



Roll of honour

Pakistan national statistics state that 70% of students entering a private school in Class 1 drop out before they reach their Matriculation exam in Class 10. In Government schools the figure is 83%.*

Credit goes therefore to all the students who this month are receiving their Class 10 'Matric' exam results. We are proud of all who have passed this first major stage in their academic careers. We are grateful to all the staff who have given of their best, the Principals and administrators who have contributed to their success, and of course to all our donors who have supported the schools and made this achievement possible for so many.

Sherbano Taseer, daughter of the assassinated Governor of Punjab (see her article on the next page), quoted Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Pakistan's founder, in an address to the Punjabi Muslim Students Federation at Lahore on October 31, 1947:

"Pakistan is proud of her youth, particularly the students who have always been in the forefront in the hour of trial and need. You are the nation's leaders of tomorrow..."

You should realize the magnitude of your responsibility and be ready to bear it."



Lahore Christian High School



Sana Arshad (right) and Norena James (left) were top scoring students in their Matric exams from the Lahore Christian High School. They are a credit to their families and to the school staff.

Norena James, daughter of James Masih, took third position in LCHS by securing 681 marks.

Her father is a painter and her mother a housewife in a family of 10 members. Norena has five brothers and two sisters. Her elder sister passed Matric from LCHS but sadly could not get support for further education, so she is working as a helper in a factory.

Norena spent eight years in the school. She loved the school as her home. Her first choice is to become a nurse which would provide a small salary during her training so that she could support her family, though she would prefer to study further if financial help is available.

Sana Arshad, daughter of a mason, topped the Matric result at the Lahore Christian High School with 800 marks (A grade). She was one of the first students to join the School in 2000. Her two brothers and sister are also studying at the school.

Sana's father suffered a heart attack four years ago and the family has struggled to meet their needs.

Her mother Frida attends the Fellowship of Christ meetings regularly. She was in tears as she shared how difficult it has been to keep her children in school rather than sending them out to work. Today she is proud of the great achievement of her daughter.

Mrs Humera is the Principal of the Lahore Christian High School, which has been fully supported by Starfish Asia since its founding in 2000. LCHS is a ministry of the Fellowship of Christ, led by Ashley Arshad and his wife Seema.

* Karachi low-cost private school survey 2010, quoted by the Pakistan Education Task Force

Hope for Pakistan

In an article on the website of the Jinnah Institute, the daughter of Punjab's assassinated Governor recently wrote a stirring assessment of Pakistan's current crisis. This is an extract:

Reclaiming Jinnah's Pakistan

by Shehrbano Taseer

The future of every country is its next generation. For a progressive, pluralistic and economically sound Pakistan to succeed, there is an urgent need to harness the potential of the youth. This requires the state to invest in education, vocational training and skills development, technology, entrepreneurship opportunities, and job creation for both young men and women.

With a crippled economy and a haemorrhaging war on terror, our education system is in shambles. Our budget reveals that only 1.5% is dedicated to education. The failure to educate the country's children costs the equivalent of one flood a year, according to a report produced by the Pakistan Education Task Force.

The 18th Amendment to the Constitution of Pakistan states, "The state shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of five to 16 years in such a manner as may be determined by law." Although this year was declared Education Year in Pakistan, over 25 million children are being denied their constitutional right to an education.

Pakistan has the largest number of children out of school in the world after Afghanistan. Only 23 per cent of our children under the age of 16 attend secondary school and almost one-third of Pakistanis have received less than two years of education. 54% of Pakistan is literate (a generous estimate) and even so, being literate means the ability to sign your name.

Pakistan's young are dynamic and thirsty to learn and be involved. But the inadequacy of quality education – critical thinking in particular – renders our country incapable of dealing with the challenges of the 21st century... But as patriotic citizens with a heavy stake in our nation's stability, we must not abdicate our responsibilities. It is in our hands what direction our nation takes.

