

Homeschooled Dubai girl wins top award at Ivy League university

INDIAN STUDENT
WITHDRAWN FROM
REGULAR CLASSES IN
GRADE 2 EARNS MASTERS
IN NON-PROFIT
LEADERSHIP

Ivy League

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Reporter

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Dorothy Jane Thomas

Dorothy Jane Thomas was homeschooled in Dubai at a time when the concept was not very popular in this region. Yet, she recently completed her masters in nonprofit leadership with a 4.0 GPA and won a top award from an Ivy League university in the US.

Speaking to Gulf News, Dorothy said her winning the prestigious Richard J. Estes Global Citizenship Award from the University of Pennsylvania in the US is “a recognition that fuels my commitment to foster positive change across the globe”.

The award is presented to a graduating international student

in the non-profit leadership programme who embodies a commitment to social impact, and has an excellent academic record.

Homeschooling journey

Dorothy, along with her two sisters, Stefanie Danielle Thomas and Darianne Thomas, was homeschooled by their parents, Ashish and Rekha Thomas, both of whom hold PhDs.

They decided to withdraw their children from traditional schooling when Dorothy was in grade two as they were concerned about the impact of conventional education on their personalities. The youngest one was never sent to a regular school.

Dorothy said: “My parents were very strict... We had to act as if we were going to school. So, we had to be ready on time, present our homework and all of that. My mom had timetables that she set up, we had to always show reports to my father. We had a system in place even when we were travelling.”

Different curriculae

The girls began with a South African curriculum, later transitioning to an American curriculum. The Thomas sisters thrived academically, thanks to

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the disciplined and structured environment their parents created with the support of private tutors.

They also engaged in extracur-

ricular activities, from horse riding and swimming to baking and painting. “Through our church, we also connected with various age groups and it ensured we had very good social connections,”

Dorothy said.

Talented siblings

Dorothy’s eldest sister, Stefanie, attended Arizona State University

