Arundhathi Krishna, MD of Upasana TVS Ltd, which is funding the project as part of its CSR initiative. Mrs Krishna, speaking of the work of Kaivalam Foundation and lauding the efforts of Stella Maris, hoped that other institutions would follow suit.



Ms. Geetha Raja introduces Ms. Usha Krishna and Sr. Principal honours her

Bringing the various heads together was Geetha Raja, Executive Secretary of the Alumnae Association. Mr V Santhalam, Director of the Weavers Council, while generously offering his support, emphasised the importance of bringing alive traditional weaves in contemporaneity. Also present on the occasion were Mr P R Kumar of Kumaran Silks, the Sisters of the FMM Community, faculty and alumnae of the Career Guidance Cell and the Association.



Mr. Santhalam addresses the gathering



The trainees in the block printing room

Sharing her dreams for the future of this project, Dr Bhuvana Rajeswaran, CCDO Retd, Slum Clearance Board, yet another alumna, outlined plans for a full scale printing set up and a production unit at SMCDRIVE, where the estimated 60 trained women, 15 in each batch, would become proficient enough at the two skills and can then sell their products in the College as well as customise them for individual/corporate clients.



Sr. Susan presents a potted plant to Dr. Bhuvana Rajeswaran and proposes the vote of thanks

Sr Susan Matheikal, Secretary of the College proposed a gracious and meaningful vote of thanks that made each individual feel personally acknowledged.