



secret projects®
Unfolding Women's Power

PRESS RELEASE 8/09/2021

Social Entrepreneur and founder of Secret Projects on C4 Grand Designs

For more information, please contact Sophie pr@secretproject.org

She always had Grand Designs!!!

As a young girl Founder and CEO of Secret Projects Fritha Mason had a great school friend and was often at her house after school and during the holidays. One of the things Fritha loved most about the house was the pillows... Designed by her friend's mother and called Secret Pillows, they folded out into cosy blankets that Fritha would snuggle under, and she decided that she wanted to fill homes around the world with them!

Flash forwards several years and Fritha had had a long and successful career in the charity sector but had never forgotten about the Secret Pillows and her desire to sell them around the globe was as strong as ever. By now, she had also worked out how she could combine this with another of her passions to empower women in India- a country she had come to know and love.

It was whilst travelling around India on the back of a motorbike that Fritha met some wonderful women living in remote regions who were desperately trying to eke out a living by making flower garlands for people to buy as gifts at local temples. Fritha noticed that in most of the homes she visited there was always a sewing machine and was told by the women that they knew how to stitch well but had no idea how to earn an income by selling items they had stitched locally. It was at this point that Fritha knew how she and the women could work together and Secret Projects was born! The first product made by women for Secret Projects was of course, the Secret Pillow and Fritha's dream came true. Hundreds of Secret Pillows have been sold since 2014 when Secret Projects was founded, and they grace beds, sofas and chairs both indoors and outdoors throughout the world. Dreams do come true.

Flash forwards a few more years and Fritha is nicely settled down with the man of her dreams, Olaf who just happens to be a master carpenter and decided to build them a house. It's not any ordinary house either and the build has been followed by Grand Designs and is one of the homes featured during Grand Designs autumn 2021 series.

There is a fitting end to this story, Fritha's own home is now filled with Secret Pillows, and she feels proud to have helped make many people's houses around the world comfortable, as having a home to call our own is so important. Fritha suggested that she and Olaf 'go for' Grand Designs as she thought it was a great way to get Secret Pillows on television!!! They never for a second believed that they would make it on to the show, but thought, nothing ventured, nothing gained! The rest is history, as they say and watch out for Kevin McCloud sitting at Fritha and Olaf's firepit, surrounded by Secret Pillows!

And... there is one final fitting end! Fritha's other dream has always been to fill her home with children! She and Olaf are both foster parents, caring for a young man, with plans to look after other children too. Their own daughter Lagertha (to be known day to day as La La) took a while to appear, but after a couple of years of 'trying' and a round of IVF she sprang into the world in March 2021 bang in the middle of building the house with Grand Designs deadline looming! So... the house has 4 bedrooms and 3 of these will be filled with children among the many Secret Pillows! View the episode here.

Secret Projects is proud to share this story of hope that highlights dreams can come true at the same time as helping others to achieve their dreams too. Grand Designs aired 8th Sept '21 at 8pm C4



INFORMATION FOR EDITORS 8/09/2021

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Picture Requests:

If you would like to request pictures, please email pr@secretprojects.org for Google Drive link or contact Channel 4 picture desk picturepublicity@channel4.co.uk

A little bit about Secret Projects

- Secret Projects provides income generating opportunities for marginalised women in India through training and the making and selling of charming, foldable clothing and homeware.
- Our vision is a world where all women have the confidence and resources to make choices, thrive and contribute to the strengthening of their communities.
- The women of our Maker Community become part of our four-stage Virtual Training for Empowerment Programme with a longer term goal of setting up their own micro-enterprises, if this is something they would like to pursue.
- We work in regions throughout India where there is little or no employment opportunities, especially for women.

To date we have:

- We have trained over 500 women
- Established a regular monthly payment date for our Makers, which is a big help for the women with their household budgeting
- Our Makers have earned over £62,000
- Worked in 5 Indian states

To learn more about Secret Projects please visit our [Learn About Us](#) section on our website.

IMAGES 08/09/2021

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Link for high-res images can be emailed on request from pr@secretprojects.org

