

March 24, 2013

Dear Friends,

I'm happy to give you an update on our recent needs. We've had positive outcomes to our first three concerns!



आशा दीप विद्याश्रम

- **New English Teacher** After searching for a few months, within four days of my last email two new candidates appeared "out of the blue". Both were good possibilities, but we have hired the one with better English skills. She seems to be a good teacher and is also teachable. Our English-speaking volunteer said that she is very happy with her. Our school works very hard to teach English competency. It's one of the ways we are different from most local schools and one of the best ways we have to distinguish our students as they interview for college placement or jobs later on.
- **Siddharth Sir** Siddharth Sir is still overworked, but he has agreed to stay with the school for another year (until May 2014). We are working on reducing his responsibilities and will need to hire an assistant for him starting this July. (after the May/June summer break.) Hopefully we will be able to find someone with the right skill set, the right philosophy, initiative, and responsibility. It is a big relief that Siddharth Sir will remain in the school.
- **Ankita** Ankita had surgery to correct her cleft palate. She came home from the hospital about one week ago and is doing fine. It will take a lot of work for her to re-learn how to say her letter sounds, but I'm so thankful that this could happen while our volunteer speech therapist is there! This will make a huge difference in Ankita's life. Previously, she was likely to have been married to a fairly poor, probably coarse man who cared little for her, only marrying her to meet his physical (sexual) needs and be a house servant/slave. If she can speak normally (and since she is getting an education), her prospects will be much brighter. Hopefully she will be married to someone who respects her and treats her kindly.
- **Annual Spring Celebration Performance** Our children will be performing tomorrow! We had to change our venue at the last minute since, even though we got government permission to hold the performance at a certain place and time, a government group began setting up their stage at our venue a few days early and preempted the use of the space. The police (who had given us the permission) said there was nothing they could do about it. But, this is life in Banaras: nothing is certain until it actually happens. We were lucky we were able to shift the show to a location only 100 yards away. The space is smaller and will require some re-adjustment, but at least the show will go on!

It's all good!

love,

Connie