

Sunrise Children's Association Inc.
"Bringing a brighter future to the needy children of Nepal"



NEWSLETTER
Edition 13,
December 2009

Dear friends of Sunrise,

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL! We hope 2009 finished up well for you all with plenty of Christmas cheer and a nice relaxing break with family and friends. We trust 2010 has started off joyfully, with some healthy new year's resolutions, much happiness, and lots of enthusiasm for your dreams and desires for the coming year.

2009 was another fantastic year for Sunrise, and we are looking forward to an even better **2010!** Please enjoy reading our wrap up of 2009 as well as our exciting plans for the coming year.

Throughout 2009 the children have blossomed beautifully, making us incredibly proud through their dedication to their studies, their positive attitude to life and their futures, their kindness and compassion for those around them, and their love, joy, and abounding energy!



Above: Beautiful kind, happy Sunrise girls, Arati and Suruchi

As well as working hard at school and around our Sunrise home, we always try to have as much fun together as possible, continuing all our regular activities as well as introducing some new opportunities. We celebrated all the children's birthday's with fantastic **birthday parties** with singing, dancing, cake, sweets, gifts, games, fun and laughter; played a range of **sports and games** including soccer, cricket, badminton, volleyball, caramboard,

skipping, frisbie, hula hoops, skating, table tennis, totem tennis and basketball; **walked our puppies** and enjoyed several **outings** together.



Above: Ram Chandra and Sunita excitedly getting ready to blow out some candles on their delicious birthday cake!



Above: A glowing Raji with some simple but special birthday gifts.



Above: Some of the older boys playing volleyball at Sunrise.

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Above: Lal with our Tibetan Mastiff puppies Annapurna and Makalu.

The children have continued to shine their amazing talents in **dancing, singing, drawing and thanka painting** throughout the year, and the disabled children have made pleasing progress through their regular **Rehabilitation Therapy**. Most of the children again performed extremely well academically, with the older children winning **various awards** from their school throughout the year, for speech, poetry, sport, singing, dancing, drawing, as well as being voted class captains.



Above: Sunrise children performing at the 'Sunrise Culture Program' after 2 months practicing.



Above: Basudev, one of the 17 Sunrise youth learning thanka painting. The proceeds from the sale of these paintings goes into bank accounts for the children's futures.

Encouragement Awards

We have continued to reward not only the academically successful, but those who strive to excel in the areas of

- Love, respect, care, kindness and service to the Sunrise family members;
- Have a positive attitude and dedication to their education and personal development and;
- Show responsibility and care of themselves and their belongings, including prayer, meditation, personal cleanliness and hygiene etc through our bi-monthly **Encouragement Awards**.

The final award for 2009 went to: Buddhiman Tamang, Sadhumaya Buddha, Palten Lama and Laxmi Shakya

In addition to these regular activities which the children have enjoyed throughout the year, below are some highlights by quarter:

Quarter 1

The first quarter of 2009 saw the children of Sunrise Orphanage celebrate **Holi Festival**, the water festival joyously celebrated by throwing water and coloured dye on each other as a reminder of the monsoon rains to come; enjoy **outings** to the movies, local temples and the historic town of Gokarna; **walking our new puppies**; playing lots of **sport** at home and at the local public field; **visiting the Kalimati slums** to continue the Sunrise Outreach Team's Social Work initiative; taking part in a 2 day **training on Child Rights**; and the female carers even took a much deserved day off together to enjoy an outing to Bhaktapur to celebrate **International Women's Day**.



Above: One of our young carers at Sunrise, Rupmala, enjoying playing with water and coloured dye at Sunrise during Holi Festival in March.

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Above: Niraj enjoying his visit to one of the local temples on one of our many walks.



Above: Some of the older boys relaxing at one of the temples in Gokarna after a walk through the local historic town.



Above: Beautiful happy Sunrise girls, Sudha and Muskan, on one of our many walks.



