



"To serve is beautiful, but only if it is done with joy and a whole heart and a free mind..."
—Pearl S. Buck

Editor: Jen Kim

November 2014

NOVEMBER UPDATE



Fall slipped in as gently as it could to edge out the sunlight on both ends of the day. Jackets, sweaters and hoods, hot tea, braiding hair as girls shiver in the early morning mist with a faint glow of sun high above the thin grey sky; evening study wearing jackets, stocking caps and shawls, sitting close to one another with pneumatic knees generating a little warmth, slightly vibrating the benches, thoughts leaving the page and floating up to their warm blanket-piled beds they glance at

watches. Early morning bathing in cold water matching the frigid air brings gallows humor, smiles and laughter from the girls whose long hair lay slowly drying on towels thrown over sweater and shawl-covered shoulders wicking out the water.

Winter in Kathmandu is not for the faint of heart or the humorless, descriptions no one would ever apply to our children. -- *Papa*

NEWSLETTER

FEATURED CHILD: APSARA BASNET

Apsara is on the far left looking mortified at having to wear a bathing suit. This was late in 2006. Apsara then and now has maintained her position as No.1 in her class; she slipped a little the first term of this year but has assured me that she will put a large gap between herself and No.2 in this next term.

Apsara takes anything she does seriously, but not obsessively; she has a good time while achieving a little more than others. She has been taking Taekwondo for the past four or five years and will become a black belt next year. She loves the forms but not



the sparring as she does not want to hit anyone.

She is quiet but not shy and always smiles with a look of great kindness mixed with humor. She is helpful to anyone at any time.

Apsara shares a room with her older sister Kabita and one of her best friends, Puja (second from right in the bathing suit photo). When Apsara first came to live with us, she was very sick. For a week I would spend most of my days sitting with her, giving medicine, reading to her, feeding her and trying to give her some comfort. She was really small, and did not utter a word the whole time. I would make her soups, eggs, toast — anything I could think of — when in reality she really just wanted dhal bat, rice and vegetables with dhal.



Around the third day I received a little smile from her and on the fifth day I made her a grilled cheese sandwich. She ate it all and made some pleasing sounds and gave me a big smile after which I bundled her in a blanket and carried her outside to sit in a chair in the sun and watch the children play during their lunch break from school.

From that evening she joined the others for her meals and also has never quit smiling at me.

Apsara is adored by her teachers, our staff and all our children. She is a girl of all seasons with an assured eye towards medicine. She is, like all of our children, a real pleasure to have around. -- Papa

FEATURED VOLUNTEER: REBECCA DEMEESTER

By Eileen Witham

While some volunteers choose to immerse themselves fully in one chosen placement, others are lucky enough to have time to dedicate themselves to multiple placements for a broader experience.



A recent volunteer who enjoyed doing just that was Rebecca DeMeester from Idaho. Rebecca started her volunteering teaching in the ever popular Ramechhap village placement. Past volunteers will remember the dhal bhat for every meal and the stunning areas she was able to explore during her afternoon walks.

And “Babu” is no longer the baby of the host family, with a new addition arriving shortly before Rebecca started her volunteer placement.



During the second half of her volunteer trip, Rebecca lived at the Volunteer House and explored Kathmandu. Half the day was spent teaching the children of local street vendors at a nearby school, before heading to help out at a local orphanage called Our Children’s Protection Foundation. Her favorite part of all three placements was the unexpectedly sassy things the children would say in English.

Between placements, Rebecca trekked through some of the most beautiful parts of the country, bungie jumped for the first time and made friends she will undoubtedly keep for life. A lasting impression from her time in Nepal will be her new favorite phrase she was taught in church: “Hallelujah, Dhanyabad!”

A FESTIVE HOMECOMING

By Carola Drosdeck



Saturday, Nov. 8 was a busy day at Papa's House. Beyond the usual crowd of 140+ kids enjoying playtime and socializing, we had many special guests—among them members of the Pradhan family from Cleveland, Ohio.

