



Namaste

We have had a busy start to 2019 preparing for an exciting year ahead. The library in Batase was opened on Christmas Day! The Batase community is now using the library on a daily basis and being the first library in a village in Nepal, its resources are adding a new dimension to learning in Batase.

Christina Lee was responsible for the building of the library with a lot of the funding raised by women on the recent Women's Everest Base Camp trek to the tune of \$20,000. Students from the Cairns district took part in the first "A Better Schoolies" project and assisted in the physical completion of the library.

Our friend and tireless worker for FHC, Roz Pulley, was awarded Cairns Women of the Year in early March. There is a report in this newsletter of the International Women's Day dinner at which Roz was honoured. The dinner raised much needed funds for the operation of the school and hostel in Batase.

Som is currently in Nepal preparing for the Spring trekking season. Take On Nepal (our commercial company) will have numerous groups trekking to Everest Base Camp and other areas during this season.

We hope to see you at our social gathering and fundraiser at the Cairns German Club on Sunday 9 June (see below). So much done and so much more to do. **Thank you for your continued support.**

Som Tamang and Susan Devitt



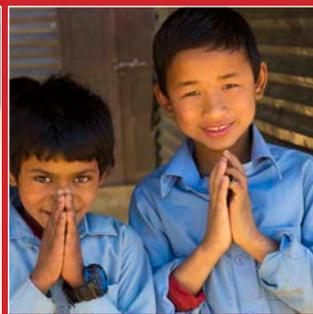
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FRIENDS OF HIMALAYAN CHILDREN (FHC)

PROGRESS



MARCH 2019



FHC HOSTEL NEWS



Name: Bimala Tamang
Class: 8
Age: 18

Bimala Tamang worked in a restaurant in Kathmandu to pay for her own schooling to Grade 8. She left school after Grade 8 because her mother needed her help at home.

Bimala is now 18 and desperately wants to resume her education at Batase school, living at the hostel. Bimala's father is an alcoholic and unable to contribute to her schooling.

CONTENTS

Library for Batase by *Christina Lee*
Cairns International Woman of the Year 2019 – Roz Pulley
International Women's Dinner by *Susan Devitt*
Meet Nijita, and Steve by *Kay Smith*

NEWS BITES

- Long time volunteers and supporters Peter and Doreen Gaudron along with Uncle Brian Duncan are leaving in early April for their first ever trek to Everest Base Camp.
- Jonathan Clayton is spending all of April volunteering in Batase on various agricultural projects.
- Volunteer Steve Johnson has begun discussions to install solar powered hot water to the showers at the Batase Hostel.
- Sujan Tamang is currently filling many roles in Batase including Hostel Parent, Librarian, Teacher aide and Liaison Officer for FHC.

NEWS

FHC Meeting

We had a very well attended meeting on 22 March with great discussion. You can find the meeting minutes [here](#).

Membership Payment

It's time to pay your FHC membership! Part of our audit requirements requires us to have a list of paid members. For your convenience we've included a membership form. Please complete it and return it to us via email as soon as possible. Members receive FHC news and qualify for 10% discount at Himalayan Dreams (The Pier) and FHC events (page 3)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Gathering & Fundraiser

WHEN: Sunday 9 June; 4:30-7:30pm
ENTRY: \$10
WHERE: Cairns German Club, 57 Winkworth Street, Bungalow

We will be showing several entertaining short films on various aspects of life in Nepal. Bring a plate to share.

Library for Batase Village – decreasing vulnerability through access to information and education



Christina Lee was born in South Korea and her family moved to Cairns when she was 12.

She completed her International Baccalaureate Diploma at Cairns State High School in 2016 and is now studying Law and Arts (Human Rights) at ANU in Canberra. Her dream is to become an international human rights lawyer. It was her interest in human rights that took her to Nepal in November 2016, four days after graduating from high school.

Since 2012 I have been fundraising and volunteering for the Cairns-based charity, Friends of Himalayan Children (FHC), that supports Batase village. What a phenomenal experience for me to finally see the village, and the people I met there were the most beautiful human beings. But behind their smiles were traumatic scars. The girls, their sisters and mothers are targets for

human trafficking to India with false promises of hope. From that moment I decided to give everything I have to eliminate injustice, such as modern slavery in our international communities, through education.

