

MITRATA-NEPAL FOUNDATION NEWS

Mitrata-Nepal Foundation www.mitrata.org

Nepal Director - Nanda Kulu
P.O. Box 19522
Ward No. 17
Khusibhu Town Planning,
Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel 011-977-1436-2394
mitrata_nepal2000@yahoo.com

U.S. Director
Dr. Christine Schutz
3934 Arsenal Street
St. Louis, MO 63116
Tel 314/762-9412
drcms@earthlink.net

FALL 2009

Dear Sponsors and Donors,

As we near the end of 2009, I feel grateful for the amazing people who have made this a successful year for our beautiful children in Nepal. In spite of the dire world economic situation, we have provided support to nearly 100 needy children. Two of our oldest children, Anita and Pawan, excelled on their exams and progressed into the best schools in Nepal to further their education. They work in the children's home as helpers and are studying hard. For the first time, we have children reaching maturity demonstrating so clearly the direct results of the support of our sponsors and donors through the years.

My gratitude goes to our determined and generous Board of Directors. They make things happen and care so deeply about our work that I am always in awe of them. Our Seattle connection has blossomed with the hard work of board member, Ambrose Bittner, who coordinated the Climb for Himalayan Children and raised a substantial amount of money for us. In August, I had the privilege of meeting these climbers who are inspiring and dedicated to our cause, besides being in incredibly good shape!

My trip to Nepal this year was productive. I was joined by board members Nancy Williger and Stephanie Recht, who helped with our capacity building and organizational work with the NGO. It made me happily cry to see them both meet the children they have sponsored for years for the first time. In the children's home, we have an excellent new Executive Director, Mr. Hari Karki; Nanda Kulu remains the President of the NGO, continuing her great work in Nepal. The Nepal staff is dedicated and hard working and I am humbled by their loving care and focus on education, all of which results in our children becoming delightful young adults.

We are pleased about our new annual fundraiser this year, cosponsored by Maryville University on Saturday evening November 14th, which includes an exciting presentation on climbing Mount Everest by Ambrose Bittner, followed by authentic Nepali food. I hope to see all of you and your friends there. Know that you have truly made a difference in this world! Peace and love to all of you.

Namaste,
Christine Schutz, President

OUR VISIT TO THE MITRATA HOME

By Nancy Morris

My sister, Maureen Bittner and I were visitors to the Mitrata Children's Home in Kathmandu, Nepal in April of this year. We were accompanied by Ambrose Bittner* who was there on a business trip. We prepared for the trip by gathering sewing supplies and art supplies for the children. A teacher friend donated two large boxes of Scholastic Books from her school for children ages 5 to 16.

We conducted some teaching programs for the children while there. On one occasion we taught hand sewing to 16 of the older girls. Each girl finished a small draw string bag during the class. The class produced lots of fun and laughter and near hysteria when one of the girls sewed her bag to her dress. Each girl was presented with a tiny sewing kit for future projects. Maureen had also brought finished bags for all the children who were not old enough to sew. Another time all of the children did handprints on quilt blocks with crayons and embellished them with art work of their choice. The blocks will be set with heat and then made into quilts which will be featured at the Fall Auction Fundraiser.

Merle Drey, our brother, funded a special party on their last day visiting the home. The children chose the menu and everyone enjoyed a sumptuous lunch and then spent the afternoon playing with balloons, jumping ropes and frisbees. We felt the trip to be a life changing experience.

*Nancy Morris and Maureen Bittner are relatives of Board member, Ambrose Bittner.



NEWS OF THE CHILDREN

Here are some excerpts from the report of Mr. Hari Karki, Executive Director of the Mitrata children's home:

“The result of first term exam was on 27th July. 56 children had attended the examination of which 31 got distinction, 19 first division and six second division. Rukesh Kumar Madav got sixth position in class ten, Sudhan Adhikari of class nine got third position, Susmita Duwadi of grade eight became class first, Susmita Lama of grade six became third, Rabina Karki of grade six fourth position and Pasang Sherpa of grade six in sixth position.”

In the Nepali school system, the SLC exam is given after the high school sophomore year. If a child does well, then he can enter the best 2 year school for finishing 11th and 12th grade and go on to university. So the SLC results are very critical!

“We have to write in golden letter the date 26 of June because on this day SLC result was declared and Pawan and Anita both secured distinction percentage. Out of 22 students from Manaslu 4 got distinction including Pawan and Anita. This moment was the happiest moment in our home. They were the first students to give SLC from our home and when both of them got distinction it is natural to be happy.

We distributed sweets in Mitrata home and gave dinner party to five teachers of the school. We took Pawan and Anita including the board members to dinner party at Thamel!”

And our children are artistically talented too! Here Mr. Karki tells of the rising musical fame of our children!

