

Sunrise Children's Association Inc.

"Bringing a brighter future to the needy children of Nepal"



NEWSLETTER Edition 7, June 2008

Dear friends of Sunrise,

We hope you are all enjoying Winter in Australia, and the lush green gardens the rains bring about. In Nepal the monsoon rains have started and generally run from mid June through until mid September. Whilst they do cause numerous and often very deep mud puddles (!), they also have lots of positive benefits such as washing away a lot of the dust and pollution built up over the dry season, as well as being invaluable to the millions of farmers that make up Nepal's population.

The Sunrise children love being able to wear raincoats, with the older children enjoying skipping along Mary Poppins style under their new umbrellas home from school! It is nice and warm throughout the rainy season, and a lovely time of year in Nepal.



Above: Arati Tamang returning home from school

240 year Monarchy in Nepal comes to an end!

The past 10 to 15 years on Nepal's political front has been turbulent to say the least. The Maoists declared **"The Nepalese People's War" in 1996** through which tens of thousands of civilians and army have been killed, in **2001 the Royal Family was murdered** in a still unexplained massacre leaving the Monarchy to the former Kings younger brother King Gyanendra. In 2003 Gyanendra dissolved the parliament, appointed a figurehead Prime Minister and stepped up the war to crush the Maoist guerillas.

In **April 2006** the Maoists ended their guerilla struggle and tens of thousands of protesters defied security forces

for days to demand that the king step down and that basic democratic rights be implemented. **On April 10th this year, elections were finally held with the Maoists winning over 60% of the National vote** and are now the largest representative party in the coalition government.

One of their first priorities was to abolish the Monarchy and **on the 28th May 2008, after 239 years as the world's only Hindu Kingdom, Nepal was declared a Republic.**



Above: Former King of Nepal, Gyanendra

For a more detailed account, please see the last page of this newsletter.

SCAI's 'Taking Care of Our World'

Whilst we have little or no influence over the political situation in Nepal and the tremendous suffering it has and continues to cause thousands of innocent people, we are doing everything we can to help as many innocent children, many who have been orphaned or abandoned through this political conflict, one child at a time. Sunrise Orphanage now provides a safe, loving home for 76 children who may have otherwise faced a bleak future of homelessness, illness, poverty, trafficking and slave labour.

Recently, Emma Taylor was formally recognized for her dedication and commitment to the children of Nepal over the past four and a half years...

Much to Emma's surprise, she was not only nominated and then selected as a finalist in the **Marie Claire/Garnier "Take Care/ Taking Care of the World Around You" competition** for all her volunteer work with Sunrise in Australia and Nepal, we just found out she **WON!** Emma was one of several hundred to be nominated, and as part of the prize was invited to attend a lunch in Sydney with Jackie Frank, the Editor of Marie Claire, as well as some other staff from Marie Claire and L'Oréal/Garnier who initiated and sponsored the competition.

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With **503,000** readers of **Marie Claire**, many of whom are very socially aware, we hope to gain some positive exposure for Sunrise and hopefully a few more sponsors!

The major prize is a trip for two to Hayman Island for 5 days. Emma is planning on raffling the prize off at one of SCAI's next fundraising events, so watch out for news on the next events!

Thank you to everybody that voted, we really appreciate your support. And thank you Marie Claire and Garnier!

Sponsor visit to Sunrise

Ivo Kavelj visited Sunrise Orphanage in Nepal for a week in May to visit his three sponsor children; siblings Saugat and Suruchi Mainali and Anita Lama. I am not sure who was more excited to meet who, but I do know they all thoroughly enjoyed his visit, and the beautiful bright coloured tops he bought each of them.



Above: Ivo with Anita, Saugat and Suruchi

Volunteers

Stephanie Rendina joined us at Sunrise Orphanage from Sydney in April/May. She was an absolute delight to have around and incredibly helpful, doing some wonderful art and craft with the children, including paper mache piñatas for our bi-monthly birthday party, making hand painted t-shirt with the children, and teaching various classes at the children's school which the school staff very much appreciated. Thank you **Stef**!



