

Newsletter 4 2004

Dear sponsors, parents and friends,

As I sit out in the weak sinter sun and contemplate the year 2004 that has gone by, it is with satisfaction that I can say it has been a good year.

We began the academic session with the newly constructed multipurpose shed, three classrooms and the same number of showers. No more the regular river baths but we do not miss out on the visit for fun.

Namita Subba and Stephen Subba, the new teachers have been great to work with. I dread the day when they might leave us for economic reasons. So long as they are here we can only grow for the better.

Through the year we have had the pleasure to host friends, volunteer teachers and visitors, notably:

Jannie Langbroek and Antoinette Bakker, Trustees from the Dutch trust "Kinderen van Sikkim", our parent organisation in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

Holland: parents of Hedwig Bakker, one of our founders.

France: Anton Mariage

Australia: Sammy Riley and Cathie Collins

Canada: Katherine Hewitt

United Kingdom: Julia Wilson, Jane Morgan

U A E: Victoria El Hussein

Peter Mc Lennan, one of our regulars was here again. With the usual goodies, he brought a shirt for every child with our school emblem in the front and donors names in the back. He was wild that the word 'compassion' in the logo had been misspelt.....It is always good to have him here and help around.

Magi, one of the pillars of the school was here. Her experience in education has not only benefitted the children but also the teachers and school administration. We will be in regular touch with her for advice and volunteer co-ordination.

To the sponsors and parents in particular I would like to give you an insight about the school through the visitors book.

Julia Wilson:this place is different and special, I feel like I've got so much more than I have given. I have experienced such generosity here and a welcome complete that I now feel it is my home.

Victoria El Hussein: It is a joy to hear the children's shouts and shrieks of laughter and see the smiles on their faces in response to life's simple pleasures, running down the hill, splashing in the stream. It makes a refreshing change after coming from a very different culture where more is never enough and even young children compete to have the latest and greatest material items.

Katherine Hewitt: You guys have something incredibly special going on in Bhuriakhop. My first night here, I watched in total awe as the students sang songs to me in 3 different languages and then proceeded to sing prayers in yet more different languages.. In my seven weeks I've spent in SHA since that first night, my sense of awe has only grown.

Matthew Waterkeys (Zimbabwe): SHA is an oasis of optimism, growing seeds of such fine potential; each nurtured with such care and compassion that the blossoms of creativity are already in full bloom.

I hope that the sponsors feel good about where your help is going and how the people are benefitting from this generosity. I am sure the parents who are deriving the benefits appreciate this and would like me to convey their sincere 'THANK YOU'!

For the new school session the trust has sanctioned 10 new students (5 as dayscholars and 5 as hostellers). Hedwig and I had to walk quite a bit to see the ground realities of the living conditions of the families of new applicants. I must say it was shocking even for me, a person from the hills. It would be fair for me to say we are taking the most deserving. The sad fact is that we have had to say 'no' to many, who would also we felt, fall in the same category.

We are in the process of acquiring our own land to build our own school. Hopefully the new schoolbuilding will be ready for the 2006 school year.

Finally I take this opportunity to thank you all and to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Jamyang Bhutia,

Principal.