

Local villagers donated land for the project, provided volunteer labor, and managed the construction work. Two hostels were constructed – one for girls and another for boys. The hostel was limited to students who had to walk three to eight hours a day to and from school. There are fewer girls because parents are still reluctant to let their daughters go away from home, but we are certain that once parents understand that the hostels are safe, the number of girls will increase.



First residents of girls hostel

During a recent visit to the hostel with the Thompsons, we were overwhelmed to see the joy and gratitude of the children – no more would they have to waste hours every day and risk their lives just to attend school. We hope that this project will be the first of many that will ease the burden of students in this remote and impoverished part of Nepal. ●

Double or triple the impact of your gift this holiday season

This holiday season, you have a unique opportunity to double or triple the impact of your gift and help even more impoverished Nepali children. **All donations made between November 24 and December 31, 2012 will be matched dollar for dollar, up to \$100,000, by our generous Board of Directors and Advisory Board!** If your employer has a matching program you can even triple the impact of your gift. In recognition of our efficient use of your donations, NYF has received six consecutive four-star ratings, the highest possible, from Charity Navigator. Only 3 percent of nonprofits qualify for this prestigious rating. If you would like to know more, please call Teresa Parker, NYF's Development Director, at (415) 331-8585.



How you can help

The other day, we ran across some papers from NYF's beginnings 22 years ago. At that time, we had a handful of scholarship students, a tiny budget, and an office that consisted of a tin trunk under the bed in our hotel rooms. So much has changed since those days – the number of children we help and the many ways we help them have increased dramatically, as has our budget.

What has not changed is our fierce commitment to provide the poorest of the poor children in Nepal with a good education, protection against exploitation, and good nourishment. To this end, we have created ground-breaking programs; our "piglet for a girl" project, which has resulted in the liberation of 12,000 little girls from labor bondage; and the 16 small hospitals we have established to restore malnourished children to health and educate their mothers, relying entirely on local, inexpensive food. These success stories are your success stories, too, for they would not be possible without your support.

Your contribution will allow us to continue providing the life-changing programs needed for these children to reach their true potential. Warmest thanks for another inspirational year. Please give as generously as you can.

Warm regards, Som and Olga



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Dear Friends:

So many good things to tell you about this time around. First, two stories that will lift your spirits: the blossoming of the new little kids at J House and K House, and an account of how we are helping the girls we rescued from kitchen slavery, including getting justice for a child raped by a villainous employer. Finally, a different kind of success – the construction of school hostels in a remote area that alleviated the need for children to walk several hours a day to and from school.

These days, J and K House are bursting with joy and laughter and hugs and kisses. It's not only because the nine little kids recently admitted to the houses (aged from 20 months to seven years) are completely adorable, but also because their older sisters and brothers at the houses are so loving and kind and attentive. If a child cries (and it doesn't happen often), twenty junior fathers or mothers come running to comfort and cuddle.



J House fun



New boys dancing

But a bit of indulgence is in order, we think. You may recall the three Chepang brothers we wrote about recently. Their mother died in childbirth, and their father was a beggar without income and could not care for them; they were living outdoors under a tarp. The youngest, three years old, was malnourished, sad, and we feared perhaps a bit slow when he arrived at J House last Spring. What three-year-old wouldn't be thrilled to be offered his first balloon? He hardly glanced at it – no reaction at all. Fast forward seven months. You would hardly recognize him as the same child. He is still tiny for his age, but the picture of health and boisterous happiness – he runs around, chattering, laughing, and is into everything.

And then there is Menuka (not her real name), the 20 month old whose mother was murdered by her father in her presence. The father fled to India, and she was found by neighbors crying, draped over her mother's body. We have never taken a child this young at the houses, but she and her four year old brother had no one else to care for them, and we felt we had to step in. Her brother is at J House. Menuka is full of life, and has learned to walk and talk since she arrived at the house several months ago. Her K House sisters are over the moon to have a little child in their midst. She is very much the little princess, pampered and loved by her many miniature mothers. And here's a wonderful twist – Menuka's sponsor is a NYF graduate we helped through medical school years ago. He is now practicing medicine in Virginia and delighted to be giving back to NYF. ●



Menuka

Indentured daughters after liberation

Many of you have asked about the future of the girls that we have rescued (over 12,000 to date) from their lot as indentured servants. We provide an array of solutions for them, from education to filing lawsuits on their behalf against abusive employers.

