

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



NEWSLETTER
Edition 4,
September 2007

Dear friends of Sunrise,

As always it has been a wonderful past few months here at Sunrise in Nepal, with **Dasain** celebrations, school holidays and many visitors from Australia, Holland, USA and the UK. SCAI in Australia has also been very busy hosting our annual **"East meets West Charity Dinner"** which was held on September 1st in Sydney.

The monsoon rains have finally come to an end in Nepal and we are now experiencing cooler mornings and evenings which is a welcome relief to the very hot months of May- September. The rain has left the country looking beautiful and green, but has unfortunately created several new enormous pot holes in the roads!

Dasain

Firstly we would like to wish you all a **HAPPY DASAIN!** Dasain is the most widely celebrated and most important festival of the year in Nepal, particularly for Hindus. Dasain runs for a period of 15 days and is a time when families get together either in Kathmandu or back in their home villages, to celebrate the victory of the Goddess Durga over the forces of evil. Unfortunately since Durga is renowned as a bloodthirsty goddess, the festival is marked by animal sacrifices, predominantly goats, throughout the country. The goats are then consumed by households far and wide as part of a special Dasain feast.

Before Dasain commences, Nepalis clean their houses and purchase new clothes. On the first day of the festival a sacred jar of water is prepared in many houses and barley seeds are planted in carefully prepared soil; getting the seeds to sprout a few centimeters during Dasain ensures a good harvest.

The children of Sunrise enjoyed the festival in full, with new clothes kindly donated by Christa from Germany, an abundance of food, and the tika ceremony on the 10th day, known as **Vidaya Dashami**. The tika is the most important part of the festival, at which the children each receive tika's (a red mark made of rice, red dye, curd and banana on their foreheads) and blessings for a long, healthy, happy life from their elders. This year they were each blessed by Sangita's 96 year old grandmother, Sangita, myself and two of our live-in carers. The children also received the traditional gift of coins, small notes (Nepalese Rupees) and a piece of barley in their hair.

People travel long distances to visit their elders, so this tika ceremony can last for several days, with the festival ending on the full moon (27th October). The children will then return to school on Sunday 28th October after almost one month off.



Hajurama (grandma), Sangita (Chairperson of Sunrise Orphanage Nepal) and I blessing Tulsi our SO Committee Member and house 'Father'.



Tulsi, Fulmaya and we giving a tika and blessing to one of our oldest boys Lal on Dasain.

Teej

Teej, the festival of women was celebrated for 3 days in September. During Teej women celebrate in honour of their husbands and in the hope of a long and happy married life. The festival traditionally starts with feasting and talking, right through until midnight when women commence 24 hours of fasting. During the day of the fast, women from all over Kathmandu Valley converge on Pashupatinath, the largest Hindu temple in Nepal, traditionally dressed in red and gold saris, often the ones in which they were married. At Pashupatinath the women take ritual dips in the river and call on the gods to protect their husbands.

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The carers and older girls at Sunrise woke up at 3am to wash, then made their way to the local temple by 4am, dressed in saris and kurta sulwas. Later in the day Sangita and I battled the crowds and headed to Pashupatinath temple. All of the girls, both young and old received the traditional bangles which they were delighted about!



Above: The girls putting on their 12 bangles each



Above: Sangita & Emma at Pashupatinath Temple



Above: Women celebrating at Pashupatinath Temple during Teej

Visitors to Sunrise

Over the past few months we have been fortunate enough to have many visitors from Australia, as well as Holland, USA and the UK. From June to August we were blessed with the presence of **Robert Blakemore** from the USA. Before coming to Nepal Robert visited Africa and India on behalf of the Children's Lifesaving Fund USA producing documentaries on various worthy projects. Robert quickly fell in love with the children at Sunrise, becoming a surrogate grandfather to the children for a period of 3 months. Robert also took a lot of beautiful footage of the children, which he is now turning into a short film for us. We look forward to sharing that with you all soon! We were all very sad to see him leave and eagerly await his return some time in 2008.



Above: Robert, carer Krisna and Saugat

In August **Alice and Ineke** from Holland visited us for almost 3 weeks, generously donating some playground equipment, a new basketball and volleyball court, as well as tracksuits and sports shoes ensuring they were properly equipped! With the help of our wonderful carers who cooked up a feast, they also organised a great picnic down at Godawari Botanical Gardens just prior to their departure. It was a fantastic day, with everyone enjoying dancing, soccer, and many other activities.



