

May 2020 #2

Dear Friends,

First of all, I would like to thank those of you who wrote in response to my call for graduate sponsors. Of the ten students that I mentioned in my last email, seven are now sponsored. The remaining needs are for Raunak (\$40/month), Golu (\$30/month), and Pankaj (\$20/month). If you are able to "adopt" one of these remaining graduates, please do let me know! Now, on to the final installment of this current series of emails . . .



आशा दीप विद्याश्रम

Up until this point in Asha Deep's history, we've never had enough capital to consider buying our own land. Our school building is leased. In the beginning, we just needed a few rooms, so the rental cost was negligible. But now, being in a building with 16 rooms, plus an open floor for larger gatherings and a playground, 30% of our expenditure each month goes toward paying rent. Topped only by the amount we pay in teacher salaries, our current rent is now \$1,100 per month. And this amount rises 5% each year as part of our lease agreement.

If Asha Deep had its own property, it would not only save on rent each month, it would allow us to pursue getting board certified through 10th or even 12th grade. Every year it is hard for me to let go of our 8th graders and send them out to other schools. If I could find a high school which is actually teaching properly, I would be happy to send them on. But so far, after having tried seven different local high schools, I have not found an affordable school which is doing a good job. True, our students are getting a high school education equal to what other students in our area receive, but I know that Asha Deep could do a better job for less money. We only lack accreditation and for that we need to have our own building. (The government is looking for stability, among other things, when awarding accreditation.)

The prospect of saving money in the long run and of being able to give quality education through 12th grade are good enough reasons for me to consider buying land for Asha Deep. And I've heard that now, after the corona lockdown loosens, the cost of real estate may be the lowest that it's been in years. In addition, the rupee has fallen to new lows which means that dollars go much further here now. I believe this is the best opportunity we have to own our own building.

The fantastic news is that for the first time ever, this is also a financial possibility for us. Last year, a friend of the school died of cancer. Although she had visited the school about twelve years ago, I hadn't heard from her in years. But out of the blue last year we got a letter from a lawyer stating that we were mentioned in her will and that we were due to receive something along the lines of \$110,000. We were shocked to say the least. We've been in touch with the lawyer over the last several months but, as of yet, have not received the money. (It's bound to come, but it has been held up by some third party legal wrangling which may take time.) In the meantime, another friend of the school felt that it would be important to move on this while the window of opportunity of cheaper real estate is open. She urged me to seek funds so that we could purchase land now rather than waiting to receive the bequest. Acting on her beliefs, this donor has already contributed an amazing \$25,000 toward buying land for Asha Deep! Shock number two!!

The estimated cost of purchasing 6800 sq. feet of empty land is \$140,000. To build a school which would be large enough for our existing classes as well as grades 9-12, a science lab, computer lab, library, kitchen, and multipurpose room would cost about \$40,950. \$2000 has already been pledged for the multipurpose room (thank you, OPS!!!). So, to date, we have \$137,000 which could be used for this project. We would need at least \$43,950 more to make this vision a reality. Of course, if more money were received, it would free up some of the bequest money to be used for any future needs.

We may be able to find an existing building that would meet our needs. But it's more likely that we will have to build our school from scratch. We envision a four-story building with one floor for our youngest students, one floor for grades 2-8, and one floor for our high school. Each floor would have classrooms, bathrooms, and a staff room. We would need a computer lab for two floors, plus space for a science lab, our library, and a kitchen. A fourth floor would contain a large multipurpose room, plus a covered open space large enough for all of our students to meet.

Space for a playground is included in the land estimate. Of course, we are willing to accept donations of any amount. But if you'd like to make a larger contribution, here are some figures to consider:

School building costs

Need	Cost	# Req'd	Total Cost
Junior classroom (150 sq ft for 20 students)	\$1100	12	\$13200
Senior classroom (200 sq ft for 20 students)	\$1450	6	\$8700
Bathroom	\$1000	6	\$6000
Library	\$2000	1	\$2000
Staff Room	\$1200	3	\$3600
Computer lab	\$1450	2	\$2900
Science lab	\$1450	1	\$1450
Kitchen	\$1100	1	\$1100
Office	\$1000	1	\$1000
Covered Assembly area	\$1000	1	\$1000
Total			\$40950

We are excited to see this project move from a dream to reality! Thank you for considering a one-time gift to get this off the ground. If you are part of a social group, you could increase your impact by urging your group to sponsor the building of a classroom or one of the special use rooms, for instance. I would be happy to answer any questions or provide clarification on any part of this project. Feel free to write and ask!

love,
Connie