See the Jinnah Institute website for the whole article and also download the report on the status of religious minorities in Pakistan, *A Question of Faith*.



Roll of honour

Miracle School



Nimra Qamar (age 15) passed Matric with 870 marks (A+ grade). Her father is a sweeper in a Government office and a diabetic. Her mother suffers from high blood pressure and pain in her joints. She works with her older daughter as a domestic cleaner to support her family. Sometimes Nimra has to take the place of her mother who is often too ill to work.

The Miracle School staff are proud of Nimra. She is hard working and has high ambitions. She hopes to study for FSc or I.Com and is applying for a scholarship.



Anam Shaukat (age 16) obtained a B+ in her Matric exams. She has four sisters and two brothers. Her father has high blood pressure and her mother suffers from diabetes. She joins her older sister to do cleaning work to support her family.

The Miracle School provided them with a glucometer, insulin and medicines, but they also need an income. She is a very ambitious girl with a great heart to serve Christ. She hopes to study further.

Exam success

Matriculation exam results were announced in August, the doorway to the future for many students who have worked hard and are now ready to move on to higher achievement.

From schools supported by Starfish Asia, 78 children passed their Matric exams.

We congratulate every one, their teachers and staff. Not only have they passed the first major hurdle in their education, but they are equipped with years of Bible teaching and Christian understanding—salt and light for their society. Pray for them!



Dilshad Gill (age 15) passed his Matric with 684 marks (B+ grade). He has no mother and his father is a heart patient and unable to work, so he used to go to work in a vegetable market after school. Unfortunately the vegetable market has moved from the local area and now his life is made even more difficult.

Dilshad has three sisters and two brothers. His older brother has a job in Kahna about five miles away, so now he travels to work with him every day. But in spite of all this he would really like to study further and he will be looking for a scholarship to enable him to go to College. Please do remember him in your prayers.

Kingdom of Heaven School

This is the Matric Class of 2011

Rafaqat Lal (in white shirt at the right) gained the best marks in the School.

He writes:

"In our family we are seven, four brothers and one sister, and we are all studying. For about two years my dad has been suffering from hepatitis. My mother is working in a school nearby. My father is a Pastor and a painter by profession.

"Circumstances at home were critical and it was very difficult to study, but thanks be to God for the Kingdom of Heaven School that polished our skills and enabled us to



stand on our feet. In the future I want to study engineering. I also want to serve God after completing my education. Keep me in your prayers."

NEW classrooms desks and chairs

In our Summer Newsletter we made a special appeal for extra funds to provide new classroom space, more desks and chairs and other equipment for schools. Thank you for your response. In July and August we sent an extra £15,500 to meet some of these needs. Here is a summary of what was achieved.

- ▶ Two new classrooms have been constructed at the Holy Shepherd School in Karachi, to accommodate the large influx of new students at the school since April (see photo).
- ▶ The upper floor has been renovated at Dean Public School in Lahore and a new roof now replaces the leaky straw covering (see photo).
- ▶ Friends Public School (not a school we support regularly) was in urgent need of a down payment on land for a new school. We helped.
- ▶ Fifty wood-and-steel double desks and benches for 100 children have been delivered to the Primary School in Sharaqpur (see the photo).
- ▶ Twenty desks and chairs are being made to provide for 40 children at the Morning Star School in Karachi.
- ▶ The Ghauri Wisdom school opted to use extra funding to gain affiliation with the Board of Education (approved), some laboratory equipment, books for the library and furniture for the Boys High School.
- ▶ New chairs and desks have been delivered to the Kingdom of Heaven School in Meher Town (see photo).
- ▶ School books and notebooks have been provided for the children at the RCDM School in Hasanabdal and St. James School in Lahore
- ▶ At last the large hall at the Gospel School is being divided into four separate classrooms. They still need some desks and benches.
- ▶ New furniture is being made for the CAP schools at Su-e-Asal and at Rasoolpura.
- ▶ The Talents School in Lahore is doing some urgently needed repair to the roof, windows, wash basins, plus painting and decoration.
- ▶ At the Christian School in Rak Dera Chahal the Director Imran Safeer was provided funds to purchase five computers for the IT classes.

