

CHILDREN'S DAY: NOVEMBER 14

While Children's Day is celebrated around the world on November 20, in India the celebration is preponed to November 14 which is the birthday of India's first Prime

Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. This year the school celebrated by organizing a trip for the senior school students to Pawapuri, a famous holy site for Jains.



Senior students enjoy a delightful visit to Pawapuri



Junior students enjoy an outing on Children's Day



Students perform a play for the annual Diwali Celebration

EDUCATIONAL TOUR

For the second year in a row, the school organized an educational tour in October for Class VII-XI students. This year 56 of us (42 students & 14 teachers) went on an adventurous and exciting 7 day trip to Himachal Pradesh in North India compared to 33 (29 students & 4 teachers) last year when it was a 4 day excursion. Coming from the plains of Rajasthan, the children were thrilled to see the majestic mountain terrain while traveling the sharp curvy roads. The beautiful sites included Dharamshala, Dalhousie, Shimla, Chamba, Kullu, Manali, Rohtang Pass and Khajjar.



All at the chaugan of Kullu to witness its famous Dussherra Festival



The Famous Dalai Lama Monastery at Mc lodganj Dharamshala

2008-09 VOLUNTEERS

The Fabindia School welcomes two volunteer teachers for the current academic year, Marketa from Czech Republic and Ida Sophie from Norway. For six months they will be at the school assisting the English teachers and helping the students with various activities.

ADULT LITERACY PROGRAMME

Senior students and teachers continue to visit Punaria, the adopted village of the school, twice a month to conduct literacy classes for local adults and children. The majority of the participants are girls and women who have shown a keen interest in learning to read and write.



Students at Punaria supporting the Adult Literacy Programme

Student Explains the Adult Literacy Programme

We, the students of The Fabindia School try to educate people of a very backward and illiterate village of Punariya. Our way of teaching was completely different. We did not try them teaching poems or chapters or speaking in English. We tried to teach them the principles of a better life. To make the concept clear we enacted a play and some of my friends gave speeches. India is an agricultural country and hence the villages are important and valuable for us. So we told them about their contribution in the development of the country. People came to know the importance of their work. They were also informed about the use of cowdung and waste materials which can be decomposed in the soil to make biogas. Our aim was that they should be aware of the importance of cleanliness of the village, importance of hygiene and nutritious food, importance of literacy among themselves and importance of plants because nowadays deforestation is spreading severely.

The Fabindia School is Recipient of a Major Donation from The Rohatyn Group including a Challenge Grant

We are very excited to announce that The Rohatyn Group of New York, NY has given a \$25,000 grant to the school with an additional \$5,000 Challenge Grant. The grant will be used to help build four new classrooms and fund girls scholarships. All donations contributed between November 10, 2008 and March 31, 2009 from donors who did not contribute to last year's appeal will be matched dollar for dollar up to \$5,000. Please join us in reaching this goal. We are grateful for your support.

Thanks to the Unitarian Universalist Holdeen India Program

The John Bissell Scholars Fund would like to thank our fiscal sponsor, the Unitarian Universalist Holdeen India Program, and its Director, Kathy Sreedhar, for their continued support. Donors will be impressed to know that 95% of all your donations go to the school, with a very minimal 5% applied to administrative costs.

New Website www.fabindiaschools.org

Please visit our new website and let us know what you think!
Send your comments to Katherine Allen, k.allen@fabindia.com

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 approximately 700 students. 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:

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THE FABINDIA SCHOOL

Newsletter

Fall 2008

LETTER FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Hello friends,

Greetings from The Fabindia School! The academic year started in April with promise of good rainfall and greenery but all hopes crashed as the rains dwindled by August end. Despite this our hopes and aspirations kept soaring with the new enrollment, as the student body grew from 598 to 707 students including 293 girls. The new admissions and affiliation for class XI and XII in July brought even greater euphoria. The additional class XI brought a lot of changes, including a new name: "The Fabindia School (Senior Secondary), Bali." We are pleased to share many of the wonderful achievements over the past year. While we celebrate the growth of the school, we are working even harder to accommodate the growing numbers and see that the quality of education does not suffer in the hands of quantity. We take this opportunity to thank all who generously donate to make the school flourish and grow to its potential.

