

Nepal update 2016

Nepal Thalassaemia Society



Wendy and Taal, Nepal 2016

Above is our heroic nurse who was transfusing during the earthquake

As our plane loomed in over the City of Kathmandu the devastation of the enormous 7.8 magnitude earthquake that hit in April last year was clear to see. Taal and I left Nepal just 5 days before the earthquake hit and we were left feeling deeply sad, shocked and helpless sitting in our safe home in the UK. Unable to fly back I decided that I would launch an appeal to raise funds for families that I know who were worst hit losing everything, their homes, belongings and livestock.

With the help of my very dear friend Elaine Miller of the U.K. THALASSAEMIA SOCIETY we raised £20,000 in just 4 weeks. The donations just kept rolling in and it was clear to see that the people of Great Britain have a very deep love and respect for the Nepali people. It was deeply touching and sincerely humbling to talk with people I have never met before but who were eager to help out both financially and physically.

Having sent out an emergency sum of money immediately last April to help families buy tarpaulins, kitchen equipment, clothing and bedding it was time to come back and make a much clearer assessment of how the funds we raised should be utilised. We spent our first week here in Nepal visiting such families and below is an account of a couple their stories.

The Upreti Family

Many of you will already know the story of Harimaya Upreti, one of our Thalassaemic children. During the earthquake sadly her family home was so badly damaged that it was left uninhabitable. Having no where else to shelter they have been forced to sleep in what was their Buffalo shed. Like many of the houses in the Dhading District her home was shaken so badly that the external walls crumbled leaving the internal parts very dangerous. Harrimaya's family are one of

the millions of extremely poor farming population and have no means of raising the funds to rebuild their home. On visiting we found that both the original stone and roof tiles could be reused and they had been lucky enough to have been given a good amount of new wood from the village committee. We now



Clinic News

Our visit to Nepal Thalassaemia Society Blood Transfusion Clinic



Earthquake

News of the devastation caused by April 2015 earthquake



Helping families

Our visits to families who's homes have been left uninhabitable and who are in desperate need of rebuilding support.



plan to support her family for the extra materials needed to build a new home and the cost of the manpower required. We plan for the work to start immediately and hope that they will be safely in their new home before the torrential downpours of the monsoon that begins in June.

Devendra Kusatha Family

I met Devi almost immediately I came to live in Nepal 14 years ago. Watching him blossom from a small boy who was sent to India by his family to be a "house boy" at the age of just 7 years in to a fine young man with a wife and two children of his own. Devi's home is in Bhaktapur just outside Kathmandu



which was one of the worst hit areas. Taal, Rishi and I went to visit his family and found a situation that

brought tears to our eyes and a heavy ache in our hearts. We found his wife with two very young children, his mother, sister and sister in law all living with not one man in the house struggling to get by on a daily basis. The house was riddled with cracks and they were



warned not to stay inside. With no where else to sleep they continue to stay there. As I entered the house I hit my head and when I looked up I could see that it was the ceiling above me that was sagging with the bamboo struts bowing under the strain of the failing walls. As I climbed the wooden stairs I was warned not to step to the right... Then his mum stood on the mud floor and it bounced like a trampoline ... Oh my gosh this family is living in a death trap. Sadly we cannot provide all the funds required to rebuild Devi's house but we are planning to support him with enough to get started as soon as possible. We are also providing Devi's with full time work to support his family and house rebuild.



Nepal Thalassaemia Blood Transfusion Clinic

It was with much excitement that we were to visit our wonderful clinic again this year. Now having been open for 7 years it was Taal's seventh time to visit! The children were so excited to see us. We were adorned with flowers and gifts and as always the tears fell uncontrollably down my face. I spend so much of my time in the UK raising funds and giving presentations about my work that when I finally arrive my heart is just so overcome with



emotion. The children were all so much bigger and looking healthy like I had not seen before. It was clear that their regular blood transfusions were starting to take effect. Due to some very kind donations we have also been able to give a fair number of children some form of chelation treatment too. Chelation is extremely costly but absolutely essential to remove excess iron from the organs and blood gained by having such regular blood transfusions.

