

SNAPSHOTS



Putney students participating in a carnival on their last day at The Fabindia School



'Garba' dance performance by Putney and Fabindia students



Anjana Batra from the Board presents a gift to former Principal Jayant Biswas



A scene from the Ramayana enacted by the students

PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS

The National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) has created a partnership program called Challenge 20/20 which pairs a school in the US with a school abroad to work on one of the global problems outlined in J. F. Rischard's book entitled High Noon: 20 Global Problems, 20 Years to Solve Them.

The Fabindia School has been partnered with The Advent School in Boston, Massachusetts, USA. Our chosen challenge problem is Education for All.

The students in both schools are in the process of getting to know each other right now through a series of questions through which they may construct the story of their education: how we get to school in the morning, what we enjoy learning about, and what we like to do with our friends.

We are exchanging letters in an effort to get to know each other as a segue into working on a solution together.

Students in the upper grades at The Advent School have been talking about what constitutes a good global education anywhere in the world. Some components that the students shared are that there should be no discrimination but instead acceptance of all ideas and that there should be more schools with less overcrowding. In addition, students think that all schools should be affordable and accessible.

There should be freedom in schools in general and the teachers should be encouraging. One Advent student wrote that our goal at this school is to "...create confident adults who know who they are and want to be. We want our kids to be world-class citizens. We want them to be respectful of others and themselves. We want them to care for the world and everything in it. Our school goal is to have opinionated kids who become opinionated adults."

As we identify these aspects of good education, we hope that we can help them become more of a reality for more children around the world.

We hope that this project and our work on it becomes part of our curriculum and continues for many years.

Christine Size,

Fifth Grade Teacher,

The Advent School, Boston, MA, USA

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 over 450. 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

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STUDENT PROFILE

When you look at her, she always has a scrubbed, smiling face in a neat and clean uniform. She is always there participating in all activities and most of the time coming out a winner. Ashvini is a student of class IX whose father is unable to afford the family expenses after his retirement from a government job. Her mother started stitching clothes and sent their three children to the Fabindia School.

Ashvini has the ambition to become a doctor as her grandmother succumbed to disease uncured. She has acquired qualities like confidence, courage and hard work which are instilled in her at the school. She has leadership qualities and with right attitude she seems to be on the right track to rise above others and fulfill all those dreams that the children of her age and circumstances have.



Ashvini in front of her house with last year's volunteers.

DRAWINGS BY THE ADVENT SCHOOL STUDENTS



THE FABINDIA SCHOOL

Newsletter

Fall 2006



Putney Students attend the morning assembly at The Fabindia School.

I have just completed my first year as the John Bissell Scholars Fund Coordinator after taking over for Marie, and it has been a wonderful and exciting year. First of all, I want to thank all of you for sending in your donations throughout the year. Thanks to your generous gifts, we were able to sponsor 101 girls for the full academic year which is a new record! Your donations are essential to enable girls to afford an education. A few weeks back I sent out our annual appeal letter and I hope that you will continue to support the school during this critical time of expansion with more girls than ever expressing an interest in attending the school.

This year the school conducted a study of 51 surrounding villages and identified over 870 children, many from tribal and low caste families, who are not receiving any education and are interested in attending The Fabindia School. Due to this tremendous demand to expand our educational outreach, we applied for a grant from The Rohatyn Group of NYC. I am thrilled to tell you that just today, on the eve of Thanksgiving, we heard back that we were awarded a grant of \$15,000 for our expanded enrollment plans. This will allow us to offer primary education to more than 460 students! However, we still are relying on the generous support of all of you who contribute to the John Bissell Scholars Fund to provide the required funding to sponsor all the girl students who wish to attend the school.

The Rohatyn Group has also offered an additional \$5,000 Challenge Grant which will match dollar for dollar any donation towards capital expenses at the school, including teacher training or buildings, etc. This Challenge Grant has the potential to help us cover some of the added infrastructure expenses needed to enlarge the school and train more teachers. If you are interested in donating funds towards the Rohatyn Group Challenge Grant to help the school expand its facilities, please let me know.

We also have three new members to our John Bissell Steering Committee: Phyllis Nauts, Hendon Chubb and Aylette Jenness. We appreciate their ongoing support of the school and welcome their input.

This January I will be visiting the school for the first time in 12 years! I remember going there with William back in January, 1995 when there was a young batch of teachers, volunteers and students. Also, in December two teachers from the Advent School (Boston, MA) partnership program will be visiting the school. So, by the spring newsletter I will have many more photos and personal stories to share of this first hand experience.

We all truly have much to be thankful for.

