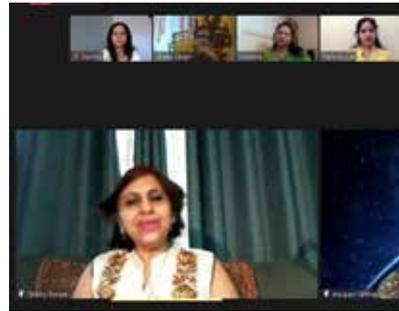


NURTURING THE ROOTS

The pandemic gave Asmita, an avid volunteer, poet and writer, an opportunity to bring the scattered writing community under one umbrella to promote Hindi

By Dr Neelam Batra-Verma



A

n Indian may go out into the world, but you cannot take India out of the Indian. No wonder Asmita Lawrence had to involve herself in community activities when she moved to Canada from the United Kingdom many years ago.

After working in the private sector for over a decade, Asmita Lawrence was looking for opportunities that would give her emotional and not just professional satisfaction. “Sometimes, just taking is not satisfying,” she says. “Giving touches your heart more than

taking, and working in the community not only broadens your horizons but keeps you connected to your roots.”

With an MBA and an MPhil degree from the United Kingdom under her belt, Lawrence has been conducting free mentorship programmes for new immigrants, in coordination with VIF of Vancouver. “Volunteering with these people not only keeps me connected to India, I can share my knowledge and experience with the new immigrants who come to Canada and are totally lost initially. I help them settle, make sure their children are admitted in local schools, show them around and teach them how to avail of the vast social services available to the new immigrants. Sometimes we lose sight of the importance of the human connection in our fast-paced lives, but, in fact, a close-knit community along with your family can give much needed social and emotional strength. In summation, this is happiness.”

Apart from her community service, Lawrence teaches at the elite Ganesh Hindi School, run by the Hindu Temple in Vancouver. “Watching the journey of the little ones, as they learn Hindi and then graduate, is nothing but exhilarating. Ensuring that the children come to class every Sunday morning needs a lot of perseverance and patience, not only on the part of the teachers but also the parents. Parents work weekdays, then have to pull their kids out of bed and get them on

“Writers are encouraged to write and speak in Hindi in the Manasvini group, though English writers are not turned away.”



