

MITRATA-NEPAL FOUNDATION NEWS

Mitrata-Nepal Foundation www.mitrata.org

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MEETING ISHOWRI

By Nancy Williger

The walk from the hotel took about a half an hour and our senses were filled with the noises, smells, and sights of Nepal. Amidst all the sensory stimulation, it occurred to me that I was about to meet a teenager who marked the beginning of Mitrata Nepal Foundation for Children. I sponsor Ishowri Kulu, the first child to come to the home. Many of you may have read the email that Christine wrote to me from Nepal when she and Nanda found Ishowri wandering in her village, cold, hungry, and sick. I do believe that she would not have survived another two weeks in that condition. She was diagnosed with pneumonia and treated and soon was well enough to begin her schooling. She started without any prior education and today is in the eighth grade. She receives glowing reports from the school principal and teachers.

As we walked, I was wondering what I would say and how it would be to finally meet this young woman, now about fifteen, that I had come to love from half a world away. I did not expect to start crying, but that is exactly what I did as soon as I saw her bright smile. We hugged with a warmth that surprised me and then we hugged again. To my surprise and joy, she did not want to let go and the flurry of picture taking gave us a good excuse to just keep our arms around each other. As our visit progressed, I was able to sit down with her and ask her some questions about her experience in the home. She is soft spoken and shy, but has a smile that lights up the room. She is proud of her progress in school and how hard she has worked to learn English. She loves the home and is thinking about staying there to work as she gets older. She likes to help with the younger children and says that all the children in the home feel like brothers and sisters. We shared conversation, a shopping trip to buy her some new clothes, and more hugs until it was time to go. With one more hug, for goodbye this time, we parted with an appreciation of this chance relationship between two strangers no more.



MY EXPERIENCE IN MITRATA

By Pawan Dahal, Mitrata Nepal home sponsored since 2004

I still remember that day when I was first going to enter the home six years ago. The staring eyes wondering around me made me completely nervous. I could hardly provide the answers of the questions which were asked to me about my personal background. I used to feel very lonely and I used to remain in silence. But within the duration of 6 years the entire matter has been completely changed.

We share our experiences among us to get the final and hopeful result. We do not have any misunderstanding among our friends. Such a homey environment creates the feeling of responsibility. We share common duties and perform our daily activities in mutual cooperation, which also helps us to understand one another's feelings. We also make sure that we do not misuse our rights. We are given very good suggestions and are punished when we are off track. I am very pleased. We think of this a positive experience and accept openly thinking it as suggestion.

The longest journey begins with a single step. Remembering this we hope the home, which was initially small, with only few children benefiting from it. Later it reached its destination, growing and developing the feelings of humanity and brotherhood. I have learned from Mitrata that love and kindness from mankind are the basis of a complex world and it becomes a common objective of each and every responsible person to save it. It flourishes and educates the illiterate ones.

At last, I have taken positive attitude in my mind and my memories of Mitrata, as without it my future was uncertain. At present I have nothing except thankfulness to the donors and Mitrata home. If fortune favors and the almighty supports I would definitely do the same as the donors are doing.



GROWTH OF A FRIENDSHIP

By Stephanie Recht

It's unusual to get to know someone solely through letters and photos. This is how Mamta and I communicated for seven years. She was a little girl when I began to sponsor her, and I've watched her grow into a beautiful young lady, one annual photo at a time. We've always felt a connection to one another, but I think we were both nervous about finally getting to meet face to face this year when I visited Mitrata.

I went to the Home my first morning in Nepal. The kids were having music class, singing and drumming with their teachers. It was fantastic to be greeted with such a joyful sound. After the music, Nanda introduced me to Mamta and I fought back my tears as we hugged. The next week, I did a dance performance for the children and led them in some movements. Following that, we all danced together for well over an hour. What could not be expressed in words was expressed in dance. All self-consciousness dissolved and a silly happiness was shared by everyone in the room. Mamta contributed a lot to the energy of the day; she even taught me some Nepali and Bollywood moves! We also did some disco dancing with her friends, twirling each other around and throwing in some dips here and there.

The rest of our visits involved plenty of talking, laughter, and a bit of shopping. Spending time with Mamta was a rich, fulfilling, and thoroughly delightful experience. Now we know one another's personalities, not just facts that we've written in letters. Our correspondence will be more frequent from now on. I can't wait to see this kind, intelligent, creative, and decisive teenager grow gracefully into adulthood.

GENEROSITY THROUGH THE LENS

Anukul Gurung is a native of Nepal and a Studio Arts major at Gettysburg College. Anukul is also an accomplished photographer receiving two honorable mentions at the 2008 Lucie Awards and having a photo featured in National Geographic in December 2008.

Through his photography, Anukul documented the lives of homeless people in Kathmandu, Nepal to help increase awareness of the struggles many people face in Nepal and to raise money to help homeless children. Anukul's photographs were on exhibit at Gettysburg College's Musselman Library and sold to raise funds for Mitrata. The event was a huge success raising over \$2,000! Mitrata would like to thank Anukul for his generous donation and effort to raise awareness of the struggles in Nepal. You can see Anukul's remarkable photos at ngm.nationalgeographic.com/myshot/gallery/110014.

