



My childhood memories are of hardship. My mum struggled to buy me a school uniform and my younger sister died of an unknown illness. Girls disappeared from the village and my sister was forced into a childhood marriage. I knew at a young age that there had to be a better life. I left Batase at age 11 years. A promise of an education turned into years of abuse as I became a slave to a rich family. I escaped and eventually became a porter for a trekking company. I learned English and became a guide, finally being able to send money home for my siblings education.

Reflecting on my past allows me to see how far I've come but this didn't happen without people believing in me. The people who believed in me are people like you, who believed in my vision and got behind our fundraising efforts.

Over the past 10 years of leading FHC, I have seen my village transform into a place where I would love to raise my own children. We have educated a new generation of young people who are empowered and ready to take our work forward. I feel humbled and grateful to each and every person who has given in whatever way they could, I thank the believers and also the doubters as they motivate me!

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for caring about the people of Nepal. Please have a happy and joyful Christmas holiday.

Kind regards Som and Susan



FRIENDS OF HIMALAYAN CHILDREN (FHC)

PROGRESS

DONATE/SPONSOR NOW



DECEMBER 2019

CONTENTS

The Banana House *by Kay Smith*

Trekking in Nepal with teenage grandchildren *by Kay Smith*

FHC Annual Report (2018/19)

Jonathan reports from Batase

Can you help?

Membership Form

NEPAL SHOP IN CAIRNS

Did you know you can buy authentic Nepalese products here in Cairns? Himalayan Dreams is a shop run by Susan and Som in the Pier Shopping Centre on the marina in Cairns. It's full of products from Kathmandu in Nepal, all made by local merchants, and all 'fair trade'. It is a great place to pick up last minute Christmas presents.

IDEAS? WE WANT YOU!

We have nearly 600 people who are paid up members or who donate regularly to FHC. If you have an idea for a fundraiser, however small, please email me at donations@f-hc.org. If you'd like to give a talk about FHC to work colleagues or friends please let us know and we can supply advertising material. Every cent counts and we are responding to more and more needy children in Batase. Thanks.

FHC HOSTEL NEWS



Name: BUDHIMAN TAMANG

Budhiman has been living at Batase Hostel for more than six months now, and studies in Grade 4 at Batase School. Budhiman's father has died and his mother has gone to work as a housekeeper in Kubeth. He was living at home with his elder brother and sister in Batase, but his sister has since gone to live and work in Kathmandu.

FHC is struggling to meet the growing demand for help for Nepalese children. \$30 per month will support Budhiman's expenses at the hostel and the school. Visit:

<https://www.f-hc.org/contact>

The Banana House – Kay Smith

Thank you to Take On Nepal and the Banana House Family, for welcoming me here during my recent stay in Kathmandu. The Banana House is a 4-storey residence, providing a home for senior school and college students from Batase.

During my visit to the house, there were eight students in residence, managing a high-functioning household, independently, although with close support from the Take On Nepal team. The students have a roster system for communal cooking and cleaning, and manage their own washing and personal spaces. Various Take On Nepal staff visit, in between work commitments, as do some trekkers and volunteers. Residents and staff welcome the opportunity to practise English with visitors.

A recent working bee has resulted in a bright, freshly-painted, functional kitchen and dining area. There is a TON/FHC office and a good-sized room for meetings, classes or large-group dining. This versatile space is carpeted and simply furnished with a stack of floor cushions and a whiteboard on the wall.

Visitor accommodation, on the second floor, was very comfortable. Double, twin and triple rooms all have ensuite bathrooms, but hot water is at the whim of the sun.



The 20-minute walk into Thamel is a typical Kathmandu adventure, with two significant roads to cross.

Trekking in Nepal with teenage grandchildren – Kay Smith

In the months leading up to my trip I had bargained earnestly with the Universe: Just, please, let this trip happen and I won't ask for anything more – ever!

I was taking my grandsons, Lucas (16) and Indra (13), to Everest Base Camp. They were on the verge of declining holiday invitations with Nan (kinda uncool) but this one was sufficiently enticing: a challenging two-week trek to an iconic Himalayan destination at 5,300 metres. In my mind, this adventure would transform my boys into young men. It would require them to be responsible and mature, and would set them up in some way, to perceive a future of expanded possibilities. At the very least, it would introduce them to the joy of adventure travel and build self-confidence, but there was the potential for so much more – if we could do it.....