The large majority are living at home and attending local schools. However, some are too old to start school, and for them, we offer a comprehensive program. We place them in an intensive literacy course to learn to read and write (most of them did not go to school during their years of labor) and then into a vocational training program. After training, they can either find a job or start their own business. Many have been successful in finding employment. For example, a California garment manufacturer has hired 20 of our former bonded girls as seamstresses in Nepal; they are earning substantially more than the average village salary.



Seamstress training

Some of these youngsters are intensely entrepreneurial and have started successful businesses – tailoring, bamboo crafts, and small shops. To facilitate these undertakings, we have sponsored the formation of cooperatives which enable the girls to borrow money to start their own enterprises or to earn money for college. (So far, 20 cooperatives are in operation.) Each member invests a small sum every week and can borrow at under market rates. As they pay back the loans, they are able to borrow ever larger amounts.



Bamboo craft cooperative

Aasha Chaudhary spent ten miserable years as a child bonded laborer before she was rescued by NYF in 2006. After completing the literacy course, she opened a small shop and canteen with about \$18 of her savings and a loan of \$200. She joined the cooperative established by former bonded girls a year later, borrowed \$300, and opened a second store. Each time she paid back a loan, she increased the amount she borrowed and used the proceeds to extend services at the canteen and buy more stock for the grocery. Today, four years later, her net worth is over \$21,000 (an enormous sum in Nepal), and she is supporting her family of seven. She plans to open a hotel and expand her empire even more.



Aasha in her shop

But that's not all. We go to great lengths to protect girls we rescue from servitude to assure that their rights against their former employers are protected. In several cases, we have pressured employers to pay back wages to the girls they enslaved. It is not uncommon for bosses to stiff these child servants of even the puny compensation they have promised to their families – a few bags of rice, or maybe \$50 a year, so that in effect many of these children are enslaved for years for no compensation. When we rescue a girl, we inquire whether she has been paid the agreed-upon wages over the years of her employment, and if the answer is “no,” we force the employer to pony up. Some of these girls have received sufficient back wages to see them through college. ●

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Justice for a child rape victim

Usha was sold to her employer at the age of nine. She did not receive a salary, but as payment for her labor, her employer agreed to lease a plot of land to her father so that he could raise crops to feed his large family. From the age of 12, her employer who, believe it or not was the principal of the local school, began to abuse her sexually. He threatened to terminate the land lease if she told anyone about it. NYF rescued her in 2007. At the time of her liberation, she was pregnant and gave birth to a baby boy at the age of 15.

The villagers were not sympathetic; they blamed her for the situation and looked upon her as a “bad girl.” Ultimately, she named the employer as the father. He vehemently denied the charges, and because he was well connected politically and prosperous by village standards, most of the villagers sided with him.

NYF filed a case in the local court on her behalf, seeking compensation and recognition of the baby as the child of the employer, including full inheritance rights. Usha prevailed. After a DNA test ordered by the court showed the employer to be the father, the court ordered him to pay damages and the child was granted

a birth certificate identifying him as the father. Today, Usha owns her own home, purchased with the money she received as a result of the court's order, runs a small shop, and her reputation in the village has been resurrected.



Shortening the distance to education

Som, NYF's new President, writes about NYF providing relief to students in remote western Nepal

Life in the rugged western region of Nepal – some 500 miles from Kathmandu – is a constant struggle for survival. People lack adequate food, safe drinking water, decent schools and primary health care. Travel is difficult. There are few roads and those that exist are in poor condition.

The most striking problem I observed while visiting the area was the high number of students who drop out of school. They are not quitting because they do not want an education, but because of the long journeys they are forced to take to get to class. Villages tend to be small – typically around 10 households in each. Since it is impossible to build a school in each village, they are constructed more or less at equal distance from the surrounding villages. As a result, some children walk as much as eight hours a day to get to and from school, trekking along dangerous trails, through dense forests and across thundering rivers. The problem is especially acute for girls, who risk physical assault. Their parents often do not want their daughters to take the risk and discourage school attendance. Those girls that manage to attend high school are very resilient and determined, overcoming physical and societal barriers with extraordinary will.

We discussed the problem with local teachers, students and parents in various villages and came up with a plan to build student housing – dormitories where students could stay during the week. We chose a school that served a large population of students and selected the Gaurishankar Secondary School in Doti, which is the only high school in the area that serves 30 villages.

Cindy and David Thompson, along with other donors, generously offered to fund the construction of the dormitories. “We are fervent believers in education access for all children, and widening the availability through housing is such a prudent strategy,” said David Thompson, who recently joined the board of Nepal Youth Foundation. ►



Cindy and David Thompson