Best wishes,

Katherine Allen

John Bissell Scholars Fund Coordinator

FROM THE CO-FOUNDER

On behalf of the Board we want to thank Jayant Biswas for the hard work and dedication he has provided to the Fabindia School during his six year tenure as the school Principal. During this time Jayant lead the school in tremendous growth, increasing the student body from 125 students to 458 students. As he takes on a new challenging role as the Principal of one of Bombay's best schools, St. Patrick's, we wish him wonderful success and satisfaction in his new position. We also want to extend a very warm welcome to Parinita Ranpal, the new Principal, and Niketa Tandon, the new Vice Principal who both bring tremendous experience and insights to the school. These two women leaders are models for our students and will surely provide inspiration and skillful guidance as the school continues to rapidly expand.

We are so encouraged to see the tremendous support from our friends around the world who have enabled our initial vision to grow into a strong and vibrant school.

Best regards,

William Bissell

Board Member and Co-Founder of The Fabindia School

LETTER FROM THE NEW PRINCIPAL



Dear Friends,

I greet you all from the Fabindia School in Bali, Rajasthan. This year we started with everything in abundance:

enrollments, rains and illnesses that

followed. Fortunately we came through all that and moved ahead with our programmes and events planned for this term.

Board members, local body and parents supported us in this progress. We have come a long way since the beginning of the school that was the vision of William Bissell, the founder of the school. The school started with 12 students and has 483 on its roll today.

As you are aware, the school charges a very small amount as fees from its students and girls only pay 50% of it. The school runs three free buses to carry students from within a 30 km radius and that is an added attraction for many parents who could not otherwise send their children to school.

We are very confident that your unfailing support will enable us to meet the additional expenditure this year. In this new session we have 20 permanent faculty members and 3 young energetic volunteers from United World College who assist teachers in standard courses and also lead creative arts and remedial classes.

This year we hosted the fourth batch of Putney students

PUTNEY STUDENT TRAVEL PROGRAM

Stories from visiting the school



Ana Ratner is in the front row on the far right

Ana Ratner, a high school student from New York City and part of the Putney Student Travel program writes, "This is a picture of the last day we were at The Fabindia School. We organized a carnival. The sixth and seventh grade girls brought in their Saris they borrowed from their families for us to wear and dressed us all up. They had been teaching us a Garba dance (those sticks that we are all holding) for a few weeks, and we performed it in front of the whole school. We were not very good at it and I think everyone had a laugh at seeing us all dressed up and

from the US program, Putney Seeds for Progress. Fifteen high school students from various parts of the USA spent three weeks working on various projects such as painting classrooms, planting trees, organizing drama and english conversation classes besides organizing morning assemblies.

Our results from 2005 have been good. The students who appeared for Class X board examination performed well and have moved on for higher studies. The students participated in many inter school Art competitions and brought laurels to the school. On the sports front this year our team played at local level cricket matches and won all championships. In addition, one of the players was selected to participate in regional tournaments. This was the first time that the students participated in District Level Athletics Cluster Tournament and they were shining like little stars.

Ms. Louise Nicholson, an eminent writer and social worker from the US, visited the school in October. She was awed by the size of the organization and generously offered to coordinate future volunteers. The only down side has been the floods, but the rivers were filled for coming years and Rajasthan became an unexpected green zone.

With my best wishes,
Parinita Ranpal

Principal, The Fabindia School

trying to dance. The boys had all bought their own turbans and were taught how to tie them."

During their stay at the school, the Putney Students helped with some of the physical work to improve the school grounds, including working on a fence. Ana writes, "The heat was at first literally impossible to work in. Although, after shopping at the Fabindia store, we picked up better clothes which helped with the heat. We all got more accustomed to the heat after a while of being in it. The kids all spoke very good English, and because they were young they still



communicated very physically, so to get along with them wasn't at all hard."

This is Christina Martin, a high school student from New York City, playing with some of the girls at The Fabindia School this past

VOLUNTEERS AT THE FABINDIA SCHOOL

Airiin Lehtmets (Estonia), Sanna Ojenperä (Finland) and Liv Kronborg Forman (Denmark).



From right: Liv Forman, Sanna Ojenperä and Airiin Lehtmets with class II B

The first sunbeams have started lighting up the air while we are waiting by the dusty road for the yellow school bus to arrive. Small joyful faces appear from the bus windows. We can hear the laughter and giggling from far away. "Sanna Didi, Sanna Didi, come and sit with me!" someone shouts from the back seat. "Good morning, Liv Ma'am," is heard from the other side. "Airiin Didi, you promised to sit with me today," declares a tiny girl from the third grade. Very enthusiastically, they are giving us basic Hindi lessons or guiding us through the latest events in their lives. Soon, the bus stops by the blue gate saying 'The Fabindia School' on it; we are ready to start another school day. The boundless benevolence and brightness of the students are what make three girls from Nordic countries feel at home in a country so different and far away from everything they are used to. Our work in the school consists of organizing different activities for the students and assisting class teachers in delivering the lessons. The main focus is in English and Art & Craft classes, as we are all friends of art and familiar with our second language after spending two years in an English speaking boarding school, Red Cross Nordic United World

