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Mala News

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How Sponsorship Changes Lives

Project Mala offers an exceptional education to children from the poorest families in rural Uttar Pradesh and those students who complete their senior education in our schools are some of the most intelligent and impressive young people you could hope to meet. A sponsorship can literally change lives, and the ripples spread out into the wider family and the community.

Shiv Kumar is just one example of a child who is progressing in our senior school, despite his family's poverty and the lack of opportunities for children from his community. We thought it might be interesting to read about how his sponsor has enabled this child to reach his full potential with us, and how Shiv has grasped the opportunities that sponsorship offers.





Shiv Kumar is now 14 years old, and started in Project Mala school Guria at the age of 8. His family makes a living by the traditional craft of the local area which is carpet weaving, and that skill has been passed down in Shiv's family from father to son. Project Mala was originally founded to provide a basic education for the children of carpet weavers who would otherwise work beside their fathers on the looms from an early age. These days fewer children take up the craft, however Shiv and his sister have been trained in carpet weaving so that they can assist their father: they both work at the loom before and after school. The family is desperately poor, and their father can barely make enough money to feed the family, even with the pitiful wage that Shiv's elder brother sends home from his labouring job. Without access to a really good school and an academic education that will prepare him for higher education and a good job, an academically able boy like Shiv has little chance of escaping a future of low paid toil: all but one of his older siblings have left school at 14 either to work or to marry.





Shiv has flourished at Guria School: his attendance is excellent and he has passed the tough and competitive entrance exams first into middle and now into senior school. We fully expect that he will do well enough in his Board exams to be able to study at a good university and join a well-paid profession that will, in time, allow him to lift his entire family from poverty.



It is not just the focus on academic excellence, however, that Shiv benefits from. At Guria school he has been exposed to music, art, drama and sport and encouraged to pursue his wider interests. Shiv has a passion for music and has been able to learn the harmonium and keyboard at school and to spend time in the music room practising and receiving encouragement from the music teacher. He very often plays in school assembly, or accompanies groups of singers and his musical talent is recognised by staff and students alike.

None of this would have been possible without Shiv's sponsor, Siddhartha Bose from the UK, who sponsors several children at Project Mala schools. Siddhartha has been supporting Project Mala since 2006 and has sponsored many children over the years. It is his firm belief that providing high-quality education to poor and lower-caste Indian children is the key to eradicating inequality in India and his efforts have been life changing for the children whose education he has funded.

All of us at Project Mala are immensely grateful to each of our sponsors for their continued support and the interest that they show in our work. Like Siddhartha, they are all giving a child a chance to shine.

If you know anyone who you think might be interested in this newsletter, please forward it on.

Regards
Project Mala

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