Ms. Parinita Ranpal
Principal of The Fabindia School



Putney Student Travel Students with Fabindia School Students, July 2008

Co-curricular activities play an important part in the life of the students. So a wide range of hobbies and activities have therefore been made available for competitions in the school. The competitions develop creativity among the students. This year the school organized the Interhouse extempore competition on different topics, speak on the spot. In the same way Hindi/English Debate competitions were organized for the students of 6th to 11th to develop and strengthen Hindi English Oral ability. Talent competition was organized for the students where the students showed their talents in monodrama, singing, dancing. The other competitions that took place in the school are English and Hindi recitation, competitive Patriotic song competition.

Functions such as Sports Day, Annual day, Children's day, Teacher's day, Independence Day, Republic Day etc. are celebrated with great enthusiasm. This time the school also celebrated the International Hygiene Day.

Student Report on School Activities

THE PUTNEY STUDENT TRAVEL GROUP 2008



Putney Student Sophia Hamati with Class II Students after an English Class

Each summer a group of about 15 American High School students visit the school as part of the India Community Service program. The enthusiastic group from July 2008 worked

hard to construct a new set of toilets for the girl students, painted beautiful murals in some of the classrooms and helped to teach English classes. The school is grateful for their dedication to enhance the school facilities and connect with the students.

Putney Student Perspectives

The kids in the sixth grade were absolutely amazing. I couldn't walk pass their classroom without everyone



Basil Stuyvesant from the Putney Group Helping to Build the New Girls' Bathrooms

smiling. They loved the "spelling game" (spelling bee). My favorite time with them was just playing with them and getting to know them. They called me Krish who is a superhero in a movie from Bollywood. He can run fast and jump high. I acquired this name since the kids

loved chasing me. I would have about 40 kids running after me, and to rest I would sit up in a tree. The kids were amazing and I really miss having been around them.

--Basil Stuyvesant, Putney Student Travel Participant & 12th Grade Student at Shady Side Academy, Pittsburgh, PA, USA

The three weeks that I spent at the inspiring Fabindia School will remain in my heart as one of the most precious experiences of my life. The



Haillie Stock from the Putney Group with Fabindia Students

memories that I shared with those sweet, beautiful, intelligent children will always be with me as I strive to live a more meaningful life each day. It is so hard to explain the joy that I felt by being able to share thoughts and ideas with children so different from myself. The students at the Fabindia school are truly amazing, and everyone in the Putney group was amazed as to how ardently they loved going to school.

--Haillie Stock, Putney Student Travel Participant & 12th Grade Student at The American School, Switzerland

I was not sure what to expect at this school but what I found out was that it was an amazing place. The students were all so friendly and wanting to get to

know who we all were. In the U.S. you rarely see students this happy to learn. It was so thrilling to see. I thought to myself how amazing it was for these students to love to learn



Putney Student Leah Cramer Gibbs with Fabindia Students

and what a great thing they have the Fabindia School.

When we taught the older classes we did a spelling competition which went really well. The students in class 5 the next day came up to me and said, "Can we play the spelling game again?" It put a smile on my face to hear that they liked what we had done and were learning from it too. We started off the game with really easy words and saw how easily they knew how to spell them, so we quickly had to think of harder words. We ended up with words like democracy and knowledge. I was really impressed.

These students were some of the nicest and happiest people I have ever met. This experience I had at the Fabindia School will never be forgotten and I hope that some day I can return to the school and see what all of them are up to. I left the school feeling like I had made new friends and gotten to see how wonderful this school really is. The children made the trip. Getting to know who they are and what their lives are like is why I loved the trip so much. I will never forget the students I met at The Fabindia School. They will always be with me.

