

Darjeeling Children's Trust

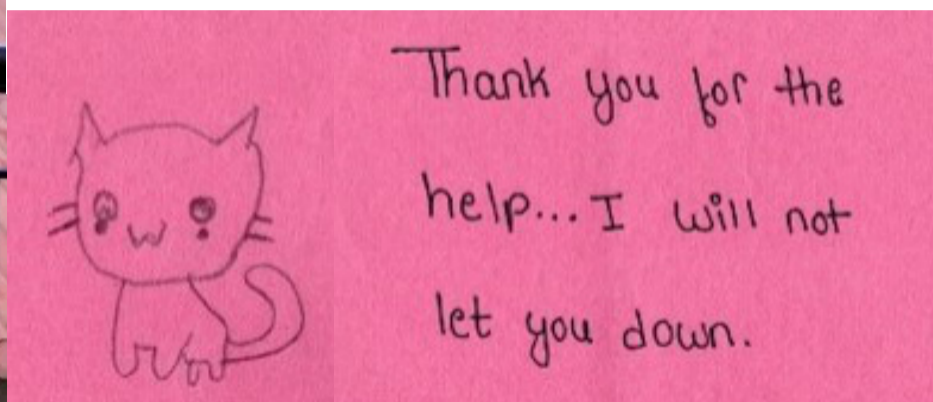
We change lives...



To,
The Darjeeling Children Trust
Respected Trustees,

I
of AG School Darjeeling of Class VII
would like to thank you for everything you've done for us. The
word would not be enough to thank you for opportunity you
provided us. I'm very grateful for all the support this encourages
me to move better further in future and I will give my best and
hope to make you feel proud.

An unsolicited letter from a sponsored child. Or the same sentiment expressed more simply...



Sponsoring a child's schooling



Whatever people say about children's rights to education, such rights mean little when the children come from poor families. Their parents—perhaps porters or housemaids—will have left school with little education themselves. And, having low-paid jobs, they can't afford to buy pens and paper for their children, let alone pay school fees.

We're determined that poverty should never deny a good education to children in Darjeeling. In 2025 we'll be paying for 55 children to attend fee-paying schools or colleges. By enabling them to attend establishments where the value of teaching in English is recognised, they'll have a great chance of embarking on a fulfilling occupation—as Gopal eagerly anticipates (see below)—lifting themselves and their families out of the pernicious cycle of poverty.

Could you bridge the gap between a child's right to a good education and his or her opportunity to claim that right? If you could, will you become a sponsor? The letters will give you a sure idea of the gratitude you'll earn.

This is from Gopal

"Thank you so much for your support and sponsoring my education. With this help I can see my future is great and bright. Your sponsorship will let me continue my studies and let me become what I want to be in the future."

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**Sponsoring
a child's education
in an good local school
for a year costs on
average \$492 (or \$41 a
month)**



IT skills training



Those entering the jobs market for the first time fall into two groups: school leavers with valuable IT competence and confidence; and those whose lack of IT skills greatly reduces their attractiveness to employers. We want to give all our children the very best chance of being in that first group.

We have identified the Darjeeling Institute of Computer Excellence as the premier provider of IT skills training for older students, not least for those whose existing proficiency levels are low. Training at the children's home consists of three one-hour sessions per week over a three-month period. By allocating one computer to two students, we can provide training for 22 students in each session.

The IT training aims to develop proficiency in MS Office applications such as Word, Excel and PowerPoint. Monthly tests track students' progress, with certificates awarded upon successful completion of the course. Dinesh's letter might be simple in its construction but none can doubt his sincerity.

This is from Dinesh

"I am very grateful to DCT for providing the computer course for us. We are learning many useful things. Thank you, DCT."

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You can help
improve our
children's employment
prospects by sponsoring
IT training. The cost of
training 22 students is
\$672 (or \$56 a
month)

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Hospitality management



Imagine yourself in Arjan's position. You have passion, ambition, determination. Thus armed, you're sure to succeed in life, able to provide for yourself and your family. Except that, coming from a poor family, your schooling will be basic. At the earliest opportunity, you'll have to leave school and take any job you can get, however low the pay, or long the hours, or backbreaking the work. So much for your passion, ambition, determination.

Now here's how things actually panned out. Arjan has been supported by DCT from the age of six. At 18, he began training in the hospitality industry. The 15-month course in Hotel Management at Darjeeling's Food and Craft Institute was followed by six months of on-the-job training in Hyderabad, equipping him with great employment prospects in hotels across India and beyond. Recently, the generosity of a supporter provided Arjan with a laptop. As you can see from the short extract from his very eloquent letter of thanks to the supporter, the gift's value to Arjan is both significant and enduring.

This is from Arjan

"This thoughtful gesture means a lot to me, and I truly appreciate it. The laptop will be incredibly helpful in supporting my future work, studies and career development. Your kindness has made a significant impact on my life, and I am truly thankful for your support.

With love and respect..."

