



Advent School 5th Graders Bake Sale Fundraiser for Books

In spring 2009, the 5th grade students at Advent School decided to raise money to buy books for the

Fabindia School. The Fifth graders spearheaded the entire project and decided to organise a bake sale to raise money. The children asked for contributions (home-made baked goods only!) from families of Advent. Then, they packaged and priced all the goodies!

On a beautiful spring day, the fifth graders sold all the baked goods to our own community as well as to the people on the street. It was a huge success and all the goodies were sold!

Later, when the books arrived the fifth graders personally inscribed most of the books for the children of Fabindia School. We hope you enjoy them!

-Arati Pandit, Advent School, Boston, MA USA

MY BOOK DRIVE FOR THE FABINDIA SCHOOL



Caroline Kranefuss Donating Books

I am a voracious reader. When my pen pal, Dr. Powell, told me that the children at the Fabindia School don't have many books at their school and asked me to help, I was happy to gather a collection. I have always hoped that all the children in the world would have many books to read. This was my chance to do something about that wish! I tried to collect some books at my school, but it didn't work out. So, I collected some old books from my house that I had finished reading. There were a total of about 30 books. It was fun to do but challenging at times. For example, when I tried to get my school to do a collection I found there wasn't enough time before the school year ended. When I decided to gather up my own books, it was hard to give up the books that I had loved for many years. But, I decided it was important for me to help children that needed the books more than I did. I hope they enjoy them!

Caroline Kranefuss, 6th grade student at Kent Place School, Summit, NJ USA

MAKING INDIA WORK - A New Book by William Bissell

Our girls' scholarship fund has a new income stream thanks to the generosity of William Bissell (co-founder of The Fabindia School) who has donated the advance payment and 100% of his royalty payments from the sales of his new book, *Making India Work* (Penguin Books India; July, 2009).

William's first book which will be released in the US in 2010 has made quite a splash in India, topping best seller lists across the country for several weeks. According to the book's jacket description, William "proposes a radical, new paradigm for development..." and focuses "on strategies which can end poverty in five years." "Hard-hitting and provocative, this book is a result of Bissell's journeys across rural and urban India, offering unique solutions to the challenges confronting its people".

If you would like to purchase a copy of *Making India Work*, please contact Katherine Allen at k.allen@fabindia.net



Last Year in School

I have joined this institution, the train of education for the last four years. So my affection towards the school has gone beyond limit. It is a solemn thought that this is my last year in this school. Our teachers always encouraged us to come up with new ideas and be innovative and be able to stand out of the crowd. The school has given me so much that I contribute a bit, i.e. make me able to make school proud of me, it will be a great achievement for me. I am under the bliss of heavenly satisfaction for being a part of this wonderful school. The time I have spent in this school will always remain engraved in my memories.

Daksha Jain
Class XII

Last year in the school

Time passes by as sand slips off, when one holds it in one's palm. I have been studying in this school for the last 5 yrs. When I joined this school, I felt very awkward to introduce myself to my classmates, but there were my teachers who helped me to feel cozy and comfortable. Now my attachment towards school has gone beyond the limit. Teachers were always there to overcome the obstacles and they tried their best in extracting hidden qualities. It's not just a school, but a stepping stone towards success. My friendship with my classmates and my relation

The Last Golden Year In Fabindia School

The last year that I spent at the inspiring Fabindia School will remain in my heart as one of the most precious time of my life. The memories that I shared with friends and teachers 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 friends so different from myself. The Fabindia School is truly amazing. I have mutual harmonious relationship with teachers and foster mutual understanding among friends. I have been in this school from nursery. When I will leave Fabindia School I will feel very bad. School has given me so many opportunity to come up. Whenever I will go in collage I will really miss Fabindia School because I think that the joyful days which I have spent here will never come back in my life again.



"I really gonna miss this place
I really gonna miss my school days!!!"

PARVENDRA SINGH
XII

with teachers grew stronger, with the passage of time. There are lots of memories attached to the school which I will never be able to shed them. There will be no greater sorrow than to recall a time of happiness which I have spent in the school. One realizes that things don't stay with you for long, so also school life.



(Nikita-XII)

The Fabindia School was established by William and John Bissell who felt the need for a model school to empower young people in rural Rajasthan where literacy rates are extremely low, especially among women. Since its inception 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 subsidizes their tuition. Started in 1992 with 11 students, the school now has approximately 776 students. The John Bissell Scholars Fund was established in the year 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.net or write to the following address:

JOHN BISSELL SCHOLARS FUND
P. O. Box 1, Collinsville, CT 06022, USA
Ph: 860-693-1123; Website: www.fabindiaschools.org

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LETTER FROM THE PRINCIPAL



Ms. Parinita Ranpal, Principal, The Fabindia School

Dear Friends,

Once again we are here with our yearly greetings from The Fabindia School (Senior Secondary), Bali, Rajasthan India.

