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NEWSLETTER

November 2026

Kindled Spirit
Educating and Empowering Women
kindledspirit.org.uk
Charity Reg no. 1159146



Page 2 **This month, Kindled Spirit is launching its 2026 Diwali Campaign. Funds raised will directly support Kshamata's work in Mumbai.**

EDITOR'S NOTE



What a summer and autumn it is proving to be for Kindled Spirit. As you will read in more detail in this newsletter, the mental health experts from De Montfort University undertook a second set of workshops with the Kshamata trauma counsellors in Mumbai. From our last visit; Carole and I know that this important work is truly appreciated by the team. We also attended the student Volunteers Fair at De Montfort University, looking to attract more student volunteers who can use this experience to learn skills and enhance their CV. This really does improve employment opportunities post university as it demonstrates certain skills and character to potential employers.

We also have a new business sponsor, the online auctioneer Grace & Gaia, for which we a truly grateful. Finally in mid-October we are lunching our 2026 Diwali campaign, let's hope that is successful. To all our Indian supporters an early **'Happy Diwali'.**

Richard Cribb, *Trustee*

95%
of all victims trafficked experience physical or sexual violence.

$236bn
Estimated Human Trafficking Trade per annum

161
Countries effected by the abhorrent crime of human trafficking

Kindled Spirit
igniting hope & freedom...

TO BRING HOPE AND FREEDOM

Kindled Spirit launches 2026 Diwali campaign

For most families, Diwali is a time of celebration, togetherness and hope. But for thousands of vulnerable young women in India, this Diwali will be very different, as these women will be separated from their families because they remain trapped in abusive and exploitative situations.

This month, Kindled Spirit is launching its 2026 Diwali Campaign.

Kindled Spirit is asking businesses across Leicester and beyond to support the campaign by displaying posters and campaign materials carrying a QR code through which customers, employees and visitors can donate. Funds raised will directly support Kshamata's work in Mumbai, providing counselling, education, vocational and life-skills training and pathways towards independent living.

For businesses, displaying a poster is a small gesture. For a vulnerable young woman thousands of miles away, the donation it inspires could help provide something immeasurably greater: hope, freedom and the opportunity for a new beginning.

If you would like to help us spread the word of our campaign and engage with your local business community, please get in touch at:

info@kindledspirit.org.uk

Or if you would simply like to donate, please scan the QR code and make your donation – Thank you.



SUPPORTERS

How Grace & Gaia ended up supporting Kindled Spirit

Having studied Physical Geography at university I have always had an interest in crystals, geodes and all things linked to what the earth creates. One evening, I was browsing the live-stream shopping platform Whatnot, when I started coming across shows selling crystals, one of which was Grace_Gaia.

The show is hosted by Krishna and Dale and every event is done with love and laughter. I thoroughly enjoyed every show, seeing the beautiful items and chatting with some truly lovely people. I soon became hooked and would be excitedly waiting for the next time they were going to be live. During one of the live shows Krishna was showing some soapstone carvings of elephants and turtles, telling the story of how they were acquired: Krishna told us about a little girl on the side of a road in India, hand carving these items and selling them in order to earn money for the family. When these items were sold Krishma would buy more from the young girl and therefore help her and her family further. Listening to this story really touched me and reminded me of the work that Kindled Spirit does, along with Kshamata, to support women and girls in India. After the show that night I sent a private message to Krishna and Dale telling them about the charity, explaining what they do and how they could get involved to support if they wanted.

I really wasn't expecting anything to come of this, but I thought at least I was getting the word out about the charity, raising awareness and maybe we would receive a one-time donation. To my surprise a few days later I got a response saying they absolutely wanted to help and get involved, they had the idea of running a live show on Whatnot where they would sell their items and all the money would go directly to Kindled Spirit. I was super excited and after introducing them to Richard and Carole (my Mum) a date was set.

We spread the word through social media and Whatnot shows and to our surprise fellow crystal sellers were also donating items to sell during the 'live'. The night came and we had an incredible number of viewers, with over 150 shares, raising over £1,700 through sales and donations. We were all completely speechless at this total. The generosity shown by Krishna and Dale for their time and donations of items, the other sellers who donated items and everyone who showed up and bought items is much appreciated, it was an incredible night.

Following the show Krishna mentioned how she would love to continue supporting the charity and hoped to be involved going forward. After a few more calls between them and Richard they also linked up with Kshamata CEO Bharathy and there are hopes for a visit to the Kshamata Transformation Centre in Mumbai, where no doubt they will be welcomed with open arms.

Another serendipitous moment in the Kindled Spirit journey.

The Whatnot App is available on your usual App Store.

Grace & Gaia

"

Another serendipitous moment in the Kindled Spirit journey

Helen Chick



The Grace & Gaia live show on Whatnot raised over £1,700 for Kindled Spirit.



MENTAL HEALTH

The Sanctury Project continues

In a previous newsletter we told you about the collaboration between Kindled Spirit and De Montfort University.

