



a new home in the world for young adults

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So much has happened at shuktara since I last wrote and those of you that have signed up online for e-news will have received snippets of information from there. If you haven't, I will fill you in and give you some more now.

(If you would like to receive e-news via Mailchimp, please sign up at www.shuktara.net where at the top of every page there is a box 'Newsletter - signup for news' please click there).

My last newsletter talked about Lula Bari, our beautiful home for girls named in memory of Lula Gibson. The change in the shuktara girls is quite extraordinary since moving in to Lula Bari. The difference in Tamina is especially positive and wonderful to see. This adorable child was sometimes out of control. She daily tore and threw all her clothes out of the windows of their previous small flats and her ADHD (Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) made her near impossible for most of us. But now she is really in her own body, aware of her surroundings and much happier.



Tamina at Lula Bari – our new girls home

Lula Bari works in so many ways and we have already been able to welcome another girl into this lovely little family group. On 10th March Pappu was called by Childline India Foundation because they had a girl they were unable to place. Muniya had been abandoned by her mother at Sealdah Train Station and left alone on a platform. She was rescued by CIF and kept in their shelter. For 4 months they tried to place her in a residential home but no one would take her. On 13th March, Lula Bari became her home. When she came she was quite quiet and a little bit unsure, obviously very traumatized by her situation, but slowly she has settled with us and is very happy. Pappu has already started proceedings for her to be admitted to REACH school in their Special Education Department, because she really wants to go to school with the other girls.



Muniya, our new girl outside Lula Bari playing with colour at Holi Festival – photo by Pappu Mishra (chairman of shuktara)

As you may already know we were able to give Raja Singh, (who also came from Childline India Foundation), a home back in February. He will also be admitted to REACH in their Deaf Unit. It is wonderful to suddenly have this influx of new life at Shuktara because since the inception of Shuktara Cakes Training Centre, during the daytime, the older Shuktara boys are out at work, so now we have more children being brought to us it makes the boys house feel alive again, as it was before they started work.



Raja Singh our new boy on the roof at the boys house

Shuktara Cakes is storming ahead with an amazing array of French Patisserie. Our customers come back week after week for financiers, ginger walnut cake, madeleines and an assortment of other wonderful cakes.

It is great to see the older boys who had struggled for so long to get work, so happy in this and with a great future.

Our thanks to Alain Cojean for thinking up and sponsoring this great project.

To see young men with cerebral palsy like Ashok & Raju working alongside the other boys at Shuktara Cakes is a joy to behold. I particularly love that Sanjay has hired a cycle rickshaw to take Raju & Ashok to work, (as they struggle to walk), and at the end of the month they pay him. They all still need a home at shuktara but this is definitely a step towards their independence if they want it.



Sanjay taking Raju & Ashok to work at Shuktara Cakes Training Centre on his cycle rickshaw

With the money that the boys earn at the Training Centre, they have been able to purchase their own steel cupboards to store their belongings and have extra money to do things away from shuktara, like going to the movies at the weekend. Even with this amount of extra cash in their pockets, most of their spare time is still spent around the home. A lot of their friends also have jobs now, so the house is really full on a Sunday afternoon, unless the boys have an order to bake for delivery on Monday!

On the 8th June we are holding a small fundraising evening in London and by now I expect you will have received either a “save the date” email or an invitation, or both. Please come, if you can, and bring people with you that may be interested in supporting us. If you have not received any news about this, please contact Sue Tungay (Secretary of Shuktara Trust UK) at:

suetungay@gmail.com

or me at

earp_david@hotmail.com

Sue has also set up a Give as You Live page so when you shop online with your favourite stores they will donate to us, all without charging you a penny more. Please type this link in and sign up; it only takes a couple of minutes, thank you:

www.giveasyoulive.com/join/shuktara

It seems that 2014 has become the year that the shuktara family gets bigger and of course it is no coincidence that it is also our 15 year anniversary. It was on 1st July 1999 that I was asked to take Sunil and Anna and you all know the story from there. Thank you for your interest, your support and your encouragement that has supported me personally and all of us at shuktara in Kolkata.

David Earp

(all photos by Paula Harrowing – except where stated)