Once Bhutanese citizens (although retaining Nepali as their native language), they along with thousands of others were forcibly removed from Bhutan and taken to refugee camps in Nepal.

Nithya and her mother Padma Maya, along with other members of the family, have since resettled in Cleveland where they have achieved well-deserved success and recognition, including American citizenship three years ago.

It was the hankering for genuine Nepali food by some former NOH volunteers/visitors four years ago, which led to a serendipitous encounter with then-owner Nar Pradhan at the Flavors of India restaurant (near Great Northern Mall, for those of you in the Cleveland area). The volunteers and Pradhan quickly learned of the many ties between NOH and the refugee community in Cleveland.

Which is likely why, when Nithya and Padma Maya made plans for their first return to Nepal in six years, they wanted to include a visit with our children.

Needless to say, we were thrilled to have them come!

They arrived with two of Nithya's cousins who live in Kathmandu and immediately set about greeting the children and sharing stories. The magnetic pull of their warmth and enthusiasm drew everyone close, and soon we were sitting in a wide circle listening to the story of their family's arrival in the United States and subsequent adaptations to their new life. It was a delight to hear the exchange in rapid Nepali, and the frequent laughter and smiles were universally understood.



To add to the festivities, former volunteer and loyal supporter of NOH, Palden Schmidt —now Deputy Regional Refugee Director at the US Embassy in Nepal — also joined us.

Following tiffin, Palden spoke at length with the Pradhan family, listening intently to the experiences of Nithya and Padma during their transition to the U.S. as well as those of cousins Om and Laxi Narayan, who were not allowed to follow the same path.

These new connections and exchanges of information were enlightening to all of us. We are excited to remain in touch with the Pradhans both in Nepal and in the U.S.

FESTIVAL FUN

For 15 days in September and October, Nepali celebrate Dashain, one of the biggest and most anticipated festivals of the year. In preparation of the holiday, every home is cleaned and decorated to invite Durga, the mother goddess, to bless families with good fortune. Many of our children travel to their homes to visit family and celebrate together.

Tihar, also known as the Festival of Lights, is a five-day Hindu festival that follows Dashain. The country celebrates by decorating their homes with lights -- both inside and out. During the festival, Nepali create intricate patterns on the floor of living rooms and yards to honor the Hindu gods.



READING CLUB REVIVAL

By Carola Drosdeck

In our last newsletter you read about Chloe Curraçan's launching of book clubs with our children. We're happy to report that the reading-for-pleasure groups continue.



During the recent Dashain and Tihar festival, the groups were revived—this time with the girls who remained in our houses over the holidays. No age limits this time, and with wide open schedules, the groups consisted of 10 to 19 year olds who eagerly chose from the growing library of multiple copies.

Anita's Imagine House girls chose *The Secret School* by Avi and, in spite of its setting in 1925 in Colorado, enjoyed the tale of the spirited 14-year old who is determined to pass her end-of-school examinations, but has to become the teacher for all of the other students in order to keep the school open.

Initially a combined group, Harmony House and Sanctuary House girls chose Louis Sachar's *Sideways Stories from Wayside School* and giggled their way through descriptions of the silly characters and their idiosyncrasies.

Upon completion of their first books the groups selected *Ribsy* by Beverly Cleary, *Aquamarine* by Alice Hoffman, and *Stuart Little* by E. B. White. Now restricted by the tight schedule while school is in session, the groups meet only on Saturday mornings, but the enthusiasm continues, vocabulary grows, and a lifelong love of reading is instilled.

Please contact us if you are interested in providing sets of books or in leading any of the groups when you come to volunteer.



THANK YOU MICHAEL TRIOZZI!

A huge thank you to our wonderful volunteer director, Michael Triozzi, who has served the Nepal Orphans Home family for the past 15 months with incredible dedication and so much passion.



If you have met Michael, you are familiar with his endless supply of energy (especially in the morning!), great sense of humor, sharp wit and ability to recommend a good book.

As many of you know, we don't like to say goodbye at NOH; instead, we say, "See you later."