Above: Stef's first day with the children at our Sunrise Sports Day



Above: One of the children's hand-painted t-shirts

Silvi San Juan joined us at Sunrise Orphanage in June. The children and carers enjoyed her company and all her help tremendously! Silvi helped repairing the kids clothes and school bags, drawing and took them on some fun outings. Prior to Silvi coming to Nepal she very kindly raised several thousand dollars for Sunrise, as well as co-ordinating a donation of software from Microsoft for Sunrise. **Thank you Microsoft and thank you Silvi!**



If anyone is interested in volunteering in Australia please contact **emma@scai.org.au** or in Nepal **michaela@scai.org.au**. We guarantee it will be an experience of a life time!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

On the 3rd May we held our bi-monthly birthday party for all children with birthdays in March and April. As always the children were very happy to be sung 'Happy Birthday' by all their Sunrise brothers and sisters, to enjoy a big

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birthday cake and receive small gifts from their Sunrise family. The highlight of this month's party was the piñatas – each child got 3 hits and thousands of laughs, oh and a few sweets each when they finally burst it open!



Above: Birthday children blowing out the candles on their birthday cake.



Above: Bipin trying his luck with the Pinata!

Emma was also lucky enough to spend yet another birthday with the children on 7th May and was again spoilt with lots of happy birthday wishes and beautiful cards from the children



Above: Emma with Amber and his beautiful birthday card

Extra-Curricular Activities

On top of the numerous hours the children spend studying and doing their chores, they make the most of their free time and have continued playing football, volleyball, basketball, badminton, other outdoor games, singing and dancing at home.

We also organized a **Sunrise Sports Day** at a local field in which the children participated in running races, egg and spoon races, relays, ball games and tug-of-war. The children were all great sports, enthusiastically encouraging their team mates and we all had a fantastic day!



Above: On your marks, get set.....!



Above: Sadhumaya leads one of the younger tug-of-teams...determination as always!

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Above: The onlookers Sunita and Tashi resting after their tug-of-war challenge!

School holidays

The children enjoyed school holidays for almost 3 weeks (end of term 1) in May/June and as always were very active, enjoying their favourite sports and games, as well as using this time to diligently do some study, read and work on the computers.



Above: Pema practicing his typing



Above: Sabin, Ramchandra, Raja and Subash practicing their dancing

Excursions

This quarter we took the whole Sunrise family to one of our favourite picnic spots, up in the hills of Nagarkot, 45mins by bus from Sunrise. The carers prepared a feast and it was a great day enjoyed by all!



Above: Fulmaya, Sangita, Manju, Lasang and Fulmaya serving up a treat!

After lunch the children played badminton, soccer, chasey, picked flowers and even found a jungle to play Tarzan and Jane!



Above: Some of the soccer boys



Above: Bipin with his posie, below Khim Maya and Sujata

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Some of the children enjoyed a trip to the local **swimming pool**...absolute chaos! As few Nepali people can swim, 75% of visitors spend their time splashing around the shallow end, young, old, teens so it was quite a challenge but lots of fun!



Above: Our boys amongst the chaos at the pool!



Above: the girls getting ready to face the crowds!

We also went on a few walks to the local **Tibetan Monastery** and the local **forest** which the children

love...climbing trees, rolling down hills, making daisy chains and playing hide and seek.

On the visit to the Monastery the children couldn't speak at all for 15 minutes so as not to disturb the monks. As always they were amazingly well behaved and didn't utter a word, not bad for 22 4-7 year olds!



Above: On the steps of the Tibetan Monastery



Above: Emma with some of our beautiful children on the walk to the Tibetan Gompa 20 minute walk from Sunrise Orphanage



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Above & below: Us in the forest near Sunrise, where the children love climbing the trees!



Above: One of our gorgeous little monkeys Nabin

Training and Development

As well as all the fun, we continued with our training and development activities, preparing the children for the future.

Computing and sewing

The children are continuing to improve their computer skills, and the carers have embraced the sewing machines, with the carers learning how to make frames for the children's Thanka paintings.

Thanka painting

After around 80 hours of dedication and hard work, the older children have finished their beautiful thanka paintings, **AND they have earned their first personal income from them!** We have already sold four thanka's back in Australia, 75% of the proceeds will go directly into a bank account set up for those children that painted them.

We have 7 more thanka's to sell, beautifully framed, and in two different sizes, so if anybody is interested please contact emma@scai.org.au.

