



CHILD ACTION NEPAL

Newsletter No 9

October 08

Establishing a new home for 20 orphans

Last year we organised many events in order to raise the funds required to acquire a house instead of renting. Unfortunately, with the political unrest, the law which was going to allow non-Nepali organisations such as CAN to own property, was not passed.

As we did not want the funds raised to acquire the house to “sleep” in investment funds, we have decided to start a new home which will welcome 20 new orphans. In August, we found a new house near our current home and decided to rent it for £3000/year.

We are now completing the construction work with new additions such as a room and a bathroom for the house manager and a study room for the children. Our main priority now is to find the House Manager for the new home. We have advertised in the newspapers and interviewed more than 20 couples but have not yet found the right people. When I go back to Kathmandu at the end of the month, we will continue the search as we plan to start taking children at the beginning of 2009. In the first year we will have only 10 children as we want them to adapt to their new life and make sure they have all our attention and care. By the end of 2010 we will have 20 children. Our philosophy is to help a few, but take care of them for better and for longer, exactly as if they were our own children.



Our new house under construction



View of our current home from the roof of the new house

About Nepal

Consequences of malnutrition:

Nepal has a population of 23.4 million with one quarter living on less than a dollar a day. As a comparison, the average Chinese person earns \$1,740 a year and the average Indian \$720 whereas the average Nepali earns \$270 a year. Around half of the children under 5 are stunted. A stunted child is typically deprived of the opportunity to reach his or her full potential, meaning he or she will be a lifelong underachiever.

September heavy flooding:

At the end of September, we heard of heavy flooding in north India. The flooding also affected almost 180,000 people in the most impoverished and least developed districts of Western Nepal. Nearly one third of the people displaced were children under 18. Many children were separated from their parents and traumatised by the flood.

Children collecting garbage in the early hours of the morning in the street of Kathmandu





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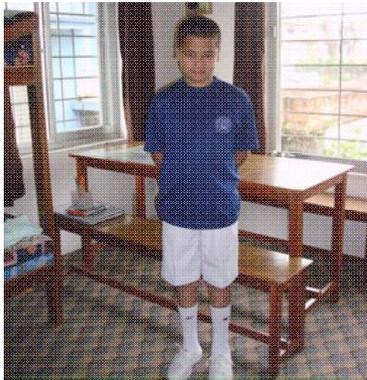
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Susan

Susan is one of the youngest children of LBU. His mother married when she was 16 years old and gave birth to him the same year. When he was two years old, his father died in an accident and the young mother gave her son to her brother in law.

For nearly five years, Susan's uncle took good care of him hoping his mother will take him back one day. Unfortunately, Susan's mother did not care much for her son. She remarried and moved to Chitwan. His uncle did not want to care for Susan anymore and brought him to LBU. We wanted to meet his mother before taking any decision. She came to see us and assured us she will not take her son back

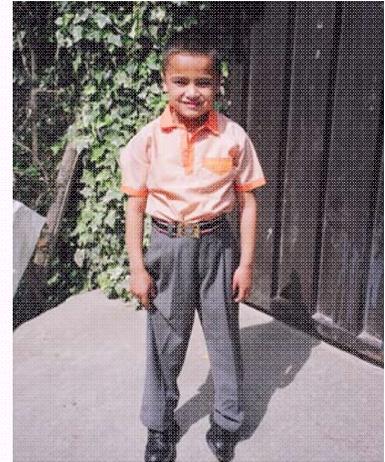
Susan in school uniform (sports day) in August 08



It was actually quite surprising to see how little Susan cared for his mother. They look like real strangers to each other. Susan has adapted remarkably to his new life at LBU. He was a lonely child and suddenly he has 9 brothers and 10 sisters and he loves it. He learnt very quickly to ride a bicycle and he is excellent at badminton.

He is doing well at school and I think he has a strong potential because he is very intelligent and competitive. He wants to be tough but he is still a very little boy so I asked Krishna (one of the older boys) to take care of him and it works very well.

