



WE WISH YOU A *Merry Christmas* & A HAPPY NEW YEAR

Batase Village has had an amazing year!

This is the time of year to reflect on what has been achieved and to feel grateful for all the support and thank the people who believe in our commitment to helping the villagers of remote Batase Village.

When I left Batase at age 11, I remember there were no girls attending school and only about 15 students in total at the school. Now the school has over 50% female attendance and 235 students enrolled. The school is now unrecognisable from

when I attended. The facilities have improved, the building is earthquake safe and the students are proud to attend. I'm excited to say that some students have graduated as social workers and community health workers. In 2022, 60 students graduated from Grade 10 and many are now going on to do their '+2' (equivalent of Grade 11 and 12) in Kathmandu and Melamchi. Our goal is to have '+2' at Batase school. This goal is getting closer and closer due to the continued support we are receiving. This goal was unimaginable only 15 years ago.

Throughout the year Batase village has thrived. Our students, who

were previously sponsored by FHC, have stepped up and taken on leadership roles at both our Hostel and the school. They volunteered their time with an understanding that this is their responsibility to give back, making me very proud.

This has been the longest time my family and I have been unable to visit Nepal. It's been difficult as I love being on the ground and I miss everyone so much it sometimes hurts. Now our flights are booked and we will all be in Nepal at the end of March 2023.

There's no doubt that the past three years have been difficult. Our fundraising efforts slowed

down but we are optimistic about a great 2023 with our plans for fundraisers in motion and I hope you can support these community events. All the great work that continues to happen is as a result of your continued support. You are truly making a difference at a grass roots level. It is our sincere hope that you visit Batase to see the impact of your efforts first hand.

Wishing you and your loved ones a Happy Christmas and an amazing New Year. May you have a Christmas filled with love and happiness.

*Kind regards,
Som*



DONATE/SPONSOR NOW

FRIENDS OF HIMALAYAN CHILDREN (FHC) • Empowerment through education

PROGRESS



"Our volunteer administration ensures nearly 95% of funds raised go directly to supporting disadvantaged children in regional Nepal."

DECEMBER 2022

Your favourite word?



Sujan Tamang - 2013

Sujan, FHC's manager in Batase Village and President of the School Board, started learning the English language in 2014 while surviving in Kathmandu. Sujan's extraordinary life (see Newsletter from September 2021) led to a disrupted and delayed education but with Som's and FHC's help, he prevailed and succeeded.

His favourite English word is 'absolutely'. What's your favourite?

Email angusmccoll@me.com and we will publish your words in the next edition.

FACEBOOK

Become friends on our FB pages and follow the regular posts from our staff and supporters in Batase Village.



Friends of Himalayan Children

Take on Nepal



Year 9 & 10 go on a cultural-exchange tour, with help from Innocents Relief



Sixty students and six teachers from the Batase School had an inspirational and privileged opportunity to go on a cultural-exchange adventure around central Nepal.

Batase is a small village in regional Nepal, located high in the Himalayan Ranges. An opportunity for school children to go on a school excursion is rare, especially a multi-day trip around central Nepal. This excursion broadened the older student's education by providing an invaluable insight



into the other cultures and histories of their own country.

They travelled via Kathmandu and Chitwan to Janakpur where they visited Janaki Mandir (top photo), a famous Hindu temple and destination for faith pilgrims. They also visited two schools where the students were honoured with the traditional foods and hospitality of the Maithali culture. They then went on to the amazing Lumbini, considered the birth place of the man who later became Lord Buddha. Lumbini is World Heritage

Listed and is a destination for pilgrims of both Buddhist and Hindu faiths. Buddhists from around the world have built temples in their own traditional styles on grounds that follow a Master Plan designed by the Japanese architect Kenzo Tange. This place would have been of particular interest to our students, who are ethnically Tamang and followers of Buddhism.

From Lumbini the students went north to Pokhara, visiting Bindhyabasini Temple, Mahendra Caves, boated on the lake and visited Davis Falls before busing back to Kathmandu. Here they visited the theatre where they got to speak with the actors, went to the Aviation Museum where they met Bed Upreti, a commercial pilot and owner of the museum, and explored the botanical gardens.

These valuable experiences can only excite and inspire our students to think of possibilities that were previously, most likely, beyond their imaginations. No class room can do the same.

The students worked hard to provide their own funding for this excursion and Innocents Relief contributed the rest. A big adventure for little Batase village.

"Don't litter" has to be taught



When westerners first travel to Nepal they can find the level of rubbish confronting. It's not just in Nepal. From my travelling experiences, I've noticed a disregard for managing litter a common problem throughout the developing countries of Southeast Asia. Resilient plastic everywhere.