A team of mental health professionals from the university led by Professor Raghu Raghavan have conducted workshops at Kshamata in Mumbai, providing the trauma counsellors with up-to-date techniques of dealing with trauma to the benefit of the young women we support but also providing coping strategies for the counsellors themselves who have to deal with hearing horrific stories of abuse every day, which in itself can lead to secondary trauma.

Professor Raghu flew to Mumbai at the end of July to conduct the second wave of workshops, he was joined by one of his former students Akshata Parekh, an Expressive Arts Therapist, who uses art as a technique of coping with metal health issues.

These are their reports:

Kshamata Mental Health Literacies Training Workshops 29–30 July 2026

This second batch of basic mental health literacy in-person training programme was conducted for Kshamata staff at Thane, Mumbai. Thirteen staff consisting of team leaders and team workers attended the workshop for two full days (29 and 30 July 2026). I started the session by asking the group about their aim of attending the workshop. The participants wanted to learn more about mental health and wellbeing, self-care practices, balancing personal and work life, and trauma support.

So, to recap;

Core Objectives: Enhance basic mental health literacy, explore self-care strategies, improve work-life balance, address workplace trauma, and reduce mental health stigma.

PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH & KEY THEMES

- **Strength-Based Foundation:** The workshop opened with the core premise that "everybody has mental health." Moving away from the common tendency to equate mental health solely with mental illness, the sessions emphasized building and maintaining everyday health foundations.
- **Normalising Mental Distress:** Prof. Raghavan framed feelings of anxiety, frustration, and sadness not as negative flaws, but as universal, normal human reactions to daily stressors. Distress was presented as a functional signal that helps individuals identify problems, reflect, and seek solutions using personal, family, and community resources.
- **WHO Alignment:** Aligning with the World Health Organization's definition, mental health was described as more than just the absence of illness. It is a functional state of mind where individuals recognize their abilities and limitations to effectively navigate daily stresses, lead productive lives, and foster purpose.
- **Defining Mental Ill-Health:** The workshop clarified the progression from distress to illness, highlighting that continuous, unaddressed mental distress significantly increases the risk of developing clinical conditions like anxiety and depression—the two most common mental health challenges globally and in India.

THE 8 CORE FEATURES OF MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY

1. **Understanding Mental Health:** Grasping what constitutes overall mental health and well-being.
2. **Recognising Distress & Illness:** Identifying signs of general distress as well as specific mental health conditions.
3. **Knowledge of Risk Factors:** Understanding the underlying causes and risk factors behind mental distress.
4. **Self-Help Strategies:** Learning practical self-care and self-help interventions to maintain personal well-being.
5. **Professional Resources:** Knowing when, where, and how to access professional mental health services.
6. **Stigma Reduction:** Promoting positive, open attitudes toward mental health to actively challenge and eliminate social stigma.
7. **Information Literacy:** Developing the skills to seek out accurate, reliable information on mental health.
8. **Cultural & Spiritual Integration:** Recognizing how cultural heritage, faith, belief systems, and spirituality can serve as key assets in overcoming distress.

WORK-LIFE BALANCE & STAFF INSIGHTS

- **Interactive Workshop:** Day two focused on practical strategies for balancing personal and professional lives through individual reflection and group exercises.
- **Key Challenge Identified:** Participants highlighted receiving work-related phone calls after official working hours as a primary, unresolved source of stress that requires further organizational resolution.

SUMMARY OF TRAINER REFLECTIONS

- **High Commitment & Resilience:** Prof Raghavan expressed deep admiration for the 13 Kshamata staff members, highlighting their unwavering dedication despite managing complex, high-stress, and traumatic situations 24/7 in support of vulnerable women.
- **Positive & Uncomplaining Attitude:** Remarkably, not a single participant complained about their demanding job responsibilities. Instead, they demonstrated remarkable resilience and a proactive mindset toward learning.
- **Proactive Engagement:** The group was highly interactive, enthusiastic, and genuinely eager to acquire new tools for promoting mental health, self-care, and work-life balance, both for their own personal well-being and to better serve their clients.
- **Gratitude & Mutual Learning:** Prof. Raghavan valued the opportunity to understand their complex daily realities and praised their ability to cultivate joy and well-being in challenging circumstances, expressing sincere gratitude for the chance to train such a dedicated team.

PROFESSOR RAGHU RAGHAVAN
Professor of Mental Health,
De Montfort University

WELLBEING

A creative space for caregivers

Kshamata is a non-profit organisation doing widespread work to empower and rehabilitate women and adolescent girls affected by exploitation and gender-based violence. The organisation works in different settings with the one common intention of reintegrating women into respectable social conditions. The team works tirelessly, providing end-to-end care, ensuring their physical safety and comfort, counselling, skill development and supporting their reintegration and goals. In any healthcare field, the team often experiences burnout, not only physical but also mental burnout, as they witness stories of violence unfold before them. The environment in which they work demands patience, care, empathy and resilience. The team carries these women through their journey towards a safe and respected life. In this process of offering care, it's only natural to feel depleted and emotionally drained. It is also not easy to manage their own life and battles.

As part of the team's continuous professional development, mental health literacy sessions are conducted. These sessions concentrate on building awareness of mental health so that the team can identify distress and provide focused care to the women at their respective centres. Along with building this literacy, the sessions also create a safe space for them to express and reflect on their own mental health and well-being. This is done using expressive arts as a modality.