Taal took great joy in handing out gifts that we had brought along with the woolly hats that Aunty Doreen and Betty had so kindly knitted through out the year. Then it was time for a cup of tea and a meeting

with my committee. I entered our little office and there on the wall was a picture of our dear friend Sue Woolston who very sadly passed away last year. Sue was a founder member of my team in the UK and raised thousands of pounds for the children of Nepal. I was so touched to see her face here in my clinic in Kathmandu. Oh this place is so deeply etched in my heart. It really is a wonderful gift and great inspiration in my life and I feel sure that it will be in Taal's too for years to come.

The clinic is run solely by the funds that I raise in the UK. Without these funds the children would deteriorate very quickly. My clinic partner, Durga Pathak works incredibly hard to ensure that the costs are kept to a bare minimum running here and there day after day himself with not a rupee of remuneration. I feel it's time to give back a little something to Durga for all his efforts. This year I will try and secure a small salary for him. Without Durga there would be no clinic and no hope for the children. We pray that in the next 5 years the government or another charitable organisation will support us so that we can give all of our 140



children the life they deserve.

Shortly after the earthquake Nepal was to suffer another catastrophic blow. Due to a conflict caused by the unfair distribution of land in the terai region of Nepal by the government, India closed its borders with Nepal starving the

Nepali people of essential supplies of gas, petrol, cooking oil, food, medicine and many other crucial goods. Landlocked and strangled geographically Nepal once again is suffering on a daily basis. The costs of the most basic items more than trebling over night. This of course has had an enormous effect on the financial running costs of our clinic. It's clear that I will need to work very hard this year to raise the basic funds required to keep my clinic afloat.

TORRESHTwo years ago I had the great pleasure of meeting young Torresh in this picture. He has Leukaemia and his family were desperate roaming the streets of Pokhara trying to collect for his treatment. I could not get mind and Taal and I had funds for the treatment. blessed the kind



finally this year I was worried that we may not be able to pay for his final years treatment when I had three donations, one from my dear dentists friends, one from my schools friend mum and dad and another from a husband and wife who have 3 young boys themselves.. There are no words to express how grateful I am.

Taal was so excited to see Torresh. He had packed many of his toys for Torresh in his suitcase and we had bought matching T shirts for them both! They played like old buddies and made each other laugh until they cried!. Torresh is now almost free from cancer and we

hope that with this final years treatment his Leukaemia will become a distant memory.

Mission.... "The Downs School Buffalo 2016"



There is no doubt that I have been very blessed in my life to have been able to enjoy the many adventures that I have but the one I experienced yesterday was quite different and I have to say incredibly humbling, one I will never ever forget

After the earthquake Taal's school, The Downs at Wraxhall, Bristol, UK started to raise funds for the families I care for here in Nepal. Mrs Bray organised a bike ride for the Pre-Prep children and an expedition to climb Everest via the main school stairway was set for the Prep School.

Quite incredibly, enough money was raised to buy a buffalo for a family who not only lost their home but all their livestock too. Whilst back in Bristol I set out to buy the buffalo and then organise a mission to deliver it to its new home. Kamal Tamang is a poor farmer and very sadly has 2 boys who are very sick with Thalassaemia.

His life is incredibly hard. After the earthquake Kamal took some finance with the bank to buy a buffalo as his family cannot survive without one. The milk, butter, yoghurt and manure it provides is essential to their daily life. He was only able to afford the cheapest buffalo and very sadly it produces only the smallest amount of milk. This has been a devastating blow for the family.

