



Proud students

Proud teachers  Proud parents



Ten of the 13 teachers at Holy Shepherd are themselves graduates from the school. They work two shifts for Primary and Secondary students. The teachers work hard and fully deserve the rewards of their success.

The Holy Shepherd School Karachi

In March the Holy Shepherd School celebrated Results Day — giving awards to successful students and celebrating the end of another school year.

Starfish Asia has supported this school since 2004 and is proud of its record in giving a future and a hope to a generation of young people from one of Karachi's most run-down colonies. This is the school that Anser and Kashi served for 10 years. It is a school with a proud record of success in raising the standards of the community.



A highlight of the Awards ceremony was the recognition given to parents who came to the stage with their children to receive applause. Often the best students are those who come from families that are eager to see their children succeed.

Parents & Teachers the keys to children's futures

In March many schools hold special ceremonies to reward their students for success and achievement. They receive certificates, shiny cups and sometimes books that affirm and inspire them. It motivates the children to aim higher.

It was especially heart-warming at the Results ceremony in the Holy Shepherd School, Karachi, when the parents were also called to the stage to receive applause for their part in their children's successes. The school went one step further. They gave special awards to "Outstanding Parents".

Many parents from poor Christian families are illiterate, as they have never had the opportunity to study. Some regret that and want a better future for their children. Sadly, others see no value in education and hold back their children's progress — or even send them to work to boost their meagre family income.

The keys to a successful student often lie in the heart of a motivated and ambitious parent. They deserve their rewards!

We value Christian school teachers as the true leaders of tomorrow's citizens. They deserve all the help we can provide. Training for teachers has become one of the highest priorities for Starfish Asia and our work in Pakistan.

Our Schools Survey revealed that hundreds of teachers in Christian schools have few qualifications and little or no training.

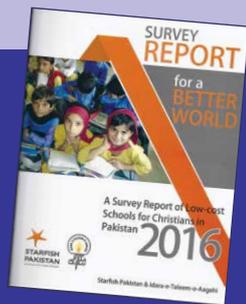
In June 100 teachers, chosen from schools contacted by the Survey, will come for training to Murree in Pakistan's cool northern hills. Four 3-day workshops, led by Kashi and Anser Javed, will focus on the use of the national curriculum in a Christian context.

The value of a teacher

In the May 2017 budget, the Pakistan Government raised the minimum wage for unskilled workers to 15,000 rupees a month (£110 or US\$140). Most teachers in our Survey of Christian Schools are earning less than £50 a month — and some less than £15 or US\$20.

Please help us to increase salaries for Christian teachers!

The 2016 Survey Report revealed that "by far the most common reason that students drop out of school is lack of parental motivation."



The Holy Shepherd Grammar School

Records of Success

We have already recorded that 10 of the 13 teachers at the Holy Shepherd School are graduates, but that is not all. At the Results Event eight other graduates stood to testify how they were developing their careers and had moved on to a good job or further studies.

Pictured above are Rimsha (whose story is given here) with her brother, Nabeel, and her father, all on stage with Ejaz (school principal) and Anser. Two other graduates are in nursing, two doing further studies and one in Pre-medical college.

Much of this has been made possible by Starfish Asia Scholarship awards. We urgently need funds to provide more scholarships for ambitious students.



"I wish every girl could study..."

Rimsha Bashir gave this passionate appeal to the students at the Holy Shepherd School Results Day.

"I belong to a poor family. Whatever I am today is because of my father, my teachers and Starfish Pakistan. They helped me study so that I could achieve something with my life. I was a class monitor and I love education. Now I am in my second year of study in nursing. My father is a sanitary worker in the same hospital where I am studying. When people look at both of us they say, 'No she doesn't seem like the daughter of a sanitary worker. Her behaviour and study... it doesn't look like she is a sweeper's daughter.'

"I wish every girl could study like me. Today I say to you girls: Do not sit at home. After Matric Starfish Pakistan provides a platform for you. If you want to be a doctor or, like me, you want to be a nurse, you can. There are many opportunities. Go out and be a light to Pakistan and the school where you studied."



Building confidence

May 20: Another outstanding day in the lives of some of Pakistan's Christians, who are often fearful and withdrawn as a result of their minority status. It is one of our goals to build a generation of young people who are proud to be Pakistani and confident as Christians.

The Starfish Pakistan Speech Competition was an initiative of Anser and Kashi to prove the abilities of young people, drawn from 16 schools for low-income Christians. "My dream," said Anser, "is to provide a platform for our students to prove themselves confident and capable."

There were four judges, a chief guest and about 300 parents and well-wishers in attendance. Each selected student had to give a speech on a chosen topic for three minutes. There were two categories, Junior and Senior. Anser was nervous.