Above: Some of the young Sunrise girls enjoying an outing with our puppies.



Above: Basudev and 20 of the older children enthusiastically participating in the 2 day training on Child Rights held at Sunrise.

Quarter 2

The second quarter saw the Sunrise family enjoy a beautiful **picnic at Godawari Botanic Gardens** together; a group of the older children **perform dances** at a local cancer charity fundraiser, numerous talented children being interviewed as well as singing, reading poetry and telling jokes on **Metro FM Radio**; and some extra-curricular activities such as **paper mache**!



Above: Lokjan, Repa and Kamdev enjoying climbing trees and playing at the picnic in Godawari Botanic Gardens.

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Above: Lasang, Palchhen, Laxmi and Marium after performing with Pema, Bishnu, Aashish and Bijay at a local cancer charity fundraiser in Kathmandu.



Above: Palchhen, Lasang and some of the older children in the studio of Metro FM Kathmandu, with Yuvraj, the host of the children's program the Sunrise children regularly appear on.



Above: Bikal Pun, the first child ever at Sunrise, making a happy mess with some paper mache!

Quarter 3

The third quarter was particularly busy and rewarding for both **Sunrise in Australia and in Nepal**, with SCAI holding two very **successful fundraising events** in Melbourne and Adelaide in late July, raising around **\$35,000 at each event**; Sunrise Orphanage putting on a spectacular performance at the '**Sunrise Culture Program**' held at the National Dance Centre in Kathmandu on National Children's Day (the local Nepali teams first fundraising program); providing a **young girl from the slums with a new heart valve**, and **new prosthetic legs** for Pasang, one of Sunrise's teenagers.



Above: Sunrise troupe performing one of five dances at the "Sunrise Culture Program" on International Children's Day.



Above: Narayani from Kalimati slums after successful open heart surgery for a new heart valve.

We also enjoyed a very special **Dasain Festival** this year, the biggest festival for Hindu's, where people are honored to receive a tika blessing from their elders for a long, happy, healthy life. It is traditionally spent with family members, and 58 of our 77 children were able to return to their villages for 1-2 weeks to spend with relatives for the first time which was fantastic, whilst the remaining children enjoyed a **3 day trip to Pokhara**, going to the **cinema**, an excursion to a local **swimming pool** and some **new clothes**.

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Above: Binita enjoying a feast after receiving a blessing from her elders during Dasain Festival.



Above: The Sunrise children at the World Peace Pagoda overlooking Phewa Lake in the beautiful lakeside town of Pokhara during Dasain Festival.



Above: Mansingh, Dil Kumar and Bishnu watching the sunrise behind the stunning Himalayas at Sarankot in Pokhara during Dasain Festival.

23 children again participated in the **KTM Marathon 5km event**, doing extremely well after almost no training, with Lokjan coming first out of all Sunrise children, followed by Pema and Ganesh.

Last but not least we welcomed 9 year old **Pramod Magar** to Sunrise, **our 77th** and only new child since July 2008. Pramod has settled in extremely well and is a very warm, loving, happy boy to have around.

Quarter 4

Quarter 4 began with the beautiful **Tihar festival**. Tihar, also known as Diwali or Deepawali, is a colourful festival of lights and the second most important Hindu festival following Dasain. The festival lasts for 5 days and honours certain animals, starting with rice offerings to the crows on the **first day** and followed by honoring dogs on the **second day** with tika's and garlands of flowers.

The **third day** of **Tihar** is one of the most important days of the festival when Lakshmi, goddess of wealth and prosperity, comes to visit every home that has been specially lit for her presence with candles, oil lamps or fairy lights – always a beautiful sight! A **Laxmi puja** (worship and offering) is prepared and each person comes to say a prayer and receive a tika from their elders.



Above: The beautiful welcome prepared for Goddess Laxmi at Sunrise, in anticipation of a blessing for great prosperity for the year ahead.

