



## How You Can Help

We especially need your help now. The economic changes in Nepal I described at the beginning of this letter require us to raise more money than ever just to maintain our existing programs. We run a tight ship, as evidenced by the fact that NYOF was awarded a four-star rating (the highest rating possible) by Charity Navigator, the largest independent evaluator of nonprofit organizations in the United States. We could not do it without your generous support. Those of you who have an IRA are in an especially advantageous position to donate this year, as you see from the box on this page. And, the “bang for the buck” that you can get for your charitable dollar in Nepal is still hard to beat. Every gift makes a real difference in the lives of these beautiful children.

While you are celebrating the holiday, won't you please join us in our worthwhile efforts by making your donation now! As a direct result of your generosity, we can continue to make these dramatic changes in the lives of these needy children.

Warm regards,

P.S. Recently, NYOF has completed an important transition of which we are very proud. In accordance with government regulations in Nepal and with the most current thinking about development, our programs are implemented by six partner Nepalese non-profit organizations with which we work closely. This arrangement provides for long-term flexibility and growth. NYOF's staff in Nepal works with these partners in developing new programs and operating and expanding existing programs. It helps our implementing partners with staff training, budgeting and financial planning. Likewise, it provides us with oversight, management, program evaluation and auditing of grantees on a regular basis. We have been fortunate to identify and foster implementing grantees that are managed by people of talent, integrity and commitment. As a result, NYOF is now able to help even greater numbers of Nepalese children with the assistance of our generous donors. We are strengthened by our diversity and excited about the opportunity to accomplish even more.

Please visit our web site [www.nyof.org](http://www.nyof.org)

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### Special Opportunity for those over age 70.5!

**Until the end of 2007, you can arrange for a transfer from your IRA directly to NYOF without paying taxes on the amount of the donation, without reducing your deductible medical expenses by 7.5% of the IRA distribution, and without further reducing your other itemized deductions because of the complicated phase-out rules. Even though the transfer is not included in your taxable income, it is counted in determining whether you have satisfied your minimum distribution requirement.**

**To qualify you must be age 70.5; the distribution must come directly from your IRA or Roth IRA custodian; and the maximum amount eligible for this special treatment is \$100,000. Additional rules apply if you have made nondeductible contributions to your IRA. Transfers from Simple IRAs and SEP IRAs are not eligible. Please notify us if you feel moved to make a donation of this type. Please contact Janis Olson, Executive Director at (415) 331-8585 or [jolson@nyof.org](mailto:jolson@nyof.org).**



# Nepalese Youth Opportunity Foundation

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**DEAR FRIENDS** This year has brought many interesting developments in Nepal – both for NYOF and for the country. The peace agreement between the Maoists and the government still holds, and everyone is hoping for elections sooner rather than later. As to NYOF, it's largely onward and upward. Our programs and our kids are thriving. We do face two economic challenges new to us this year. First, the US dollar has fallen approximately 13% over the past year. And, inflation in Nepal is running about eight percent per annum. Because we receive contributions primarily in dollars and must pay for programs with Nepalese rupees, the result is that programs cost us 20% more than they did a year ago. More about this below.

I had an 82nd birthday party in Kathmandu in June, and Sirjan, one of the little boys at J House, our home for boys, made me a pretty little card with the message: “Thank you for growing me.” And that is what we are doing – “growing” not only Sirjan, but thousands of other kids, providing them with an education, health care, freedom from bonded labor, and, for some of them, the first secure home they have ever known.

## “Growing Kids” at J and K Houses

These small children's homes in Kathmandu – one for boys and one for girls – provide a safe and loving haven for some of the most destitute children in Nepal: former child beggars, children abandoned by parents, and even worse. Sijan, for example, was orphaned when his drug-addicted mother died of an overdose, leaving him without anyone to care for him. He arrived at J House four years ago scared, traumatized, and depressed. You wouldn't believe it today if you saw this lively, smart, cheerful, confident little kid.

These miraculous changes in the children result from a lot of care, support and love, giving them a sense of security. They live in a nice house, go to excellent schools, wear decent clothes, have art and music lessons, and everything else necessary for a child to grow up healthy and whole.

The short-term transformation is astounding, and the changes last a lifetime. I was reminded of this last May, when the kids at both houses gave a Mother's Day

party for the two “aunties” at the houses and for me. They made little gifts, sang songs, and made sweet little speeches. We had a guest that night, a woman from the UK who had recently lost her husband and was still grieving. We thought the evening with these lively kids would cheer her up, and it did. She was sitting next to a teen-aged boy who had grown up at J House, and was about five years old and living in jail with his father when we met him years ago. At one point, he turned to her and asked if she had any children. She replied, sadly, that she did not. This large, gangly, teen-aged kid opened his arms wide, threw them around her, gave her a great big hug, and declared “Well, then, I will be your son.” Love begets love.

The newest boy at J House is six year old Rajan and, like all the other children there, he has a sad story. He was born in a remote village, and his father died when he was a few months old. The fate of a widow in Nepal is not pleasant. The family evicted the mother and child

### FALL 2007



One piglet + NYOF's help = freedom from bondage for this little girl



Proud father with his daughter who was restored to health at NYOF's NRH



Little girls growing up at K House

from their home and took the father's property. So, she came to Kathmandu to seek work and an education for her child. She worked as a house cleaner in various homes until she fell ill and died. Rajan, without family support and with no prospects for an education, would have been a prime target to become a street child in danger of dying an early death from drugs and neglect.



