

Friends of Himalayan Children
General Meeting – Stratford Library

Minutes

Wednesday, 18 September 2024

Meeting commenced at 6:10pm

Present – Ivan Whittle, Deb Whittle, Phulmaya Tamang, Josie O’Shea, Som Tamang, Susan Devitt, Su Byden, Rita Zappulla, Tim Trehearn, JP Clayton, Peter Gaudron, Kirsty Nancarrow, Roz Pulley.

Apologies – Angus McColl, Fiona Sewell, Kay Smith, Sue lowth, Brian Duncan, Gwyn

Som

General welcome and acknowledgement of country. Introduction of Su Brydon whose daughters have married Tamang boys after a trip to Nepal. They now live in Melbourne and are keen to help.

Susan – refreshed on the last meeting minutes and they were accepted.

General Business

1. Trivia Night – Rita

To be held Friday, 27 September – arrive at 6pm and trivia to start at 7pm. So far there are 122 tickets sold, with the hope that 200 will sell before the night. Tickets are \$20 and there will be tables for 8. There will be a silent auction as well as raffles. A square will be used for collecting money. (Rita to organise). Raffle tickets will be sold for \$2ea, 3 for \$5 or 7 tickets for \$10 There will be prizes for 1st, 2nd and 3rd winners as well as a prize for 2nd last. The trivia night will consist of 6 rounds. Brothers will be running the quiz and FHC helpers will have access to the room at 330pm. We will need 2 -4 people on the door, 2 people directing to tables and between 2 – 4 people to collect answers. Su and Susan Devitt have volunteered to be markers of the quiz. Table mats with FHC children and stories will be laminated for the night with hopes sponsorship will be increased.

Action – any available helpers to contact Rita

2. Fundraiser for early next year – proposed date 8th February.

Dinner using Nepal restaurant in Cairns as caterers.

Action – Jonathon to check venue availability.

3. Update from Village – Som

Som described the loss of his father (a Shaman and Buddhist) which happened recently. Som and Phulmaya were in the village for the celebration of 21 days. Som’s entire family (Susan and the three children) were full participants and very grateful to be part of such a meaningful occasion.

This has been the hardest year of Som’s life with loss of family, Bijay, loss of finance and many changes to the FHC committee in Nepal. There has also been difficulties with Amber’s (Som’s late brother) wife regarding a parcel of land. Som shared these hardships in relation to Som’s father and his land in Batase Village.

Som also spoke of changes in Nepal where other trekking companies are employing females as guides – once a rarity which Som challenged and encouraged Batase girls to join Take on Nepal. Unfortunately, there is a tend for girls in Batase to finish Year 12 and go elsewhere (overseas) where more money can be made.

FHC has now been going for 17 years. Many great achievements/opportunities have occurred despite the difficulties!

- 25 children in hostel
 - 43 scholarships
 - 48 students (high achievers that are interviewed) are being assisted by Donna Smith for a period of 2 years to ensure these students complete their +2 (College education). Unfortunately, the donations, particularly by Donna Smith are being held up by Social Welfare Council – making it difficult to access the money donated. A % of money donated is being charged by Social Welfare Council. Donna Smith is an American woman who trekked with Anil and was moved to take action and help. She is also part of the Rotary International in America but her donations are not part of Rotary International. She has also completed paperwork as a beneficiary in her will – as outlined in Angus’ recent newsletter.
4. Susan – Nepal Trip Update
Susan will be returning to Nepal in November to assist with a trip to Everest Base Camp as well as Mera Peak.
 5. Som suggested the social connection in FHC is lacking and suggested a potluck dinner with a small cost be organised. This needs further discussion.
 6. Kirsty Nancarrow – Book updates
Kirsty has done 4 speaking engagements of her book (Himalayan Dreams: The Story of Som Tamang) since the last meeting. There has been lots of interest. Kirsty will be in Nepal (going to Batase Village) in October. Singapore Airlines has given her an extra 15kgs to take extra donations. Kirsty will be meeting with the Australian Embassy (in Nepal) on 24 October for afternoon tea. Kirsty’s efforts are greatly appreciated by Som and FHC. We are all very proud of her efforts, care and achievement.
 7. Innocents Relief – MF
Mary Frances gave update of recent conversation with Clare Carter (IR). Clare has been very happy with their contact with FHC. She is happy with the last acquittal and if opportunities change, possibly assistance with future projects could occur. At the moment, the focus for IR is Timor where needs are much greater.

The next General Meeting will be held on December 4th. Details TBA
The AGM will be held 15 January – details TBA.

Meeting closed – 7:50pm

Minutes taken by Mary Frances de Jourdan