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**You can change
a life by sponsoring
a DCT Hospitality
Management student.
The cost of the full
course is \$1,320 (or \$88
a month for 15
months)**

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Mental health counselling



One of the lessons of our age is that mental ill-health represents a crisis which is often hidden and suffered in private. No-one would question that mental health awareness for children and young people is essential if they are to thrive emotionally, psychologically and educationally. This is why we treat mental health counselling so seriously.

Educating our supported children (and our staff) about mental health, and helping them recognise when they need help, promotes understanding, reduces stigma and encourages open conversations. Interactive mental health awareness sessions, run by qualified counsellors and psychiatric social workers, cover such issues as anxiety, bullying and depression. They equip children and young people with coping skills, resilience and the ability to deal with their emotion as they navigate the pressures of growing up. After attending one of these sessions, Hanka wrote simply of what she had gained from the experience.

This is from Hanka

"[The mental health programme] helped us learn how to take care of our thoughts and feelings. We also learned how to be kind and help each other when someone feels sad or worried.

"Thank you for always being there for us..."

"With lots of love and gratitude..."

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Will you help our children and young people understand and tackle mental health issues by funding the counselling programme at a cost of \$156 (or \$13 a month)?

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Himalayan Mountaineering Institute



Those of us who enjoyed a happy childhood and fulfilling career would never say that preparation for life starts and ends in the classroom. Success, happiness and the capacity for making the most of life's opportunities requires much more: confidence, moral courage, self-belief, discipline and the ability to work in a team. When necessary, you need to be ready and able to take the lead.

We are determined that the young people of Darjeeling should be helped to develop these traits. So we work with the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute to arrange courses in which a variety of exhilarating outdoor activities take in Darjeeling's highest point—the 12,000 foot Sandakphu. If Sunita's experience is typical, we're sure they'll develop those qualities and virtues which, by supplementing their formal education, will equip them to scale life's peaks.

This is from Sunita

"I want to express my gratitude for this opportunity to go to Sandakphu. I felt tired on the trek but it was a nice experience. I made so many friends and learnt so many things like rappelling, climbing and swimming, cooking and many other things. I also won two medals in obstacle race and indoor rock climbing."

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You can
change the life of
a young person by
sponsoring their 15 day
HMI course at a cost of
**\$276 (or \$23 in 12
monthly payments)**

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Career counselling programme



Exam passes alone don't guarantee a smooth transition into work, especially if the school-leaver is uncertain as to the path ahead. So all sponsored students in years 8-11 have expert career counselling, with Year 11 students benefiting from personalised sessions with comprehensive assessments. This helps them set realistic goals, create actionable plans and build confidence in their choices, whether that be further education, vocational training or entry-level jobs.

Career counsellors helped Asmi build a persuasive resumé and develop strong interview skills, giving her a competitive edge in the job market. They also opened her eyes to careers which had previously seemed inaccessible.

We are determined that expert career counselling should empower our sponsored students to take control of their futures, fostering independence and self-sufficiency, and providing the best chance of career success. Are you able to help us achieve that goal, please?

This is from Asmi

"I would like to extend my gratitude for the career counselling session. I did not know that this session would be so important for me as I had already set my goals but now I realise how important it is to match our career with our personality. In the first session, Sir taught some very important lessons of life and I am very grateful to him."

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If you'd like to help our students plan their future by sponsoring career counselling, the total cost for all students is **\$650 (or \$54 a month)**

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Yoga sessions



As those of us with personal experience know very well, yoga can be really beneficial for children and young people, supporting their physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Besides helping improve flexibility, strength and coordination, yoga also encourages mindfulness and focus, helping children and teenagers manage stress, anxiety and conflicting emotions.

The yoga sessions at the children's home teach valuable life skills such as patience, resilience and self-discipline. In a non-competitive, inclusive environment our children can build confidence and feel empowered. As Hanka's enthusiastic letter shows, practicing yoga also enhances social skills, with group exercises encouraging communication and teamwork whilst nurturing both body and mind.

This is from Pooja

"I love yoga because it helps me stretch and feel calm. The poses are fun and I feel strong and peaceful. I like breathing deeply and balancing like a tree."

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You can help our children and young people by committing to a regular payment of \$13 a month towards the cost of the yoga teacher

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Rainwear and warm clothing



Those who are not so keen on the rain shouldn't live in New Orleans LA, where average annual rainfall is 66". If they simply can't stand wet weather, they should certainly give Recife in Brazil a miss, as it must endure 95". However, if they want to know what really wet weather is, what better than a visit to Darjeeling? Those who have lived there know that annual rainfall in the town—a drenching 148"—makes New Orleans seem arid by comparison: Darjeeling's rainfall in July is nearly as much as Kansas City MO gets in a whole year.

Little wonder, then, that we must provide good quality rainwear for all the supported children, along with ample warm clothing for a climate which is often very cold. In 2025 we'll need to spend about \$3,000 on rainwear, umbrellas and warm clothing. If you're in the fortunate position of being able to stay dry and warm without too much difficulty, will you help the children of Darjeeling share your good fortune with a one-off gift?

