



THE FABINDIA SCHOOL

Newsletter

Summer 2015

LETTER FROM THE PRINCIPAL



Principal Deepika Tandon with Fabindia Student Scholars
from l to r: Kasak Choudhary, Vinita Sirvi, Ritu Karwar & Kinjal Rao

We saw a lot of changes in 2014. I spent the year primarily getting to know all thirty-two staff, interacting with students and really trying to find out what makes The Fabindia School tick! I watched how the school Vision was being lived out in classrooms, on the playing fields, in the staff room and board meetings. Much time was spent listening to what had worked in the past, what areas needed revisiting and what policies need re-writing. I patiently heard out what parents had to say about their children's needs and what staff and students wished to say about theirs. I listened in on multiple meetings and reflected on what gaps existed and where. Our school holds a lot of expertise. The staff and I have a plan in place to forge a way ahead for us in 2015.

Workshops helped build teaching capacity and quality. We anticipate that these professional development opportunities for teachers will have a direct impact on student success. I have yet to see a teaching faculty that responds so well to changes and is so keen to improve their teaching. It will not be long before I see my staff train teachers of other schools!

A sense of ownership of their school has grown among students. Students have responded beautifully to the introduction of clubs and societies. *The School Weekly*, our campus newsletter, is a good example.

I thank the John Bissell Scholars Fund, the Bhadrarjun Artisans Trust, my Board Chairman, my staff and my students who work so tirelessly for the good of the school community.

- Deepika Tandon, Principal, The Fabindia School

DREAMING SUCCESS

A dream is a hope, a wish and an aspiration. Dreams are our ultimate destination, which represents what and why in our life. People always shy away from following their dreams. This is because they doubt their success. They are always pulled down with the fear of failure. If a mountain of troubles comes your way, don't sit to cry, but instead try and try. Dream is your right, but for that it is your duty to struggle. To achieve the sky and to fly, will power is what you need. Don't forget the words of William Arthur "If you can dream it, you can become it."

- Khushi Rao (Class IX)



Caption: L to R: Gaurav Solanki, Poonam Singh, Manmanvendra Singh, Chandresh Choudhary, Amrit Choudhary, Khushi Rao and Teacher Perna Rathod during Annual Day.

REPORT OF THE ACADEMIC YEAR: APRIL 2014 – APRIL 2015

Principal Tandon has led us in achieving a tremendous amount of positive change through many new initiatives. Here are a few:

- One-month teacher training during summer vacation. Three day workshop on Mind Mapping and Innovative Teaching in Classrooms conducted by faculty from Welham Girls' School, Dehradun; Ms. Barbara Powell from USA conducted a teacher training workshop
- New Disciplinary Committee comprising students and staff
- English Readiness Program, Hindi Readiness Program and Science Exploration Program implemented to develop language Spoken Skills and inquisitiveness in Science.
- July: Krystal Sung raised money to donate Reverse Osmosis (RO) water.
- Two Math Teachers attended the Math Speak India International Conference in Jaipur
- October: 7 girls went on exchange to Maharani Gayatri Devi Girls' School, Jaipur; 9 MGD girls visited us in February. 10 students visited on exchange.
- Four individual trophies for Excellence in Service, Skill, Sports & Study introduced.
- Four inter house trophies in 4 Ss introduced.
- 22nd Annual Function Chief Guests: Principal, Ms. Kanchan Khandke, Mayo College Girls' School, Ajmer and Principal, Mr. Somik Ghosh, The Scindia School.
- Parineeta Ranpal English Prize introduced.
- Photography Club showcased on Annual Function. It boasts 100 members
- Many international guests visited the school
- Co-Curricular and Sports activities were conducted throughout the year. The students also won four gold medal in National Art Competition and Global Olympiads
- 12 American high-school students from Loomis Chaffee School, Windsor, CT, visited and collaborated on a community service project in a local village with our students.
- Establishment in May of Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) and the Alumni Association.

- Compiled by Bharti Rao, Senior Coordinator, Editor of *The School Weekly*

PERSPECTIVES FROM AN AMERICAN VOLUNTEER TEACHER

Before I arrived, I expected the school to be drab. Blurry satellite photos from google maps suggested squat buildings on a dusty plain. But the picture I had built up in my head was quickly overturned when I was greeted by an incredibly lively and colorful place. The hallways and classrooms are decorated wonderfully with posters and student projects, the campus has beautiful trees and bougainvillea. But more than that, there is just always something happening at The Fabindia School: art activities; visitors and students from exchange programs; competitions in areas like dance, debate, cricket and even kite-flying, with every happening documented by a thriving and popular photography club.



Caption: Jackson Wagner with Fabindia students



Students creating "Rangoli" or floor painting with colored powders

That there were so many children in the younger grades is one of the many signs of the school's continuing, rapid growth. In general, there was an energy to events at the school that made me feel optimistic. In particular, I have to commend Deepika Tandon, the new principal, for doing an excellent job.

There's a critical need for education in Pali. The kids I met and befriended were bright, opinionated, and powerfully curious about the world: they were always eager to hear my favorite facts about the solar system and stories about life in faraway countries, and I was similarly interested to hear their thoughts on local issues and their guesses at what their own futures might hold. The Fabindia School really does provide an oasis of learning and opportunity. I can't help but feel that those students have a bright future ahead of them.

