

Local High School Student Finds Success with Literacy Spree

Written by Karah Van Kammen



Aakanksha Saxena, an incoming senior at Desert Mountain High School in Scottsdale, founded Literacy Spree, a 501(c) (3) nonprofit, in 2014. Literacy Spree aims to empower underprivileged female youth through education, more specifically at a female orphanage in India. In 2015 the non-profits crowdfunding campaign raised a total of \$4417 resulting in a significant difference in the lives of the girls it touches.

Through Literacy Spree, Saxena enrolled recipients in vocational skill development diploma courses at UPTEC. UPTEC offers various diploma courses in Computer Science, Accounting, and Finance that enable females from sponsored orphanages to secure jobs in the workforce. Saxena set up a computer lab at the Leelavati Munshi Balgrah orphanage to help bootstrap technical education amongst the girls who live there. She purchased laptops and tablets and installed them at the orphanage with the hope to expand the lab and build others in the future.

Saxena also set up an ongoing skill development program at orphanages through which volunteers teach girls the fundamentals of using computers. To facilitate this, she teamed up with a local chapter of the Make a Difference Foundation (MAD). As a result, MAD has been supplying Literacy Spree with volunteers who come into the orphanage several times a week to conduct their programs. The fundraising dollars have allowed Literacy Spree to hire tutors for sponsored orphanages as well.

Locally, Saxena created a high school community service group in Scottsdale that tutor and host math competitions for Valley middle schoolers. The group has not only helped spur mathematical interest in more than five hundred local students but has also garnered profits for the funding of Literacy Spree projects.

Literacy Spree is currently running their 2016 fundraising campaign. **All of donations are tax deductible and will go towards higher education opportunities for underprivileged children. To donate click [here](#).** Donations may also be made via check made payable to "Literacy Spree" and sent to 11458 N 128th Place Scottsdale AZ 85259.