

MITRATA-NEPAL FOUNDATION NEWS

Mitrata-Nepal Foundation www.mitrata.org

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THANKS TO MARK HARTSUYKER!

The Mitrata-Nepal Foundation has accomplished many things in the past several years directly due to the efforts of Mark Hartsuyker. Mark's knowledge of cinematography as well as his many dedicated hours of work made the Mitrata-Nepal promotional video possible. Mark helped in so many other ways from creating informative brochures to mailing out Nepali tea. As a Mitrata-Nepal board member, Mark always had great ideas and eagerly volunteered his time.

Due to a new career opportunity, Mark has left Saint Louis and resigned from the Board of Directors. Mark came to Mitrata to be of service the children of Nepal. He has done this in so many ways. The proof is in the smiling faces of the children. The Mitrata-Nepal Foundation will miss Mark and we thank him for his outstanding contributions to our organization. Dhanyabad Mark!

WELCOME BARB MORRIS!

We are pleased to announce Barb Morris will be providing part time administrative and bookkeeping services for Mitrata-Nepal in the USA. She has already helped so much by getting out the invitations to the Fundraiser Dinner in November and other tasks. She will help us stay organized and communicate with our sponsors.

DEAR SPONSORS AND DONORS,

I am pleased to announce that we now have 49 children in our home in Kathmandu and 28 children that we sponsor for school. These are numbers that Nanda and I discussed in 2002 when we found Ishwori, our first child for Mitrata, and brought her from the village to the city. It all seemed like a pipe dream at the time, I have to admit!

Toward the close of 2008, we find that we have quickly and successfully grown up to become a 501(c)(3) organization with 15 members of the Board of Directors. We are, for the first time, hiring a part-time assistant who will organize our communications and do our bookkeeping. This is a huge step for us, initially costing more money, but in the long run assuring our ability to communicate better with all of you. Even with this addition, 95% of our donations will still be going to our programs in Nepal.

Currently as Americans, we are in slower economic times and I know that all of you are carefully considering where your dollars go. I can assure you that the dollars for Mitrata are directly saving and enriching the lives of children, who have known such poverty, despair and economic hardship that we cannot imagine. Our country has huge resources and strengths even in hard times. But tiny Nepal continues to struggle terribly since the war. Living expenses are going up for people who do not have enough money for clean water, sewer systems, schooling or food.

I thank all of you for continuing to support Mitrata through "thick and thin". Together we are making a direct difference in the lives of these children from halfway around the world. I am especially grateful to my very "awesome" Board of Directors and some special people this year who helped us so much, Dr. Debra Shatoff, Ron Gaus, and Barb Morris for their incredible efforts and hard work. Each person contributed significant time and money to our cause in spite of having full lives of work and family obligations. I feel so grateful to all of you who have opened your hearts to Nepal's children.

Please join us at our Fundraiser on November 16 for a Nepali style celebration and bring a new friend with you to introduce to Mitrata. Peace and love to all of you. Namaste,

Christine Schutz,
President Mitrata-Nepal Foundation for Children, Inc.

UPDATE FROM NEPAL

By Praswas Shakya

Nepal finally has installed a working government, with a President and a Prime Minister and a fully working council of ministers. This was welcomed all across the nation and the world, with hopes of Nepal being directed into the path of development and stability.

Since being sworn in last month, Prime Minister Puspha Kamal Dahal has been paying diplomatic visits to China, India and the United States. He was in the United States recently to address the 63rd General Assembly of the United Nations and met up with President Bush. The Prime Minister also gave a talk at the New School University in New York in an attempt to reach out to the Nepalese Diasporas in the United States. The first budget of the new government was announced and was received with mixed reactions, including some protests. However, amendments were made, which has relatively quieted the situation. According to the budget, Nepal achieved a Gross Domestic Product of 5.6 percent the last fiscal year. Nepal collected Rs. 107 billion in revenue and collected Rs. 34 billion in foreign assistance.

Nepal met with a terrible flood on the Koshi river, with thousands displaced and lives lost. The government and the international community have responded and relief is on its way. Electricity has become scarce and load shedding has increased throughout the country due to damage from flooding.

The biggest festival in Nepal is Dashain which runs from September 30 to October 14. With the political stalemate long passed bringing some stability and security, people are looking forward to enjoying this Dashain. Hopefully Nepal gets the stability needed and coasts along the path of development.

