

Throughout the year, in weekly sessions, we teach the children facts they should be familiar with in the fields of science, social studies, the arts, and current events. Once a term we hold a written test with the top scorers winning prizes. Our annual competition, which contained questions from all our sessions starting last July, was held in March. The incentive was a pizza party for those who scored over



85%. I was pleased with the effort the students put in to get in on that party; 22 students made the mark with one girl attaining a perfect score!

Also in March, we celebrated Holi, applying colored powder to each other and then dancing! The kids love this day of play with their teachers and friends.



All this has been punctuated by practice, practice, practice for our annual Spring Extravaganza which will be held tomorrow (April 2)! We decided to hold our performance at our new location this year as a way to introduce ourselves to the new community.



Circus skill practice (left) and creating letters (ASHA DEEP VIDYASHRAM) for stage decoration (above)

A few weeks ago, our teachers canvassed the two slum areas closest to our new school, telling them about Asha Deep and giving them invitations to our upcoming performance. It felt good to begin our mission of offering hope through quality education in our new neighborhood. Quality teaching is a **huge** need there; a group of our teachers talked to a family who has a daughter in the 8th grade. When they asked her to read a sample of Hindi, however, the girl could not even recognize all her letters. It's heartbreaking that whole communities of children are being sentenced to a life of poverty due to the lack of proper teaching in nearby schools.



Since we have announced our opening at the new location, there is a growing sense of anticipation among the families of Narottampur, the name of our new location. When I visit the school site, I am inevitably followed by a group of children, almost jumping up and down with excitement as they tour their new school. Construction continues at good speed; the building will be mostly complete by June.



Giving them a better future!

Here are some recent pictures of our new building:

This was taken before work had started on the third floor.



View from the front balcony onto the adjoining village.



Interior courtyard



Our teachers on neighborhood canvas day

With best wishes to all of you as we move into Spring,
love, Connie

In this view, the walls are nearly complete.

