

NCEF GYAN

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE NEPALESE CHILDREN'S EDUCATION FUND

What's Inside:

Moments with Kids...

a personal recollection



gyan: *n.* knowledge acquired
by direct perception

Moments With Kids...

a personal recollection

“We all are very eager to change children’s lives in Nepal, but the children change our lives too in their own magical ways, which nobody sees.” These are the words of NCEF volunteer Mr. Hem Pokharel, who recently visited Nepal and the NCEF sponsored children, their parents, and Nepal volunteers during a zoo visit program.

A zoo visit program was organized on July 30th to bring together the children (who had been quite busy doing well in their studies), their parents, and the dedicated volunteers in Kathmandu in the pleasant atmosphere of Jawahalakhel Zoo.

With the support and encouragement of volunteers in the U.S. (Mr. Atul Pokharel, Mr. Om Prakash Gnawali and Ms. Inku Subedi) and of volunteers in Nepal (Mr. Basu Gnawali, Mr. Raja Ram Luitel, and Mr. Suresh Devkota), the program was successful in fulfilling its other goal - establishing a personal relationship with the children, and their parents we serve, and how the volunteers’ dedication and donors’ support changes the lives and the future of many children in extreme need.

Without further a due, below is the personal recollection of Mr. Pokharel of that day, and the inspiration that followed.

During my recent visit to Nepal, Inku Subedi, Raja Ram Luitel, Suresh Devkota, volunteers, parents, children, and I got together for a day at the zoo in Jawahalakhel, Kathmandu. Before leaving Nepal, I had sent an e-mail to the NCEF board inquiring about the possibility of seeing kids in the program in Kathmandu and doing something with them and the volunteers. I had already met the NCEF kids on one of my trips to Nepal, as well as during my previous visit.



I was unsure as to how one could organize the whole event, but now I have a better idea. After my initial e-mail, I got replies from Atul, Om, Mr. Basu Gwanli (NCEF Treasurer, Nepal Chapter), Raja Ram Luitel (Kathmandu Coordinator), Suresh Devkota (Patan Coordinator), and Inku Subedi (NCEF Board of Member). I had marked my calendar for July 30, 2006, and asked if it would be a good day for everyone to meet. The response was positive. July 30 was a Sunday, so even though everyone was not able to attend, most of the folks in Kathmandu whom I e-mailed did come.

I then asked NCEF members and volunteers if we could arrange a small meeting for initial planning on July 23 at the hotel I was staying at. I did not make it to that meeting, as my flight got delayed the day I was supposed to fly from Boston. However, I did call all of them as soon as I got there. Raja Ram Luitel and Suresh Devkota took the initiative and arranged the event. We all decided to meet in front of the Jawlakhel Zoo at 9 a.m.

On the morning of July 30 I headed towards the zoo. I stopped at the local bookstore and decided to buy something for the kids. I did not know what to get. I brought some notebooks, pencils, and Frisbees. I got to the zoo at 8:30 a.m. I was excited to see the kids once again. Inku and her brother showed up at around 8:45 a.m. Inku is a graduate from a US college and she is currently working on her PhD at Brown University, RI. She also did a fine presentation at the Rotary Club at Annapurna Hotel on July 29. She was very upbeat and confident about her presentation, which was filled with facts and information on Nepali children. As a result, the Rotary Club pledged support for NCEF. They are also looking forward to working with NCEF.

By 9:00 a.m. most of us were already there. We decided to wait fifteen more minutes before we walked through the zoo gate. Soon, everyone else arrived. The whole atmosphere was filled with smiles. I cannot explain in words how I felt at that time. I knew some of the children from my first visit to their houses and schools. We then introduced ourselves to each other, joining hands to say Namaste to some and shaking hands with others.

By 9:30 we were inside the zoo. We had to find our reserved spot. We went there and spread a mat, and most of us sat down. We then went into longer introductions, telling our names, things we like to do, grade, and the place where we live.

Mr. Luitel, who planned the day's program, let us know the schedule for the day:

1. Introduction
2. Walk around the zoo and see animals



3. Snacks
4. General talk with children and parents separately by a child psychiatrist and Inku



5. Discussion about NCEF, including ways to make it better in the days ahead

One of my main wishes was to be there for the children, spending the only day I got off from my work in Nepal to do the things I wanted most to do. That is, I wanted to spend some time with them so that their magic would work on me.

I will now try to introduce the children I met at the zoo one by one. I had made some detailed notes at the time so that I could write more about the visit after I returned to Boston, but they got lost in the course of my travels. I will try to note whatever I remember.

1. Laxmi Sunuwar is studying in class six at Pragati Sikshay Sadan, Kopundol.
2. Sharmila Tandukar goes to class eight, at Guheshowri School, Thapathali.
3. Pramila Humagain is in class five, at Pragati Sikshay Sadan.
4. Kripa Pokharel is living in Navakiran orphanage home and goes to school.
5. Pragya (Bhirki) Pokharel lives in Navakiran orphanage home.
6. Lapsang Lama is a new scholarship recipient this year.

7. Kumar goes to Jana Prabhat Secondary School.
8. Ojina is studying in Viswaniketan School.
9. Rajkumar goes to college in Kathmandu.
10. Ujeli goes to Viswaniketan School.

I knew Ujeli right away, as I had spent some time with her and her family during my last trip. Later on I was informed that all the kids are doing really well in their class. According to the volunteers, almost all of the NCEF kids are at the top of their class.

The kids played all day and we finally got together to have a small conversation. We were all eager to talk to the kids. While Inku was with the parents, I visited with the children along with the child psychiatrist. We learned that seven out of the ten children thought they would be happier to see their dad spending more time with them instead of coming home after drinking with friends. Alcoholism is a big problem all over the world, especially in developing countries with a stagnant economy and insecure environment.



I thanked the volunteers for the good work they are doing, and then thanked the children for going to school and the parents for motivating their kids to go to school. I said, "Our progress may look insignificant right now, but we have started a program and we are into something really good for the future of Nepal and the whole world." I also met with Mr. Luitel and Bidur Dhungana of NCEF Nepal for a general talk that same evening.

At last I came back to Kathmandu with the volunteers in a microbus. As the microbus started to move, I thanked god for the fortune to be able to see all of this, which is almost like a dream. We all are very eager to change children's lives in Nepal, but they change our lives too, in their own magical ways, which nobody sees.

I would like to end with the quote which I came across during the Earth Festival in my school: "If you don't do it, who will?"

ABOUT NCEF

NCEF is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to develop the potential of disadvantaged Nepalese children through education. Need-based scholarships are provided to deserving students who would otherwise be unable to attend school. Our social workers in Nepal meet regularly with the selected children and their parents to assist in each child's development. We dedicate our resources to each NCEF child until they complete high school (twelfth grade).

2006 FUNDRAISING METER

\$17606

MAKING DONATIONS

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www.nepalchildren.org/donation.html

□ Checks:

Make checks payable to:

Nepalese Children Education Fund or NCEF

Mailing address:

Nepalese Children's Education Fund

P.O. Box 380061

Cambridge, MA 02238-0061

Questions?

Website: www.nepalchildren.org

Email: contact@nepalchildren.org

THANK YOU!

WHAT ARE CHILDREN DOING?

"I felt very good when I scored 98.5% in the trimester exam and the teacher congratulated me." – Sujal, Nepalgunj

"I am very happy to continue my higher study and meet new friends there." – Kalpana, Nepalgunj

Sushila in Nepalgunj enjoyed playing a game of hiding the handkerchief at her school

Puja in Nepalgunj was happy when she answered the teacher's question in front of all her friends.