Above: Fulmaya, Ineke, Fulmaya & Alice at Godawari

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Sponsor visit

Matt Golding, sponsor of three year old Tashi Sherpa and good friend of Emma's visited for 3 weeks in September. As well as spending lots of time getting to know Tashi, Matt experienced the beautiful Annapurna mountains with a 1 week trek, the annual Teej festival and some local sightseeing around the Kathmandu Valley. Matt is a professional cartoonist, so he also kindly spent some time teaching some of the older children the basics of creating caricatures and some basic drawing skills.



Above: Matt teaching how to create caricatures

Volunteers

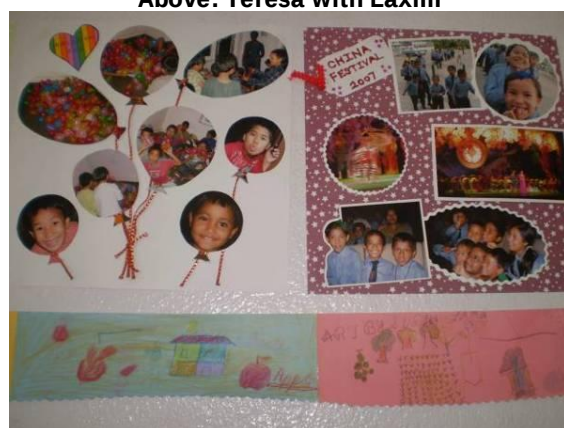
Sharangan Kangatharan and **Teresa McDonald** joined us in September/October each for around 3 weeks. **Teresa** kindly brought with her a huge suitcase packed with art and craft things for the children, which with the help of the children, very skillfully and tirelessly used to produce some beautiful work, which are now decorating the walls of our prayer and meditation room at Daisy House. The great array of art and craft items that Teresa and her friends Nola, Cheryl, Ruth, Andrew provided will keep us going for a while, ensuring we don't forget her and or great work.



Above: Sharangan with live-in carer and "house father" Tulsi



Above: Teresa with Laxmi



Above: An example of the artwork created by Teresa and the children

Sharangan settled in easily to Sunrise, and impressed us with his grasp of the Nepali language and how quickly he remembered so many of the children's names! Shar became a regular participant in the weekly volleyball games which both the carers and the older children competitively enjoyed. Shar was also very helpful with the children's homework and Bharat's physiotherapy exercises.

Eulina joined us in late September from the UK. She stayed with the children at Sunrise for around 4 weeks, keeping them well entertained throughout their school holidays. She helped the older children improve their computer skills, helped with Bharat's physiotherapy and very generously took the children from classes 5 & 7 to Manakamana where they rode Nepal's only cable car and to Chitwan National Park where they visited the elephant breeding centre and went elephant riding. Thank you Eulina!

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If anyone is interested in volunteering in Australia or Nepal, please contact Michaela michaela@scai.org.au. Helping improve the lives of these beautiful children is always an incredibly rewarding experience!

Excursions

The children had tons of fun in their school holidays, going on a couple of outings with Emma, the volunteers and the Sunrise carers. Following the trip to Chitwan, we took classes 3 & 4 to Boudha Stupa and the movies, and class 1 & 2 to the zoo. The young children in SKG, LKG and Nursery stayed at home and had lots of fun with balloons kindly donated by **Margaret Couston** from Sydney.



Above: Classes 3 & 4 at Boudha Stupa



Above: Classes 1 & 2 at the zoo



Above: Paddleboating at the zoo; Sadhumaya, Niruta, Anita, Raji, Ranjita & Muskan



Above: Carer Fulmaya and the kids at the zoo

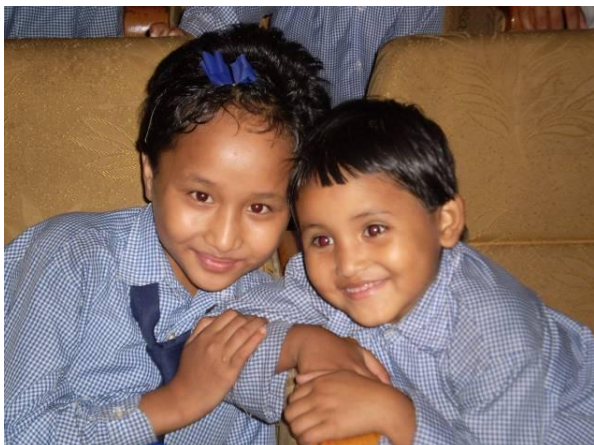


Above: The young boys with their balloon 'tails'!

