

June 2014

Dear Friends,

Please forgive me; it has been a long time since I have written. I had been planning to write in April after our annual performance, but it took a while before I got some photos of the event. Later I got a full-time sub position so was pretty busy trying to make hay while the sun shone! This month of course I've been busy preparing to transition back to India. Our ticket is June 25th. As of today I've sold most of the furniture and the car. I just have one drop-leaf table left to go. We have to be out of the apartment this Saturday and we'll spend the last few days at mom's house visiting with my brother and his family who will be here from Texas. So long to gorgeous California . . . hello hot, humid Varanasi!



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Here are a few photos (at last) from our huge performance. By all reports it went well again this year. At least we didn't have to change the venue at the last minute as we did last year! It's always a great community event and gives the kids a chance to shine and feel proud of themselves. Many of you know that a few of our students come from a hostel that has rescued girls from abusive situations. Although most of our other students don't realize what these girls have been through, we know that they have suffered the worst of experiences. This year, after the performance, one of those girl's fathers commented,

"When I saw my daughter up on stage, I suddenly realized that she was an important person. I saw her with new and proud eyes. I will never treat her badly again!" This performance is very important for our students who, because of their caste, are taught by society that they are worthless.

After the successful performance, there were just a few weeks of studies left before final exams and summer holiday which started on May 5th. This year we had eight graduates who will be admitted into the local high school and we are seeking people who would be willing to sponsor their educational expenses. We really need some people to step forward for this! A full scholarship which covers ALL educational expenses



(admission fees, monthly fees, educational supplies, and after-school tuition) costs \$45/month. We can also receive partial scholarships at \$25/month which covers monthly fees or \$10/month to cover after-school tuition costs for one student. For those who would like to help but cannot afford to give every month, we are accepting one-time gifts of \$90 (to cover the admission fee for one child) or \$50 to cover all books and school supplies throughout the year. I've attached a brochure which introduces you to our graduates this



year. If you would like your donation directed to a particular student, please let me know! We welcome communication between sponsors and our students via email. Our graduates will be starting high school in about two weeks!

In other news, our current landlord threatened to practically double our rent to guarantee our lease for the coming year or to raise it to a lesser degree with the caveat that we may have to move on two months notice. So, we started looking around. Amazingly, we have located a possible new location. I have been told it is closer to our target community, it has space for everyone to assemble at once, and there is space to play in an empty lot next door. The landlord is scheduled to return from vacation in a couple of days after which we hope an agreement can be finalized. Some minor alterations/repairs would need to be done, so, if we move, we plan to move during a long weekend in August. Please do pray for both graduate sponsors and the possible move.

Our new school year will begin on June 27, just a couple days before my arrival. Hopefully I will be able to properly take over the helm of the school as well as settle into a new home and life back in Varanasi. It should be easier to keep you all updated when I'm actually there on a daily basis! Thank you so much for your support!

love,

Connie