- Jackson Wagner was a volunteer teacher in Physics and General Science for five months in 2014-15

WOMEN RISE IN THE WORLD

In the past women were treated as slaves. They were kept within the four walls of the house. Even they had no rights. No one feels happy in the home at the birth of the female child. A girl is regarded as a burden on the parents and the family. In future, as a wife she has to obey her husband. Even educated and modern husbands want them to be kept within the four walls. Now the women's position in free world has risen. The Constitution of free world gives them equal rights in all fields of life. Today in the political field women are successful as men. In the medical field also women have proved their ability. There are many women who are physicians, medical experts etc. In the field of education women are now on the top.



Komal Suthar and Mukesh Choudhary display their artwork during Annual Day

If we look at the other side of women's position in new world they have higher opportunities. In homes and outside homes their exploitation is continuing, society needs to change its attitudes towards women. Today women can take up any career she likes. In families they are allowed to study the subjects of their choice. Choosing a good career makes a girl self dependent.

Women are considered to be a burden on the world but it's difficult to imagine a world without women.

- Pooja Solanki (Class X)

SEARCHING FOR QUESTIONS



Fabindia pre-school students, L to R: Kanishka Rajpurohit, Tanya Tripash, Khushi Meghwal, Nisha Rathore and Saksbi Suthar

I visited The Fabindia School in April as part of the Favrot Fund-supported Fabindia Leadership Development Project, which encourages teachers to take responsibility for their learning and teaching. One workshop was about questions, specifically how to take a topic and generate questions about it and how to distinguish between closed and open-ended questions.

Like all schools in India, Fabindia is exam-driven: students must take the CBSE (Central Board of Secondary Education) test. The looming presence of the exam helps to determine classroom priorities: an emphasis on reading and writing English, rather than speaking (which is not tested), and an emphasis on getting the right answer rather than encouraging students to generate questions.

Teachers thought up questions around the topic: "Some students are not engaged in the classroom." Then they divided their questions into two types: closed (which are answered by "yes," "no" or one answer) and open-ended (which require an explanation and cannot be answered with "yes," "no" or one word.) and had lively discussions in small groups. Closed questions are "more accurate, easy to learn," reported one teacher. Open ended questions "allow creativity and thinking of students" suggested another, but the potential disadvantage is that open-ended questions are "a waste of time" and students "may go on a wrong track." That is, the teachers feared the students' responses may deviate from the answers suggested by the required curriculum. The workshop was based on The Right Question Institute's "Question Formulation Technique" (QFT).

In reflecting how he might use what he learned in the workshop, Surendra Singh concluded: "I can use close-ended questions to improve students' memory. I can use open-ended questions to make creative students."

- Barbara S. Powell is a consultant in teacher education, curriculum development and evaluation.

Facebook: The Fabindia School
Blog: www.bateducation.org
Website: www.fabindiaschools.org

- See a short film on the school
- Read our weekly updates from teachers and students
- Review the latest financial reports and budgets
- View pictures from recent activities
- Read comments from visitors, teacher training programs, and more!

Please visit us online for lots more news!



John Bissell Scholars Fund (JBSF) student scholarship recipients 2014-15 with Katherine Allen (back row), JBSF Coordinator, International Fundraising

THE FABINDIA SCHOOL - ABOUT US

The Fabindia School was established by William and John Bissell who saw the need for a model co-educational school to empower young people in rural Rajasthan where literacy rates are extremely low, especially among women. From the beginning the school has been committed to encouraging education for girls in a region where most parents who can afford an English medium school would send only their sons. To encourage and promote female students, the school provides need-based scholarships. Started in 1992 with 11 students, the school now has 650 students.

BHADRAJUN ARTISANS TRUST (BAT) – ABOUT US

William and John Bissell set up the Bhadrajun Artisans Trust (BAT) to build social development programs in India with a focus on education and crafts. The charity established "The Fabindia School" in 1992 in Bali, Rajasthan, as a co-educational, K-12 school. With support from the John Bissell Scholars Fund, BAT has set up a permanently endowed scholarship fund for financially needy girls studying at The Fabindia School.

THE JOHN BISSELL SCHOLARS FUND (JBSF) – ABOUT US

The John Bissell Scholars Fund was formed in 2001 in memory of John Bissell, co-founder of The Fabindia School and the Bhadrajun Artisans Trust (BAT). The Mission of JBSF is to support the annual and capital giving to The Fabindia School by international donors. JBSF consists of friends of The Fabindia School and of the Bissell family who are devoted to the work of the school, with special interest in the school's strong commitment to the education and empowerment of girls in rural Rajasthan. The vision of JBSF is that over the coming generations The Fabindia School will be a beacon that brightens the future of women in rural Rajasthan, creating a model for the region.

JBSF and BAT have partnered with Give2Asia, a 501c3 non-profit organization, in San Francisco, CA to raise charitable donations for The Fabindia School. To make a tax-exempt donation, go to www.give2asia.org or contact Katherine Allen at:

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Thank you to the many donors who have contributed to support the girls' scholarship fund.