J and K House kids playing on traditional village swing



J and K House kids on outing to baby goat farm

One of the families Rajan's mother worked for took him in for a few months, but could not keep him, and contacted us. All this happened recently, after my return to the U.S. in July, so I have not met him yet. But he is described by one of the staff as "lovely, cute, joyful face and handsome boy." Judge for yourself: I can't wait to return to Nepal shortly to meet this "lovely, cute" little boy.



Meet Rajan and "judge for yourself"



K House girls having fun

## "Growing" healthy kids at the NRH

Our Nutritional Rehabilitation Homes for severely malnourished children continue to restore hundreds of infants and toddlers to good health each year and to educate their mothers about nutrition and good child care practices. We now have six of these facilities scattered throughout the country. The main one in Kathmandu, which serves as a training and support center for all the others, is funded largely by the generosity of the dZi Foundation in Colorado. The capable and devoted staff has perfected the art of training illiterate young mothers in good child care practices.

This year, we will add three new facilities in remote parts of Nepal, some of which were inaccessible during the years of the Maoist insurgency. This is to serve the large number of mothers who cannot come to Kathmandu with their starving children. We are also starting a pilot program of nutrition camps in isolated areas. This will involve sending teams of medical personnel and nutritionists to examine the local children, show the mothers and other relatives of the children how to prepare nourishing supplements made of locally available foodstuffs, and refer very malnourished



Children being restored to health, mothers (and a father) learning at NRH

children to the nearest NRH for rehabilitation. Then we will conduct two follow-up camps to assess the effectiveness of our approach. Such a program is much needed, since half the children younger than five years of age are malnourished, and this is a leading cause of death among this age group.

Nepal is a country of strong traditions, and these include traditions about child rearing. We have found that mothers we have trained in good child care methods at the NRH are sometimes unable to practice them when they return to their villages because the matriarch of the house – the mothers-in-law – insists that traditional (and sometimes harmful) customs be followed. For this reason, our camps will also focus on educating the mother-in-laws who have such a powerful influence over the rearing of children.

Because this letter would not be complete without a few pictures of the thousands of children the NRH has restored to health, here goes:



Subash at admission to NRH and just 30 days later



Arjun at admission to NRH – and just 17 days later

## Go Girl, Go!



Empowering Dalit Daughters (EDD) girls off to school in their new uniforms

Every time I visit the girls at our hostel for Dalit girls, I feel like jumping up on a soapbox and shouting "Go, girl, go!" As you may recall, last year, we initiated a new program to provide a very good education for 20 girls of the Dalit (or untouchable) caste. The people of this community, and especially women, are among the most oppressed, exploited, and demoralized group anywhere. By every measure, they are at the bottom of the barrel, and this is really saying something in a country as poor as Nepal. The literacy rate, maternal death rate, child mortality rate, and income level – are shockingly bad. And they are discriminated against socially in a way that is hard to believe.

We support the education of hundreds of girls of this caste in the lower grades in village schools (which costs about \$50 per child per year), but we were impatient to identify and train leaders so that they could help to uplift this community. Last year, we interviewed 175 Dalit girls throughout the country who had done well on their college entrance exams and whom we judged to be dynamic and passionate about helping others of their caste. We awarded 20 of them scholarships and brought them to Kathmandu. We call this our Empowering Dalit Daughters program (EDD). In addition to full

scholarships at good private colleges, these young women receive leadership, language, computer, and journalism training to prepare them for the leadership roles we hope they will assume when they finish college and perhaps professional school.

Most of these girls are 16 to 18 years old, and since they attended government schools, they did not speak good English. Quite a challenge, since their college classes in Kathmandu are conducted in English. Their marks have not been issued yet, but we anticipate they will do well in their first year in spite of this handicap. It has been a thrill to watch these smart, energetic, vibrant young women come into their own. They are full of life and fun, beautiful, eager to do good in the world. It is hard to imagine that they have come from a world of such tyranny and repression. Although they were pretty homesick for the first few months, it wasn't long before they fashioned themselves into a loving family, supporting each other in a way that would make any nuclear family proud.

Since these young women have never been any place except their villages and smoggy, dirty Kathmandu, through a special grant from a donor, we treated them to an "educational tour" to historic

and scenic destinations in Nepal. The tour was a great success – it expanded their horizons and rewarded them for a year of very hard work in new surroundings.

Thanks to the generosity of some donors who pledged five years of support to educate one girl in this program, we were able to enroll four additional girls this year. Their stories are heartbreaking. One is from a caste of prostitutes. This is a family business, and the male members of the family act as procurers. Although this appalling practice is dying out, there are still young girls who are vulnerable. One of the new students in our program is at risk in this regard, since she is an orphan. She has been living with her aunt, who was forced into prostitution under the old custom, but is determined that her niece follow a different path.



Off on their first trip around Nepal

Another new girl in the program supported her family as a farm laborer, since her father abandoned them and left them in extreme poverty. Still another had to resist her father's determination to marry her off at a young age so that he would be relieved of the burden of supporting her. I marvel that these young women had the determination and smarts to finish high school and score well in their college entrance examinations with the deck stacked so heavily against them. It will be fascinating to watch their emergence over the years as leaders of their communities.

