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FRIENDS OF HIMALAYAN CHILDREN (FHC) • Empowerment through education

PROGRESS

DONATE/SPONSOR NOW



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

MARCH 2023

Gift to FHC in your WILL?



Have you considered gifting FHC in your Will?

Wills are something we mortals have to consider and a gift from you through your Will is a great way to expand your legacy and continue to contribute, even after you have gone. A gift to FHC would allow us continue our work in providing disadvantaged children in regional Nepal with a safe home and access to a good education. In the 18-year operation of this charity, we've had great success in stopping child trafficking in Batase village. Empowerment through education has been key to this success.

FHC plays an important role in the functions of the Batase School to ensure the community has access to good education.

For more information on how to gift FHC in your Will, visit www.f-hc.org/support/make-a-donation

"It's been 7 years since a girl has been taken from Batase" celebrates Som



In Nepalese rural communities such as Batase, most families are engaged in subsistence farming. They rely on their children's help with farming and household chores, which are often undertaken before and after school. Many families value education, particularly for boys as they see this as a pathway out of poverty. Consequently families will struggle to give their sons the opportunity to go to school.

Resistance to schooling can be stronger with girls, as the cultural

norm in remote villages is for them to marry young and move to their husband's home. Sometimes girls as young as 12 are married, even though early marriage is against Nepalese law. Hence many families don't value education for girls, preferring them to stay at home to care for younger siblings and do farm chores.

FHC strives to give girls access to an education so they have choices beyond early marriage and labouring on the farm. An independent life. A life of choices.

There is another important reason to give girls, and boys, access to an education. Children from poor regional areas are particularly vulnerable to the human-trafficking trade that still thrives in Nepal. Batase children are not immune. Extreme poverty makes children vulnerable, especially girls. Traffickers can groom families for years, eventually offering them money and persuading them that a good job and bright future awaits their daughters in Dubai or India. Batase village has lost a number of its children to this evil trade. FHC is determined to change this reality, through education and awareness for girls – training for all.

This aim is paying dividends. "It's been seven years since a girl has been taken from Batase village" says Som Tamang, FHC's founder. "And in the last five years it has been rare for girls to marry before 20 years of age."

These advances are to be celebrated. Such privileges, taken for granted in the first world, are life-changing for the most vulnerable in these regional communities – girls. You, as supporters of FHC, have played a large part in this success.

Batase school invited to a prestigious Learning Fair



The Mayor of Melamchi Municipality visiting the Batase School exhibition.



An electric motor bike built by students of Thangpal Valley Secondary School.

The Batase School recently participated in the Panchpokhari Learning Fair for 2079 (Nepal calendar) that was held at the Thangpal Valley Secondary School, one of the biggest schools in Bagmati Province.

The Fair was all about science. Final-year students from over 25 schools and five colleges were represented at the Learning Fair and the Batase School was one of only three schools invited from the Melamchi District. This has been a great honour for Batase to be part of this huge event and confirms the school's standing as a respected educational centre in this part of Nepal.

The benefits of such an experience for the Batase school students

were far-reaching. Not only did they get to show their skills to a large audience of students from other schools and colleges, they also got a chance to impress government dignitaries and educators, and even the media. They were interviewed by the media. Being exposed to such attention will build their confidence and communication abilities, important life skills.

"Their is nothing impossible that our student's can't do if they will be provided exposure and instant pace for learning. Thank you Mr Som Tamang for instant support. And our School team who always supported them to glow and grow" explains Samikshya Kutuwal, teacher and project manager at the Batase School.

Benefits from the Batase school Cultural tour



In the previous newsletter we talked about a cultural excursion the Year 9s and 10s from the Batase school went on at the end of last year to central Nepal.

A lot of work was involved in making this multi-day tour a reality. Sixty students and six teachers from the Batase School visited Kathmandu, Chitwan, Janakpur, Lumbini and Pokhara where they visited places of cultural and religious significance, called in on other schools and even experienced the theatre in Kathmandu. The value of such an experienced to these students cannot not be understated.

Samikshya Kutuwal is a teacher at the school and she project managed the cultural tour with Bijay Tamang from FHC. Samikshya raised approximately \$2,800 from family, friends, colleagues and co-workers. Her own father donated nearly \$500. FHC's Anil Tamang raised over \$1,730. The students themselves raised over \$3,000

and Innocents Relief helped tremendously with more than \$3,400. You, through FHC, gave over \$500 to the venture.

