

# Empower the Children



## Rosalie's Message

Fall 2015

Dear Friends,

Since 2001 Empower The Children has fanned the tiny sparks of unfulfilled potential that emanate from one of the most disadvantaged places on earth—the slums of Kolkata. Every year we watch the flames grow brighter. Through education, ETC children, teens and young adults emerge from the darkness of illiteracy into the sunlight. Some of these students have endured unimaginable hardship, but their indomitable spirit, coupled with sheer determination to recreate their lives, has become a true inspiration to us all.

Today, ETC maintains eight schools, two tutorial centers, vocational training programs, and now provides college funding for those students seeking higher education. At its core are local teachers, administrators, board members and international volunteers. Their team spirit and hard work project an energy that helps to alleviate the sting of adversity and even despair that many of our students face. We have expanded our ancillary services to include computer training courses and spoken English classes. The happy faces of our special needs children is another indication that ETC is shining a light into a corner of society that often discards the mentally and physically impaired. Last but not least, ETC continues to provide a nutritious lunch for 600 students every day.

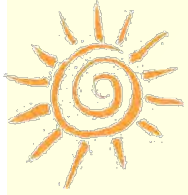
Although ETC's core is strong and resilient, YOU, our supporters, are the renewable energy who make our miracles happen. Each year we send out an appeal and we are never disappointed. Your generous contributions enable ETC students to permanently change the landscape of their impoverished existence. Ask our students...their stories, their sunny smiles and their gratitude tell it all!

Love,

Rosalie

The best kind of people are  
the ones  
that come into your life  
and make you see sun where  
you once saw clouds.  
The people that believe in  
you so much,  
help you to believe in  
yourself.  
The people that love you  
simply for being you.  
The once in a lifetime kind  
of people.



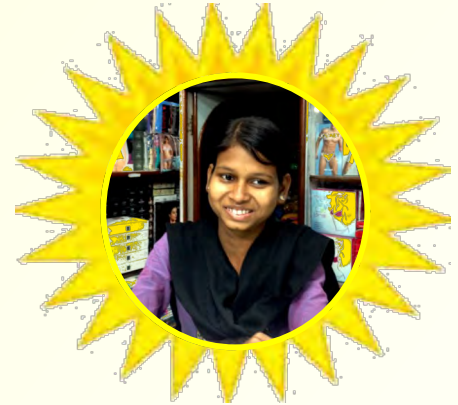


VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMS at Empower The Children schools are designed for women who want to develop skills, express their creativity, and acquire a degree of financial independence. Some students arrive at ETC under extraordinary circumstances; they excel, succeed and serve as models for other students who wish to follow in their footsteps.

*"You can overcome whatever is going on around you if you believe in the light that lives within you." Justine Edward Shine*

*"Who will support my mother?" asked Suna Ghosh after her father died. Her decision to shoulder that responsibility changed the course of her life.*

Suna has a 13 year history with Empower The Children. At the inauguration of Preyrna 1 School, she enrolled in the literacy program and studied there until she was a teenager. Then she transitioned to the vocational training program where she learned various kinds of stitching and knowledge of fabrics.



SUNA

But life changed markedly after her father died. Her sister, newly married, moved to her husband's residence so Suna reluctantly quit school to care for her mother. *"I worked as a domestic servant for several years but was never satisfied and dreamed of a better future."*

Suna realized that her knowledge of fabrics and decorative embroidery could be a stepping stone to the world of textiles she loved so much. With this in mind, she applied for a position at Radhu Rani Blouse Specialists in the Uttarapan Shopping Center. To her delight she was hired and has since won kudos from her manager. Today Suna has actualized her dreams of a better future, earning a livable wage and a means to support her mother. *"Over the years, with ETC's help, I have gained the confidence and skills to succeed in life."*



*"A wise man adapts himself to circumstances as water shapes itself to the vessel that contains it." Chinese Proverb*