After much deliberation it was decided that we would buy a buffalo for Kamal and his family. I had no idea just how logistically difficult it would be as I didn't realise that Kamal lived so far away from the civilisation of Kathmandu. Finally after all the months of planning

yesterday Durga, my nurse, Rishi, Taal, Subash Kharki our incredible camera man and I set off long before the



sun came up to achieve our mission. We drove for hours and then left the car and started to walk ... Up and down ... down and up along the endless dusty mountain track with the 32 degree sun shining on us There is no such thing as flat in the Himalayas. We were told to look for the school and Kamal would be waiting for us ... This is what we saw ... The school completely destroyed by the earthquake. only the door was still standing. Had the



quake happened on any other day than a Saturday (Nepal's Holy Day) it is said that more than 40,000 more children would have died as more than 3000 school's were destroyed across the Gorkha District.

As planned Kamal was there waiting for us and our beautiful buffalo was walking ahead to its new home. We

passed thought what I can only describe as total devastation ... There was not a single stone building left standing ... Now all we could see was lines of tin shacks with tarpaulins flapping over the top of them. As we passed through one village we met a 90 old man sitting alone on a broken and filthy bed in his sweltering hot tin home. His wife of 70 years was killed in the quake and his home destroyed It was at this point my heart cried so deeply I cannot explain.

Finally after hours of walking Kamal signalled to show us his village ... Paha Khola Before us was a sea of tin

perched on a hill more than 2000 meters up teetering on the edge of the world. One has to wonder how people ever came to live in such a desolate place. We walked on in with Kamal and his new buffalo and were greeted by the whole village. Kamal's Thalassaemic boys Ayush (8years) and



Aashis (5years) were easy to spot in their bright orange tee shirts. Ayush was looking particularly sick, his head now enlarged and his tummy distended. The Kelfer medicine we have been providing Ayush with no longer works and he desperately requires the much more expensive Desirox Chelation medicine. At £500.00 per year it is just a dream. As soon as I get back to the UK I am going to do my best to give Ayush a pain free last few years of his life and the chance of prolonged life by raising the funds to pay for his medicine.

So finally our dear buffalo "Tolla" (meaning down in Nepali) was settled and we were able to sit and chat with the villagers. Every house in Kamal's village was destroyed. Ayush was trapped under the rubble of his house for hours before his father was able to dig him out. It took weeks for aid of tin and tarpaulins to arrive due to there being no flat land for a helicopter to land. Somehow life has continued and the villagers are now settled in their tin huts but the bitter winds and soaring heats are a daily challenge. The government has promised every family that lost their home a 2 Lakh (£1300.00) payout from the enormous World Earthquake Fund Money but still nothing has been received and with the condition that one must not start building a new home until "Building Specifications" have been agreed millions will see another monsoon in their tin huts. We now plan to help Kamal and his family rebuild their house with funds from our earthquake appeal. It will not be a quick fix but instead will take time. We will be keeping a close eye on Kamal, his wife,

Ayush and Aashis from now on offering them as much support as we can.

So here we are at the end of our enormous journey, enlightened, humbled and deeply touched. I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every person who has supported me in my mission. Without your help I would not be able to continue taking care of all the children in our clinic. I am deeply grateful. Somehow by hook or by crook we seem to just about keep going!

I would like to say a very special thank you to Elaine Miller and the U.K. Thalassaemia Society who's support is a pillar of strength to us here at Nepal Thalassaemia Society.

If anyone would like to know more about the clinic, sponsoring a child or supporting us please do not hesitate to contact me at pinkyland_2000@yahoo.co.uk. Or telephone me on 07836 572062.

If you would like to make a donation please see the details below. To see our website please visit www.nepalts.org.uk

With love and sincere thanks

Wendy Pinker (Pinky)

2016 fund raising targets

Ayush medicine £500 per year

Durga Salary £2400 per year

30 Children Chelation medicine £360 per child per year

Clinic running Costs £7000 per year

Nepal Thalassaemia Society Bank Account Details

HSBC Bank

Account Name : Nepal Thalassaemia Society

Account : 71463209 Sort Code : 40 47 34