The tour was a huge success that has led to other extraordinary opportunities for the school. Because of the tour the school won a SGD\$1,000 (approximately AUD\$1,110) from a Singapore university, which went towards the Batase School hosting a food festival and science and technology, arts and craft exhibition. "Students gracefully show their leadership quality and showcase their talents in front of the community, schools and teachers from various areas" explains Samikshya.

Som saw the potential of this tour and added strong support to ensure success. He says that Batase has been looked on very favourably because of the cultural excursion and the exposure afforded to the students. "The value of the tour is very evident."

Woohoo...it's Saturday



Meet some of the children you support at FHC's Hostel. It's Saturday and they are celebrating because there is no school today. In fact, Saturday is their only

school-free day of the week in Nepal. Today is for cleaning and washing, and any farm work that needs to be done. Then it's movie time at the Library.

Happy Sonam Lhosar (Tibetan New Year)



Why is Sonam Lhosar celebrated? Sonam Lhosar is a Buddhist festival and is one of the most important festivals celebrated in Nepal by ethnic groups such as Tamang, Gurung and Sherpa. 'Lho' means year or age, and 'Sar' means new or fresh.

Sonam Lhosar is based on the lunar calendar so changes on the Gregorian Calendar each year. It falls on the second new moon after the winter solstice. This year that coincided with 22 January. The extravagant festival is celebrated in Nepal each year to mark the beginning of the Tibetan New Year.

Years are associated with 12 different animals – Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Eagle, Snake, Horse, Goat/ Sheep, Monkey, Rooster, Dog, and Boar. Historically the festival is celebrated after harvesting.

During Sonam Lhosar, Tamang people visit monasteries and

stupas to participate in special rituals to drive away evil spirits.

The houses and surroundings are cleaned to welcome gods and goddesses.

Beef, pork, chicken, mutton, fish, and sweet desserts are consumed in the Sonam Lhosar.

People wear traditional dresses and jewellery to participate in cultural events and exchange the greetings with each another.

Is Sonam Lhosar the same as Chinese New Year? It's similar but different. Because the Uyghurs adopted the Chinese calendar, and the Mongols and Tibetans adopted the Uyghur calendar, Losar occurs near or on the same day as the Chinese New Year and the Mongolian New Year. But the traditions of Losar are unique to Tibet, and predate both Indian and Chinese influences.

Thank you to our Hostel cooks



There are some people who are essential to the everyday functions of FHC on the ground in Batase. Indispensable. Saile Tamang (left), Urmila Tamang (middle) and Tok Maya Tamang are our cooks and they prepare the meals daily for the kids at the Hostel. But they are more than just cooks. They are mentors, role models and even mothers to children either orphaned or living away from their families.

Congratulations Bir Bahadur Tamang



From left: Bijay Tamang, Anu Tamang, Bir Bahadur Tamang and Milan Tamang.

Bir Bahadur Tamang has just been voted school captain by the students at the Batase School. We are very proud of Bir, who has been with FHC's hostel for many years.

Bir came to our hostel after his mother died and his father went to India for work. Steven Cheng from Australia kindly supported Bir by sponsoring him through FHCs

sponsorship program. If you are interested in sponsoring a child through FHC, visit www.f-hc.org/sponsor for more information.

Congratulations also to Anu Tamang for being voted vice captain and congratulations to all the house captains and vice captains for the different school houses – Green House, Red House, Yellow House and White House.

Congratulations to our champion volley ballers



TOP: Samjhana Tamang, Bindu Tamang, Asmina Tamang, Apsara Tamang, Susmita Tamang
FRONT: Binita Tamang, Rabina Chalise, Gyalmu Tamang and Budu Tamang.

We are so proud of the Batase School female volleyball team who won their competition at the Melamchi Municipality championship. They went on to the Sindhupalchok District games and came second.

Our newsletter is a hit with the kids



Our quarterly newsletter is sent around to all FHC members, sponsors, donors and our team in Batase. It showcases the latest news from Batase and surrounds. The FHC hostel kids are in on it too and it's good English practice.

If you know of someone who would like to be added to our newsletter mailing list, please let us know. You can also view and download past newsletters from www.f-hc.org/news/newsletters-and-annual-reports

Batase School – secure electricity via solar panels



Sarbagya, Danish, Dr Morgan Kiani, Paras Loomba, Sujan, and Matthew Nelson.

Nepal is no stranger to renewable energies. Hydropower plays a predominant role in Nepal's electricity system, currently providing 96.2% of the country's needs. Access to the main grid is not always possible in mountainous, regional Nepal so supply can be unreliable.

A new approach is required and thanks to Dr Morgan Kiani the Batase School now has access to reliable electricity via solar panels.