After returning from Nepal, I sent an email to Libraries Without Borders (LWB), based in Paris, with the hope that they will assist me in building the first library in Batase Village. LWB responded, accepted me into their team, and wholeheartedly trusted me to create their first project in Nepal. Their support went well beyond just building the library. It has been an honour to work with an amazing team of people and have access to their incredible innovations and resources.

Before I went to Nepal, if someone asked 'Why is your passion human rights?' I would say 'Somewhere in the world there is some boy or girl with a dream. That dream can only

come true if some day somebody decides to stand up, speak out and do something'. This belief led me to Paris and an internship with LWB to build the first library in Batase.

Through building this library we hope to stop human trafficking by decreasing vulnerability through access to information and education via a library. Part of the library is the KOOMBOOK – a digital web-based library created by LWB.

In December 2018, 14 ANU students (including me) travelled to Batase to finish work on the library and assist users with the new resources and hold human-trafficking awareness workshops. The library opened on Christmas Day 2018.

This is a community driven project and without the support of everyone involved, would not have happened. Support is ongoing. You can help by donating here: www.gofundme.com/21stcenturylibraryforbatase



Christina Lee – Batase's new library is open for business!

Cairns International Woman of the Year 2019

Roz Pulley is the Cairns International Woman of the Year for 2019. Roz first became involved with FHC after an inspirational interview she did with Som Tamang for the Cairns Post in 2009.

"His powerful story of childhood slavery and the work he was doing to educate and empower young girls in Nepal swept me up and before I knew it, I was involved with the group, holding fundraising dinners in my home, sponsoring a child, packaging books and clothing to send to Nepal".

Roz is now Vice-president of FHC and we are so proud that she has been recognised on International Women's Day for her dedication to our cause and many others.

Roz is a truly unique and special person and she has dedicated her

life to making the world a better place through raising awareness and funds for many causes. Not only is Roz a committee member, she is also a dear friend to us and to the villagers in Nepal. Congratulations Roz, we're so happy all of your great work has been recognised in this way.



Roz Pulley (left) with other award winners – Ella-Rose Lawrence and Stephanie Russell-Farnham.

International Women's Day Dinner (Sat 9 March)

One of FHC's major fundraisers is the International Women's Day Dinner and what a great success it was. The Brass Band Hall was brimming with people and the event brought in an impressive \$10,000 for the charity. Everyone was moved by Christina Lee's heartfelt speech and we were left in awe of Marita Cheng's unbelievable achievements. Both Christina and Marita are creating change for thousands of young women in the world. The food was delicious – thank you Chef Kumar Gorkhali. A huge thank you to Angela, Maureen and the team of hardworking students from St Andrew's Catholic College as well as Pascale, Daniel and Jonathan... without you the event would not have happen.

Susan Devitt



Som with Marita Cheng (left) and Christina Lee.



Chef Kumar Gorkhali is always happy to come up from Sydney to help.



Nijita

Meet Nijita, her journey to recovery has begun!

Steve Johnson from Cairns met 14-year-old Nijita in September 2018 in Batase village, Nepal. She is one of five siblings who live at FHC's hostel in Batase. They were living alone in a neighbouring village, having been abandoned by their parents, who had gone to Kathmandu in the hope of making a living. Nijita's older sister was caring for the children as best she could, and the struggle to survive meant education was out of the question for them all. The youngest of the children was four years old.

When FHC was alerted to the situation, the children were brought to the hostel and enrolled

in the school. They have been there now for almost two years.

Nijita was special. She was unable to walk and, when Steve heard that this was due to hip dislocation at birth, he felt compelled to find out if anything could be done medically to help her. Steve accompanied Nijita to Kathmandu for assessment by a team of specialists, and the verdict was YES! He took test results and ex-rays to Australia for a second opinion, with the same verdict.

Nijita's surgery is scheduled for May 2019 in Pokhara. In preparation she has been fitted with body casts and spent one month in hospital

adjusting to the casts and building muscle strength. She recently returned to Batase to continue her exercise program. As a resident of the Batase hostel, she is in good hands. Steve will return to Batase at the end of April to accompany Nijita to Pokhara and assist post-operatively as directed by her hostel family.

Steve has set up a 'My Cause' page to raise the funds needed for Nijita's surgery and rehabilitation. Please help make this young girl's dream of mobility a reality.

You can donate [here](#).