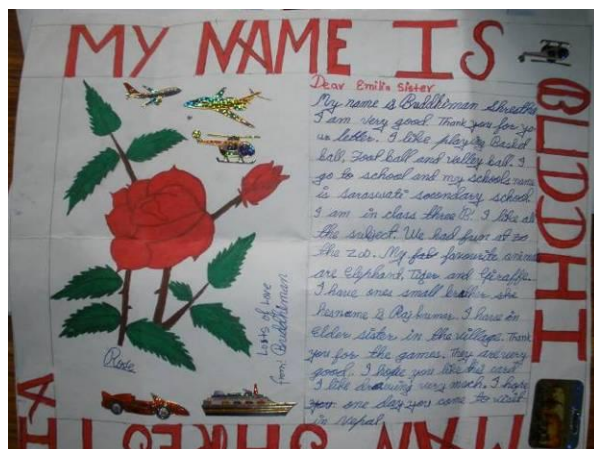
As mentioned in the last newsletter, the thanka teacher expressed his congratulations to the children for their dedication and impressive skill. **Well done kids!**



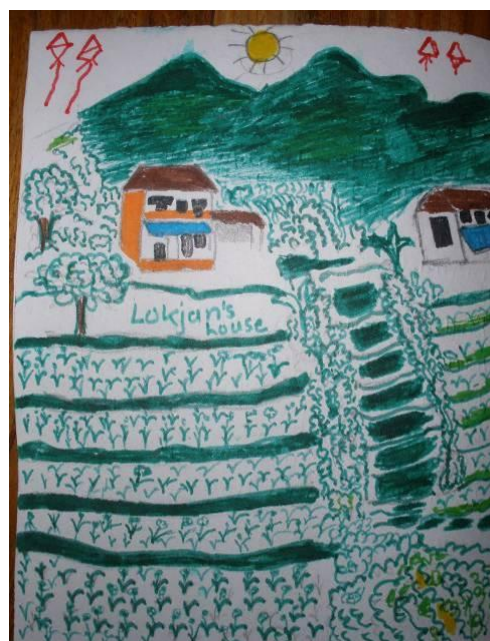
Above: The artists Saugat, Lokjan, Pema, Binita, Lokendra, Sujata, Ranjit, Palchhen, Dolma, Pasang and Lasang.

Kids Column

This month we would like to share with you some of the cards that the children have made for their sponsors.



Above: Card and letter by Buddhiman Tamang, below by Lokjan Rokaya



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Above: card by Sujata and below by Pasang



Sponsors, we hope you like them!

Encouragement Awards

Bi-monthly we provide encouragement awards to those children who stand out in the following key areas:

- Displaying the greatest love, respect, care, kindness and service to their Sunrise family. This includes staff, carers and importantly their numerous brothers and sisters.
- Positive attitude and dedication to their education and personal development. This is not

only results based, but is heavily focused on dedication and effort, courage, and persistence in achieving their goals.

- Responsibility and care of themselves and their belongings, including prayer and meditation, personal cleanliness and hygiene, care of school items, books, toys etc.

This month we are pleased to announce the following children were awarded; **Marium Tamang, Arati Tamang, Milan Tamang and Raj Kumar Shrestha.**

Sunrise Outreach Program

The Sunrise Outreach Team has continued to visit the slum area in Kalimati with Emma to learn about Social Work and to share some of the values and skills they have learnt at Sunrise.

Kalimati is **one of 82 slum areas in Kathmandu**, in which the government provide temporary bamboo and plastic shelters to **over 300 people**. The conditions in which they live are appalling to say the least, with little access to clean water and very basic food, often simply being rice with salt.



Above: Sunrise Outreach Team members in yellow with some of the children in the slums

On our last couple of visits we broke into pairs, one Sunrise child with one mentor and each pair interviewed up to ten families each, recording all the information in one central database. Our Sunrise children demonstrated extraordinary compassion and professionalism in their work and are benefiting enormously from being able to give something back to the broader Nepali community in need.

With the ongoing support from **Polycom**, we have been able to **sponsor 67 children from the slums to go to the local government school**. Keeping their uniforms clean is the major challenge (the school has white shirts!), but the children have been attending regularly and are really enjoying attending school. The parents are

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very humbled and thankful that we have been able to send their children to school. **Thank you Polycom!**



Above & below: Some of the very happy children with their new school bags.



Most of the parents are uneducated themselves, so we have also held counseling sessions with the parents to encourage them to take responsibility for what they can and provide support and encouragement for their children.