This year marked many significant achievements:

- The school introduced the first batch of Class XII since receiving our national accreditation for senior secondary schools.
- Enrollment increased by 10% from 707 to 776 students including a large percentage of new girl students, which brought our female student body up from 35% to almost 40% of total enrollment.
- All of last year's Class X students passed their final exams with flying colours and Darshan Vaishnav made us all proud with an almost perfect score of 99 out of 100 in

mathematics. Many of our alumni are going to excellent Colleges and Universities across India.

- We completed several construction projects including four new science labs and four new classrooms which have physically allowed for the continued expansion, increased enrollment and introduction of new Class XI & XII, while also providing the space to keep the number of students per class low. In fact, we were able to bring down the student teacher ratio from 28:1 to 25:1 by hiring a few new teachers and utilizing the new rooms to split the classes. The school has also acquired six new computers, five coolers and aqua guards. In addition, the administrative block is now equipped with IT facilities.
- We opened four new satellite schools in four surrounding villages providing pre-primary and primary education to 167 new students who will eventually enroll at the main campus in Bali. This exciting achievement is just the first step towards our long awaited goal to expand our outreach to surrounding communities and make the school even more accessible.

We congratulate all our wonderful teachers, staff, parents, students and supporters for working together to achieve these incredible results! We take this opportunity to thank all who donate generously for development and growth of the school.

Parinita Ranpal
Principal, The Fabindia School

The idea for a network of satellite schools was pioneered by Mr. William Bissell, co-founder of the school, who was concerned that many young children were travelling 45 km each way to reach the school which took them several hours every day. Mr. Bissell proposed the idea to start pre-primary and primary schools in the nearby villages to provide the small children with education at their door steps. As a result, four ideal locations were identified and with extensive planning and hard work the schools were setup and started in the month of July 2009.

It was somewhat disappointing that the student enrollment did not exceed 167 students, but the team must be given due credit for its hard work. Everyone at the new schools is contributing their best efforts and we hope to significantly increase enrollment for the next academic session by proving to the new local parents our credibility and success.

THE FABINDIA SCHOOL, NANA: Pre-Primary & Primary (Nursery to Class IV) 103 students

This is the farthest located school at 45 km from the main campus in Bali. The school is based in an old castle, which adds a lot of character and history, and is managed by Guman Singh Chouhan. The student enrollment is the highest with strength of 103 students.



The Fabindia School, Nana

THE FABINDIA SCHOOL BIJAPUR: Pre-Primary (Nursery, Intro, Prep & Class I) 26 students

Bijapur is a small village with a tribal population. The teachers at the school are very enthusiastic to teach the first generation learners.



Inauguration ceremony of The Fabindia School, Bijapur

THE FABINDIA SCHOOL LUNAWA: Pre-Primary (Nursery, Intro & Prep) 17 students

Lunawa is predominantly a Jain village. The school has a small enclosed compound with painted walls. Enthusiastic teachers & students makes the ambience very cheerful.



Volunteer Meghna and teachers with students at Lunawa School

THE FABINDIA SCHOOL MUNDARA: Pre-Primary (Nursery, Intro & Prep) 24 students

Mundara is a big village and the school compound has open spaces. The toddlers come to school walking as they don't have to travel long distance.



Inauguration of The Fabindia School, Mundara

Two volunteers, Ms. Eliza Galbraith from U.S.A. and Ms. Meghna Acharya from New Delhi, are helping the students in various subjects. Their efforts are commendable.



Eliza and Meghna in front of the new block

I teach music and environmental science and since my first session, the amount of warmth and excitement with which the students welcomed me and spoke to me, has been overwhelming. One of my favourite moments was teaching the second grade to yodel, as part of an old Hindi song. Days after days, the children sang the song every time they saw me, just to assure me that they remembered and liked what I taught them.

The amount of energy, curiosity, and eagerness to interact with me, and learn new things (how to fold paper peacocks, for one) is pretty spectacular. Even in the occasional substitute class I might take, the students immediately and keenly respond to whatever I do with them, whether it's picture writing, or quizzing or just introductions. The children look forward to coming to school, something I certainly cannot recall doing in my own school days.

I am really grateful for the efforts of the teachers to make me feel at home. My colleagues are extremely helpful and they quickly improvise with me, if I want to try a new way to explain a difficult topic.

My experience of The Fabindia School so far has been really, really lovely and I hope to return someday after my time as a volunteer is over!