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

SINGLE (\$10/year) COUPLE (\$20/year) FAMILY (\$30/year)

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: _____

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

Please print the form, fill out and sign, then email, scan or photograph to info@f-hc.org

Friends of Himalayan Children Inc.
Monthly Meeting: 22nd March, 2019
Minutes

Attendance: Som Tamang, Linda Alexander, Kay Smith, Breanna Glen, Steve Johnson, Sarah Hoyal, Mary Frances De Jourdan, Tim Trehearn, Peter Gaudron, Roz Pulley, Colin Devitt, Ellen Taiapa, Prince Taiapa, Antonia Gambi, Jonathan Clayton, Pascale Clayton, Daniel Clayton and Susan Devitt

Apologies: Brian Duncan, Kirsty Nancarrow and Jana Engler.

1.Update:

Som provided everyone with an update from Batase village:

-The hostel was carpeted before Winter at a cost of \$2,000, this will make Winter much more comfortable for the children at the hostel. The Take on Nepal Schoolies group made this suggestion when they were in Nepal in November.

-A 21st century Library was opened in Batase village on Christmas Day, this project was driven by Christina Lee in collaboration with FHC and Libraries Without Borders. Susan explained how this library is the first of its kind in Nepal and will have a huge impact on the lives of the villagers. The Take on Nepal Women Only Everest Base Camp Trekking group raised nearly \$20,000 which was donated towards the library project. Money was also raised through Christina's viral funding page, people from all over the world supported this incredible project.

-Som explained that the families of the kids who are not in the hostel but receive sponsorship come to the hostel every couple of months to receive support and funding for their children's education.

-Bijay is currently overseeing the running of the hostel and library in Batase.

-Steve Johnson explained that he would like to hold a fundraiser in the future to build a hot water shower at the hostel (Action: Peter Gaudron and Jonathan Clayton to check out the potential for building a shower during their time in Batase).

2. Library Project:

Som explained that a clear outline of the costs will be presented at the next meeting, the overall cost of the library was approx \$30,000. MF explained how the space looked when she was in Batase in September and how it has been transformed by the team.

Som explained that it's currently not a lending library and that it is open for 3-4 hours everyday. Bijay is taking classes from Batase school up to the library everyday. It is being put to great use.

3. Nijita:

Steve spoke about the support he is providing to Nijita, Nijita lives at the hostel with her 4 siblings, Nijita's parents are both alcoholics who were unable to care for her. Steve explained that he first met Nijita last September when he went to the village. Nijita has a dislocated hip and is unable to walk without support. In September Steve brought Nijita down to Kathmandu for x-rays and met with doctors to discuss what could be done for Nijita, the doctors informed Steve that she could undergo an operation that would allow her to walk again.

Steve has recently returned from Nepal after spending a few weeks with Nijita in Pokhara where she is receiving medical treatment, she is also being taught how to live independently. Nijita will be operated on in May, a doctor from India will fly to Pokhara to perform the surgery. The cost of the operation and her stay in the hospital will be approx \$5,000. Steve has started a My Cause fundraising page to raise money for Nijita's medical expenses.

Action: Steve to return to Nepal in May to be with Nijita as she undergoes this life changing surgery and rehabilitation.

Everyone to share fundraising page to support Steve's fundraising efforts.

4. Background Info:

Som shared powerful and heartbreaking stories of some of the children living at the hostel. Som also explained how his Mum is "Mum" to so many kids in the village and that she gives freely from her own pocket to each of the children. Som also discussed how the hostel is breaking down expectations around the caste system in Nepal. The hostel is home to children from all castes, they are living happily together and growing up realising that the caste system is unnecessary.

5. Tim and MF:

Tim explained how over the past year FHC have not been engaging with the larger community and that a bigger effort is going to be made to reengage with people. This is going to be done through regular gatherings and also a newsletter. Tim is working with Angus McColl on the newsletter.

Tim and MF are working on sponsorships and memberships, we will be encouraging more people to become members through the website and offering incentives such as a discount at Himalayan Dreams and on entry into fundraising events. It was agreed that membership costs would be \$10 for an individual, \$5 for a student and \$20 for a family.

Action: Contact website developers (Julie and Richard Johnston) to set up payment for membership through the website.

Put information on kids being sponsored into the newsletter.

Feature a letter from a sponsored child in the newsletter.

6. Fundraisers:

It was agreed that more fundraisers are needed to fund the ongoing costs. A social night at the German Club was suggested for 8th of June.

Action: Susan to contact Chris Zilm regarding booking the venue for social gathering.

7. Meeting Closed:

7.45pm