PEN PALS

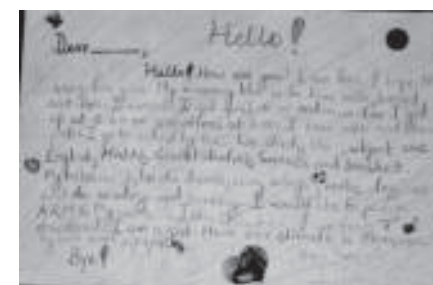
Letter handwritten by a Fabindia School student to students at The Advent School

Ishu writes:

Dear,

Hello! How are you? I am fine. I hope the same for you. My morning like is to have milk, bread and jam. In summer I get up at 6.00 and in winter I get up at 6.30 or sometimes at 7.00. I have milk and chapati. I go to school by bus. We study the subject are English, Maths, Social studies, Science and Sanskrit. My hobbies is to do dance, sing song, make designs and do reading and writing. I would like to join in ARMY. My Name is Ishu Chauhan. I am from 7th standard. I am a girl. Here our climate is Monsoon. My nick name is papu. Bye!

Your Penpal
Ishu



College. Liv is working with older students whereas Airiin and Sanna take care of the first and second graders. Looking after the school library, organizing remedial classes for weaker students, running a book reading club, a choir and the editorial group responsible for publishing the school magazine, are some of the extra-curricular activities we hold outside the classes and syllabuses. In the afternoons we visit a children's hostel in Bali. Helping the students with their homework, giving attention and love and being the sister and mother for children who are far away from home is the kind of social work The Fabindia School carries out in the community through us volunteers.

Being a volunteer at The Fabindia School gives us the unique opportunity of experiencing a radically different culture through work and interaction with students and teachers on a professional as well as personal level. The school leaves space for our own initiative and ideas in an already well-organized setting. The students learn fast, show great interest and enthusiasm and the work is very stimulating for us in many ways. Getting to know the children is a very rewarding experience and we share a mutual care and interest. As we try to teach them and help them, they constantly teach us lessons about life we would never have been able to learn elsewhere. The students at The Fabindia School are taught to be open-minded and are encouraged to believe in their own ability to follow whichever dream they might have about their sparkling future.

Letter written by an Advent School student to students at The Fabindia School

Dear Students of the Fabindia School,

My name is Will. I have been to India when I was four years old, & I can tell you, I found it extremely fascinating. I remember seeing elephants near Jaipur, near the Amber Palace, & I can tell you, we don't have elephants here in the United States! I am ten years old, I play the violin, and I have a fourteen-year-old sister named Annie. I like to play soccer, baseball, and Frisbee. I also like to bike ride, ski, & snowboard. My favorite subjects at school are math, reading, and gym. I like these subjects because I feel always confident that I will do a good job in them, and I feel like they are easier for me than most subjects. My favorite animal is the snake, because I feel that its slither seems very sneaky, &, though it may not seem so, they are extremely smart. I have two cats, and their names are Mars & Isis. My favorite kind of food is Mexican, & I like Science Fiction movies. I hope to hear about you, & I hope to get your replies soon!

Will Osborn
Fifth grade

VOICES



A Diwali decoration from a class II student

A wonderful heaven is my school
Sweet school, beauty school, lovely school
Teacher love me, friends love me
I love too.
A wonderful heaven is my school.

By Rabul Suthen, class IA

Our X-Principal Mr. Jayant Bhowse

It often happens with everybody that whenever we have someone with us, we don't care about him/her. When the person goes away from us then we realize about his/her personality, quality, thinking and everything. Same is with me, now I can realize how was our X-Principal. He was very punctual. He was strict but kind too. He was sharing very good personality. Many times he used to scold us, when we make mistakes. He used to explain us what is good for us and what is bad. He was a everyone loving person. He was strict with us as well as very cool and soft. He gave lot of love to us. He was a calm person. He was an intelligent person. Words are not enough to write about him. For me he was same as my parents. I was afraid of him, so I am afraid of my parents. I spent 5 years with him. There is no such incident with such place where I could say anything or he scolded me without any mistake. He is really a complete gentle man. He is kind so minded. He don't have any bad quality.

By Shradha Sharma, class X

OH FABINDIA!

These class rooms, these labs,
These lush green fields, that classic land,
Those exciting intervals, that part of enjoyment
That long night preparation for exams,
That struggle for some marks,
These competitions and festivals,
These fights and fears,
That care of teachers, that charm for poets,
That farewell party which brought tears,
This life is so rare,
I'll remember it forever
These years have almost gone,
But made us strong,
There were fears and tears
But we had seasons to cheer
Fabindia has given me life
And strength to fight in future
No matter the conditions,
Easy or tough to bear

By Naveen Doshi, class X