



THE FABINDIA SCHOOL

Newsletter

Fall 2007

LETTER FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Hello friends,

Greetings from The Fabindia School! The new academic session started in July with euphoria as enrollment kept growing and reached a whopping 582 students. New teachers were also added as more staff was required to take care of all the students. The school is making steady progress and many exciting developments took place in the last few months.

The campus has been undergoing a lot of construction which is coming to completion. The access road is almost ready. The new block of classrooms are ready and going to be inaugurated shortly. The Putney Students completed two projects at the school, a basket ball court and new roofing for the students' toilets. Local parents donated two water coolers with aqua guards which were installed. The new computer lab started functioning. Lastly, we constructed a new bridge to be used as a bypass road during the rainy season to reach the school.

The school has launched a community service and adult literacy program, undertaking the responsibility to teach in a nearby village called

Punaria which has a 72% illiterate population. The students of senior classes regularly visit the villagers and we hope that a side benefit of this program will be to motivate and inspire parents to send their daughters to The Fabindia School in the coming session.

As water management is an important issue for the people of Rajasthan, the senior students went on a field trip to see a water conservation and management project. They learned about rainwater harvesting and the community achievements of two villages, Khadin and Anicut, whose joint efforts lead the project.

In August the school organized a Cricket Tournament where 18 schools participated. The home team was the runner up and it was a great success. Many visitors came to the school for the first time and were surprised to

see our impressive buildings, play area and green surroundings.

The girls attended an archery competition for the first time and stood first in the competition. The students of the Fabindia School also received an award for best discipline.

In September the teaching staff along with class X students took an overnight bus on a field trip to Jaipur to see a Fabindia store, warehouse and a block printing unit. The trip was designed to introduce the staff and students to the various work of the Fabindia Company. They also managed to visit several of the famous landmarks of Jaipur, including the beautiful fort, and for many this was their first time to visit the Rajasthani capital city.

For the first time, the school organized an educational tour in October for classes VII-X. Twenty-nine students

plus 4 teachers went on the 4 day train journey to some of the famous Himalayan towns, Haridwar, Mussoorie, Rishikesh and Dehradun. For many students

this was the first time away from home and traveling out of their state and they had a wonderful trip and enjoyed a lot.

Recently the school hosted Indian staff members of Room to Read, a US based NGO (non-governmental organization) that provides schools with library books and funding for girls scholarships. We are very grateful that they decided to provide 10 girls with scholarships for the running session and 40 new girls' scholarships in the new session. Thanks to John Bissell Scholars Donor Patty Arndt for introducing us to this organization.

Lastly, we are awaiting the results of our recent inspection by a team of Principals from the central government board to add classes XI, XII and hope that in the coming year this dream will be realized.

The school is growing in leaps and bounds. We, the Fabindians, are happy and grateful for your support. We wish you Happy Diwali and a Prosperous New Year.

Parinita Ranpal, Principal



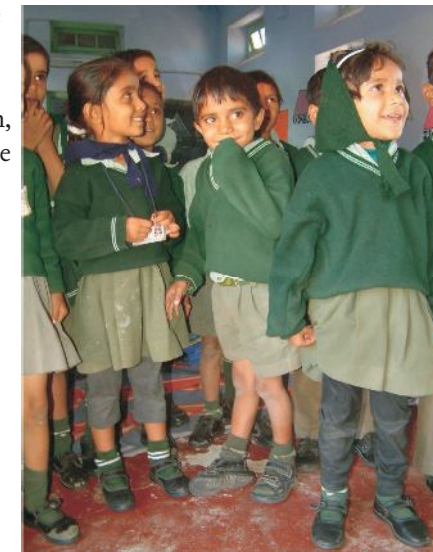
Field Trip to Fabindia Block Printing Unit near Jaipur



Educational Field Trip to Himalayas



Field Trip to Local Water Conservation Project



Class I Students

COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ADULT LITERACY PROGRAM

NOTES FROM KATHERINE ALLEN, JOHN BISSELL SCHOLARS FUND CO-ORDINATOR



Senior Fabindia student distributes free reading material

In April 2007, 30 students at The Fabindia School from grades 8-10 adopted a nearby village, Punaria, to lead an Adult Literacy program. In addition to reading and writing, the students also addressed the gathering on the importance of sanitation and the environment. Many girls spoke on the importance of education in their lives and encouraged the adults to learn reading and writing. At the end of the program, one of the women held a girl's hand and said: "You are literate, so you have courage to speak in front of so many people. Look at us, how far behind we are left. Today I pledge to learn how to read and write my name."