Chinese Festival

Sunrise friend in Nepal, Nirjana, kindly organised 70 free tickets to a performance at the Convention Centre in Kathmandu to enjoy a night of singing, dancing and acrobats. The children were mesmerized by the bright lights, beautiful colours and the very talented performers!

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Above: Kashmi & Deewaki at the Chinese Festival



Above: Yaham, Repa and Bipin at the Chinese Festival

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!!

Now that we have the birth dates of most children we have begun celebrating! Our first birthday party was held on 5th August for the 13 children that were born in July and August. For most children it was the first time they had enjoyed a 'real' birthday party, with cake, party hats, party games, sweets and singing and dancing. We gave each of the children a small gift which they loved, particularly the girls, who were given a 'Dream Book', a diary they can write their personal thoughts, feelings, hopes and dreams.

This week we will be celebrating all September and October birthdays, with the party being kindly sponsored by SCAI friend **Saras Prasard**, with a 100 slice cake from Le Meridian, Kathmandu!



Above: Laxmi and Dolma at bday party



Above: Repa with his new toy

School Exams

Whilst we always have a lot of fun, the children continue to study very hard and once again did very well in their exams. We were very proud of them and were very pleased to be able to reward each and every one of them with a very cute stuffed camel, kindly sent over by friend **Rob Paton**.



Above: The much loved camels!

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Above: Ramesh Tamang with his camel (Rob's sponsor child)

You may recall in the last newsletter, we mentioned siblings Lal and Khim Maya Biswokarma's outstanding improvement over the past year (from 30% to 83% and 33% to 75%). **We are delighted to announce that Khim Maya topped her class in 1st term this year with 90%. Other than Khim Maya 12 other children came 1st, 2nd or 3rd in their class! Exam results will be sent out to sponsors separately.**

Welcome to Dipesh and Dinesh Lama and Chham Bahadur Gurung

3 year old Dipesh and his 6 year old brother Dinesh joined us in early August from their village Kakani, which lies in the Nuwakot District north west of Kathmandu. Chham joined us from the same poorly run orphanage that 30 children have previously been transferred from. After knowing Chham for over 3 years it is great to have him with us and he is overjoyed to be joining his 30 brothers and sisters with whom he has shared many experiences over the past few years. The three boys have settled in very well and are an absolute joy to have around.



Above: Dinesh Lama, Below: Dipesh Lama



Above: Chham Bahadur Gurung



Extra-Curricular Activities

The children have continued enthusiastically with their dance classes and can now confidently perform some beautiful group dances. Basketball and volleyball are also a regular part of Saturday afternoon routine, with quite a serious volleyball tournament developing over the past month!



Above: The smaller team delighted about their near defeat over the bigger boys below!

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'Musicians Making a Difference', an Australian based organisation has kindly sponsored our music program, which has now extended to guitars, violins and flutes. The children are once again showing their great talents and are a joy to watch!



Above: Sabin practising the guitar

Encouragement Awards

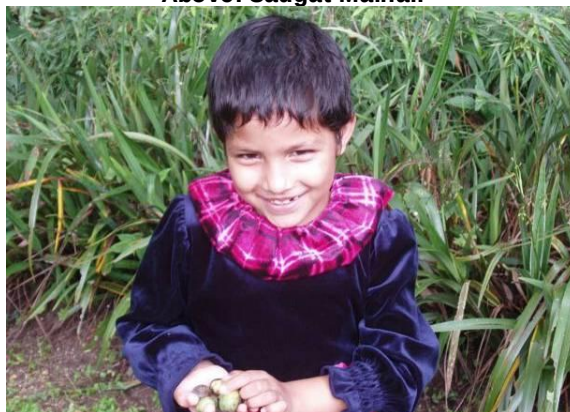
Bi-monthly we provide encouragement awards to those children who stand out in the following key areas:

- 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 with art sets; **Saugat Mainali, Suruchi Mainali, Khim Maya BK & Sujata Rana.**



Above: Saugat Mainali



Above: Suruchi Mainali



Above: Khim Maya Biswokarma



Above: Sujata Rana

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Kids Column

This month we would like to share with you some artwork by 7 year old **Niruta Lama**. The children love drawing in their spare time which keeps our Sunrise home beautifully decorated!



Above & Below: Niruta and her artwork



Sunrise Projects & Community Programs

New library

Thanks to **Oxford Press and Phil Ellis**, friend of SCAI and founder of Foster Friends in Australia, we have been given 3 boxes of books and other educational materials to get our library started, with more on the way!