Unlike me, the boys were untested in light-weight, independent travel and long-distance trekking, but I saw myself as the weak link in terms of strength and fitness. The boys had had no trouble on our training walks – they were naturally active, although of late computer games seemed to occupy more of their time....

I was 68, but I had done this same trek just a year earlier. I had had no headaches, no vomiting, and I was certainly able to move quite quickly across the glacial moraine as I fled the bitter cold of Base Camp for the shelter of our lodge at Gorak Shep. And yet, from around 4000m, I had experienced symptoms that I attributed at the time to a head-cold – a streaming nose and a throat that felt like it was cut by razor blades. I have since learnt that my symptoms may have been altitude-related – I can't be sure. Whether the boys would manage at high altitude was a complete unknown. I dreaded setting them up for failure – and yet failure is another of Life's important lessons.... Perhaps, if I failed, I could send the boys on in the care of the guide and porter, both of whom I had trekked with previously and trusted to make good, careful decisions. There were many unknowns, but ultimately, it was an adventure worth trying.....

For two days, we waited hopefully at Kathmandu Airport for a flight to Lukla – the start of our trek, but late, monsoonal weather kept flights grounded, both in and out. We tried flying elsewhere and taking a helicopter to Serke, which would have meant a 7km uphill walk, in rain, to Lukla, but our aircraft had to abort the attempted landing at Rumjatar. With no wriggle room in our tight school holiday travel schedule, one acclimatisation day

already lost, and no change in the weather forecast, the Universe was insisting on a change of itinerary. The long-anticipated trek to EBC had to be abandoned in favour of our new goal: Annapurna Base Camp. This meant, instead, an 8-hour bus ride to Pokhara next day, and a shorter 7-day trek, to ABC, at 4,100m. Our guide, Samjhana would still accompany us, but a new porter had to be hired, as Amber had preceded us to Lukla, arriving successfully on foot. He would now wait there to help a following group of trekkers.

The weather forecast for the Annapurna Sanctuary remained gloomy, warning of overcast, wet and stormy conditions for the week ahead. Oh well, you get what you get and here's hoping we are prepared. Actually, I had serious misgivings about the boys' footwear. I had opted to buy and hire much of their gear in Kathmandu, with Samjhana's help. Not only was this a cheaper option, it also saved weight and space on the flight to Kathmandu, allowing me to bring over, instead, donated charity goods. The boys were walking in school/sport shoes – not a problem in fine conditions, but certain to be soggy wrecking balls in our weather. Their alternative lodge shoes were walking sandals. I had assumed that, as on the EBC trek, there might be yak-dung fires in the lodges at night to dry our wet gear. But, no; instead, a lesson for me: on the ABC trek there are no yak teams carrying supplies to the lodges, and donkey teams are rare. Men carry everything: gas bottles, building materials, bottled water, food. It cost us \$25 for three hours of gas heating at Macchpucchre Base Camp, the stop before Annapurna, to dry our wet gear. Sharing it with others helped defray the cost but we were left with an indelible sense of the responsibility we all have to be mindful of the resources we consume – especially when the supplier, who literally bears the load on his back, is paying the highest price. My grandsons' feet were indeed, super-hydrated prunes at the end of each day, but the boys gave them a careful bath with make-up removing wipes (our alternative to ice-cold showers), dried them carefully with their micro-fibre towels, put dry socks and their lodge sandals on. Next day, with feet restored to normal, they put their sodden shoes back on. My footwear choice for them should have been Gortex walking boots, hang the expense – and yet they managed, with good humour and never a single complaint.