MOMOTA

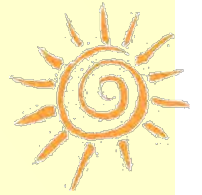
*A place to hang one's hat is the first thought that comes to mind when opening a business; however, Momota and Prodip Jana did not have that luxury. They couldn't afford to rent space but did not let that deter them. They sought permission from the local authorities and opened their pedal sewing machine shop on a footpath in Salt Lake, a prosperous suburb of Kolkata.*

There, in all weather, they fashioned simple articles of clothing, keeping prices low. In order to improve her skills, Momota enrolled in the tailoring class at Preyrna 3 School. She is now able to sew more complex articles of clothing and is grateful to ETC as she watches her family business grow.



## KARUNA

*"Problems are only opportunities in work clothes.*  
Henry J. Kaiser



Karuna's story is one of heartbreak, hope and courage. Two years ago, her husband died a tragic and untimely death. At age 32, Karuna had a young son to raise and no income, but that wasn't the reason she joined the vocational training program at Preyrone 3 School. *"I was despondent,"* she said, tears flowing down her face. *"I needed to distract my mind from the tragedy. I had to start living again."*

Enrolling in ETC's tailoring program at Preyrone 3 School was a decision Karuna made to alter her life. Even before graduation, she opened a shop in front of her house using her mother's manual sewing machine.

Karuna now designs and sews women and children's clothing from fabrics provided by her clientele. She smiles as she recalls that she had so many customers before the Durga Puja holiday that she was afraid she would not complete all the orders. However, with perseverance and a desire to succeed, she managed to finish everything on time. And Karuna has goals for the future—opening a larger shop and becoming a tailoring teacher. Karuna has started to live again!



*"Born with the odds stacked....blessed to be exceeding expectations daily." Unknown Origin*

She's small in stature but taller than all of us. Her education is limited but she can teach us so much. In her brief 18 years she has witnessed a lifetime of hardship but still remains happy and playful. Her story trumps many of the tragic stories that frame life in the slums, for Rumpa Das is a dwarf. However, in a society that shuns dwarfism, Rumpa has *beaten the odds* as she was born to loving parents who cherish her and have always made her feel secure.

When Rumpa was 12 years old, life took a very nasty turn when her mother was severely burned after a stove exploded. Just three years into her schooling, she had to quit school to shoulder the burden of caring for her mother, while her father, the family's only support, continued to pull his heavily loaded cart through Kolkata's traffic-choked roads.

Rumpa, now enrolled in ETC's vocational training program at Preyrone 3 School, excels at needlepoint. She was first to volunteer in our interactive lesson portraying Martin Luther King, and her parents were ecstatic when she joined other drama students in ETC's Celebration of Diversity performance.

Rumpa has a great deal of inner strength, and she enthuses everybody with her zest for life. When she says, *"I don't feel disabled....I can do anything,"* we believe her because she's RUMPA!



## RUMPA



Rosalie

ETC's new interactive curriculum, a kaleidoscope of ideas created by Karen Mackolin and myself, was designed to engage students who have little experience of life outside the slums. Lesson plans include a multitude of subjects that contrast Indian and American cultures. Collaboration on this project paid off! The interaction between teachers and students through discussion, art, music and drama has proven that teaching can be fun and that fun is learning too!

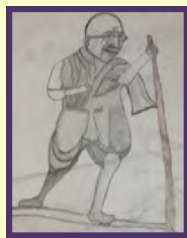


## FAMOUS PEOPLE

## FAMOUS LANDMARKS



Mahatma Gandhi's dream of an independent India began on March 12, 1930. As thousands joined the salt march to the sea,



Gandhi proved that non-violent protests could change the course of history—the British salt monopoly was broken.



## I HAVE A DREAM.....

Martin Luther King said, "Since being in India, I am more confident than ever that passive resistance is the most powerful weapon available to suppressed people in their fight for justice and human self-esteem."



WE  
SHALL  
OVERCOME

Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King shared a dream in which fundamental rights serve everyone equally—a symbol of hope that sprang from these FAMOUS PEOPLE.