Sunrise Outreach Program

Commencing in early November we will be taking some of the older children out into the community on Saturday mornings to help disadvantaged locals. Firstly we will be volunteering our time at an old age home in Patan. Down the track we are planning to go and help needy children in other children's homes who have not been as fortunate as our children and are still living in terrible conditions.

Skill Development and Work Experience

As many of you know, whilst providing basic care, such as food, education, medical care and clothing, SCAI are committed to developing the skills of the staff and children of Sunrise Orphanage to enable them to become employable and self-sufficient in the long term.

Thanks to a very generous grant from **Polycom Australia** we have been able to establish part of our skill development and training centre at Sunrise, so far incorporating **3 new computers, 3 sewing machines and Thangka painting training**. Thangkas are the traditional Tibetan Buddhist paintings of religious and ceremonial subjects, for example a mandala, the wheel of life, aspects of the Buddha or the various Bodhisattvas or historical figures. The children's computer skills are developing rapidly; in the near future we may see this newsletter being produced by the children themselves! **Thank you Polycom!**



Above: Palchhen Lama practising her computer and typing skills



Above: Live-in carer Pramila repairing school uniforms

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Above: Dolma Sherpa with the beginning of her Thanka painting



Above: Carer Fulmaya and Khim Maya knitting

Sunrise Children's Village (SCV)

In line with our philosophy of promoting self-sufficiency and sustainability in the long term, we are working towards buying land and building a permanent home for the children, in the name of **"Sunrise Children's Village"**.



SCV logo designed by
Matt Golding, sponsor of Tashi Sherpa at Sunrise

All funds from the September 1st fundraising dinner in Sydney will go towards the purchase of land, as well as all upcoming fundraising events.

For as little as one or two coffees a week you can be a founding donor of Sunrise Children's Village! Every individual person can make a significant difference; small steps lead to large victories! So please contact Emma emma@scai.org.au today for more details, every little bit helps!

"East Meets West" Charity Dinner

The 3rd Annual Cultural Fusion Evening was held in Sydney on September 1st 2007. It was a fantastic night both for the guests and for SCAI, raising almost **\$17,000!** Guests enjoyed delicious Asian cuisine, energetic bollywood dancing, traditional nepali dancing, raffles, auctions and more!

Upcoming Events

SCAI will be launching its **"See the Sun rise in Nepal" for FREE fundraising program** in early December. This initiative shall provide successful participants who raise AUD\$6,000 or more with an opportunity to visit Nepal for FREE for 21 days and witness, first hand, the benefits of their contributions. Keep your eyes out for more information!

Our Sunrise Family

Last but certainly not least our **carers**. Sunrise has grown from 3 children in July 2005 to **77 children** and is now considered by the Child Welfare Board to be one of the three model children's homes in Kathmandu, something we are all very proud of! Whilst we at SCAI work tirelessly on the fundraising side as well as spending quality time with the children on a daily basis and overseeing all of the daily operations at Sunrise in Nepal, it would not be possible without the absolutely wonderful love, support and work of Sangita and our live-in carers.

The carers rise at around 5.30am and work all day, cooking, cleaning and washing (2 sets of 77 school uniforms and casual clothes each week by hand!). We are incredibly lucky to have found such a dedicated group of people who genuinely love and care about the children's welfare and future. On top of all their daily work, then even find the time to play with the children, something that is extremely rare in a children's home in Nepal.

So we would like to take this opportunity to formally acknowledge all their hard work and say a huge thank you!

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Above: Our wonderful carers. Front; Fulmaya, Angur, Rupmala, Pramila, Manju. Back; Tulsi, Hasta, Sangita, Krisna, Fulmaya



Above: Our beautiful children!

The other group within the Sunrise family we simply could not do without are of course you! So again we would like to thank you all for your ongoing support and generous donations.



Thank you!

Sunrise is a true success story and shows just how important it is to follow your dreams wholeheartedly, pursuing them with persistence, dedication and a positive attitude. Nothing is impossible, so we encourage you all to please, whatever they may be, follow your dreams! You too can make them a reality and feel the incredible sense of reward that we have been able to experience over these past few years. And through your work, you may even help others along the way!

We look forward to sharing this journey with you for years to come, and to growing our family further. So please help us to spread the word about our Sunrise children and the work of SCAI by passing on this newsletter to as many people as you can.

Best wishes,

The SCAI Family

Emma Taylor	President
Sarah Kemp	Treasurer
Michaela Killips	Committee Member
Urmila Cuganesan	Committee Member