

## The ABC's of Freedom - Schools4Freedom, Update 1

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In 2010 and 2011, a few members of the Rotarian Action Group Against Child Slavery visited projects, sites and grassroots organizations—all helping survivors of modern slavery—in India. One of our biggest questions was how to reverse the cycle of illiteracy and poverty that leave people vulnerable to slavery—how to bring families out of exploitation and into freedom forever, thus preventing injustice, violence and exploitation of children and generations to come.

*Photo: Children who will attend Rotary's School4Freedom in Uttar Pradesh, India.*

Over the past year-and-a-half, RACSRAG members and others have provided monetary and moral support for the Rotary School4Freedom project. We've asked more questions and communicated with partners Voices4Freedom and MSEMVS. Thanks to donations from 12 individual Rotarians, 13 Rotary clubs, one Rotaract club and additional donors, the groundwork is laid to do the heavy work of freeing a village.

Fundraising is complete, our village to come out of slavery has been chosen, and assessments are finished.

Information about our village:

- \* The hamlet is outside of Varanasi, in the state of Uttar Pradesh, India.
- \* Of the 400 villagers, 132 are in debt bondage slavery working in slaveholders' brick kilns, farm and construction projects. Others are at risk for enslavement because of abject poverty, illiteracy and lack of knowledge of human rights. That will change.
- \* Currently only two or three villagers can write their own name.
- \* 75 children will attend this School4Freedom (S4F). They will be their family's first generation to go to school.

In the next few months, a basic school with roof and supports will be built. Our funds will provide 2 teachers, school supplies and furnishings, and hot lunches for students. A solar lamp will be installed to allow students to study at night and to reduce snakebites and violence. Over the next three years, students will receive an education, women and youth will learn vocational skills to generate income, and adults will learn that they have human rights. At the end of the process, the village will be organized to demand their own freedom and will have the strength and stability to sustain it.