

Lotus Leaves, Summer 2009

Newsletter of the Druk Padma Karpo Institute / Druk White Lotus School, Shey, Ladakh, India

Dear Readers, Jullay!

My name is Deep Kumar. I come from Jammu, which is located in the same Indian State as Ladakh, but has very different climatic and cultural conditions. I arrived in Ladakh last August to take up the position of Head Master of Druk White Lotus School.

In September we celebrated Teachers Day and Parents Day, and were soon into the October end-of-year examinations.

We welcomed 115 additional students at the start of the 2008-9 school year in November. The school roll now stands at 506 students (260 girls and 246 boys), of whom 158 are residential students who live on the campus.

Our oldest students are 14-15 years old and are in class 7. My top priority is to ensure that the school achieves high academic standards and that our lead students pass their end of year 8 public exams next year with flying colours. My other priority is to develop the confidence and skills among the children required to succeed in the modern world, to enable students to explore and learn about their environment, and encourage attitudes and behaviour that support ecological sustainability.

We have already welcomed various international visitors and volunteers to Shey this year, and have a busy and exciting schedule ahead of us. Staff and students thoroughly enjoy these pleasurable educational exchanges.

With best wishes to you all, and with great thanks to the school's many supporters, friends and sponsors,
Deep Kumar Koul, Head Master



Staff Development

Karma Dhargyal is in charge of the Nursery & Infant section. Karma was selected to travel to UK for 3 weeks in January 2009 in order to visit various schools and colleges in order to experience first-hand different methods of teaching and learning, and to gather educational resources to share with colleagues. He also squeezed in free time to visit the London Eye and Madame Tussauds.

International Co-operation

Our long-time friends from **St. Christopher School**, UK, paid a three day visit to our school in April. The group was led by Edwin Gruber. St. Chris has been supporting DWLS for the past 5 years and their generosity has been overwhelming. During their visit

they organised a variety of educational games for our children. A class on psychology was organised for the teachers, and trainers demonstrated some important first-aid techniques, which were of immense benefit. A cultural programme was staged for the visitors and they performed some songs and plays. Souvenirs were presented to our guests on the final day of their visit. A friendly basketball match was organised in which both sides took part. On the whole, the visit was informative and educative, and both partner schools learnt a lot. DWLS is looking forward to carrying out further such exchanges in the years to come and we expect other schools to join us in creating such relations in the near future.

Contributed by Karma Dhargyal

Roxanne Bamford, a 'gap year' student from London, arrived in April to start a 3 month assignment. Her main task is to help the teaching staff to improve their English language capability. She was joined in late May by **Jake Armitage**, Resident Architect from Arup Associates, who will be on site for 4 months.



Healthcare

In April, Michel Guinet and Corinne Barbier from Tahiti made their third visit to Shey to offer preventive fissure sealant treatment to students, in order to protect their adult teeth. They were assisted by dentist Jean Philippe Bréard from Grenoble, France. Here you see them using the new dental equipment we purchased, thanks to donations from France, Tahiti and the UK. In addition, dentists from the dzi Foundation (from the US) visited in May to re-examine the teeth of the older students they had seen last year and to provide any necessary curative treatment.



Child Sponsorship

131 students from disadvantaged families are sponsored by international supporters and thus benefit from a modern education. Mme Sarla Chhewang and Wendy Cornwell travelled to the Markha Valley in September 2008 to assess the families of new applicants. Wendy is constantly searching for new sponsors - an additional seven sponsors are needed from November 2009.

Buildings & Infrastructure



The school took a huge step forward in October 2008 when a sophisticated, new **solar energy system** was switched on, supplied by SunTechnics Energy Systems Pvt. Ltd. The system provides enough electricity for current needs, but system capacity will need to be expanded next year to meet the demands of the growing campus. We continue to raise funds for solar energy investment through voluntary carbon offset donations from supporters and visitors to the Shey campus. Please contact us if you wish to 'offset' your travel.

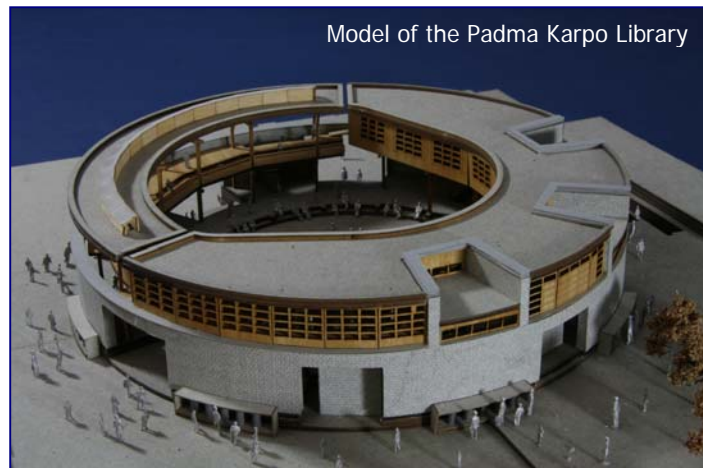
Construction Manager Angdus is keeping up the pace of construction. The Science Courtyard was completed in October 2008. Key targets for 2009 are to complete the first **Secondary School** building and **Residence 3**.

Fundraising

We raise funds in many strange and wonderful ways. On the left you can see students from Dukhan English School in Qatar enjoying a 'Crazy Tie' non-uniform day in order to raise funds for Druk White Lotus School. Students from Dukhan English School are planning to visit Ladakh in 2010.



We are now fundraising for the new **Padma Karpo Library**, to be built at the very center of the campus. The model on the right shows what it will look like - *with your kind help*.



Local Enquiries: Tashi Tsering

Druk Padma Karpo Institute
Shey, Ladakh, J&K
India
Tel: +91 1982 267 255
pa.dpki@gmail.com

International Enquiries: Rachel Glynn

Park Hill House, 1 Park Hill
Bickley, Bromley, Kent BR1 2JH,
United Kingdom
Tel: +44 20 8468 1339
info@dwls.org

International Enquiries: Carrie Lee

PO Box 49358
Los Angeles, CA 90049
United States of America
Tel: +1 310 663 6807
carrie@drukpala.org

www.dwls.org

Images courtesy of: Arup Associates, Roxanne Bamford, Jean Philippe Bréard, James Devine, Rachel Glynn, Edwin Gruber and Michelle McLachlan.

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