The students and school teachers will continue to conduct literacy programs at the school's "adopted" village every 15 days throughout the school year. As a first time community service program by the students and teachers of The Fabindia School, everyone was overwhelmed by the positive results.



Senior Girls discuss the Literacy Program at nearby village

The Fabindia School was established by William and John Bissell who saw the need for a model 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 attract girls the school subsidizes their tuition. Starting in 1992 with 11 pupils, the school now has nearly 600. The John Bissell Scholars Fund was established in 2000 in memory of John Bissell. Its purpose is to support scholarships for female students.

For comments or further information about the fund, contact Katherine Allen at k.allen@fabindia.com or write to the following address:

THE JOHN BISSELL SCHOLARS FUND
Katherine Allen,
Fabindia, P. O. Box 118, New Hartford, CT 06057, USA
Ph: 860-693-1123

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Science Lab at The Fabindia School



A view of a classroom at The Fabindia School



Senior students in the library at The Fabindia School with Principal Ranpal



Board Members with William & Anjali Bissell, Charley Todd & Katherine Allen at the "vision plan" retreat.

BIM BISSELL'S VISIT TO ADVENT SCHOOL

Last May Bim Bissell had a chance to visit the 5th grade class at The Advent School in Boston that has had a letter exchange program with The Fabindia School

students for several years. In addition, the 5th grade teacher, Christine Size, had visited The Fabindia School during her winter break in December 2006. Here are some reflections from Ms. Size about Bim's visit to her classroom.

After Mrs. Bissell left, the kids and I were talking about what she said. She spoke of the children who did not have access to education in rural areas being like seeds in the dry earth, just waiting for water to grow. When the soil and seeds receive this necessary item, they bloom and grow. Similarly, when children receive education that had been lacking before,

they too bloom just like the flowers. They possess everything they need to grow but are just waiting for the "rain".

It was such a treat to meet a woman who has affected such important change in the world and the students felt very special that she was in our midst after our having talked about her and her husband for so long! She came at an opportune time, as we had textiles and pictures up from our trip to India to visit The Fabindia School. Our students were by that point very well-

informed about the school, as they had been writing letters to the students and had also seen many pictures and videos of the traditional Rajasthani dance the children performed for our arrival.



Mrs. Bim Bissell visiting Advent School, Boston, MA

PUTNEY STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

Regan Lee was one of 15 American High School students who visited The Fabindia School in July, 2007 as part of the Putney Student Travel program. She reflected on her trip:

I felt so blessed to be helping children that not only needed it but were so grateful for it. They constantly thanked us and treated us with the greatest respect, which only added to the amount of fun we had there.

I learned a little Hindi while interacting with the kids we taught and the locals we talked to, and I loved shopping for things and observing how everyone lives on a normal day. Along with all that, the historical sites we were able to see just blew my mind and it gave me a great perspective on how every



Putney Student Volunteers with Fabindia School Students

corner of the earth is like no other. Of course the primary reason for the trip is doing community service, but along the way you slowly learn things you never could imagine and all the struggle pays off.

ADVENT SCHOOL CELEBRATES INDIA



Dressing Up For India Festival at Advent School

After visiting The Fabindia School during their winter break in December 2006, two teachers at the Advent School took the experiences from their trip to create an Indian Festival back home in Boston, sharing what they learned on their trip. The teachers brought back henna for mehndi designs, clothing, lanterns, bindis, spices and more that the students used in their presentation. The fifth graders dressed up in Saris and Indian clothing and did a school wide presentation to parents and the other students. After watching a video of the Fabindia students performing a dance program, the Advent students decided to make their own video, and recorded songs and dances which they sent back to the Fabindia School students.



