

GANDHI COLLEGE



November 27, 2013: UPDATE

Greetings from Sue Wallace:

I have just returned from 5 weeks at Gandhi College and want to share news and impressions about the college with all of the “Friends of Gandhi College”.



NEW STAFF

A new professor of English has been hired: Dr. Rajani Gupta. Dr. Gupta is young, enthusiastic, and has an excellent command of English.

In addition to his regular courses in English Literature he is also teaching the 9-11 English Language Class in the English Learning Center. See “English Language Center” . p. 3.

(Photo: Dr. Gupta helps Sadhana open an interactive CD.)

NEW PROGRAMS

The M.A in Home Sciences program is well underway with the first class of girls ready to graduate at the end of this academic year. The girls with whom I spoke are delighted to have an opportunity for post graduate work so close to home and many said they would have no post graduate opportunities were it not for this class.

An exciting development related to the Home Sciences course is the installation of a solar oven at the college at the end of November. The goal of Sun Oven India is to replace coal, wood or dung cooking sources with clean non-polluting sources in institutions that provide large quantities of food , for example, elementary schools. The oven at Gandhi college is part of their pilot project and is free to the college. A second oven is being placed at the nearby elementary school. Ricca Slone from Sun Ovens will spend 10 days at the college to explain the operation and use of the oven.





STUDENT SUCCESS

A Gandhi College Graduate, Abhishek Kumar has been accepted at the prestigious

Benares Hindu University (the Alma Mater of Jagadish Shukla) for a Ph.D. program in environmental sciences. Abhishek was a student in the first English Language Center Workshop which I co-taught with my friend Marylyne Evans in 2010. After completing his MA in Geography he

successfully passed the NET (National Education Test) which qualifies him to teach in any undergraduate program and the two rigorous exams necessary to receive admittance in BHU. The next step, a personal interview, was a big one since we all knew that most of the positions would go to students from BHU undergraduate programs and students who had “contacts” with the faculty. Jagadish Shukla used his range of contacts to help Abhishek meet with one of the young professors who was then part of the seven-person interview committee. He received notice of his acceptance on November 11, 2013 and will begin classes on December 1, 2013. *(Photo: Abhishek, standing, brings sweets to the college faculty to announce his acceptance at BHU.)*



Arsenic Testing Project

Following reports of serious levels of arsenic in wells in areas nearby Gandhi College Mike Wallace, who spent one week in the village, organized an arsenic testing program. Abhishek soon became more proficient at the actual testing procedures and also collected samples from many villages in the area. Mike and Abhishek found that the water in the village and at Gandhi College is free of arsenic.

We would like to see current Gandhi College students involved in similar projects.

(Photos: Mike, Abhishek and Shriram Shukla, Gandhi College Manager, look at test results.)

Maharishi Valmiki's Birthday

On October 18 professional musicians gathered on the second floor of the college to celebrate - for 24 hours! - the birthday of

Maharishi Valmiki believed to have been the author of the Ramayana. Loudspeakers projected the music throughout the surrounding villages enabling everyone within 5 km. to participate in this event.

(Photo: Mahendra Shukla, Jaghadish's eldest brother, watches the musicians.)

THE ENGLISH LEARNING CENTER AT GANDHI COLLEGE

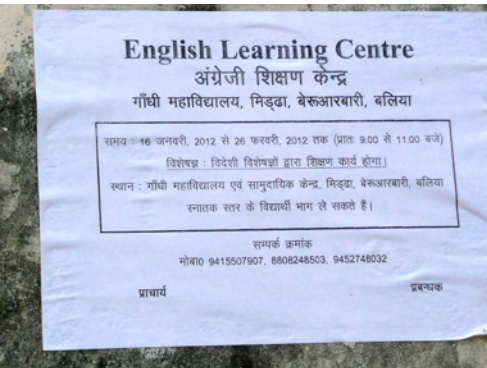
Providing opportunities for students not enrolled in the English Courses to begin or continue the study of English and for those who are enrolled in English as one of their three subjects to receive additional language practice which is not included in the literature-based curriculum.

Background

After my first English Language Workshop in 2010 I realized that the college needed a system that would provide English language development support and opportunities that were not dependent on visitors. In 2012 we opened the English Language Centre in Chandran Memorial Hall with 10 old and three new donated desktops and some pilot language learning software.

New Home

The Center is now housed in a spacious room on the new second floor of the college. Shriram Shukla, the college manager, did a wonderful job in organizing the infrastructure for this program including the solar panel back-up that ensures that we have adequate electricity at all times. We have 11 “refurbished” desktops and 6 laptops (two of which are reserved for teacher use) with internet connections for up to 5 laptops at one time. The room has fans and 4 large windows to provide fresh air and light and will soon have 8 LED lights. All of the computers are “loaded” with English learning software.



The Learning Center program is a combination of direct instruction and practice/learning on the computers. Dr. Gupta teaches the 9-11 class for girls who are able to come before regular classes begin at 11:00 AM. Ms. Swati Upadhyay, who was a student in my 2010 class and served as my assistant in the 2012 class, teaches 3 sessions between 11:30 and 3:30. All classes have a student progress tracking system so that we can measure both student progress and the effectiveness of the instructional design. (Photo: Swati introduces new students to computer basics before they are assigned a machine).

Future Plans

- Opportunities for “drop in” learning/practice
- Extended hours one or two days a week.
- Opportunities for students to learn basic computer skills, including typing, and to access the internet for academic purposes.
- Classroom computers for teachers. Due to the number of days the college was closed for festivals and holidays and the fact that the teachers already have full schedules, I had limited opportunity to share possible uses of computers to enhance classroom instruction or

to extend areas of professional expertise. However, teachers will have time to explore these options in February when the class schedule is less heavy.

(Photo: Pooja and Nidhi confer on the answer to an interactive grammar exercise.)



THE NEW GANDHI COLLEGE



Completed in 2013 under the direction of Shriram Shukla, the remodeled building includes four large classrooms and two smaller rooms on the second floor with covered walkways in the front and around the inner courtyard. Enhancements to the first level include a gated front courtyard, a front court veranda, restroom facilities reserved for faculty, and conduits for electricity in every room. Future plans include finishing the floor in the English Learning Center with smooth stone to help reduce dust. *(Note: In this photo scaffolding is still in place for work on the exterior brick wall. Masons were completing this work, as well several interior walls and railings, while I was there in October/November.)*

Comments
or questions? Email
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Watch the Gandhi College Website for
interviews with students and faculty in
2014