--Leah Cramer Gibbs, Putney Student Travel Participant & 11th Grade Student at Calhoun School, New York, NY, USA

JLB FUND & STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

Throughout John Bissell's life he frequently gave money to people or organizations which interested him. Anyone who knew John can vividly recall remarkable stories of his deep and selfless generosity. He always gave quietly and anonymously. To honor John's spirit of generosity, the JLB Fund was established based on a percentage of Fabindia sales which is set aside to fund worthy individuals and projects that reflect John's ideals and people's needs.

Over the years, the JLB Fund has given to The Fabindia School. On the ten year anniversary of John's death, the school remembers John and all that he has done for so many. We also want to briefly share the life stories of those who the JLB Fund has honored with a named scholarship in memory of the remarkable impact they each had on innumerable lives in India.

Riten Mazumdar was one of Fabindia's first and India's best loved designers with a specialty in textiles. Educated in the quiet and beautiful natural environment of Shantiniketan - a University set up by Rabindranath Tagore - north of Calcutta, Riten went on to travel and exhibit internationally. He worked in Delhi for many years where he became



Riten Mazumdar

one of John Bissell's closest friends and headed a design studio called M Print. Classic geometric circles and squares made him an icon in the design scene of the 60s and 70s. Another experience of note was the time he spent training with Armi Ratia, the founder of the Finnish textile and clothing company Merimekko. In the late 80s Riten returned to Shantiniketan and spent the rest of his life teaching. The JLB Fund remembers him by establishing an annual Riten Mazumdar Scholarship for a student with creative talent.

Bob Webb from Australia was one of Fabindia's early partners as the head of Trade Action, a business with a strong commitment to social change. In 1964 Bob and his wife Sonya began an undertaking which encompassed so many of their core values and sense of purpose. Bob, Sonya and friends held fundraisers for Community Aid Abroad which led to the opening of the first "Handicrafts of Asia" store and Trade Aid which later became Trade Action. Profits from these organizations went back into Community Aid Abroad. Amongst his peers and fellow workers. Bob was heralded as an innovator and a visionary. Their "Aid Through Trade" approach was an early model of providing equitable employment opportunities for artisans, particularly in India where they had a strong commitment. Over the years with their shared ideals and Bob's frequent trips to India John and Bob became good friends. In

memory of Bob Webb, the JLB Fund is pleased to create the Bob Webb Scholarship to annually educate an outstanding girl student.

Nancy Pelletreau was in the US State Department in India in the 1960s when she first met the Bissells and became lifelong friends. After retiring from the State Dept she was frequently assigned back to India as a Consular Officer in Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata and Chennai. Nancy had a heart of gold, a lively spirit and unabashed honesty, a penchant for calling a spade a spade. Whenever she entered a room she filled it with interesting conversation and plenty of laughter. Nancy is remembered for all of the young people she mentored, nurtured and helped build their self-confidence and self-esteem. She believed that life is an exciting adventure to be enjoyed and she taught by example. The JLB Fund remembers Nancy Pelletreau with an annual scholarship in her name for a needy girl student.

Norman Reynolds was a brilliant development economist from South Africa who worked for the World Bank in India from 1970-1975 and at the Ford Foundation in India as a rural development specialist from 1975-1979. Throughout his impressive career, Norman was a champion for economic justice and human dignity. The JLB Fund honors Norman's commitment to rural economic development and empowerment by providing scholarships to four girl students from rural villages during the 2008-09 academic year in the name of his four daughters Talitha, Portia (who was John's godchild), Abigail and Sabaa.

John Moynihan was an artist; multi-faceted and multi-talented. He worked in many mediums, including animation, film/video, print and graphics, where he was as an animator, art director, film and video producer/director and graphic artist. John was also an adventurer and loved to travel. He had traveled around the world twice, including the time when he got a job working on a supertanker. In the early 70s when John was in 7th grade his parents, Patrick and Liz Moynihan, and sister Maura moved to New Delhi where he continued his schooling for a few years. The Moynihans became lifelong friends with the Bissells and John continued to travel extensively in India all his life. In loving memory of John, his family and friends have funded a new computer center for the school, called the John Moynihan Computer Lab, which is a great resource for the school.