INNSBROOK GATHERING

On Sunday, August 31, Mitrata held a small gathering at Innsbrook, a nature-oriented vacation community located one hour west of St. Louis. About thirty Innsbrook residents enjoyed delicious food and wine while watching the Mitrata DVD at the chalet of Inta Berzins. Debra Shatoff, also an Innsbrook resident, helped Inta Berzins plan the event with Nancy Williger and Stephanie Recht. Nancy spoke to the group about Mitrata's history and her important role as the first official sponsor. Thanks to this small group of friends, one child will be home-sponsored and three children will be school-sponsored. In addition, the Mitrata home received \$100 toward a new washing machine and \$800 in general donations that will go toward maintenance and upkeep of the home. Debra, Inta, Nancy and Stephanie extend their sincere thanks to the kind people who attended this event and helped to make a difference in the lives of Mitrata's children.

In a letter to friends who attended the event at Innsbrook, Debra wrote, "Margaret Mead said 'Don't ever doubt that a few good people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only way it has ever happened.' You are among these 'few good people' and I thank you for joining me in this worthy cause!"

DONATE STOCK, SAVE TAXES

Donating stock to Mitrata-Nepal Foundation for Children can help us to achieve our goals in helping the children in Nepal – AND can help you to save on taxes. Mitrata-Nepal Foundation for Children is a 501(c)(3) charity and your donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. We appreciate our many sponsors and donors who send cash gifts and support Mitrata's various fund-raising activities.

Another way to help Mitrata is to donate corporate stock. Generally, you should only donate stock that has appreciated in value and that you have held for more than one year. If the stock has declined in value, you would generally be better off selling it and donating the money. This strategy may be especially timely this year for stock that you will be forced to redeem because of a merger, such as Anheuser-Busch. Giving away stock that has increased in value generally gives you a tax deduction for the fair market value of the shares. And, you avoid paying capital gains tax on the increase in value of the stock. This strategy generally works best for those in the higher tax brackets, although if you are forced to redeem a significant quantity of A-B stock in 2008, it could push you into a higher tax bracket. Donating some of your A-B stock could help to keep you in a lower tax bracket.

Check with your tax professional, financial planner or lawyer to see how a stock donation would affect your individual tax situation. Contact Christine Schutz for more information about donating stock.

MITRATA AT GREENTREE

Despite the intervention of Hurricane Ike, the Mitrata-Nepal Foundation mounted a successful fundraising booth this fall at Kirkwood's Greentree Festival. This annual festival presents folk life, music, crafts and many food booths.

Sandra Hoffmann organized the effort and her neighbor, Ron Gaus, provided the home-made ice cream "Foster's Famous Frozen Custard". Ron and his family are foster parents (hence the name) and he contributes his work to many child-centered causes. A featured item was his special "Baileys ice cream" (4% alcohol), a definite crowd pleaser. During the first half of the weekend this booth sold \$943 in both ice cream and Nepali tea. As the work and costs of production were donated by Ron and other Mitrata volunteers this was pure profit for the children. If the remnants of Hurricane Ike had not swept through Sunday morning and shut down the final day of the fair we might have doubled this. But don't worry, next year we'll be back!

UPCOMING EVENTS

ANNUAL FUNDRAISING DINNER AND SILENT AUCTION NOVEMBER 16

Please join us for a fun filled evening of traditional Nepali music and food at our annual fund raising dinner and silent auction on Sunday, November, 16th. We will be returning to the Cardinal Rigali Center, 20 Archbishop May Dr., Webster Groves, 63119. Look for the signs and balloons on Laclede Station Road to direct you to the site. Hewie Powell, one of our directors, has kindly donated the room. Everest Cafe will be providing a traditional Nepali meal. The event will begin at 5:00 p.m. and the meal will be served at 5:30 p.m. After the meal, we will have a short program of traditional Nepali dancing and an update from Chris Schutz on the Mitrata home.

Invitations will be mailed in early October. Those who RSVP by November 3rd will be sent a catalog of silent auction items. Here's a chance to do your early holiday shopping and benefit a great cause. If you do not receive an invitation and would like to attend, please contact Nancy Williger at 314-962-2426 or nawillgr@aol.com.

MOUNTAINS CLIMBED FOR NEPAL'S CHILDREN

Climbers scaled mountains in Oregon, Washington, and Nepal this year in the 3rd Annual 3 Summits for Nepal's Children. Climbers donated or raised money through personal sponsorships to the tune of over \$11000 with over \$8000 of that donated to Mitrata.

In June, bad weather on Mt. Baker forced participants to head to Oregon to scale Mt. Hood in which 8 participants summited. In July, a record 18 participants attempted Mt. Rainier in Washington and, quite amazingly, everyone summited! For the first time, the "third summit" is a mountain in Nepal planned for October. A group of five participants is making a 3 week trip organized by Red Lantern Journeys to visit the Mitrata Orphanage in Kathmandu and then head to Chulu West in the Annapurna region to attempt it's 21,000 foot-high summit.

