



A Monthly Newsletter September 2010

Letter from the President

The end of the year is fast approaching and there are many exciting events in store!

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Letter from the President

The news this past month was made mostly in America. The First Annual *Shawn Bradley Charity Golf Invitational* was held at Red Ledges Golf Course in Heber City, Utah. It was a stunning success!

The event was sold out as we welcomed many of our supporters to the event to play golf. We also hosted a President's Brunch during the tournament, at the course, for non-golfers. It was a great forum for sharing our work with many new people.

On Sept 25, there will be a rock concert fundraiser at the Fairgrounds in San Diego. Bands will be playing from 4:00 PM- 10:00 PM. Go to our website for details, if you are interested in attending.

Two more quick fundraising items; there will be a benefit dance at Noah's Reception Center in Draper, Utah on October 23rd. Entrance will be \$6.00. Check our website for more details. On October 29, we will host our Second Annual "Shoot Hoops with the

Jazz" night, at the Zion's Bank basketball Center in Salt Lake City. Attendance will be limited to 125 people. Last year the tickets sold out quickly, with some of our supporters, who had awaited a little too long before buying, offering up to \$1,000

hoops with Jazz players, but also playing ping-pong, Wii, and trying golf swings with them. It was an awesome evening. Lots of families came, with young kids with stars in their eyes. It was a rollicking evening, one that won't be forgotten by those who attended.

So get your tickets early!

In India, we've just wound down the last of our summer volunteer sessions. Weather is cooling down a bit. Monsoon's around the corner. The new library is a hot spot on campus. All the children are enjoying having access to the books. The library was designed to encourage the children to spend time there exploring books and sharing their ideas about the books. It was a bit of a foreign concept at first, but

now the children have really warmed up to the idea that books are to be used and enjoyed. It's been like discovering a treasure!



to get a ticket! The tickets will be sold for \$400, and can be bought on our site, www.RisingStarOutreach.org. Last year, the event included not only shooting

The children worked very hard with artist Melissa Leyam-Fernandez to produce some darling Christmas cards this year. If you go onto our website, you can see their cards. Sending cards and staying in touch with friends is such a lovely Christmas tradition. This year it can be even more meaningful. Use the cards produced by our children and know that you are also helping to support a school dedicated to the education of the underprivileged of India. It's a great way to help celebrate Christmas.

Finally, we've already started receiving requests to know when our Christmas Wish List will go up on the website. Those of you who have used the list in the past to give Christmas or Hanukkah presents to your friends, know how great it feels to know that each gift you give, gives twice—once to your friends, and once to provide the children and leprosy-affected patients in India the opportunity for a better life. The list should be available on the website by the middle of the month.

Thanks for your tremendous support which makes our work in India possible.

Becky Douglas

Hello from India!



The month of August was a very memorable one. We saw our largest and final summer volunteer group come and go, which was depressing for everyone because of the enormous contributions each volunteer made at the school, colonies, and construction in the colonies..not to mention the enormous



outpouring of love every volunteer gave to the children each day and night!

Soon after the last volunteer group left, one little Rising Star boy asked Sarah when the next group was coming? Sarah replied, "this was the last summer group..so not for a while". Initially, his reaction was one of disbelief and then of a realization that the volunteers would indeed be gone for a long time! The obvious disappointment that washed across his face was sad for Sarah to see and helped us both realize the incredible impact all of these amazing volunteers have on the children and colonies here at Rising Star.

Saying good bye to the long term volunteers, including the coordinators and summer volunteer director was especially difficult to do, simply because of the amount of time spent with each one and the impact each person had on every department here at Rising Star. Their contributions, including the collective impact by the short term volunteers will never be forgotten. Truly a summer we will always remember and cherish!

