



**MAY 2009**  
**KATHMANDU, NEPAL**

## *Dear Friends,*

Several years ago, just before Mother's Day, I had the extraordinary experience of appearing on the world's most popular daytime program – The Oprah Show. It occurs to me that I have never told you, our dear donors, what the experience was like, although many of you have asked.

So here goes: Once Oprah decided that she wanted me to appear on the show, a member of her staff called from Chicago asking me to come to the studio for the appearance. I brought with me Santosh, one of the boys who grew up at J house (our home for boys in Kathmandu), who was studying in the U.S. We were picked up by a limo at the airport and taken to a luxurious hotel. That night, as we sat in the hotel's restaurant, we marveled at the strange turns life takes. Who could have imagined that Santosh, an impoverished boy from a farming family living in a remote Nepalese village, and I, a retired San Francisco lawyer, would one day be sitting in the penthouse of a fancy hotel looking down on the lights of Chicago, sipping wine, enjoying a sumptuous meal, and waiting to appear on a TV show watched by tens of millions of people.



The next day, the limo whisked us off to Oprah's studio, and a team of makeup artists and hair stylists got to work. Some of her staff told me that Oprah's charitable efforts are far more extensive than the public knows about – for example, she has built several hundred schools in Africa. They seemed to have a warm spot in their hearts for their boss. Then, we were ushered into the studio, where a small audience was waiting. Oprah entered, greeted everyone, and began to chat with the audience. The thing about her is what you see is what you get – she is as funny, warm, and approachable in person as she is over the airwaves. During commercial breaks and for some time before and after the show, she and the audience engaged in very informal and sometimes funny conversations about this and that. She has a genius for creating a one-on-one, intimate connection with everyone she encounters, and these exchanges were great fun.

Then came my turn. I was a tiny bit nervous beforehand, because this was a chance for me to tell NYOF's story to tens of millions of people all over the world, and I wanted to make the most of it. But Oprah's folksy informality put me at my ease, and Santosh, who had never been on TV or inside a TV studio, held my hand and reassured me. He is a born ham, and he was relaxed and looking forward to the experience. She was very interested in what he had to say about his life and how NYOF had helped him to transform it. (He has transformed it even more since the show, since he recently received an MBA from a California university.) Oprah, it turned out, was especially interested in our Indentured Daughters Program, which frees young girls from bonded labor with the gift of a piglet or a goat to the girl's family.

When I tried to speak about J and K House, NYOF's homes for impoverished children, our Nutritional Rehabilitation Homes for severely malnourished kids, or the thousands of children for whom we have provided an education, Oprah would interrupt with "Listen folks, for \$100 you can buy a piglet and save a girl from bondage!" At the end of the show, she walked over to Santosh and engulfed him in a great, big, motherly hug.

*more...*

**Changing the world...one child at a time.**



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The broadcast was close to Mother's Day, and as a result many of the donations we received because of our appearance were \$100 checks or multiples thereof, representing gifts for mothers and wives – the purchase of a piglet or goat to liberate a bonded girl in Nepal. What a unique and fulfilling way to honor someone on this most sentimental of holidays. I cherish the memory of that extraordinary experience not only for its own sake, but also because it was the vehicle that brought so many new friends to NYOF.



Since the show, our Indentured Daughters Program has multiplied several-fold, and we have rescued thousands of new girls with our piglet-for-the-freedom-of-a-girl scheme. We have expanded our efforts to eradicate this custom to the second of five districts in west Nepal where the practice of bonding occurs, mobilized the communities to oppose the practice, and are on our way to setting free the thousands of girls still in bondage.

The accounts we get from the field about the lives of these girls are hair-raising and sometimes inspiring. Here is the story of a girl we will call Durga Chaudary, one of five children in her family, and the only girl. Her family was very poor, as her father leased land from a landowner and was paid only with a portion of the crop. Everyone in her family became a slave to the landowner. Durga herself was sold at the age of six to an employer far from her village. She worked 16 hours a day, doing backbreaking labor in the field and at the house of her employer. When she was 11 years old, she heard about NYOF's Indentured Daughters Program and begged her parents to allow her to come home and attend school. At first, they resisted, but after strenuous efforts by our local staff, they agreed to let her return home, in exchange for a piglet. She had never been to school before, and like the other liberated girls, she attended our intensive bridging classes, which allowed her to enroll at the government school in her village in the third grade. She proved to be an apt student, and finished high school with our support. She now works for NYOF part time as a facilitator in the bridging class program that she herself attended years ago and earns enough to attend the local college. She is studying for a degree in Education to fulfill her dream of becoming a teacher.

Not bad value for the initial gift of \$100 which a generous donor made to NYOF in honor of their mother! Or for even better value, if you donate \$350, NYOF can support her through 10th grade, the end of high school in Nepal.

We welcome your support of this unique and cost-effective project. I'll bet your Mom or your wife would get more pleasure from knowing that her gift for Mother's Day was the liberation of a young girl from slavery than if you presented her with that sweater or perfume or flowers you were thinking of buying.

Warm regards,

**The Nepalese Youth Opportunity Foundation**

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*Oprah, Santosh, some piglets, and a lot of new supporters found a way to change hundreds of lives*