While visiting the orphanage, the participants will interview and create a biography for each child. Upon their return to Kathmandu, the participants will then go sightseeing to the famous sights of the Kathmandu Valley with the children of the orphanage.

For more information about 3 Summits for Nepal's Children, please contact Ambrose Bittner at Red Lantern Journeys: Phone: 206-568-0710, email: ambrose@redlanternjourneys.com. Or, visit the Red Lantern Journeys web site for more information: www.redlanternjourneys.com.

DASHAIN FESTIVAL 2008 IN ST. LOUIS

~ Arati Maleku

Nepal is a land of colors and festivals. For Nepalese, festivals are not only the annual celebrations, but also a living part of their rich cultural heritage. "Dashain" is not only the biggest festival, but also the most anticipated one among all others festivals of Nepal. The Dashain Festival 2008 was organized in St. Louis with the objective of bringing the Nepalese community together with a sacred thread of national unity. It was celebrated on September 20, 2008 at the St. Ann Community Center amidst approximately 275 Nepalese from St. Louis and the surrounding areas with food, drinks, cultural performance, exchange of felicitations and wishing for the ultimate peace and prosperity in Nepal. The Mitrata family was fortunate to participate in this grand event formally introducing Mitrata-Nepal Foundation and our efforts to the greater St. Louis Community.

Dashain is the longest and the most auspicious Hindu festival in the Nepalese annual calendar. The fifteen days of celebration occurs during the bright lunar fortnight ending on the day of the full moon. Throughout the kingdom of Nepal, goddess Durga is worshipped with countless pujas, offerings and animal sacrifices. Goddess Durga represents the power of the Supreme Being that preserves moral order and righteousness. "Durga", also called Divine Mother, is believed to protect mankind from evil and misery by destroying evil forces such as selfishness, jealousy, prejudice, hatred, anger, and ego.

The history of Dashain traces back to the great victory of the gods over the wicked demons. One of the victory stories is the Ramayan, where Lord Ram after a big struggle slaughtered Ravana, the monstrous king of demons. It is said that Lord Ram was successful in the battle only when goddess Durga was evoked. The main celebration glorifies the triumph of good over evil and is symbolized by goddess Durga killing the terrible demon Mahisasur, who terrorized the earth in the guise of a brutal water buffalo. The first nine days of the festival represent the nine days of battle, the tenth day marks the day of victory in the battlefield, and the last five days are the celebrations that followed the victory.

Schools and businesses are closed during the Dashain celebration and day-sky is filled with colorful kites. Nepali families manage to shop if not for all, but at least for the children during this season. The most popular cuisine is goat meat prepared as a delicacy. In Nepali homes, whole families are involved in cutting and preparing the meat which usually lasts for 2 to 3 day's of feast. After receiving the blessing of goddess Durga, people are ready to work and acquire virtue, power and wealth.

MITRATA-NEPAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President - Dr. Christine Schutz
Vice President - Dr. Nancy Williger
Secretary - Dr. Sandra Hoffmann
Treasurer - Beth Boyd, CPA

Inta Berzins	Scott Biesinger	Ambrose Bittner
Jim Brasunas	Sue Kaiser	Arati Maleku
Hewie Powell	Stephanie Recht	Praswas Shakya
Barsha Tuladhar	Gil Williams	

STAYING IN TOUCH WITH YOUR CHILD!

Twice a year we send pictures, letters and sometimes drawings from your child. You can send small items to your child or pictures and letters of your family. The children love to hear from their sponsors. Large items are not recommended and please do not send money. Please send items to the Nepal address listed on the front page.

Please let us know if your address or contact information changes so you can receive mail from your child. Send us your email address for easy communications. **The use of an electronic newsletter and updates could save Mitrata Nepal enough money to sponsor 2 children each year.** If you prefer to receive the newsletter by email, please send Christine your request at drcms@earthlink.net. Thank you.

ITEMS NEEDED FOR OUR HOME IN KATHMANDU

1. Office furniture: \$220
2. Vacuum Cleaner: \$360
3. Extra medical expenses: \$600

These items will help the children live more productive lives.

If you would like to make a donation towards the purchase of any items listed please go to our website at www.mitrata.org. Click on "Donate" you will be directed to the secure Paypal website.

Mitrata Nepal Foundation for Children NEWS is published at various times each year to keep donors informed. Questions, comments and suggestions should be directed to Scott Biesinger at jsbeez@hotmail.com or by mail at 625 Highland Park Dr. Apt. G, Chesterfield, Missouri 63017.