“One thing I forgot to mention was about the international music week where students participated in Imagine Rainbow In Kathmandu Project group which is run by donor Thomas Bertschi from Switzerland (www.rainbow-project.ch). They were involved in the part where they had to play twelve instruments. The program was live telecasted by Kantipur TV and our kids were praised a lot. Ajay Shrestha and Raj Kumar Balami had participated in “Nasa Mukti” art competition organized by “Vawana Mahabir Jain Niketan”.”



NEW WEBSITE ON THE WAY!

Check out our new, updated website at www.mitrata.org. Thanks to our new webmasters, Mike Hoenig of MHE and his son, for their donation of diligent and hard work to Mitrata!

FALL 2009

ANNUAL MITRATA FUNDRAISER SATURDAY NOV. 14TH 5:30 PM: JOURNEY TO EVEREST

This year's annual event and auction will feature Ambrose Bittner and Michael Frank presenting "Journey to Everest". They will be in St. Louis for a presentation of their spring 2005 climb of Mt. Everest. Climbing Mt. Everest is a significant challenge that many have dreamt about, but few in the world have attempted. Out of 6 climbers, only Michael Frank summited along with two Nepalese climbing Sherpas.

This is sure to be an exciting event where you will hear firsthand what it is like to climb the world's tallest mountain. The event will take place on Saturday, November 14th at Maryville University Auditorium at 650 Maryville University Dr., St Louis, MO, 63141. Doors open at 5:30, Lecture and photo presentation begins at 6:00pm. A reception to meet and talk with the climbers will follow the presentation. Nepali snacks will be provided. Tickets are \$30. Learn about one of the world's great adventures, share personal experiences and help children in need in Nepal. Don't miss this rare opportunity...save the date!



WAYS TO GET TICKETS:

Go to the Mitrata website and purchase tickets online through Paypal.

Contact any Board member for tickets.

If you have any questions email Barb at barb_mitrata@yahoo.com

POLITICAL UPHEAVALS IN NEPAL

BY HELKA KARKI

Nepal is a small landlocked country sitting politically and economically in a strategically very important location between two emerging giants, India and China. The mystical country in Himalaya and the land of Shangri-La is surrounded by India from three sides; east, west and south while China covers the northern border.

Though, blessed with breathtaking Himalayan views and beautiful hilly terrain, Nepal is also one of the most impoverished countries in the world. Difficult geographical terrain, ongoing political turmoil, natural disasters and recently ended civil war has left Nepal behind in the 19th century. With a per-capita income of \$1144 [2008 consensus] and a population of 28 million, half of the population still lives below the poverty line with income of less than \$2 per day.

After the end of civil war in 2006 and the declaration of a landmark election, the country saw some new changes. The end of civil war gave people hope for a peaceful and bright Nepal. At present, Nepal has a constituent assembly, which also acts as the parliament but whose major task is to write a new constitution within the next 8 months. There is a coalition government made up of 22 parties which are represented in the constituent assembly. However, with no party having an absolute majority in the assembly, the political turmoil keeps on rising, making it difficult to achieve the target of drafting a new constitution on time.

Drastic changes in the socio-economic system of Nepal have also brought a lot of consequences in the last two decades. The civil war resulted in the killing of 13,000 people. The 239-year-old monarchy was abolished and Nepal became the youngest republic in the world. The landmark constituent assembly election brought the former rebel Maoists in power and making the former rebel leader as the democratically elected prime minister of Nepal. This made Nepal one of only two nations that have democratically elected communist leader as prime minister, the other being Cyprus.

Though a difficult task to achieve, people in Nepal have not lost their hope of having a better and new Nepal. Everyday new consensus are being made, new agreements are being signed and everybody is joining hands in making a new Nepal. Nepalese are determined to provide a new future to the youngest republic and everyone in the world is hoping for a prosperous and peaceful Nepal.

MITRATA-NEPAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President - Dr. Christine Schutz
Vice President - Dr. Nancy Williger
Secretary - Dr. Sandra Hoffmann
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Dr. Inta Berzins	Scott Biesinger	Ambrose Bittner
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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. **Printing and mailing each newsletter edition costs us about \$450. That is \$900 a year that could be spent on the children! Please consider receiving your newsletter by email to reduce our expenses by sending your request to Barb at barb_mitrata@yahoo.com. Thank you.**

PROGRAM NEEDS

With our children getting older, we are very much in need of contributions to our Scholarship Fund to help children with college and vocational education. We have nearly 100 children's futures to consider.

If you would like to make a donation towards the Scholarship Fund or the Building Campaign, please go to our website at www.mitrata.org. Click on "Donate" you will be directed to the secure Paypal website. Please designate your preference.

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.