Susan in school uniform in May 05



Teej Festival

In August we have the Teej festival, during which women fast for 24 hours, dance, and sing special songs and wear their most beautiful dresses and jewels and go to the temple to pray to the Goddess Parvati for the long life and good health of their husband or future husband. The religious significance of Teej lies in the devotion of Goddess Parvati for her husband Lord Shiva and celebrates the day they were reunited after 100 years. At LBU, we also celebrated Teej. We all stayed dancing and singing until late and then the older girls had a special meal at midnight before going to bed and starting the Teej fasting. In the morning we got dressed with our best kurtas and saris. Then we went to Pashupatinath where we started to queue with hundreds of women. Even the young one who did not fast came with us. During the 5 hours long queue, the girls had henna applied on their hands ("Mehndi") according to the tradition. We then all came back exhausted but happy.

All dressed up for Teej



The girls queuing at the entrance of the temple





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Our April Vacation

As every year, I spent the last two weeks of the children's vacation in Nepal, before they start the new school year in mid April. During their vacation, we ask the children to perform chores such as dish washing, vacuum cleaning or sweeping the floor. We also encourage them to practice sports and artistic activities. We found a sports complex in a nearby hotel and brought the children there a few times so that they can play in the swimming pool. I also hired a couple of teachers to help them improve their swimming. This year we also went to Chitwan National Park for a few days. After 8 hours on a coach, we stayed in a hotel close to the river where both staff and children could rest. The children love these trips outside Kathmandu. This time I made sure there was no television in the bedrooms, but we had a small swimming pool. We did elephant riding and bathing, canoeing, a Nature walk, visited a local museum and the village by Ox carts. Back in Kathmandu, I took the children to a local restaurant for dinner.

Our first evening out in a restaurant



The older children in particular enjoyed this "grown up" activity. We also went to the cinema to watch the Mummy III. There was an entr'acte during which we bought some pop-corn. The children really enjoyed this new experience!



Fun activities in Chitwan



Finding the right school:

When we moved house early 2007, we also had to move all the children to a new school closer to home, called Kathmandu Valley School (KVS). We chose KVS because they were offering a diploma equivalent to A level, but after one year we realised the level of education was not as good as expected. We moved the 10 oldest children to a new school called Chandbagh School (CS). We wanted to be sure this was the right school before moving all the children because each time it is very expensive as the uniforms and most of the books are different. CS is more expensive than KVS too, but is well equipped with a good science laboratory, computer rooms

The boys and girls of KVS



and library. The level of education is also higher and as all the children were struggling in maths, we decided to hire a second education manager. Next year, all the children will be together at CS.



The girls and boys of Chandbagh School





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Thank you for your support!

We are extremely grateful for your support and in particular would like to thank all our guests at our July fundraising event and their generous participation at the raffle and auction. We are also particularly touched by the initiative of Katrina Themans, 8 who after trekking in Everest during a scientific mission, decided to help Nepali orphans by writing and selling for 5p a newspaper called "The Kat". Katrina has already raised more than £400 (www.justgiving.com/kthemans). Finally, we would like to thank our supporters who ran for CAN at the London 10K and raised £1,800. Next year, we will have our first marathon runner, Mark Johnson, who plans to raise £1,500 for CAN. Please have look at www.justgiving.com/markjohnson01.

Our annual event on the HMS President



Katrina Themans in theTimes



Our top runners from the London 10K



Sponsoring a child

Any donation is welcome and even £10 or £20 makes a difference. However, should you wish to sponsor a particular child and follow his/her progress as he/she grows up, the cost is £40 a month or £20 if you wish to co-sponsor a child with friends or family. Alternatively, we can arrange for you to have a co-sponsor.



With Muna last August, just before going to Pashupatinath to celebrate the Teej Festival.

Gratefully yours,

Florence Krief