This is from Rachana

"Thank you so much for the umbrella and rain clothes. I love them. Now I can stay dry and warm even when it is pouring. I'm so happy and grateful."

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**You could help one
child stay dry and warm
in 2025 with a one-off
gift of \$25**



Medicines and toiletries



Some things just aren't glamorous, but they're essential all the same.

The new children's home has become a vibrant and nurturing environment for 50 girls and 50 boys, with every aspect of their welfare being thoughtfully addressed. From providing essentials such as toothbrushes and toothpaste to ensuring adequate provision for girls' hygiene, each detail is carefully managed. Darjeeling Children's Trust ensures that all the children feel secure, cared for and happy in their home, creating an atmosphere where they can grow and thrive.

We budget to spend less than a dollar per child per month on toiletries and medicines. Your support in this aspect of the well-being of the children would help us sustain this high level of care and so make a real difference in their lives.

This is from Jigten and Sangam (Supervisors)

"Unlike in many households, no child is ever denied the medication they need.

"Every month we check that the children have all the basic toiletries – brushes, tooth paste, sanitary pads, towels, combs etc. The children are very happy to be able to maintain their personal hygiene – and so are we!"

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Please consider
covering the 12-month
cost of toiletries and
medicines for one child
with a one-off payment
of \$13

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Nurse training



DCT is proud to support young women who wish to become fully qualified nurses. Past students have trained as nursing assistants at a local nursing home and then found employment at a hospital in Gyaganga. Another successfully studied for a Diploma in Laboratory and Microbiology, followed by additional training in a pathology laboratory, finally achieving qualification as a Laboratory Technician. Our most recent successes include a DCT-sponsored student who enrolled in General Nursing and Midwifery training three years ago and recently passed all of her exams.

These successes follow more than a decade of support, in which we have empowered women in the healthcare sector and contributed positively to their lives and communities.

This is from Harsha

"I have completed my General Nursing and Midwifery course, which took three years. I stayed at the children's home for more than nine years. I am very grateful to DCT for supporting me and shaping my career. I will never forget DCT's generosity and will contribute to our society in the future."

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Could you help a young woman realise her ambition of becoming a nurse? The annual cost of training is \$1,536 or \$128 a month for three years

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Nutrition programme



The nutrition programme is a key part of our wider Health & Well-being Programme.

In place of the dull and repetitive fare to which they had become accustomed, the children now delight in the nutritious and delicious food provided by DCT's supporters. They savour the fresh, organic flavours of Himalayan cuisine, from vibrant green vegetables to protein-packed eggs and dairy. Each bite promotes their health, growth, and overall well-being, fostering not just physical strength but also a sense of joy and contentment.

It's very clear that the diverse and wholesome meals bring smiles to young faces and energy to their days, ensuring that every child is nourished and cared for. The transformative impact on their daily lives is a testament to the power of good nutrition in nurturing young minds and bodies.

This is from Madhav

"I like momos. Thank you."

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**Please help us
fund the nutrition
programme with a
monthly or one-off
payment. Large or small,
your gift will contribute
to a healthy diet for
our children.**

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Mathematics tutor



A sound grasp of math fosters critical thinking, problem-solving skills and logical reasoning. Not only is math fundamental for understanding and engaging with science, economics and technology, it equips children with essential life skills such as sound budgeting, effective time management and informed decision-making.

Recognising the importance of math as a fundamental academic discipline, DCT funds a mathematics tutor to take dedicated sessions at the children's home, providing tailored instruction to complement the school curriculum.

With a focus on engaging activities and personalized guidance, this supplemental tuition enables our children to gain confidence and a sense of accomplishment, laying the groundwork for academic and career success.

This is from Pradeep

"Thanks to extra math lessons, I understand things better now. I can solve problems faster and feel more confident in class. It is fun and I am getting better every day."

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Will you help our children and young people get to grips with math by funding the mathematics tutor for \$1,548 (or \$129 a month)?

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Technical vocational training



Imagine a young person from one of Darjeeling's poorer families, full of dreams but limited by poverty. Clearly, if such young people could access appropriate vocational training it would unlock the door to a better future, transforming lives and breaking the seemingly endless cycle of poverty.

Khari is one such person. In 2024 we supported him by covering the cost of his training at the Don Bosco Technical Institute (his heart lies in motor mechanics). Now he has not only a wealth of new skills but also self-confidence and—best of all—a good job in a local workshop. If you could support another budding mechanic like Khari, you'd set him on the path to self-sufficiency, able to support his family and contribute to the local economy.

If you empowered just one of Darjeeling's young men to achieve their potential and create a brighter, more prosperous tomorrow, gratitude for your kindness today would surely outlive you by decades.

*This is from Sangam
(Male Supervisor)*

“Khari had failed in class 10 and he could not study further. After successfully completing a Mechanics Course, paid for by DCT, he is now working in the Mahindra company.”

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**Sponsoring
a young person's
vocational training at
Don Bosco Technical
Institute costs \$576 (or
\$48 a month) for the
full course.**

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