



June 2007

Dear Friends,

Just this week I got the financial report showing the donations which were sent following the letter I sent in April. You will be happy to know that contributions for Asha Deep Vidyashram totaled \$5340. Thank you so much to those of you who sent a check. Having this money now at the start of the school year has saved me from worrying about the massive expenses (thinking in terms of rupees!) that have been necessary this month. I have purchased new writing tables, a new chalkboard, textbooks for the coming year, pencils, notebooks, crayons, chalk, sports equipment, etc. I have also purchased over 100 yards of fabric; the new school uniforms will be ready by July 1. The new school year starts on July 5.

In May I hired a new teacher, a woman from south India. Of all the people I have ever interviewed for a teaching position at the school, she gave the best answers I have ever heard. I was very happy to have found her and very glad that she has joined our school.

There was another teacher who caused me no small amount of tension last year. I was seriously considering firing him but until June had found no one who seemed to be a better replacement. Then the founder of the school met with me and said that for some time she had been urging a colleague of hers to join the school. She hadn't wanted to give me false hope, but there was a possibility that he might be ready to join us. The end of the story is that he will be joining our school and I am very excited to have him. While the other teachers have needed a lot of training and guidance, this gentleman has the intelligence and leadership abilities needed to be a real help to me. In addition, his English is excellent which will be a huge benefit for our students and will assist me greatly. My poor teachers have to suffer a bit trying to decipher my faltering Hindi. They are gracious in this, but having someone there who can say what I want to say how I want to say it will be helpful.

As I wrote in my last letter, I have had it in mind to extend the school hours to offer some special classes to the children (such as sewing, dance, sport, art, etc.). I have known that we should be offering these classes, but feeling overwhelmed with the essentials of running the school have been unable to give the time to organizing such a program. Now I am hopeful that we can use some of the money you sent to pay our newest teacher to take charge of this portion of the school day. I am hoping to start the extra-curricular classes in August.

I have had a very productive summer, indexing many of the resources in the school, creating a variety of new worksheets for our students, and holding some teacher seminars on topics like: teaching what's important, discipline in the classroom, creativity in teaching math, and basics in English phonics (this system is not generally used here). The teacher seminars have been encouraging. This is the first year that I have felt we have a good group of teachers with some experience who understand the philosophy of the school and seem excited to promote it.

In the next couple of weeks I will be involved in getting everything in place in preparation for the start of the new session. There is lots of cleaning to be done, and I need to go out into the community and round up some new children. I hope that I will find those children who are serious about learning and that I will be able to convince their parents to give them the time and encouragement necessary to succeed in school.

Thank you so much for your encouragement and support.

love,  
Connie