Steele and Sarah Hendershot



Firsthand Experiences of a Sponsor

When I first came to Rising Star in 2007, the children had just moved onto the land and the organization was still in its refining stages. I don't know what it was about this shy little girl that captured my heart during the chaos, but I immediately felt drawn to her. She wasn't the "energetic, always smiling, cute as a button" child that seemed to abound at Rising Star. At just 14 years, she had been through a lot and you could see it in her eyes. She tended to hang back just observing. She had started school at a much later age, so keeping up was difficult for



her. When we talked, she didn't say much but she would always sit and listen attentively while I was reading stories or talking to the other kids.

When I told Alemelu I wanted to sponsor her, she flashed this brilliant smile I had never seen before and was glued to me for the next two days. Still not much conversation took place, but we would sit together on the steps and watch the sunset and the other kids playing. We had an unspoken bond and neither of us really knew why. I still can clearly remember her silhouette standing on the balcony of the boy's dormitory and watching us

drive away in the bus for America. It almost broke my heart.

This summer, three years later, when I realized I would be coming back to India this year for a wedding, the first thing I did was make plans to go see Alemelu. I must admit, I was a little nervous and didn't know if she would remember me, or how her English was. I had this awful fear that she wouldn't recognize me and we would just be sitting in awkward silence for the duration of the visit.

As we walked up to the house and I saw her, the most striking change I noticed was her eyes. They no longer had the deep-seated sadness that was so prominent before. After a few minutes, her shyness melted away and we chatted about school, her plans to be a tailor, and her upcoming marriage. She excitedly showed me around her house and pointing out various things including pictures of the school and athletic trophies she had won at Rising Star. As we walked through the colony, she introduced me to her friends and future father in law. She is planning on being married in the fall to a boy also from the colony that would be going to tailoring school with her. Although I hadn't been physically in Alemelu's life for three years, I felt like a par-

ent who's just realizing her child is all grown up. There would be fewer letters, if any, and my little girl would be going off and starting a life of her own. She had changed from the shy little girl hiding in the corner to a young woman with a quiet confidence and excitement for life. She was beautiful and the smile that I saw so rarely 3 years ago would flash every few minutes making her look radiant against her humble backdrop.

Our visit lasted about 90 minutes. As I walked away, I wondered at the difference my dollar a day had made. I realize my experience is unique and few sponsors have the chance to meet the children they are helping. I was so grateful to have the opportunity to see the change in her life and to be able to be a part of it. I don't know what the future holds for Alemelu. I pray that she is happy in her marriage and is successful in school. She has had a hard life, and will probably have many trials ahead of her: but seeing the difference and the confidence that three years at Rising Star has given her gives me the hope that she will be strong enough to face the hurdles that will come. That's the best repayment I could ever hope for and I wouldn't trade it for the world.

Karly Mather

Volunteer Story

I can hardly believe that it's been nearly three months since I arrived at Rising Star! The time has passed too quickly. But in this short period of time, I've already been able to observe a number of positive changes at the school. Many of them involve improvement in the children's ability to read. This has been a major focus for me. Specifically, we've (1) organized English tutoring classes (emphasis on phonics) at the end of each school day, which thirty percent of the children attend, (2)



instructed the final volunteer session to spend all of their tutoring time on reading, (3) showed many of the teachers how to use Reading Horizons, (4) distributed beginning reader materials to kindergarten and first grade teachers, and instructed them on sounding out words, (5) created library time for most of the students, and (6) organized the library and created a check-out system.

The results have been thrilling. Two English teachers recently remarked to me that they have noted progress in many of their students' reading. Children remain wildly enthusiastic about checking out books, especially the younger ones. I told some of the summer volunteers that listening to children sound out words (which practically no one at the school could do a few months ago) had an intoxicating effect on me, and that it felt like "opium to my ears." They had a good laugh at my corny phrase, and then immortalized it by including it on their painting of the wall (each summer session paints a mural at the end of their stay). See the picture on Page 1!

Celina Charles



Jeevantham

January 19, 2004

Jeevantham had a rough start here at Rising Star Gifted & Talented, but he was away for a month, but when he returned, he had 184 friends to welcome him back! Jeeva's face is never without a smile, and he hides his teeth with his lips so that only his gums show. He is loved by his house mother, friends, teachers, and all that meet this wonderful boy!