I have many reasons to be proud of my grandsons for the way they managed on this walk, and yet it was a vastly different experience from



Uncertain weather on the approach to ABC



Lucas (16) and Indra (13)



Rushing to school in a local village

what I had expected. In anticipating the adventure with them, I had especially looked forward to good conversations with the boys – time to bond more deeply and opportunities to guide and mentor them. But no, I only really saw them at breakfast, lunch and dinner; otherwise, they walked ahead, hot on the heels of our porter, Indra – and had their own clear preferences for how to spend their down time, after dinner, at the lodges. Conversations, I discovered, are not their thing, anyway. They talk nonsense and I was glad to be excluded. (Would you rather visit Kathmandu or Kathmandhu? Neither, I prefer Dogmandhu. And, on Dahl Bhat, our regular evening meal: This is Dahl and this is Bhat. Meet Dahl, whose first name is Roald and his friend Bart. Often, they just made noises: Doo, doo, di doo doo. Aaagh!) I told them that once we reached Annapurna Base Camp, some magic would happen and they would lose their ability to talk nonsense. After that, I said, you will suddenly be able to have real conversations. They looked at me as if to say, and what would be the fun in that?

They did modify this of their own accord though. On three different occasions during the walk, we three and Samjhana had to share one room. Indra and other porters always slept in the dining room. I explained to the boys that Samjhana wasn't able

to understand their communication style and that she would probably enjoy some real conversation with them. They genuinely liked Samjhana and appreciated all that she did for us as our guide, and I loved their efforts to be inclusive, welcoming and cooperative.

The adventure did not magically transform them into young men, however. They are still prone to talking jibberish, trying to heel trip each other up, feigning stumbling, arm punches, obstructing, nonsensical speculations and commentary. As individuals, the story is very different, but on our ABC trek, they were making memories as brothers, and that was as important a goal as mine: sharing a life-changing journey with them. One memory which I will treasure always is their efforts to lighten the load of our porter by carrying more themselves. Samjhana and I always vetoed this choice, to ensure that the boys achieved our destination each day; however, on the last day my younger grandson came to me and said, "Nan, you have to say yes today. It's the last day and we want to carry as much as we can, to make Indra's load lighter. Please say yes." And so, for our last 22 km day, each boy carried a full pack and bags in each hand. My load was heavier that day, too, with my very full heart.

FHC Annual Report 2018/19

In 2019 income to FHC from fundraising, donations, sponsorships, the annual dinner and more, was over \$91,000.

Expenses came to \$76,218 of which \$72,039 went to our causes in Nepal. At the end of the 2019 financial year we have an unappropriated profit of \$80,435.

The full report can be viewed [here](#).

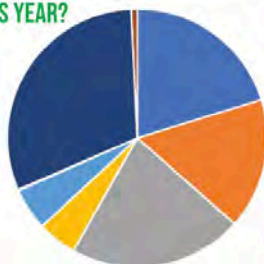
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Friends of Himalayan Children is very proud that such a high proportion of funds raised goes directly to aid the communities in which we work, through building projects, provision of teachers, and funding the hostel and library.

FINANCIAL REPORT

WHERE DID OUR FUNDS COME FROM THIS YEAR?

- Fundraising
- Annual Dinner
- Donations
- Library Project
- Biblioteg Koombook
- Membership Fees
- Sponsorship
- Bank Interest



PERCENTAGE OF FUNDS RAISED USED DIRECTLY TO ASSIST OUR COMMUNITIES.

96%

FHC is driven by skilled, passionate and generous volunteers who accept no recompense of costs incurred.

HOW DID WE SPEND OUR FUNDS THIS YEAR?

A COPY OF THE FULL FHC FINANCIAL REPORT IS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST.

THIS SUMMARY INFORMATION COMPLIES WITH AUSTRALIAN STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS.

- Advertising
- Auditor
- Bank Charges
- Donations to Nepal
- Depreciation
- Biblioteg Koombook
- Fundraising
- Insurance



Jonathan reports from Batase

It was good to hear news of Batase from Jonathan on his return from his productive six-week trip in September and October this year.

An ongoing project for Jonathan, over a number of years, has been the planting of seedlings for reforestation, with a view to generating a supply of firewood and lumber. He reported that the eucalypt seedlings he originally planted are now two metres high.