Advent Fifth Grade Student Teaching a Parent About India

THE PLANTATION DAY



Annual Day to Plant Trees

On 28th August 'The Vanmahotsava' a national forest conservation holiday, was celebrated in School. Keeping in view the degrading environment, the school has been celebrating this day every year. Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) O.P.Bohra was invited as The Chief Guest. He along with students planted trees with promise to take care of the environment by planting more trees every year. On 15th August the school was awarded for protecting the Environment and its green cover.

'THE RAMAYANA'

A play on 'Ramayana' was put up by the students of Junior School on the occasion of 'Diwali'. They acted brilliantly and proved their acting mettle.



Students stage play under the trees

A VISITORS PERSPECTIVE

Ernie Lovett is a photographer, longtime friend of William Bissell and his family, and is married to Jeff Shumlin, who directs Putney Student Travel.

Last January, my mother, Dorothy Lovett, and I traveled through Rajasthan together in celebration of her 70th birthday. Before stopping in Bali to see the school and meet Parinita Ranpal, we passed a few days in the nearby community of Narlai. There, I spent my days wandering the town taking photographs. In one home, I was invited in for tea. The men were gathered in the sun outside the kitchen. My mother and I joined the mother and daughter in the kitchen and chatted with them there. I learned that the daughter was 12—my daughter's age—and that she had recently stopped going to school to focus on work at home.

Two days later, during our visit to the school, I couldn't help but feel the contrast. Sixth grade girls, my daughter's age, this girl's age, were an animated presence in the classroom. They raised their hands to speak in class; they greeted us in a poised and capable manner, their long legs raced out of the classroom to prepare for the performance. And what a performance! Grinning, green-uniformed girls were transformed into traditional Rajasthani dancers. These were girls who showed respect for their culture and traditions but had a clear sense of the larger world around them.



Good Friends at The Fabindia School

THE PUTNEY GROUP 2007

This year The Putney Group arrived on 5th of July. The group under the supervision of very enthusiastic leaders Michael and Zarah Ali did outdoor work for the School. They had two big Projects in hand.



Putney students lead Morning Assembly

They built a Basket Ball Court and did Roofing of the outdoor student toilets. They taught in Junior School, conducted morning assemblies, put up plays, and played matches with school teams. They waded through the flooded roads and completed all the Projects. We are very thankful to them.



Putney Students Help Build New Basketball Court

VOICES

I am Heena Goswami, Student of class X. I am the luckiest student who has got a chance to study in The Fabindia School. I came to Fabindia four years ago. I was, literally, a stupid student. I knew nothing. I did not know to speak in English. The first year in Class VI was very hard for me. I learned to speak English. In Fabindia School, other than studies, I could find a way to show my talent through other activities. This school is a way for me to expose myself to the world and show my talents. Earlier I used to consider myself as the smallest student, but when I came to school I found that I am nothing. Because I met so many people who had enormous knowledge. I met people who spoke so well, who were so creative. They spoke so well. This school has given me power to compete with these people. I proudly say that I am student of Fabindia School. I feel this school as my second home. I am proud that I am the Head Girl of my school. But, it is unfortunate it is my last year in the school. I pray that I complete my 10+2 in this school. I know that it will happen.

- Heena Goswami

By Heena Goswami, class X

I am Jaydeep Singh student of class X. I have been studying in this school from last 12 years. When I came to the school I was just a child and now I have grown into a young boy. I have spent a long period in this school that's why I feel this school very close to my heart. I have love, faith, respect, honour and feelings that can be expressed in words. I always look upon my school as an institution which provides knowledge and personality to a child of little sense and makes his future bright. This school has given me a chance to discover myself and to expose my talents to the world. I feel this school as my second family. I have got such education in the school which cannot be provided by any other institutions. I am lucky to be a part of this school. There are many activities taking place in this school emphasis on a child's personality development, improving his or her ~~skills~~ skills. I am lucky to be benefited by these activities. It was a long journey from class prep to class X, and this journey has been very successful and very impressive for me. But it is unfortunate that this journey is going to end very soon because it is my last year in this school but I hope that we will have 11th and 12th in the school and I will be here only. It was a nice experience of my life in this school.

- Jaydeep Singh, (X)

By Jaydeep Singh, class X