Expressive arts use visual arts, music, movement, drama and writing in an integrative way towards healing, promoting overall well-being. Expressive arts are used in these training programmes to communicate the importance of self-care in a demanding environment and to remind the team of the community support they can lean on. Discussions and creative explorations help build community trust, so they feel able to rely on their peers as well as friends and family outside of the workspace. These sessions also discuss how and when to reach out to professional help. But the heart of it all is being able to 'play' and to hold space for creativity where the team can use the arts to move, engage with each other, sing together, make a collage and reflect on their own mental health and well-being.

These sessions help the team to speak their truth and stay grounded in their own reality with intentions to make necessary changes. Many have expressed that they look forward to these sessions as a pause and break from their daily routine. They have also suggested this space be held monthly so that they could track their personal mental health progress. It has been deeply moving to witness how the team has used these expressive arts sessions for personal growth, reflection, as a pause and, of course, to have fun.

Akshata Parekh
Expressive Arts Therapist





Expressive arts use visual arts, music, movement, drama and writing in an integrative way towards healing.



Millie Cribb represented Kindled Spirit at the De Montfort University Volunteers and Part-Time Job Fair on 1st October.





LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS

At De Montfort University

We are always on the lookout for volunteers to help us raise awareness of the work of the charity, but also to organise their own fundraising events. This social responsibility activity looks good on the CV and Personal Statement, recognised and encouraged by some prospective employers.

Kindled Spirit Ambassador and my daughter Millie Cribb joined myself and Carole at De Monfort University Volunteers and Part-Time Job Fair on 1st October. Millie posted about her experience on LinkedIn, this is her post:

Today, I had the opportunity to represent Kindled Spirit at the De Montfort University volunteer's fair! I was able to speak to students about the charity and the work we support, and connect with people from across the university and wider careers community.

It was amazing to get involved in the day, have some really interesting conversations, network with different people and most importantly, get more people interested in Kindled Spirit and signed up to support the charity.

Kindled Spirit has been working alongside Kshamata in Mumbai for over 12 years, supporting young women who have survived trafficking and exploitation, so it was great to help raise awareness of the charity and the opportunities to get involved.

If you know anyone who would like to volunteer for us or become an Ambassador (someone who repeatedly volunteers) then please do get in touch at

info@kindledspirit.org.uk
or go to our website and complete the online registration form, located under the Ambassador Scheme tab.

www.kindledspirit.org.uk

AMBASSADOR PROGRAMME

Become a Kindled Spirit Ambassador

Our Ambassadors are trained volunteers who support the fundraising activities of Kindled Spirit. This is for people who want to go the extra mile to help raise funds for Kindled Spirit by organising fundraising activities, representing Kindled Spirit in their local area and helping to engage people with the work and aims of our charity.

Together we can transform the lives of victims of trafficking in South Asia

For any further queries please contact us at
info@kindledspirit.org.uk
Thank you,

Hajira Piranie
Mentor, Ambassador Programme
Trustee, Kindled Spirit

What does being an Ambassador involve?

There are lots of different ways in which you can make a difference and support Kindled Spirit, here are a few suggestions:

- Organise a fundraising event; from a coffee morning to a Gala dinner - the opportunities are endless!
- Set up a small fundraising group or committee with friends, family or colleagues
- Give short talks or presentations to groups in your area about the work of Kindled Spirit
- Distribute collection tins to shops, cafes, restaurants etc. in your local community
- Source auction or raffle prizes for our supporter events
- Take part in an organised event to raise funds for Kindled Spirit

We do not expect every Ambassador to do all the above; just doing one or two things can really help. The depth of your involvement as an Ambassador is completely up to you.



Being an Ambassador for Kindled Spirit means never failing to find motivation towards challenges that are in aid of their great cause. Failure never feels like an option when the essence of this charity is teaching people never to give up.

Jack Wells – University of Exeter, one of our existing Ambassadors, who has undertaken some incredible challenges on behalf of the charity.

Sign up by scanning the QR code

GIVE AS YOU LIVE

You can financially support the great work of Kindled Spirit and it does not cost you a single penny, that is Sign Up / Register with Give as You Live. You Shop, They Donate. With over 6000 retailers on their platform there is choice for everyone, but they also have many of our 'day to day' providers including energy companies, supermarkets, mobile phone providers and DIY stores.

ALL IT TAKES IS 4 EASY STEPS...

1. Click this link to take you to the site **www.giveasyoulive.com**
2. Register
3. Select Kindled Spirit as your chosen charity (Charity Reg no. 1159146)
4. Start Shopping ... remember you need to go through the portal each time you shop, so save it in your 'Favourites'.

Thank you for your support.

... + 6000 more retailers !!

Kindled Spirit
igniting hope & freedom...

CONTACT US

Email: info@kindledspirit.org.uk
www.kindledspirit.org.uk

Scan to Donate and to light a Diya or Candle

Our thanks go to the team at Paper Bridge for the Kindled Spirit artwork, Newsletter and Website production – surya@paperbridge.co.uk