

July 1, 2007

Dear friends,

We write to share the recent news and goals of the Omprakash Foundation. However, our history, pictures, volunteer and donation opportunities can all be explored in detail on our website at [www.omprakash.org](http://www.omprakash.org). We invite you to visit the site and/or contact any one of us with further questions.

The Omprakash Foundation aims to promote global education by connecting donors and volunteers with foreign schools that have expressed a need for material and human resources. As we educate others, we educate ourselves: the connections we forge produce new perspectives and opportunities for all those involved, whether in India, America, Pakistan, Zimbabwe, or beyond.

Two years after its formation, the Omprakash Foundation continues to involve itself with new people, places, and projects. As we expand outward, our excitement is marked by an increasing sense of humility. We remain committed to supporting the spread of education, but recognize the ambiguity of such a goal, and the multiplicity of meanings and values that the concept of education holds for different people. More so than ever before, we refuse to think that we know what is best for the diverse communities with which we are involved, and therefore hesitate to approach these communities with any sort of contrived, inflexible “mission” in mind. We are proud of what we have accomplished, but ever more wary of the possibility that projects such as our own can inadvertently legitimize popular imaginings of an impoverished, third-world “Other” desperately in need of guidance and support from “the West.” Thus, as we gaze toward the future, we gain our greatest confidence not from the strength of any grand vision, but from the simple methodology that has guided the Omprakash Foundation since its conception in January, 2005: we will continue to work from the ground up, responding to the needs and desires of people that we know rather than attempting change societies, building upon human relationships rather than abstract objectifications of “the poor.” Our great hope is that this approach will allow us all to go outward not as philanthropists or aid workers, but simply as people—people with so much to learn, and so much to give.

Our new initiative to encourage young Americans to volunteer at schools around the world is directly linked to this methodology. When a school contacts us and expresses its desire for volunteer English teachers, we post information about this opportunity on our website. Americans can then use this resource to organize their own volunteering plans. Beginning this summer, volunteers will find themselves forging new relationships every day, expanding the network of the Omprakash Foundation to allow more voices to be heard, more aspirations to be articulated. In this way, our volunteering initiative achieves at least three things simultaneously: it provides native English speakers to schools that want them; it allows young Americans to broaden their own perspectives by forming meaningful relationships with new communities, and, as a product of these relationships, it gives a voice to people whose needs might otherwise be obscured beneath the macro-level development schemes of governments and NGO’s alike. Grounded by these voices, the Omprakash Foundation can continue to respond accordingly with both human and material resources.

The continuing generosity of our donors has allowed us to support a variety of educational projects. Most recently, we have begun supporting the construction of a library linked to a class for underprivileged girls in the Golok region of Tibet (Qinghai Province, China). We have also purchased one year’s worth of school materials for 503 students in orphanages and refugee camps throughout Pakistan and Afghanistan—a region where the need for education and cross-cultural contact seems ever more urgent at this time. Steadfastly committed to being as transparent as possible, we have posted extensive details about our spending initiatives on our website, and encourage you to review them with a critical eye.

If funds permit, our next projects will include the development of a health clinic and library at a preschool in Tsopema, India, as well as a new program that will deliver books to the multitude of schools and libraries with which we have become involved. We also hope to begin supporting a drought-stricken village in rural Zimbabwe by enabling its school to provide daily lunches to almost two-hundred children. Nick will spearhead some of these efforts while traveling in India this summer, and other volunteers will

help us continue to strengthen existing relationships and build new ones with educational projects around the world.

All contributions to the Omprakash Foundation are tax-deductible, and readers will find donation instructions below. However, because so much of our project does not depend upon money, we want to emphasize that this is not a mere fundraising letter. We do not dare claim that our cause is any more worthy than all of the others that demand your attention. We write simply to share with you our hopes, our doubts, and our gratitude for your presence within the web of relationships that drives this project onward.

Wishing you our best,

Nick Smith, Willy Oppenheim, and Dan Furman

*Checks made out to the Omprakash Foundation may be sent to: Willy Oppenheim, 794 S.U., Bowdoin College, Brunswick, ME 04011*

*We encourage donors to earmark checks for specific projects if they so desire.*

*The Omprakash Foundation is registered as a tax-exempt nonprofit charity under section 501©3 of the Internal Revenue Code. Tax Identification number (EIN): 20-8655418*