VOLUNTEER WEBMASTER NEEDED

The Mitrata Nepal website is a great way to update everyone about Mitrata. Keeping this information up to date helps maintain a relationship between the organization and sponsors, donors and volunteers. Mitrata is currently searching for a volunteer interested in maintaining the website. Please contact Christine Schutz at 314/762-9412 or drcms@earthlink.net if you would like to volunteer for this opportunity.

WOMEN'S MITRATA EVENTS

A small group of friends got together in January and again in March to raise funds for Mitrata Nepal and the results are astounding! These 2 small events resulted in 4 children receiving school sponsorships, a \$100 annual donation to the Mitrata Home and \$3,465 in general donations!

Margaret Mead said, "A small group of thoughtful people could change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." Mitrata is so thankful for these "thoughtful people" that are small in numbers, but make an enormous difference in the lives of children in need. A special thanks to Debra and Jerry Shatoff, Ailce Duarte-Fletcher and Alicia and Chris Creighton for organizing these events. If you would like to hold a fund-raising event for Mitrata contact **Stephanie Recht at phone# and email.**



FRUITS OF OUR LABOR

The dream of Mitrata Nepal has come true. Anita Shrestha and Pawan Dahal, who are both home sponsored, passed the School Leaving Exam (SLC)! This is a major accomplishment for a child due to the disparity in Nepali schools. The SLC allows a child to continue on to college (11th and 12th grade in Nepal) and possibly on to a university. Less than 38% of Nepali children pass this exam. The success of Anita and Pawan are the direct result of the generosity of all donors, sponsors and volunteers. You can feel proud of the difference you have made in the world!

IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION

Education signifies the preparation for life. It is the light of life and a continuous process. It becomes the most precious and permanent property of an individual. It invites positive and constructive changes in life. It makes our lives really prosperous and meaningful. Everyone wants to be well-educated. Therefore we see many parents sending their children to schools, colleges, institutions and universities.

Education plays the primary role in the personality enhancement of an individual. It proves to be one of the most important forms of human civilization. It is the key to personality upliftment. It makes people civilized, good mannered, aware, well skilled and responsible. Education empowers, strengthens national unity and uplifts public awareness. Educated people don't blindly accept or reject anything and can discriminate between good and bad behaviors. Education is considered to be the foundation of development. To continue any development activities such as administration, technical status, scientific study, social and physical conditioning; education plays an important role. In this 21st century the climax of science and technology has emerged as the contribution of education.

Education is the most important property of an individual. The progress of the nation depends on its educated manpower. Education is one of the basic needs for us. That's why everybody is expected to be well educated. It is said that education brightens and enhances human civilization.

Anita Shrestha
Mitrata Nepal home sponsored since 2003

UPCOMING EVENTS

CLIMB FOR HIMALAYA CHILDREN

Climb for Himalaya Children is an annual benefit climb of Mt. Rainier in Washington State to raise money for Mitrata. The climb will take place July 17-19 with 21 participants raising approximately \$25,000! These funds will go toward the general fund to support the Mitrata home throughout the year. Team leaders for the climbs are Ambrose Bittner, Bill Harrison, Len Kannapell, Michael Frank and Abi Devan.

This is an amazing event that provides participants with the physical challenge of climbing Mt. Rainier while raising a significant amount of money for the children. Thanks to the fund-raisers, climbers and to Red Lantern Journeys for their dedication to helping the children of Nepal. A special thanks to Ambrose Bittner, also a Mitrata Board Member, for investing so much time and effort into organizing this amazing event. The climb is now full, but you can go to redlanternjourneys.com for more information on this event.

MITRATA AT GREENTREE

Mitrata will again have a presence at the Kirkwood Greentree Festival Sept. 18-20. Come down for another taste of "Fosters Frozen Custard", Ron Gaus' contribution to Mitrata fund-raising and one of the best homemade ice creams you will ever try. Last years' sales were interrupted by Hurricane Ike's St. Louis contingent, but this year we plan to be there no matter what! If you would like to volunteer to staff the booth or for more information please contact Sandra Hoffmann at 314-845-9339.

FESTIVAL OF NATIONS

Mitrata Nepal will share a cultural corner booth with Nepali Women's Global Network St. Louis at the International Institute's Festival of Nations to be held August 29-30 at the Tower Grove Park in St. Louis. Admission to the festival is FREE and will feature traditional dance, food, exhibits, and more from many countries around the world. Please contact Arati Maleku at arati.maleku@gmail.com for more information or to volunteer at the booth.

ANNUAL MITRATA EVENT WITH SPECIAL MT. EVEREST CLIMB PRESENTATION

This year's annual event and auction will feature Ambrose Bittner and Michael Frank. 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 November 7 with more details to be announced soon. Don't miss this rare opportunity...save the date!

MITRATA-NEPAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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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. **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. Ten bunk beds: \$900
4. Computers and software: 2 x \$600
5. Screens for windows: \$300
6. Donations are needed for the Scholarship Fund to help children with college and vocational education.

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.

