



“With Love, from Vatsalya”

www.vatsalya.org

Volume 3, October, 2011

Dear Friends,

It has been a GREAT and BUSY four months at Vatsalya. So full, that I completely forgot to write the June edition, and then simply could not write the August edition of “With Love from Vatsalya”. Initially, I felt bad about this slackness in my duty and the routine of the last 6 years, but then was somewhat happy as no one seemed to have noticed it...☺! Well, life HAS become very hectic and so busy....for all of us. Also, I guess, some of the technological advances have made the world a very small place. Face Book; for instance, has become a great medium to keep in touch and know about matters that concern us or are close to our hearts. Our Face Book page, “Vatsalya Udayan” is an active interactive forum for friends. So, in view of the above facts of life, we have decided to make this publication quarterly now, instead of bi-monthly - Four editions a year should be sufficient to update you regarding progress and life at Vatsalya...☺! I will try and cover in this edition as much as possible from the past 4-5 months without making it too lengthy and tedious reading...☺.

FIRST AND FOREMOST-OUR NEW SCHOOL!

The construction was started in March and the target was to raise money (US\$ 40,500) and build the school by July!. A wild, fanatical idea it was. But at Vatsalya, most things have started with just such a wild fanatical thought...☺ And once again; our FRIENDS came forward and said “Why Not?” People bestowed on us great affection, trust and confidence, completely beyond our hopes and expectation. And with the amazing support we received, the New School at Vatsalya Udayan was presented, on your behalf, to the children on 31st July!

We had a small simple opening ceremony but the day became very special as we were joined for the celebrations by 15 students from **Cocker Mouth School, UK; Mairi from Scotland and Carla from Spain, Casey, Aaron, Jennifer and Victoria Lawn from USA and Lara and Victor from France**. The function began with Hawan and Shanti Paath, a Hindu ritual aimed at praying for peace and prosperity for the Universe and ended with a special meal served to the laborers who built the school.

One extraordinary thing also happened, as if inspired by the speed with which the target of building the school was achieved: Our school has also been awarded the Certificate of

Registration by the State Education Department! It did come MUCH before we expected it...☺!
 So, we are all set for developing and providing quality education as well as job focused skill training to many children and young people in years to come. We have a total of 61 children from Udayan and 22 more are enrolled from nearby villages in this academic year. The school opening hours are 7.30 am to 1.30 pm and in the afternoon from 3 to 5pm, children of the 14+ age group attend skill building, art, dance and craft classes.

Here is our Family Photo taken in front of the New School!



And these are our FRIENDS who donated generously for the New School:

Anoothi, India	Emmanuelle M,	Nicola Huges,	Sylvie Bauer,
Arti Ghai, USA	France	Australia	France
Bhoruka Trust, India	Felicity, UK	Ours Ondine,	Tamara Gibb, USA
Cedar M Elisabeth,	Frank Delano, USA	Crowdrise	Upinder S Dhillon,
France	G Ritesh, India	Pamela Bjorkman,	USA
Chris, Australia	Jaipur Round Table	USA	Urmila Lodha, India
Conrad Chavez,	Club, Jaipur-India	Patricia Little,	Ursula Jurgen,
USA	Lenka Zak Patten ,	Ireland	Australia
Cynthia LaRowe,	USA	Poiner Family,	V K Sharma, India
USA	Louise Hayward, UK	Australia	Vignesh, India

Dan Eigsti, USA Delta Donohu, USA Dr Archana, India	Maggie Soladay, USA Maryjo & Stephan, France Moira C Gourlay, Canada	Rahul Pal & friends, India Saga Charitable Trust, UK Salaam Garage, USA Sarah Simmons, USA Srinivasan, Dubai	Wadhwa Family, India Welasco, Spain ZOOP, France
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UPAARJAN, THE LIVELIHOOD PROGRAM FOR YOUTH, ATTAINS NEW HEIGHTS!

We opened 2 new centers, one in Sanganer and the second in Poddar School for Deaf and Mute people. The center in Poddar school has filled us with a new energy and motivation. These young students, Persons With Disabilities (PWD) as they are called, are amazingly optimistic, enthusiastic and hard-working people and we are finding them very keen learners, very quick to grasp the skill or knowledge being imparted to them. It is very humbling and exciting for all at Vatsalya to work with them and LEARN from them! We feel so very proud of this new opportunity to expand.

At present we have **635** young people in all from about 7 different localities, most of which are slums, getting trained in trades such as Sales and Marketing, Tailoring and Fashion Designing, Computers and Hotel Management. At the end of three months' intensive training that includes personality development and conversational English, these young people will be placed in relevant industries. So far, since October 2009 when the program started, Vatsalya has covered 2,474 young people as part of this livelihood program.