"I warned the judges not to be too disappointed if the standard was not very high. Our students and schools were taking part for the first time in such a programme. Many Christians do not believe they can ever be successful in this society, because of their low and deprived status. Starfish Pakistan is striving to prove them wrong. When we visit schools we often tell the children: 'You can do it! You can succeed!'"



"We did not need to worry. We were all amazed at the ability and confidence of these students from poor families. One after another they proved that, if they are given the chance, they are among the very best."

The judges were unanimous in their praise: "Starfish Pakistan has taken a great step to provide a platform for these deprived children to show their talent." The programme lasted for five hours and was lightened by several dance performances.



STARFISH ASIA

What are we doing?

2017 is our 14th year. We have come a long way and we are involved in many new things. Our heart remains the same: *"The relief of poverty, sickness and distress, the advancement of education and the advancement of the Christian faith in Pakistan."* This is a brief overview of how we continue to fulfil that commitment.

1 Starfish Asia, working together with Starfish Pakistan in Lahore, is now providing regular support to 34 Primary, Middle and Secondary Schools and 7 homes or day-care centres for orphans, disabled or disadvantaged children.

We are helping about 7,000 children, of whom the majority are from very poor Christian families. We are specially concerned to provide reasonable salaries to teachers, school books to the children and a good learning environment with neat, clean and adequate school facilities.

2 As a result of the 2016 Christian Schools Survey, we are now working to provide essential help to many more schools. We are currently engaged in projects to provide toilets, blackboards and textbooks where needed. We have contact with 600 schools for low-income Christians.



We once dreamed of saving a few. We now aim to transform a generation...

3 Teacher training has become a priority as we have access to more than 4,000 Christian teachers, many of whom have no teaching skills. Kashi is developing a team of teacher trainers. We launched the Pakistan Association of Christian Teachers in 2017 — along with its quarterly magazine.

4 Our aim is not only to ensure a good secondary education for Christian children from deprived homes. We want them to be a generation of men and women of faith who know their Bibles. To this end we have prepared a Bible curriculum for primary classes (and plan for higher classes also). We hope to make these available soon to 50,000 children.

5 Aware that most available school textbooks have a strong political and Islamic bias, we are beginning a project to produce quality books for English, Urdu and Social Studies that are user-friendly for Christians.

6 We are aiming at more than secondary school success. We are preparing Career Planning Advice for High School students. We also give about 150 scholarships for capable Christians wanting to study further or do vocational training. We provide some long-term loan awards for Christians studying for higher degrees.

7 Anser and the team of Starfish Pakistan arrange programmes (like the Speech Competition) to raise ambition and morale for Christians, with the message: "Christians can succeed and contribute to Pakistan's future!"

Running with passion

Allan's Summer 'Double Ultra'

Allan Grant has a passion -- an extraordinary passion for running long distances — and an equal passion to raise funds for Pakistan's Christians.

"As I have now entered a new decade I thought it would be good to have a double running challenge to start and finish this summer. The first is to again do the West Highland Way Race: it starts at 01:00 on Saturday June 24 (154 km. and max. 35 hours to complete). The second, 10 weeks later, is known as the CCC (Courmayeur-Champex-Chamonix), on Friday September 1, a horseshoe-shaped route around Mont Blanc through Italy, Switzerland and France (101 km. with 6,100 m. of climbing and 26 hrs. 30 mins max. to complete)."

Allan will raise money for a vehicle to bring teachers to an isolated village school. Please support Allan now at uk.virginmoneygiving.com/AGrant



Proud to be at school

The children at Shama School are so excited! These are the children of brick kiln workers, living close to the kiln where Shehzad and Shama were murdered in 2014. Their new school building was opened in March.

Baber, Sunita, Mike and Anser cut the ribbon.



The children got new furniture and new school books and bags ...



A generous donor gave a clean water filter... and they are learning to wash their hands and clean their teeth — **proud to be at school!**



Help teachers get to school!

Walter Waheed oversees Waheedabad Christian Middle School serving 120 children. Nine teachers need to travel each day from Khanewal city. Transport is essential for the school's survival. Their present van breaks down regularly and must be replaced. Your support of Allan will help provide £2,000 towards the purchase of a van.

Running with love



With no less passion (but perhaps a little less energy) Jenny Brown has faithfully run the Great Midlands Fun Run for several years, raising thousands of pounds for Pakistan's children. She ran again on 4th June, but you can still support her to help reach her target of £2,000. Thank you, Jenny!

uk.virginmoneygiving.com/JennyBrown777

Churches working together

Five years ago a group (or *Benefice*) of village churches in Somerset raised more than £4,000 (far beyond their target) to equip a school for brick kiln workers. We are delighted and grateful that they have launched a new appeal to equip three more poor schools in Pakistan. **Could your church do something similar?**

www.facebook.com/starfishasia

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STARFISH ASIA

giving hope to the children of Pakistan

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