On this trip, he continued work on the reforestation project, and also established new vegetable gardens to grow spinach, leeks, cauliflower and cabbage, in an endeavour to reduce the 1.4million rupee

annual outlay on food for the hostel. Also, in order to supplement cattle fodder, he planted mangel wurzel and turnips.

In the absence of children and staff at the hostel during the Dashain holiday period, he also performed caretaker duties at the hostel. Future projects that Jonathan hopes to oversee will be the construction of a buffalo shed near the hostel, designed to also accommodate goats and chickens, and an underground water tank to store rainwater from the hostel roof, in order to mitigate conflict among villagers over water access in the drier months of the year.



CAN YOU HELP?

FHC DONATION TINS



Do you know of a venue with high pedestrian traffic (ie. café, bakery, corner shop, butchery) that would be willing to have one of our charity tins displayed on their counter?

If so, please contact:

- Daniel (0450270399); or
- Jonathan (0414281196).

If the tin is lost or stolen, the venue will have no liability whatsoever.

We are also able to supply a chain and attach the tin to the counter.

REDEEMABLE CONTAINERS

RECYCLING FOR FHC



Most soft drink cans, plastic bottles small and large, beer bottles and cans, juice poppers, even Yakult bottles are redeemable. Just look for '10c redeemable' printed on the label.

You can take your redeemable containers to any recycling centre in Queensland and the code **C10010512** will direct the money straight to FHC.

Thank you to the Brisbane recyclers who are already directing refunds to FHC.

Other ways to redeem for our cause:

- ring Daniel on 0450270399 or Jonathan on 0414281196; or
- email pascacleayton@gmail.com with your address for pickup; or
- drop them off in **Redlynch** (front of the garage door at 29 Eugenia Cres); or
- drop them off in **Edgehill** (8 Fleming St) – Di Andrews 0408180201.



MEMBERSHIP FORM

Members receive FHC news updates, 10% discount at Himalayan Dreams and 10% off on all FHC sponsored events.

MEMBERSHIP TO FHC

Membership to FHC is to be paid annually. Becoming a new member, or renewing your membership, is a 3-step process:

1. Indicate your membership type
2. Make payment through your online bank via 'Direct Debit' (see below)
3. Provide your details and send back to us.

1. Membership type (for a single year or a 3-year term)

SINGLE (\$10/year)

COUPLE (\$20/year)

FAMILY (\$30/year)

SINGLE (\$30 for 3 years)

COUPLE (\$60 for 3 years)

FAMILY (\$90 for 3 years)

2. Payment

Please make payments via 'Direct Debit' to:

Friends of Himalayan Children

BSB Number 034 664

Account Number 262 957

[Please put your 'name-membership number (if you have one)' in the 'Payee Reference' box]

3. Member Details

Name: _____

Address: _____

Preferred phone contact: _____

Email: _____

ABLE TO VOLUNTEER?

When organising fund-raisers or other FHC events we are on the lookout for people to lend a hand. Would you like to be on our 'able to volunteer' database so that we can contact you when we need help? If so just indicate by ticking the box below.

Yes I'm happy to be included on your 'able to volunteer' database

Contact Details

Friends of Himalayan Children Inc, PO Box 5213 Cairns Qld 4870 AUSTRALIA

Mobile: 0428 861 001 (Tim Trehearn); Email: info@f-hc.org; Website: www.f-hc.org

EMPOWERMENT THROUGH EDUCATION



Sponsor a child in Batase

www.f-hc.org/contact

FOR JUST \$30 PER MONTH

you can guarantee a child a place in school and the support needed to help the child in our Batase Hostel succeed (to year 10).

You can make a difference.

EMPOWERMENT THROUGH EDUCATION



Sponsor a youth in Kathmandu

www.f-hc.org/contact

FOR JUST \$50 PER MONTH

you can support a young adult staying in our Banana House to further their education in Nepal's capital, Kathmandu.

You can make a difference.

FUNDRAISING IDEAS?

We have nearly 600 people who are paid up members or who donate regularly to FHC. If you have an idea for a fundraiser, however small, please email me at:

donations@f-hc.org

If you'd like to give a talk about FHC to work colleagues or friends, please let us know and we can supply advertising material. Every cent counts and we are responding to more and more needy children in Batase Village.