SAMVEDNA-JAGRITI, THE HEALTH AND EDUCATION CAMPS FOR STREET CHILDREN

Supported by the Friends of Vatsalya, Australia, led by Caroline Poiner, these camps are now a regular feature of Vatsalya's outreach program for slum communities from where almost 90% of Street Children come. These camps are held thrice a month in different slum locations. Vatsalya's team works on children's health and hygiene habits, the attitude of parents towards education and the mindset of the young people who are unaware and apathetic regarding ways and means of leading a life of dignity and economic independence. The women are organized in Self-Help Groups, the children in groups called Baal Morcha and given leadership roles according to their age. The young people are motivated to join vocational training courses and take on full-time jobs. The most outstanding feature of this program is that our children from

Vatsalya Udayan now comprise the Resource Team for these camps! They stand in front of the street children, share their achievements and tell them proudly “We are here, you can be too”.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

- Aryan; our 17 year old boy qualified and played Soft Ball at State level and a team of 12 other boys participated in a Block Level tournament. A team of girls is due to play in another event this month...
- Little Divya who is being treated for Hodgkin's Lymphoma has almost completed her Chemotherapy. She has responded very well to it and the ailment is almost cured. She is in good health, cheerful and is looking forward to participating in a dance program this month...
- As part of the World Challenge Expeditions, 27 students from Cocker Mouth School, UK and the Tring School, UK volunteered at Vatsalya and painted the classrooms with educational information, designs and patterns. We are awaiting more artistic talents to do the other rooms...
- Ana Alaman (www.openeyesproject.com) from Spain visited Vatsalya twice along with 23 friends including some senior citizens from Spain. She and her group donated Rs. 90,000 (1350 Euros); just what we needed for the doors and windows for our new school! A long-awaited list of sports and medical supplies was also purchased with it. This lively bunch of people also played a match of Kabaddi with our children and surprised them with their command of the new sport that they had just learnt....
- For our new school, we raised US\$ 31,861 and built six rooms, 4 toilets and a drinking water station. Six more rooms are built up to plinth level. We will build the remaining structure as and when we are able to raise more funds. Kibble, a Scottish Residential Care Institution is planning to send its children and staff to help us construct part of the remaining structure in April, 2012. They will also raise funds for it before they come....
- Our women's Self-Help Group membership has reached 190! We will be starting a separate newsletter for Anoothi soon and share with you the stories of these women and their changing lives along with the beautiful products they make...
- Freya Douglas, Maureen Anderson and Patricia Little connected Vatsalya with wonderful communities in England, Scotland and Ireland! Gaelcholáiste na Mara, Carysfort National School and Arklow Youth Center in Arklow, Ireland are Vatsalya's new friends and partners. People in these communities have shown great support

and admiration for Vatsalya and we look forward to a meaningful long term association with them...

- Manju, Chandani and Satyam; three of Vatsalya Udayan children are now full time staff with us! Manju, who is gifted in creative art, is in-charge of training Self Help Group women in making semi precious stone and Patwa jewellery and Katha work home products. Chandani is the Dance Teacher for our children and is soon going to be a graduate (Visharad) in Katthak; a classical north Indian dance. Satyam; who just got his driving license, is Driver cum Security Guard of Vatsalya Udayan!

FROM FILES OF FRIENDS

Here is a beautiful letter sent by Victoria Lawn from USA after she completed her volunteering at Vatsalya:

“...I feel honored to have had the privilege of working for such a strong organization and equally as strong children. During my stay with Vatsalya, I undoubtedly learned more than I could have imagined regarding Indian culture, a committed NGO, and how to combine compassion with a perseverant attitude and mind to truly accomplish significant goals.

While working at Vatsalya, I also was blessed with meeting some extraordinary people who are gifted beyond their knowledge in areas of compassion, strength, persistence and passion. The staffs at Udayan, Kavach, Upaarjen and Targeted Intervention in Ajmer all have a unique dynamic that contributes to each project's special needs and successes. While observing each of these projects I was able to learn from both the staff and the people it served which made my entire experience extremely vibrant. It was particularly a pleasure to learn from and work with Jaimala and Hitesh. They are both extremely dedicated to the mission of Vatsalya, and working with them gave me hope for my future aspirations of working in medicine and public health as well enthusiasm for a future visit.

While learning about the diverse ways Vatsalya serves the people of Jaipur and its surrounding areas, I was simultaneously inspired to contribute in equally diverse ways. Where Vatsalya aims to fill in gaps between the government and the people, I aimed to fill the needs in each program. At Udayan and Upaarjen, I facilitated an identity workshop for young adults and adolescents to build self-awareness and self-esteem. At Kavach and

Targeted Intervention I learned many outreach strategies and how to present critical health information to the very poor general population. Lastly, I was able to participate in the Samvedna-Jagriti camp for slum children where I took the opportunity to revise the curriculum. At Vatsalya, every volunteer has a wonderful opportunity to engage their unique talents and passions while learning from some unexpected sources as well.

Lastly, I cannot close this letter without a special note of gratitude for the children and staff at Udayan and the guesthouse for their open hearts and minds as they were always willing to share a part of themselves with me while being open to my new ideas too. I am so thankful for the opportunity to witness the strength of the children who have already overcome many obstacles the cruel world has placed before them. But, it was even more beautiful to witness and receive their warmth, creativity and tenderness that one might not expect after surviving their hardships. Each one of the children touched me in their own unique way and certainly left a footprint on my heart. I do hope my path in the future leads me back to Udayan and Jaipur so I have the chance to see where all of their paths are taking them.

**With Love and Warmest Regards,
Victoria (Vicki Didi) Lawn, USA
March, 2010.....”**

PS: Vicky did visit again in July, 2011 and was present at the opening ceremony of the school!

Thank you, dear friends. I will leave you with this picture of our children who passed their 12th, 10th and 8th Grade exams with flying colors! They got between 56% to 78% marks. It would be important to mention here the contributions made by volunteers in their achievement. Patricia from Ireland and Brooke from USA spent devoted hours in working with them on their English. So, even if it was hard to find them when it was time for their English class, there is no doubt that these children did learn from you, because of you...☺ Thank you, very much!

Warm regards,

Jaimala



Girls-Pooja, Chandani, Manju and Anmol & Boys-Mukesh, Aryan, Mohit, Giriraj