The **fourth day** continues with more Laxmi pujas and is the start of the **New Year for the Newari people**, the original inhabitants of the Kathamandu Valley. In the evenings of the second and third days, as is tradition, around **30 of the Sunrise children** walked around the neighbourhood stopping at people's houses, singing songs and dancing until the owner came out with gifts of sweets, fruit, flowers and money. **Always lots of fun!**



Above: Some of the Sunrise girls performing for the neighbours during Tihar Festival.

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The **fifth day of Tihar** is known as '**Bhai Tika**' (bhai=younger brother), and on this day sisters bless their brothers wishing them a long, healthy, happy life by placing colourful tika's on their foreheads, along with a garland of flowers and a plate of fruit and sweets. The brothers then bless the sisters with a tika and some money. This was again a very special day for our children, with all of the girls blessing their Sunrise brothers, followed by the boys blessing their Sunrise sisters.



Above: Saugat sitting happily after receiving his blessing from all his Sunrise sisters on "Bhai Tika" (Brother's blessing day during Tihar Festival).

Dental camp at Sunrise

In November all the children and staff at Sunrise received a dental check and treatment by some local dentists who kindly volunteered their time and donated some medicines. The children were extremely brave, some having teeth extracted, and some having follow up fillings.

Volunteers and Donor visits

We have been delighted throughout the year to have had visits from some of the **children's sponsors, donors and some wonderful volunteers**. Some very kind people have also carried over donated goods for us through '**Carry for Kids**' and Australian based organization which connects travelers with local schools and orphanages in Nepal, Bali, Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand.

In the last quarter we welcomed **Jackie Batemen and her 9 year old daughter Lauren**, who very kindly donated a large bundle of clothing and shoes which Lauren collected from her classmates in the UK; **Bridget Saint** and **Alicia Coleman** who very kindly carried over several bags of goods from Australia through 'Carry for Kids'; **Geoff Allen** a long term Sunrise member; **Tara**

Sanders and her partner David from REACH who performed circus acts for the children (they may be returning in 2010 to train some of the Sunrise children for a couple of months); and last but not least our regular visitors from Holland **Desiree Letcher** and **Ineke Meinen**, whose church very kindly donated a tremendous amount to Sunrise, including a new tracksuit, runners and long johns for each child, a new vacuum cleaner, pillows, towels, blankets, rugs and some new cooking equipment.

Gemma Sacco and husband **Anthony** volunteered with us for one month in November. They were extremely dedicated and greatly appreciated by the kids and carers, getting up early to help cut vegetables and prepare the meals, helping tidy and clean, helping the children with their homework, reading, playing games and taking the dogs and children for walks. Thank you Gemma and Anthony for your fantastic contribution!



Above: Gemma and Anthony at Sunrise

Kumaran Yogaranandan returned to volunteer at Sunrise in December for a month, **his fourth year in a row**. Kumaran has showed tremendous dedication and enthusiasm for Sunrise both in Australia and Nepal over the past 4 years, **and as announced in early December, Kumaran was elected to join the SCAI committee as Secretary**, following the resignation of Lia Jenkins.



Above: Kumaran with one of the very poor but happy children in the Kalimati slums.

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As well as Sunrise Orphanage, SCAI runs 3 other projects along with its local partners;

- **Education of 103 children** from the Kalimati slums
- **Education of 31 children** from local community
- **Training of over 250 students** at Sunrise's Community Training and Development Centre

These projects have made a significant difference to many lives over the past couple of years, so we would like to thank again the sponsors of these programs.

Kalimati Slums

This project is generously supported by **Paul Cummings and friends from 'Kathmandu Kids' in WA**. The project has various programs including;

- Sponsoring **103** children to attend a good quality, local government school;
- Providing **before and after school tuition** for the class 4-9 students to give them support in doing their homework, as they receive little support if any from their parents/guardians who are generally illiterate;
- Providing classes during the day in the slums classroom for the **3-6 year old children** who do not yet attend school;
- Providing classes during the day for the **lowest caste children** who are not permitted to attend school by their parents who prefer their children to help support the family by begging on the streets;

We were delighted to have **Paul and team members** visit in November so they could see first-hand the benefits of their support.

