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NAMASTE!!

Hello All,

September is a month riddled with change. This month we've had to unfortunately say goodbye to 3 staff members; Rebecca, Jurgen, and Katarina – you will be sorely missed for the enthusiasm, energy, and lasting friendships you brought to the team.

As the summer ended (yet the monsoon remains), we have seen another influx of volunteers that will stay here in the long-term and we look forward to their hard work and inspired ideas for change and sustainability.

In this issue of the newsletter we will recap the last of the Care & Community Two Week Special programme, where, with grit and determination, they built a basketball court at the J House, a home for orphaned and abandoned boys.

As usual we have also included the next month's schedule of social events and trips, along with the top tips for Nepal and the wish lists for various placements in and around Kathmandu. This page is especially for future volunteers who would like some idea of how they can contribute further to their placement.

Finally, why not click over and have a look at Projects Abroad Nepal's Country Blog or Facebook and Twitter pages to read about the latest goings-on in Nepal!

Facebook = Projects Abroad Nepal - The Official Group!

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/projectsabroad.nepal/>

Country Blogs = <http://www.mytripblog.org/pg/groups/3014/Nepal>

Twitter = http://twitter.com/#!/Proj_AbroadNP

See you around! ☺

Projects Abroad Team, Nepal.

Care & Community Two Week-Special

Laying the foundations by Elle Smith

After a few days of sight-seeing, cultural activities and becoming accustomed to the individual vivacity that Kathmandu has to offer (cows in the road perhaps being the most bizarre!), myself and the 22 other Two Week Special volunteers arrived at J House, a home providing care and shelter for abandoned and orphaned boys, ready to start work. Our main task for the two weeks was to construct a basketball field as the children had recently moved house leaving them with nowhere to play. Firstly we cleared the designated area of land, carried down bags of sand in order to create a level base (the lorries could not deliver the materials directly to the field) and tried our hardest to hold conversations with the Nepali men who were also helping out, although this often ended up with them laughing at our lack of strength! The amount they could carry was unbelievable but even they were put slightly to shame when the children returned from school and were running, carrying bags twice the size of them!



The next few days involved transporting three truck loads of bricks and laying them, this time to create a solid, level base. At first we made a human chain where we passed the bricks along two at a time, which was a very odd sight putting Uncle (the main carer at the house, who is, quite possibly, the nicest man you will ever meet!) and the other carers in hysterics. We learnt a great deal from the Nepali workers and not only building skills, their dedication and drive to work is inspiring and definitely made us all realise how lazy we can be! Following the brick-laying, where we were all amazed by the ingenuity of their tools and how they have an equivalent to everything we are used to at home, we split into groups, one to mix and lay the cement, the other to paint the building to give it a new lease of life. This included a mural, designed partly by our group and partly by a former J House member who is going to study Fine Art at university. Unfortunately, we were not able to completely finish the basketball field as the cement was still drying when we had planned to paint the lines but, we were all grateful

to have been able to help make a difference to the children and were honoured to have met them. They really are incredible, they are so full of life, their English is basically perfect and, despite all the hardship they have suffered, they can still talk about their birth villages with such passion and exuberance.

Although we were only in Nepal for two weeks, we were given a glimpse of Nepali life and culture, as well as a highly memorable trip to Chitwan National Park and made fantastic friends from all around the world. On behalf of the group I'd like to thank all the Projects Abroad staff who helped us have such an amazing trip, especially Jurgen who was the best Supervisor we could have asked for (sorry Henry)!



Volunteer Stories

A Physiotherapist in Patan by Alice Judd

My physiotherapy experience in Nepal has been interesting to say the least. I have spent four weeks working in the Community Based Rehabilitation Centre (CBR) for children with disabilities. Most of the children in CBR have cerebral palsy which I am familiar with. Some of the children have learning disabilities too and they have some challenging behaviours such as pinching and spitting.

The biggest difference between here and England is the conditions of the centre. The children with disabilities attend a day centre, which is in the downstairs room at CBR. The room is small, has a mat in the centre and wooden box seats with tables around the room which most of the children sit in. There are two chairs used by two of the children who are more disabled but it is fair to say that these have seen better days and they were probably not specially designed for them like they would be in England. There were a few things that shocked me about the centre:

- The children do not wear diapers or nappies and are often left to wet themselves before they are changed.
- Very few of the women who work there play with the children or interact with them.
- There is only one physiotherapist at the centre and he's only there for a couple of hours a week and he only ever treated a couple of the children.