Dr Morgan Kiani is an electrical engineer and Professor at Texas Christian University in USA. She is also a member of IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers). IEEE is the world's largest technical professional organisation dedicated to advancing technology for the benefit of humanity.

Dr Kiani learnt about the challenges in Batase Village from Susan while visiting Som and Susan's shop – Himalayan Dreams – in Cairns. On returning to the US, she raised \$US35,000 (about \$52,000) and a plan to install solar panels at the school.

Dr Kiani visited the village recently with a team and now the panels are in-place and operational. Accompanying Dr Kiani is Paras Loomba, founder of Global Himalayan Expedition (GHE). He is also an electrical engineer and has led several leadership expeditions to Himalayas to provide clean energy access to remote Himalayan communities. GHE aims to "empower regional communities towards a sustainable future."

Matthew and Danish are photographers with GHE recording the experience and Sarbaya is a Nepalese businessman supplying the solar panels.

FHC and the Batase community are very thankful to Dr Morgan Kiani and GHE for helping to further develop their school. Very thankful also is Sujan, President of the School Board and FHC's manager, who hosted and looked after the group throughout their visit. The Batase school is developing quickly and fast-becoming a respected centre of education for this region. The future is bright for the school and FHC's kids.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT – charity tins



Jonathan (left) is FHC's tireless organiser of charity collection tins. He finds willing businesses to host our tins and regularly collects from them. In the last 12 months, FHC has raised over \$3,200 in small change from these tins and Jonathan's efforts.

Thank you to the following businesses for hosting our tins:

Cafes and restaurants

- Coast Roast, Mantra building, Esplanade
- Lagoon Cafe, Esplanade
- Captain Cook Fish & Chips, Sheridan St
- Brother Jenkins Restaurant, Martyn St
- 7 Spices Restaurant, Sheridan St
- Mulgrave Seafoods, Fish & Chip Shop, Showground Shopping Centre
- Annabel's Bakery, Sheridan St
- Cruz Coffee, Grafton St
- Barista Sista, Rusty's Markets
- Punjabi Nights, Indian Takeaway, Freshwater
- Le Crouton, Freshwater
- Tia's Cafe, Sheridan St

Supermarkets & Mini Marts

- IGA Mantra Trilogy, Alpin St
- Mini Mart, Balaclava Road
- Jets Friendly Grocer, White Rock (Opp TAS)
- Friendly Grocer Supermarket, Sheridan St
- Edge Hill Friendly Grocer
- Night Owl, Cnr Sheridan and Grove St
- Night Owl, Reservoir Rd
- Night Owl, Trinity Beach
- Lake Placid General Store
- Reed Road Store and Takeaway, Reed Road
- Trinity Local Convenience Store, Trinity Beach
- Palm Cove Deli, Palm Cove
- NightOwl BP, Clifton Beach
- NightOwl Caltex, Westcourt

Fuel stations

- Liberty Servo, Mulgrave Rd
- Liberty Servo, Reservoir Rd
- United Servo, Sheridan St
- United Servo, Ray Jones Drive

If you know of any business that would like to help, please contact Jonathan on 0414 281 196.

Post-school views like no other



After a long, hard day in the classroom the walk back to the hostel is a treat. "There is so excitement, happiness and refreshment after spending whole day at school and back to home."



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 upcoming 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.

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

DONATE IN YOUR WILL

Have you considered leaving money for FHC to continue its work from your estate in your WILL? We have achieved so much but there is still a lot to do.

Visit www.f-hc.org/support/make-a-donation to learn how.

FHC DONATION TINS



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

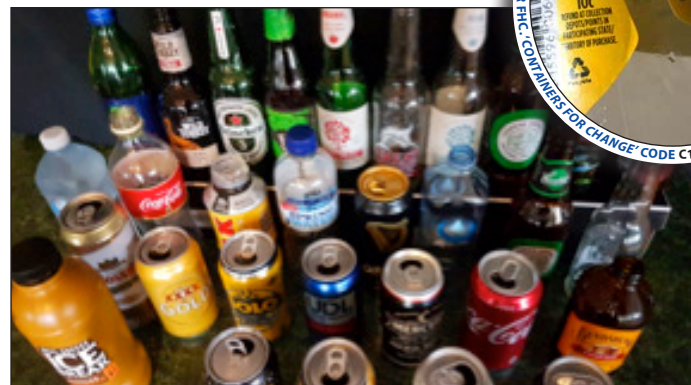
If so, please contact Jonathan on 0414 281 196

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.

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.