In addition to the above regular programs, we were thrilled to be able to **give 250 children in the slums a new tracksuit for Christmas**. It was incredibly heart-warming to see the joy on their faces as they each received a warm, brightly coloured tracksuit.



Above: The children in the Kalimati slums lining up to receive their Christmas tracksuits.



Above: Some of the children dressed in their bright new Christmas tracksuits in the Kalimati slums.

Community Education Scholarships

This project, currently supported by **Christian Theisen** from Germany, provides sponsorship of the **education for 31 needy children** from the local community. These children generally have a single mother who does some form of manual labour work earning \$30-50 per month, barely enough to pay the rent of a room and food.

We were also thrilled to be able to provide another **67 children with a new school sweater for Winter** at one of the local schools where 10 of the sponsored children attend. In temperatures as low as 5 degrees in the morning when school commences, these children were attending with no sweaters – **\$400** is a very small investment to fulfill a basic need for these happy and much warmer children!



Above: Some of the happy children from Gokarna School who received new sweaters for Winter.

Community Training and Development Centre

This project, supported by **Helen Davis and Hindmarsh Island Rotary Club**, was established to assist people from within the local community who lack skills, employment and income opportunities. We currently offer **computing, sewing, candle making, English language training and a community library**.

Since its establishment in October 2008, over **250 students** have joined the centre; 132 students studying computing, 71 sewing, 36 English, and 15 candle/incense making.

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2010 and beyond

2010 has already started off extremely well for Sunrise, and we are confident of another great year for everyone involved. We plan to expand our 4 main projects, with the focus being on further integrating the welfare and developmental aspects of each project.

With the **education sponsorships of the children in the Kalimati slums and the local community**, we aim to work more closely with their parent/guardians to encourage them to participate in training programs to enable them to become more employable/ able to earn a more stable income, and hence be able to provide for their family on a long term basis with reduced dependence on Sunrise or other supporting sponsors.

With the **Community Training and Development Centre** we plan to expand the capacity of the current programs and potentially introduce new programs in response to the needs of the local community. In addition to this, we may introduce/partner with a micro-lending program to assist in the establishment of small businesses, leading to self-sufficiency of graduates in the future.

With **Sunrise Orphanage** we plan to provide more and more children with various training and income generating opportunities, such as thanka painting, art/craft, wood carving, singing, dancing and social work opportunities.

In addition to these ongoing activities, **our major goal for 2010 is to source land and start building Sunrise Children's Village.**

Please contact emma@scai.org.au for further information on any of our current projects.

Sunrise Children's Village

SCAI, along with Sunrise Orphanage and other local partners, plan to build SCV, a purpose built, energy efficient, self sustainable, permanent home for the current and future children of Sunrise Orphanage. We plan to house up to 100 children at a time, with the following facilities that both the Sunrise children and the local community can benefit from:

- Training and development centre for computing, sewing/tailoring, thanka painting and other saleable goods
- Library and English language centre
- Music centre for singing, dance, music, performances
- Rehabilitation centre for disabled, including health post with basic medical facilities
- Multi-purpose sports field for soccer, volleyball, badminton, basketball, table tennis etc
- Playground with swing, slippery dip, seesaw, various climbing equipment
- Courtyard/ quiet area for reading, studying, yoga, meditation, talking
- Vegetable/ herb garden for consumption and horticultural/ permaculture training
- Animal grazing and breeding

From everyone at Sunrise in Australia and Nepal, we sincerely thank you for your support in 2009 and wish you all the very best for the year ahead, full of love, joy, peace and happiness!

The Sunrise Family