Why these societal attitudes exist in these poor countries is not clear. Perhaps the more difficult life is, the less you worry about things like pollution. And if you are raised from birth in this environment, you possibly don't see the problem. Familiarity blindness. Litter everywhere is normal. For what ever reason, it is a problem that needs to be addressed, not just to appease privileged visitors but for



the sustainable future and health of communities. One solution is to teach the children in the schools the importance of a clean, rubbish-free community and how to go about achieving that.

For progress to happen there needs to be a shift in attitude and the best way to do that is through education. And that's exactly what is happening at the Batase School and re-enforced by our mentors at FHC. The children are being taught about pollution and the impacts of unmanaged rubbish. Rubbish bins have been installed at the school (thanks to Innocents Relief and funding from Ubuntu) and children are taken on regular excursions to pick up rubbish.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT – CFC hauls \$31,146.46!



Tim (left), Matt and Mary Frances



Pete Tuck



Howard Smith



Jonathan Clayton and Som

Fundraising for the charity over the past two years has been challenging but thanks to 'Containers for Change', we have raised over AUD\$31,000 for the year. At 10c each, that's a lot of containers. To make this happen we have a dedicated and hard-working team of supporters.

Jonathan Clayton knows very well what the streets of Cairns City look like at three o'clock in the morning because that's when he's out there collecting bottles from dumpsters and wheelie bins before the council trucks come.

You can find Howard Smith walking the streets of northern Cairns with bags of recyclables over his shoulders.

Pete Trehearn and friends are working hard in far away Boonah, just west of Brisbane.

Tim and Mary Frances have tapped into businesses on the Atherton Tablelands. A special thanks to the Tolga Caravan Park, Matt from Billy Cart Brewery and The Barron Valley Pub. Thank them with your support when you next go up the hill. And thank you to Pete Tuck for help and the use of his trailer.

Thank you also to Di Andrews, Annett Musumeci and Maureen Cameron for being collectors, and to everyone else who do their own thing from home.

If you would like to help, simply take your redeemable containers to any recycling centre in Queensland and the code **C10010512** will direct the money straight to FHC. Or tell one of our collectors. They can come to you or you can deliver to them. See the last page for details.



New building



Post earthquake school (2016)

School progress, thanks to Ubuntu Foundation & IR

Generosity abounds with the Ubuntu Life Foundation and Innocents Relief (IR) – a AUD\$25,000 donation.

We are very pleased to share with you the news that Batase School has completed their Building Upgrade Project. The project grew as a result of a 'limited' gift from the Nepalese Government. In 2019 Sujana Tamang won a AUD\$50,000 grant for the addition of this building at Batase School. The grant money was very controlled and building specifications had to be followed exactly as set out by the government. While the money was gratefully received, the building could not be completed as required, with provided funds.

Help came from the Ubuntu Foundation. Their donation to Innocents Relief (who wonderfully passed it on to Batase School) allowed the school building to

be completed. The new building is home to new classrooms, a computer lab, a science lab and a new Headmaster's Office. Once again, the project provided employment for community members, much needed space at the school, and community pride.

The Ubuntu donation also included development of a Waste Management System at the school. Colour coded bins have been installed to encourage recycling and rubbish disposal. The final project, tree planting and creating a green space for the school area, will take place later in the year when the rains come.

We would like to thank Ubuntu Foundation for their generous donation as well as Innocents Relief for choosing Batase School for this wonderful gift.

innocentsrelief.org.au
www.ubuntu.life

Our Scholarship students



It's time again for our Scholarship students to receive their study materials for the next school term. Our Scholarship students are the children you support while they live at home. They have homes but their families are too poor to provide an education for them.

Handing out these materials in the background is Sujan, FHCs manager in Batase and President of the Batase School Board.

As well as providing study materials, our FHC team meet with the parents to explain their child's progress at school. They explain to the parents (whom most likely have had no education) what the exam results mean and how they can help their children improve by providing a happy study environment at home.

Not all kids excel and the problems could be in the home. The children help their parents at home with work in the family business or

on the farm. It's important that the parents understand the importance of getting the balance right between work and study. Their child's future depends on it.

They are all very grateful for your continued support. The parents appreciate the opportunity your support is providing for their children. They understand that a good education will empower their children with choices and independence in life.

Numbers fluctuate but currently we (you) support over 40 students with their education while living at home. We would love to support more so please let others know about our cause and what we do.

It costs AUD\$30 per month to support these children while living at home. If you would like to sponsor one of these students, or simply sponsor the program, visit www.f-hc.org sponsor-now or discuss with us at info@f-hc.org

School success for our Year 10s



Congratulations to our Hostel Year-10 students who have successfully completed their Secondary Education Examination (SEE). Of the 10 students we have staying at the hostel sitting this exam, all passed with flying colours – with 'A's and 'B's.

