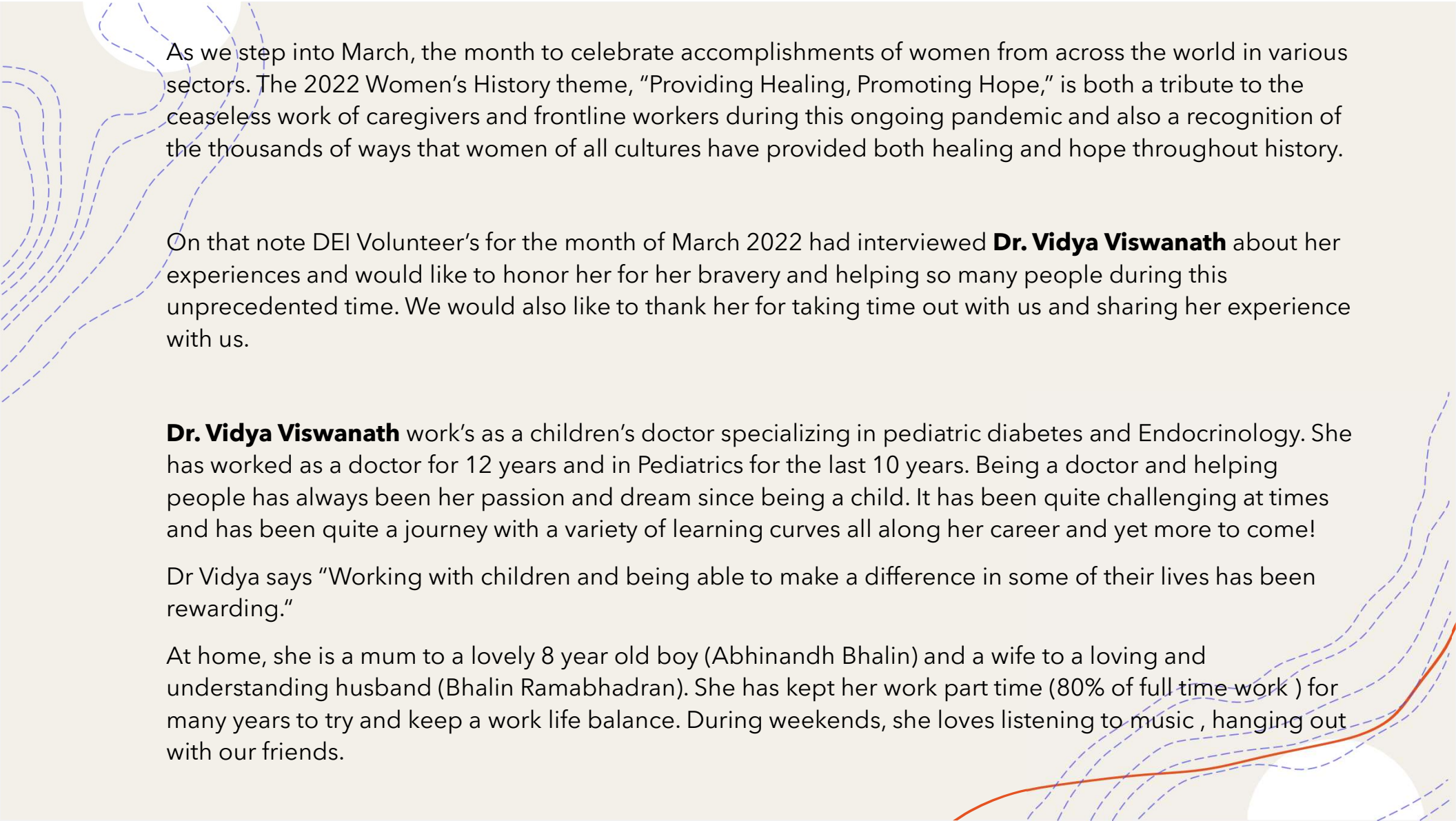


In conversation with Dr. Vidya Viswanath





As we step into March, the month to celebrate accomplishments of women from across the world in various sectors. The 2022 Women's History theme, "Providing Healing, Promoting Hope," is both a tribute to the ceaseless work of caregivers and frontline workers during this ongoing pandemic and also a recognition of the thousands of ways that women of all cultures have provided both healing and hope throughout history.

On that note DEI Volunteer's for the month of March 2022 had interviewed **Dr. Vidya Viswanath** about her experiences and would like to honor her for her bravery and helping so many people during this unprecedented time. We would also like to thank her for taking time out with us and sharing her experience with us.

Dr. Vidya Viswanath works as a children's doctor specializing in pediatric diabetes and Endocrinology. She has worked as a doctor for 12 years and in Pediatrics for the last 10 years. Being a doctor and helping people has always been her passion and dream since being a child. It has been quite challenging at times and has been quite a journey with a variety of learning curves all along her career and yet more to come!

Dr Vidya says "Working with children and being able to make a difference in some of their lives has been rewarding."

At home, she is a mum to a lovely 8 year old boy (Abhinandh Bhalin) and a wife to a loving and understanding husband (Bhalin Ramabhadran). She has kept her work part time (80% of full time work) for many years to try and keep a work life balance. During weekends, she loves listening to music , hanging out with our friends.




When the pandemic started, what were your inhibitions?

Dr Vidya "Pandemic year had been challenging, particularly in the beginning when there was very little information available regarding the virus. To balance the strong urge to stay in the frontline and provide service to sick children versus the unknown risks that I posed to myself and my immediate family and friends was mind boggling and scary. As a Pediatrician, things were not quite as tough as compared to the adult physicians and the Intensive care staff, as the adult population was more affected. We stuck together as a team supporting each other."

What changes were made when lockdown was implied for regular patients and how was the response from them?

We continued to deliver care remotely through virtual video clinics to our regular patients to keep them safe. Most of them understood the pressure and restrictions on the whole health care system and cooperated well. We devised a rota system to provide backups to manage the staff sicknesses and shortages.






How do you balance the increased risk to yourself and your family with the urgent need of your patients ?

During the pandemic , there was a deep sense of commitment as a professional and willingness to deliver the best care to the highest possible standards especially when dealing with acutely unwell children. However, reminding ourselves that we looked after and protected ourselves physically and mentally to be able to provide safe and urgent patient care was paramount.

How do you take care of yourself? In other words, how are you ensuring you are rested, healthy and high-performing?

Stress and anxiety became a part of me during working days. Hence, I absolutely looked forward to my days off when I could spend quality time with family to unwind and recharge . We went out for walks to appreciate nature. I also started learning keyboard along with my son by joining an online class, which helped us explore a whole new world of melody. This helped me a lot to maintain sanity and function effectively on days of duty.



How Did this Pandemic affect Your personal & professional life?

There was a huge change of routine in both personal and professional life and adapting to the changes were the key. The pandemic also reiterated to me how important it is to just live and cherish the present moment in hand.

What new technology were used or brought in during the pandemic?

We learnt that we could keep patients safe also via telephone and video consultations. Various secure virtual event platforms were created so we could continue to deliver reasonable care. Teams and Zoom calls became a norm that is still continuing. Work from home for staff who were isolating, but had no symptoms were allowed to do telephone consultations for patients which probably something never even thought of earlier.

Any advice for women professionals on the occasion of women's day?

Women express their love, value their relationship, empathise and support their fellow humans. Adapting to any unforeseen changes, facing challenges with strength and courage, excelling in the fields we are in with commitment and hard work is very unique to Women. Hence, we must remember to give ourselves the appreciation and acknowledgement we deserve and be proud. **#proud to be a woman! Happy Women's Day!**