ETC students learned that the Statue of Liberty is the first symbol of freedom that greets immigrants upon their arrival in the USA. The Taj Mahal is admired worldwide as a beautiful masterpiece of Indian art. Construction of 3D puzzles, drawing, play acting, and travel through books and photographs instilled in our students a desire to someday visit these FAMOUS LANDMARKS.



By re-enacting the Salt March and the Boston Tea Party, students were surprised that citizens from both India and the U.S. colonies were able to change the course of history. These two iconic events crushed the monopoly of paying unfair taxes and served as catalysts that won them freedom from British rule. Every student then cast a vote—the most important part of their lesson on INDEPENDENCE.

The history of the rupee dates back to ancient India, circa 6th century BC. The American dollar has its roots in a Dutch coin Leeuwendaler (lion daler). The circuitous journey of a 100 rupee note was dramatized by students who experienced firsthand how money is transacted in their neighborhood. They mapped out where different currencies are used throughout the world, and then each student created a unique CURRENCY.



## INDEPENDENCE

## CURRENCY



International Currencies



Uncle Sam Hats





*"There can be no rainbow without a cloud and a storm."* J. H. Vincent

## RAM KRISHNA GANGULY

Adversity is no stranger to 19 year old **Ram Krishna Ganguly**. He is a college student aspiring to become a chartered accountant, yet has known hardship from an early age.

His mother, the youngest of 14 children with no money for a dowry, wed a man 16 years her senior. Odd jobs offered a scant living, and Ram Krishna's ailing, malnourished father often sacrificed his own health for his family's nourishment, insisting, "You take, you take."

At age 11, under ETC's sponsorship program, Ram Krishna was able to remain in school when his parents' funds became exhausted.



**Ram Krishna, with his proud mom, joins the growing ranks of ETC college students.**

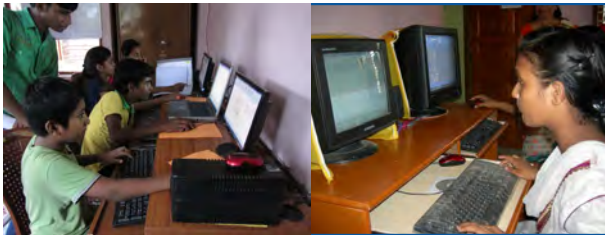
In spite of his father's poor health and frequent hospitalizations, Ram Krishna passed his final exams, coming in first division. Today he is a student at South City College of Commerce and continues to excel in his studies.

Ram Krishna's mother is very proud of him, encouraging him to *"work hard and become independent."* She stresses, *"He must become a good human being....not only to help his parents but also those destitute children in similar circumstances."*

Ram Krishna is determined to *pay it forward* to other needy children in gratitude to ETC and to honor his parents' sacrifices.

ETC salutes Ram Krishna for his hard work and determination to succeed!

### "SUNLIGHT" on ETC Students



**Computer Classes Level One** —ETC students receive certification in Office, Painting, Power Point, Windows, Word Pad, Internet, E-mail and Excel.



**Art Classes**—Under the artful eye of Mr. Susanta Das, ETC's budding artists created this spectacular mural and boundary wall to brighten up their school.



**The "Sun" has come up for many ETC students. Fourteen years ago, they were young children enrolled in ETC's Preyrna Schools. Today hundreds of young adults enjoy various educational and vocational pursuits.**

**We thank our loyal ETC Supporters!**

- Higher Education
- Motorcycle and Car Mechanics Repair
- Building Industry—Marble Layers and Fitters
- Construction Industry—Brick Layers/Building Material Suppliers
- Self-Employed—Shopkeepers/Seamstresses
- Retail Stores
- Computer Certification /Apprenticeships
- Tutoring
- West Bengal Police Service



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This beautiful quilt was designed and sewn in just five weeks by students from Cupar Angus Primary School in Perthshire, Scotland. ETC's years-long cultural exchange program is alive and well, as Indian and Scottish students continue to 'give back' to one another—learning, experiencing and loving. **Thank you Scotland!**



Wedding bells, flowers, and music made Dustin and Jessica Brown's wedding a very special day! Even more special was their generous and compassionate gesture of donating the money they would have spent on wedding favors to ETC.