A special congratulations goes to our two highest achievers – Gyanmaya and Akriti.

Gyanmaya Tamang (left) achieved the highest result of all of our students. She scored 87.5%, which equates to a GPA of 3.5 (out of 4) and an 'A' rating. Gyanmaya came to the FHC Hostel four years ago after she lost her mother and a



brother to the earthquake in 2015. In 2020 she topped the Basic Level Exam (BLE) for the district with 96.5% when she went from Grade 8 to Grade 9, winning the school a \$2000 grant. She aims to study further to become a nurse.

Akriti Tamang (right) achieved 83.75% (GPA3.35/A). She came to our hostel in 2016 after her father died and her mother was too unwell to care for her. Her two sisters also live with us at the Hostel. Akriti hopes to become a leader in her community and work for the government. She wants to advance gender equality in Nepal and improve the lives of women, especially for young girls.

Tihar Festival celebrations, Nepal's 2nd biggest



Tihar is a 5-day Hindu festival celebrating the victory of good over evil. It's the second-most important festival in Nepal after Dashain. It's celebrated on the night of the new moon in the eighth month of the Hindu calendar, which this year was on 25 October.

The festival is four days of giving reverence to certain Gods and animals such as crows, cows, and dogs that have long-lived alongside humans.

The fifth and last day of Tihar is called Bhai Tika and is for family. Brothers and sisters mark their special bond by worshipping

each other – a ritual based on an old legend where a goddess outsmarted the God of Death to save her brother.

On this fifth day of Tihar, sisters create a protective barrier of holy water and blessed oil around their brothers. A special garland made out of the makhamali flower (*Gomphrena globosa*) is placed around the brother's neck as this flower is known for its long life. The tika (Hindu mark on forehead) placed on the forehead of the brother is also unique in that it consists of seven different colours. The tika is also placed on the sister's forehead by the brother.



HOW CAN I HELP?

There are many useful ways you can contribute to our cause.

BECOME A MEMBER



For just \$10/year you can become a member of Friends of Himalayan Children.

You will be added to our email database and notified of up-coming FHC activities and events. Members get a 10% discount. And you will receive a quarterly news letter

with all of the latest news about what has been happening in Batase and beyond. You can join online at:

www.f-hc.org/support/become-a-member

FHC DONATION TINS



Do you know of a high pedestrian-traffic venue (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 Jonathan on 0414 281 196

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

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

FUNDRAISING IDEAS?

- We have nearly 600 people who are paid up members or who donate regularly to FHC.
- If you have any ideas for a fundraiser, however small, please email Tim Trehearn at: donations@f-hc.org
- If you would like to give a talk about FHC to work colleagues or friends, please let us know and we can supply pull-up banners and advertising materials.
- Every cent counts and we are responding to more and more needy children in Batase Village.

RECYCLING FOR FHC



Most soft drink cans, plastic bottles, beer bottles and cans, juice poppers, and even Yakult bottles are redeemable. Just look for '10c' 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.
- Big thank you to the Brisbane recyclers who are already directing refunds to FHC.
- Or get your collection to us and we can process them:
- **REDLYNCH:** call/text Jonathan – 0414 281 196; or email pascalleclayton@gmail.com with your address for pickup; or drop them off in front of their garage door at 29 Eugenia Cres, Redlynch; or
- **EDGE HILL:** call/text Di Andrews – 0408 180 201, or drop them off at 8 Fleming St, Edge hill; or
- **CARAVONICA:** call/text your location to Annett Musumeci – 0434 702 126 and she can collect; or
- **FRESHWATER:** call/text Maureen Cameron – 0407 737 337, or deliver to 16 Merrybrook Street, Freshwater.
- **ATHERTON:** call/text Mary Frances – 0400 607 323, or deliver to 3B Crisp Close, Atherton.
- **WANT TO BE A COLLECTOR TOO?** email info@f-hc.org

EMPOWERMENT THROUGH EDUCATION



Support a child in Batase

www.f-hc.org/sponsor

FOR JUST \$30 PER MONTH

you can provide essential support for a child to be able to succeed at school to Year 10, while living at home.

You can make a difference.

EMPOWERMENT THROUGH EDUCATION



Sponsor a child in FHC Hostel

www.f-hc.org/sponsor

FOR JUST \$50 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/sponsor

FOR JUST \$150 PER MONTH

you can support a young adult attending Higher Secondary School in Melamchi or Kathmandu.

You can make a difference.