

They always have a story to tell...

Storytelling is an art in itself but nowadays, people don't have the time to tell stories or listen to them. But a few working professionals in the City have taken it upon themselves to keep the art alive by adding new dimensions to it.

They call it performance art and make it a point to turn every story-telling session into an unforgettable experience.

Metrolife interacted with a group of storytellers who are either storytellers by profession or have opted out of a professional career to take to storytelling.

The group has no barriers when it comes to exploring the world of stories. They feel that their strength lies in the choice of stories and style of narration.

Their story-telling sessions are attended by children as young as five to adults as old as 60. Their pool of stories includes Indian folktales, African folktales and American short stories. They also present a few Scandinavian stories.

The group consists of Deeptha Vivekanand, Aparna, Sowmya Srinivasan and Rashmi Kulkarni.

Deeptha, who was a corporate trainer, stepped into storytelling in 2008. She used to read stories to her child and that's how she developed an interest in the art.

Deeptha feels that visual presentation makes a significant difference. "It is best to build logic into every story and bright visuals can cer-



DEDICATED Clockwise: Sowmya, Deeptha, Rashmi and Aparna. DH PHOTO BY SK DINESH

tainly enhance a story-telling session. Music, language, props... all make for a great story-telling session," feels Deeptha.

Sowmya, who has a strong grounding in arts, took to serious storytelling in 2007. "There are no barriers when it comes to selecting and telling a story. It all depends on how well you can build a story. With the number of nuclear families increasing in the City, parents

are more than willing to have their children sit through a session of stories. This more than makes up for the absence of grandparents," reasons Sowmya.

Aparna, who was an IT professional, gave up a plush job and chose storytelling as a full-time profession.

She observes that the tradition of storytelling has been in existence and has effectively been passed on from one

generation to another. "There is a magical element attached to storytelling. In fact, folktales contain a lot of what we see in our day-to-day lives. It's the things that we see and hear around us," shares Aparna.

She adds, "Storytelling helps in cognitive development and strengthens the emotional side of a person. Stories also offer a fertile ground for a lot of experiments and that's what we do all the time," notes Aparna.

Rashmi Kulkarni, who used to be an IT professional, switched to teaching. She effectively narrates stories using the technique of multiple intelligence.

"Storytelling indirectly helps develop an intimacy between the storyteller and listener. We don't give any conclusion when we narrate a story. We leave it to the people to imagine," she says.

Together, the group narrates at least five stories a month and individually, they narrate many more.

Nina C George

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