

May 2020 #1

Dear Friends,

In this current installment, I would like to tell you about the needs of our 47 graduate students. In the coming school year, we will have students in each of 9th-12th grade plus a few that are now studying in college. Here's a rundown on them by class.

Unfortunately, this is the first year that we have been gravely disappointed in the lack of responsibility, diligence and drive of most our 8th graders. We gave several warnings that they would have to study much harder and improve their behavior if they were to be considered for sponsorship going into 9th grade. After 2nd term exams, I called each one into the office and told them where they stood. Subsequent to that, I did see some improvement in a few of them. But, in the end, out of ten students, their teachers agree that only four should be sponsored as they move on to high school. They are Ajay, Deepak, Khushboo, and Manish. Despite the lackadaisical approach of the rest of the class, these four kept their focus and showed that they are serious about further study. We will be enrolling them in a local high school as soon as schools re-open. The costs of sponsoring one of these students is \$44/month (\$528/yr). This covers their admission and monthly fees, evening tuition fees, as well as textbooks and notebooks. Here's a bit about each of them:



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Ajay. At one point said he would like to be a lawyer. Could be a good one if he puts in effort and keeps his focus. He is fun loving so sometimes is not as serious as maybe he should be. But, since he is smart, he stays ahead of most in the class.



Deepak. A prankster but in a fun way. Studies well at home and asks good questions. Interested in engineering. His father died two years ago, so he feels a burden to care for his mother and younger sister. His mother gives good support for his study.



Khushboo. An excellent student for the entire 5 years she's been at Asha Deep. Takes studies very seriously. Skipped 7th class and still managed to be the top student in 8th. One of our most promising students.



Manish. Was quite behind when he first joined Asha Deep, but has worked hard and really improved over the last two years. Wants to study engineering.

We have eleven students that will be moving from 9th to 10th grade this year. Of those, most are already sponsored. We just need support for two of them: Manvi and Raunak. Their costs are \$40/month. (The costs of this class are less because the larger number of students allows us to spread tuition costs over more kids.)



Manvi was so far ahead of her classmates in 7th grade that we decided she should try to skip 8th grade. We gave her the challenge to study math (her weakest subject) on her own last summer so that she would be ready for 9th. With hard work, she passed her special math exam, so she was able to move ahead. She's been keeping up well with our other 9th graders and will be taking her 10th class national board exams this coming year.

Raunak will have to study hard to pass 10th class this year, but we want to give him the chance for this. He would like to study commerce in 11th and 12th grades.



Nineteen of our students were to have finished 10th grade this year. We will probably need sponsors for three or four of these but since they have not given their exams (they were postponed due to the corona virus), we aren't sure yet. The costs of 11th and 12th grade are significantly higher than 9th and 10th grade costs, mainly because we have to pay not only school fees but also for evening tuition classes. If you are able to sponsor at the level of \$55/month, please let me know! When I'm sure exactly who we will need sponsors for, I can get back to you.

Happily, our 12th graders have already been sponsored!

Surprisingly, college costs here are typically quite a bit less than high school costs. Therefore, we don't normally sponsor students that have graduated 12th grade. Still, in a few cases where a student has shown that they are serious about study AND we know that they would not be able to attend college without some financial assistance, we have agreed to help. This year we will have six students in this situation (out of 20 graduates that will be attending college in the coming year). Two of these have already been sponsored, so I could use four more people to step up. The cost to sponsor these students is just \$30/mo.



Golu is in his final year of studying electrical engineering at a vocational school.

Jyoti has two years left to get her bachelor's degree in commerce.



Pankaj, from a boatman family, has just one year left to complete his bachelor's degree in commerce.

Like Golu, **Vikas** is in his final year of studying electrical engineering at a vocational school. He's another one whose father died within the last two years.



If you would be able to sponsor any of these students for the coming year, we would be so appreciative. Certainly, if students are willing to study, they should be given the chance to do so! Do write back if you have any questions about this opportunity.

Finally, here's a bit of an update on the covid19 situation. In the past week, despite our lockdown, positive corona cases have been on the increase in Varanasi. Where we had held steady for several weeks at 15 positive cases, we now have over 60 positive cases in our district. A few of the new cases are on our end of town, so the danger of the virus entering our students' community is much greater. In addition, the third extension to the lockdown has just been announced. This long period of no income for the large majority of our students' families is becoming more of a hardship. We've starting providing food to families in serious need. If anyone would like to make a special gift toward covid19 related relief, you are welcome to do so. We will make sure that it goes toward buying food or medicines for needy families in our area. Just add a small note with the contribution stating that it is for covid19 relief.

Thank you for considering these needs!

Connie