Improving the infrastructure during busy summer months

A new roof at Dean Public School

You may remember the picture in our last Newsletter of the straw roof over the classroom at Dean Public School.

Naeem Dean wrote: "I have no words to thank you for the great favour for which God has used you for the Dean Public School. Surely this will make a difference for my students."



New desks and chairs at the KOHM School

Facilities are improving for the students at the Kingdom of Heaven Ministries School in Meher Town, Lahore. Two years ago there was a desperate shortage of space and several classes sat on the ground in the courtyard in summer sun and winter cold.

Now all 420 students are in a classroom and new furniture has just been delivered, sufficient for every student. This fine school is now registered, equipped — and still dreaming of having their own building.

New classrooms at the Holy Shepherd School, Karachi

In March Anser wrote from Karachi: "We have got 95 new registration forms and I really need to extend at least two more classrooms this year. Can I please request you to help us construct two more rooms next month?"

The two new classrooms have been built during the summer recess. They still need to be fitted out with desks and chairs, but the school is better equipped for the 650 children who now study there.



New desks and chairs for 100 children at the FOC school in Sharaqpur

NEW PROJECT ★

The children of Narang Mandi

Narang Mandi is a small town 50 kilometres north of Lahore, once famous for its Rice Market (*mandi*). It has 25 mosques and five churches. About a thousand Christian families work as labourers and cleaners. Of the many Christian children few can afford to attend school. The need for accessible education is huge. There is one private Christian school that is inadequate to meet the needs of the community.

Daud and Sosan, members of a local Pentecostal church, having teaching experience and a passion to help their community, opened a small school for 50 children.



"We are giving spiritual teaching to these children as well. We have a rented building with no furniture and other facilities. We have four teachers, who are almost volunteers because few of the children can pay fees. There are hundreds who want to join us to get education."

In September Starfish Asia took the plunge and started to support this new school, providing a grant to rent a better building, equip it with basic furniture and provide a regular subsidy for teachers' salaries. It will be known as the Adam Academy. Please pray for this new project.



Caring for body and mind

We continue to be impressed by the initiatives of many of our partners to care for their communities. Sometimes (if special funding is required) they inform us in advance. Sometimes they go ahead with whatever resources they can access. Here are just a few recent projects that have helped hundreds.

The Gospel School in Bilal Town

Shamshad and Rubina never lack ways to help their people. This is an extract of an email from him in June:



"In Bilal town our Christian community is very poor. They cannot pay for their medical treatment. We arranged a Medical Care Camp in the Gospel School on 20-21 June.

We provided 150 people with dental care, treatment and medicine. We hope to be able to continue this project."

Simple, basic – but appreciated.

Holy Shepherd School, Karachi

Anser and Kashi have likewise never lacked initiatives for the people of Mianwali Colony. They recently arranged to vaccinate their whole school against Hepatitis B. Here is Anser's report:

"Hepatitis B kills many thousands of people every year. One person in 10 in Pakistan is a carrier. I know people in our area who have died from Hepatitis B, including one of our own students.

"Starfish Asia provided funds to give free vaccination to every student in our school including the staff and their families. Yesterday 552 students and 20 staff members were given their first dose."



PLEASE CONTACT US!

We look forward to hear from you

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- Please send me the regular Newsletter
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STARFISH ASIA

giving hope to the children of Pakistan

I was walking on the beach one morning and I saw a young man picking up starfish from the sand and flinging them back into the sea. I asked why he did it.

"If I don't, they will die in the midday sun," he said.

"But there are thousands of starfish," I replied.

"What difference does it make to save a few?"

He looked down at the starfish in his hand and flung it to safety in the waves.

"It makes a big difference to this one!" he said.

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