- Meghna Acharya, New Delhi, India

Twice a week we visit the Fabindia feeder schools. The feeder schools have an immensely difficult and important role to fulfill. Not only are these formative years for the child, but these schools have the task of introducing English as the medium of instruction to children who have only been exposed to Hindi and Marwari in their home environment.

The teachers are really enthusiastic and willing to embrace new ideas and techniques so that their students

learn better, and the children are palpably happy to be in such a colourful environment. The teachers have made every effort to ensure a wonderful learning atmosphere, be it by painting the walls, putting up colourful charts, having many plants and trees, and displaying the children's paper projects and drawings around. Even the buildings chosen for the feeder schools (an old palace in Nana!) are beautiful airy spaces.

Each time Meghna and I visit, we're welcomed affectionately by both teachers and students, as we play games, sing songs, make drawings, and fold paper to help the children identify colours, objects, alphabets and numbers. We combine our efforts with other teachers to think out creative and fun ways for the children to not only receive information but to improve their skills. Colour tag, stepping games, and alphabet mnemonics are some of the things we do with the children.

It's really heart warming to visit the feeder schools. All four feeder schools have bright, happy students, which is a testament to the efforts of the teachers who are responsible for them. Pre-school children begin the day with songs, chants, and nursery rhymes; once they've filed in, small, close-knit morning classes proceed to take place under strings of homemade alphabet cards. Through a combination of written exercises and oral drills, the kids start to explore the world around them, putting English vocabulary and description to objects in their everyday lives. By the time they reach the primary level, we are positive that the students will be well equipped to handle a fully English-medium school.

I came to the Fabindia School in mid August, and in seven weeks I've never ceased to be amazed. These kids come to school on the hottest days of the year, gather in groups in the classroom, and focus their boundless energy into a sincere effort to learn. Outside of class, I've sat down with children of various age groups bringing me questions about the USA, the world, geography, geometry, grammar, statistics, and the poetry of Percy Shelley. The will to know more strikes me as the most important driving force in this school, and each day I see teachers and administrators doing more to nurture, guide, and ignite that spirit in all their students.

Even the language barrier is treated as an outlet for creativity. Kids have reached out to me not only with the English they've learned in the classroom, from films, or on their own, but with arts and music as well. I feel I've only begun to see the full breadth of the experience to be gained at The Fabindia School.

- Eliza Galbraith, USA

On 18th September, 2009 students from classes VI to VIII went on an educational field trip for their social studies class to the Chaklai Fort. The students spent over an hour exploring the fort and its many rooms and passages. They learned about the lineage of kings who inhabited the fort, the history, strategic architecture & construction of the main gate and moat built to protect the people.

CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES 2009-10

Students are very actively involved in a wide variety of co-curricular activities including display board competitions with different themes (My Dream World, Monsoon Magic, Rakhee Making and My Favourite Teacher), extempore, patriotic song competitions and English debate competitions.



Girl dancers in the play ALADIN



Seta and Hanuman at Ashok Vatika



Showing off their trophies

REFLECTIONS FROM RECENT VISITORS

The Fabindia School, a cosmopolitan gem in rural Rajasthan, has grown considerably since my last visit in 2004 in terms of more buildings, more students (710), more classes (now a senior secondary school). The computer room has been greatly modernized and enhanced.

In the first grade, the children were sitting on the floor, two to a tiny table. The teacher, in a beautiful white sari, used a pointer to indicate the time tables on the blackboard.

In a fifth grade classroom Art Powell, former Academic Dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, asked: "Next Tuesday there will be an historic event in America. Does anyone know what it is?" A boy in the back row raised his hand, stood up and said: "The inauguration of Barack Obama, sir, the first black President of America."

Art was impressed with the discipline among the students, and the competence of the principal. When we asked what three wishes the principal might have, Parinita responded: to increase the student body from 710 to 1000, to carve out space in the new building for a staff room, and to have an auditorium which could hold the whole school.

- Barbara and Art Powell, Cambridge, MA USA

Judy (a physical therapist) and I (a physician), accompanied by our lifelong friends, Norman (a merchant in N.Y.C.) and Babette Kornbleuth (a fashion designer), visited The Fabindia School on January 19, 2009 after a lovely stay with the Bissells on their farm. The visit was memorable. Most striking was the attentiveness of all the students to what was going on. Despite the distraction of our visit, decorum was exemplary at all age levels.

Enthusiasm for learning was apparent on the young faces we saw as we described some aspects of our careers. Only two students admitted to a desired future in medicine. More liked the idea of a career in fashion!

We learned that some of these children endure three hours travel on the bus to attend this school. We were happy to learn that a contemplated series of small village satellite schools might shorten the ride for the youngest kids in the future. The visit was inspiring.

- Richard Abraham MD, Canton, CT USA