Above: Sangita giving counseling to parent in the make-shift classroom in the slums

We have also given some of our old white school shirts from Sunrise to some of the smaller children in the slums so they can wear them to the make-shift school that has been set up in the slum areas for 4-5 year olds that are not yet attending school.



There are still many children that are not permitted to attend school by their parents as their parents prefer to use them for begging during the day and night to help earn money for the families to survive. Over time we hope to be able to help these families so they will allow their children to attend school and help break the cycle of poverty their families face.



Above: Emma with some of the children not yet attending school

Sponsors needed!

At Sunrise we still have many costs that are not fully covered so if anyone is interested in **sponsoring a child at Sunrise Orphanage for \$39 per month**, please contact emma@scai.org.au for more details.

As a sponsor you will receive regular updates on your child, including exam results, general activities as well as receiving letters and cards from your child. As we do, the children sincerely appreciate your generous help and love having an extended family in Oz which many of them one day hope to visit!

You too can make a difference!

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Thank you

We would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all our sponsors and donors, without your support we could not have helped change the lives of so many children.

Please help us continue our work by spreading the word about Sunrise.....remember every individual can make a significant difference, one child at a time!

We sincerely wish to thank you all!

Best wishes,

Emma and the Sunrise Family



240 year Monarchy in Nepal comes to an end continued....

A turbulent history

The past 10 to 15 years on Nepal's political front has been turbulent to say the least.

In 1996, as conditions for the larger population of Nepal were extremely poor and the Maoists demands for reforms to aid the poor were not met, the Maoists launched what they called "The Nepalese People's War". This has led to tens of thousands of deaths of both civilians and Army personnel, at the hands of both the Maoists and the Army. This conflict has been one of the major contributing factors to the high number of orphaned and abandoned children in Nepal, through death of parents and parents abandoning their children and sending them to orphanages in Kathmandu to save them from the risk of being kidnapped and recruited as child soldiers in the Maoist army.

In 2001 King Gyanendra was enthroned after a bizarre and still unexplained massacre of much of the royal family, including former King Birendra, his wife and children. As the story goes, former Crown Prince Dipendra, reportedly enraged by his parents' refusal to allow him to marry, opened fire at a family gathering with automatic weapons, before shooting himself.

From the start, King Gyanendra and his son were under a pall of public suspicion for engineering the incident. He quickly tore up his promises to end the war with the

Maoists and modernise the country. In October 2003, Gyanendra dissolved the parliament, appointed a figurehead Prime Minister and stepped up the war to crush the Maoist guerrillas. In 2005, he dismissed the Prime Minister and assumed full executive powers, declaring a state of emergency and granting sweeping powers to the military. Leading opposition politicians were rounded up, heavy media censorship imposed and protests.

However, as the 2001 bloodbath revealed, the whole institution of the monarchy was in crisis. The shut-in world of the royal family was completely divorced from the reality of the vast majority of the population. Yet the same international media that today heralds the end of the monarchy routinely used phrases such as "beloved monarch widely revered as an incarnation of a Hindu god Vishnu" to describe Birendra in particular.

Meanwhile, the civil war continued, until in April 2006 the Maoists ended their guerilla struggle and tens of thousands of protesters defied security forces for days to demand that the king step down and that basic democratic rights be implemented. It was in the aftermath of these demonstrations that the Maoists reached a deal with a seven-party alliance headed by Nepali Congress and the NCP-UML to enter the interim government in preparation for the election of a constituent assembly. The past couple of years have seen an uneasy truce and ceasefire to the war whilst processes for fair, democratic elections were established.

On April 10th this year, elections were finally held, under the observation of various international "electoral police". Surprisingly, the Maoists (formerly labeled as terrorists by the US government) won over 60% of the National vote and are now the largest representative party in the coalition government.

One of their first priorities was to abolish the Monarchy and on the 28th May 2008, after around 239 years as the world's only Hindu Kingdom, Nepal was declared a Republic, and on the 11th June the King and his family peacefully left the palace. The palace will be turned into a museum and the King plans to remain in Nepal at his Summer Palace as his main place of residence on the outskirts of Kathmandu.

Although there are doubts about the Maoists and their recent violent practices and whether they can lead the new Government effectively, the vast majority of Nepalis sought desperate and immediate change and have made it clear they are pleased to see the end of the Monarchy. Now everyone is waiting patiently to see what will unfold under the new political structure.