John McClosky Moynihan February 15, 1960-October 15, 2004

The Lab and John's life help to inspire many students to discover the creativity and enjoyment of the arts and the urge to travel which enriched John's life.

VISITING THE FABINDIA SCHOOL

The school is delighted to host a range of visitors, from across India and abroad, who share our educational interests. Please contact us if you will be traveling in Rajasthan and would like to visit the school. We would love to welcome you as part of the extended Fabindia School community.

Students reflect on recent visitors

On 3rd October David a Journalist Came to our class. It was great to interact with him. He told us that he was the editor for New York Times. He was living in India for last two years and writing various articles for the Newspaper. He also took our interview and also showed some video clips. He told that he was going to write a book on Afghanistan. David showed us that Journalism is also a good career option for us.

KHUSHPAL SINGH XI Comm.

On 3rd October, David and Christina visited our school. David was a journalist and Christina was a photo-journalist. We arranged a program for them. They introduced themselves. They visited our class also. They showed us newspaper of America in which David had collected all the information and all the pictures were provided by Christina. David asked me to take interview on laptop. She also showed us the picture of Afghanistan in her laptop. She also showed us the picture of Donna House on the frontpage of magazine. It was very nice to talk to them and to meet them. They wanted us to become journalist as a career.

From: Nikita Khyapreshi XI Comm.

REFLECTIONS FROM RECENT VISITORS

"I was in the new computer lab and the head girl and a partner were making a power point presentation and asked me to suggest the topic, so I said 'Birds, like those you see around the school.' When I came back after a while to see what they were doing, I saw the following slide: 'Birds are the ones that fly high to reach their dreams.' We thought that was wonderful."

Bob Repetto, CT, USA, Visited the school in November 2007

"It was an absolutely fantastic visit. I am so impressed. The school is a wondrous place - I wish I could take a year off to teach there."

T. Swayze, VT, USA, Visited the school in November 2007

"We had such an amazingly inspirational experience at the school. I am a former public school teacher [many

INTERESTING FACTS

- ABOUT THE FABINDIA SCHOOL & STUDENT BODY
- In 2008 India's Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) granted the much anticipated accreditation to The Fabindia School for Class XI and XII; only 2 other schools in the region are CBSE accredited for Class XI & XII
 - The first Class XI commenced in the '08-'09 academic year and Class XII will start in '09-'10
 - Enrollment has increased 18% from 598 students in '07-'08 to 703 students in '08-'09
 - Of the 703 students attending Nursery through Class XI, there are 460 boys (65%) and 243 girls (35%)
 - Even though the school already subsidizes girl students by charging them half of the boys' tuition fees, the school has to work hard to continually enroll new girls.
 - 8 Buses travel a distance of 45 kms to transport children to school
 - None of the students have dropped out of school, compared with the regional drop out rates of 40% male

years ago and many vocations ago] so I was quite appreciative of the effort of administrative and faculty leadership at the school."

Nan Burroughs, CT, USA, Visited the school in November 2007

"As the students started their classes, we walked into the John Moynihan Computer Lab, peeked in on the younger kids learning to read, and studied the future irrigation system out beyond the soccer field. I remember being struck by how focused everyone seemed. The youngest students were not sleepy or distracted, and the oldest were very busy prepping for their upcoming exams. It was great to see people taking their education so seriously!"

Emily Hagar & Orson Robbins-Planka, NY, USA Visited the school in January 2008

- and 60% female
- All of our Class X graduates have gone on for further studies, compared to the local population where only 50% of males and 30% of females have graduated from Class X
- Local literacy rate is 60% males and 40% females
- Student Body Religious Background: 95% Hindu; 5% Other (Jain, Muslim, Christian)
- Students' Family Income Level: 10% above average; 40% average; 30% below average; 20% below poverty line (\$2,600/year family income is average; \$900/year family income is below poverty line)
- Students' Social Background/caste: General 20%; Other backward caste 55%; Scheduled Caste 20%; Scheduled Tribes 5%
- The student body religious, economic and social make-up reflects the diversity of the larger Bali Tehsil region (pop 200,000) based on municipality records