So from all of us - staff, volunteers and children - with love: *See you later, Michael!*

A NOTE FROM EILEEN WITHAM, OUR NEW VOLUNTEER DIRECTOR

After hearing about Nepal Orphans Home in 2009 from Sanctuary for Kids, I spent the next three years reading every update and newsletter I could find to learn more about this extraordinary family.

I arrived as a volunteer for the first time in October 2012 with my mother and sister in tow. I have not stopped talking about NOH and Volunteer Nepal since, so you can imagine how delighted I am to be here as director of Volunteer Nepal. It means I am not only allowed, but expected to share my enthusiasm nonstop.

As I reflect on my first 6 weeks, I must take a moment to acknowledge my predecessor Michael Triozzi. His enthusiasm and wry wit are definitely missed around Dhapasi, not least by Smiley dog. We wish him all the best as he re-enters his journey in academia.

If you have any questions about volunteering, let me know. If I need to repeat anything so you can understand my New Zealand accent, just ask! If you need help shaving your head or need a terrible duet partner for breakfast time show tunes (both examples from my first few weeks) consider it added to the job description.

I am overwhelmingly proud to have been welcomed so warmly into the NOH family and hope I can help our volunteers enjoy their time with Volunteer Nepal as much as I have. -- Eileen

We are thrilled to welcome you to the NOH family, Eileen!

THANK YOU!

A Magic Show for NOH

By Laurie Levine



It was a night of oohs and ahhs for the 110 guests who enjoyed the magic of Greg Hudson, a hypnotist and mind reader.

The evening also included a successful raffle with great prizes, desserts and plenty of laughter. It was wonderful to see so much of the community of Central Coast in Sydney, Australia come out and raise funds to support the children of NOH.

Want to throw a fundraising event or learn how you can creatively support NOH? See our webpage for ideas: <http://www.nepalorphanshome.org/fundraising-possibilities>

DONATE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON!

Have you thought about giving a gift to NOH in honor of a friend or family this holiday season? Our updated wish list includes much-needed items for our homes. Give a set of knitting needles for only \$4, sports equipment for our athletes for \$25, or even a solar panel to provide the gift of light during our (up to 18-hour) electricity blackouts for \$150. You can see the complete list and give directly on our wishlist webpage. <http://www.nepalorphanshome.org/wish-list>

GOODSHOP AND GOODSEARCH

Please make every gift count this holiday season. More than 1,600 top stores including Amazon, Toys R Us, Best Buy, Apple, Gap, LL Bean and more will donate a percentage of virtually every sale to Nepal Orphans Home. Just go to GoodShop.com, designate Nepal Orphans Home or Papa's House as the cause you support and then click over to your favorite store. You pay nothing extra - and you can even save money as GoodShop lists numerous money-saving coupons and free shipping offers.

Or, add the Goodsearch toolbar to your browser at <http://www.goodsearch.com/toolbar> — and your purchases will count even if you forget to go to GoodShop first. There's no easier way to support us this holiday season. Please spread the word.

Furthermore, you can easily donate money to NOH every time you conduct an internet search just by using the Goodsearch search engine at www.goodsearch.com: Go to "Who do you Goodsearch for?", type in either "Nepal Orphans Home" or "Papa's House", click "Verify", and start donating to NOH as you surf the net!

STOCK GIFTS

We take this opportunity to remind you that Nepal Orphans Home can now receive gifts of stock shares. There may be significant tax advantages to donating stock directly to Nepal Orphans Home since donors may avoid paying capital gains tax on appreciated shares. Of course, NOH cannot provide tax advice and donors should seek advice from tax professionals in connection with their stock donations.

If you wish to donate stock to NOH, please contact Barbara Hess, Treasurer of NOH, Inc., to obtain the routing number of the NOH account. Barbara can be reached via email at bhessnc@aol.com.

CHECKS

Checks, payable to Nepal Orphans Home, can be mailed to Nepal Orphans Home, P.O. Box 1254, Davidson, N.C. 28036. Of course, credit card donations are welcome and can be made through our website. www.NepalOrphansHome.org

[Don't forget to follow us on Facebook!](#)