Jessica, her sister-in-law Amanda and friend Rachel had volunteered in Kolkata in 2010. Upon returning home, they decided to fundraise in Asbury Park and raised over \$2,000. **Thank you Dustin, Jessica, Amanda, and Rachel!**

**Merchant & Gould**  
An Intellectual Property Law Firm

Merchant & Gould is proud to announce the 2014 recipient of the **Paul A. Welter Award for Excellence in Trademark Law**  
**Nisa Lynn Ojalvo of LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton Inc.**

Please join us for a special celebration honoring her, and all of the past Welter Award Winners.

Thursday, November 13, 2014  
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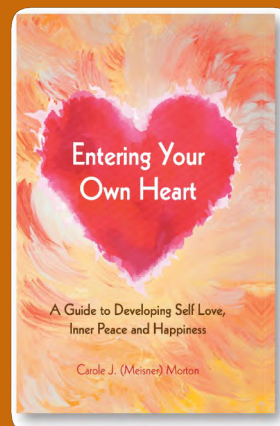
Nisa Ojalvo was the 2014 recipient of the Paul A. Welter Award for Excellence in Trademark Law. Nisa fundraises for ETC every year but took this extraordinary opportunity to donate the \$5,000 she received from this award to ETC. Nisa is a "once in a lifetime kind of person".

**Thank You Nisa!**

Fourteen years ago Rosalie's colleague, Karen Mackolin, *jumped on board* to help create the alphabet curriculum. Today many of ETC students can boast that they learned their ABC's in fun, innovative ways.



Now retired from the Jackson School District, Karen has once more *jumped on board* to create a new and exciting curriculum that contrasts Indian and American cultures. Her vivid imagination has enlivened our classrooms and for that we say, **Thank You Karen!**



In her book, *Entering Your Own Heart*, Carole Morton reveals a psycho-spiritual path that readers can travel in order to reach true self-love, healing and awakening. Carole, Rosalie's life-long friend, has pledged to donate 10% of the proceeds from her book to ETC. **Thank You Carole!**



**MEET THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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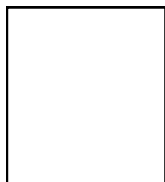
Empower The Children  
P.O. Box 1412  
Jackson, NJ 08527 USA

**E-mail:** Rosalie: [giffoniello@gmail.com](mailto:giffoniello@gmail.com)  
Janet: [janetgrosshandler@gmail.com](mailto:janetgrosshandler@gmail.com)

**Website:** [www.empower-children.org](http://www.empower-children.org)



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# EMPOWER THE CHILDREN



## 2015 LUNCH PROGRAMS



*"The sun will come out tomorrow....."*

Thanks to you, our ETC supporters, our students now have a place to shine! They are strong, healthy and determined to succeed. We can measure this by their smiles, enthusiasm and love of learning. *The world is their oyster*, and we want to help them attain their goals.

ETC serves a wholesome lunch to 600 children six days a week. Despite an annual increase in food prices, we have been able to maintain this program. We trust that through your continued generosity, ETC will encourage and enliven our students by nourishing their bodies and educating their minds. To quote James Barrie, *"Those who bring sunshine into the lives of others cannot keep it from themselves."* Thank you!

### Help Feed

#### Our Children

- \_\_\_ \$ 50.00
- \_\_\_ € 50.00
- \_\_\_ £ 32.00
  
- \_\_\_ \$ 100.00
- \_\_\_ € 100.00
- \_\_\_ £ 64.00

- ☀ Preyrona 1, 2 and 3
- ☀ Atmaraksha
- ☀ Nehru Colony
- ☀ Nevidita Preschools
- ☀ BBD
- ☀ Khamargachi School

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Donate online at [www.empower-children.org](http://www.empower-children.org)

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