

Darjeeling Children's Trust - News Update May 2009

The school year is now well on its way in Darjeeling and the children newly sponsored by the Trust are settling into their new schools, joining the four children who were the first to benefit from sponsorship last May. They have been taking their mid term exams recently and all seem to have done well. They are a jolly bunch, and growing in confidence as the months go by. The newly sponsored children were kitted out with their new uniforms in February/March and as it is Trust policy to buy a uniform that will last two years if at all possible, some of them, especially the smallest, can look a little swamped. They will grow! As the monsoon has struck early this year and the rains have been severe in Darjeeling - the result of Cyclone Aila - the Trust has also bought raincoats and wellies for the children to help keep them dry. Thankfully all are safe and well.



It is great news too that the first school toilet to be funded by the Trust is now completed. The project was developed with the support of the local community and is a major benefit to the children. The original plans for water harvesting involved two tanks on the roof of the school but this element was amended due to local fears of vandalism, so now the tank is half buried alongside the building.



New toilet at Agam Singh School

Work has also finished on providing a safer entrance and new gate at Bhanubakta School.



The photos above show the situation before and after construction. The children used to come down the stairs directly onto a busy road and had to go through two locked doors to get from upper to lower classrooms. The new enclosed space provides much safer access. The Trust is hoping to provide a new toilet for the children at the school over the next year and continues to support the school by providing pencils, crayons and other stationery items.

The Trust recently received two urgent requests for help, the first being from Toong Soong School where the roof was badly leaking. It was found that whilst the roof has been in place for some time, the holes could be patched and this has been done by one of the teachers. The Trust is funding the repainting of the roof to help prevent rusting and to extend the life of the existing structure.

The second urgent request for help came from Hope School, a school for disabled children where a major local benefactor has recently withdrawn his support. The Trust already contributes to the school by providing money so that the children can have milk and a banana every day to supplement their diet. As the school relies on voluntary contributions, Trustees have agreed to help the school further by providing some emergency funding to allow time for local fundraising to take place to replace the shortfall.

Good news on the travelling library which is warmly welcomed in schools - Sabita, our librarian story teller, has now added one more school to the list of schools which she visits.

Marilyn Adams,
Chairperson, Darjeeling Children's Trust
www.darjeelingchildrenstrust.com