During my first two weeks, I worked alongside another volunteer that was good because she'd already been there and had established a Physiotherapy programme for four of the girls. Having two people was beneficial because we could do more activities with the children. The Physiotherapy equipment is minimal and basic, the treatment room had a plinth, a couple of floor mats, 3 gym balls, a bucket with bean bags, some wooden poles, a few hoops, a couple of different balls, some building blocks, a mirror and lots of stools which worked well for obstacle courses! We had a number of different games which we tried to rotate to avoid repetition. Two of the girls had similar problems, so we did some of their treatments together which also made it more enjoyable for them.

The language barrier wasn't much of a problem as they can understand gestures, demonstrations and your tone of voice quite well. Similarly, they can communicate to you with facial expressions and you can tell when they are enjoying it or not.



I got a little worried when the other volunteer came close to leaving because I wasn't sure how I would cope on my own. A lot of our activities relied on having two people (one to support the child and the other to organise equipment and things). Fortunately, a new volunteer arrived. Although he was on a Care placement, he was willing to help and be directed by me so I could continue with the same activities as before.

My placement was only four weeks long and although you don't see much progress in this time, it's really satisfying to see the children enjoying themselves. I only did Physiotherapy, specifically, in the morning which sometimes frustrated me because I wasn't doing Physiotherapy all day. However, seeing the conditions at the centre and how much the children love interacting and playing games, I didn't mind staying in the afternoons and playing with the children. After all, you

can still be doing Physiotherapy whilst you're playing, if you get the children to sit differently or use their worse hand etc!

CBR was definitely not what I was expecting and it was really hard to adjust. If I'd been there completely on my own I would definitely have struggled. I think it's best to be open-minded and try to see things from their point of view. Once I accepted that these were the conditions and I couldn't change that, it was easier for me to adapt and deal with the situation. You have to be ready to get stuck in and help with feeding, changing and toileting because even if it isn't 'your job' as the Physiotherapist, you either do it, or watch them wet themselves and sit there for ages and I know which one I'd rather choose!

I wouldn't say I've thoroughly enjoyed every day at CBR, but it does have its moments. After lunch is a good time to get all the children involved together on the floor with a ball or something and they love to laugh together. I have definitely got a lot of memories and experiences that I'm sure will stay with me.



Volunteer Donations

Volunteering itself is always a fantastic way to help people that are less fortunate than ourselves but this month there have been a few volunteers in particular who have contributed above and beyond what is expected of them. The whole team just want to give a special thanks to everyone!!! These contributions are very gratefully received and we just hope you realise the amazing difference you are making.

Snowland Ranag School

Thank you to Sarah Jones and her parents, Julie and Kevin Jones, for fundraising \$2750 AUD for Snowland Ranag School in only 4 days with kind donations from many people across Western Australia. Winter is fast approaching and the children at the school weren't prepared with clothing as most of the kids didn't have thermals or closed in shoes. With only half this money we have bought

150+ pairs of new sneakers, 450 pairs of socks as well as 164 sets of thermals. The rest of the money will be going to buy new medical supplies as well as improving the diet of the children at the school. A very big thank you!

Celebrating Teej!



Taking place in early September, Teej is a fasting festival for Hindu women. Spanning three days, Teej consists of massive feasts, cathartic fasting, and lots of dancing. Walking around Kathmandu on Teej, it is difficult to ignore that sea of women dressed in flashing red clothing, dancing and singing their way to any of the temples dedicated to Shiva.

The Teej Festival is obligatory for all married women and girls who have reached puberty. The legend behind the festival tells the story of Goddess Parvati, who fervently fasted and prayed for the great Lord Shiva to become her spouse, who was so moved by her devotion that he took her as his wife. Teej is the festival commemorating this event and is supposed to give prosperity and longevity to the woman's family.

Dar Khane Din is the first day of the festival. A feast takes place as both married and unmarried gather in their more glamorous red clothes, singing and dancing their devotional songs. At midnight the 24-hour fast begins, women often go without a taste of food or water for the period. A puja (religious ceremony) is held to Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati, offering them food and flowers. Oil-lamps are lit and should last the whole night, otherwise it is considered a bad omen.

The last day is the Rishi Panchami, a day when women go through a purification ritual by bathing themselves in red mud and leaves from the sacred Datiwan bush. Women are then absolved of their sins, guaranteeing prosperity for the husband and family of the women.

Recipe of the Month!

Chana Masala

Chana Masala is a dish that mainly consists of spicy chickpeas; it can be a main dish or a side-dish that accompanies rice prepared in any style. Chickpeas require 24 hours of soaking in water, but a quicker method would be to boil them for half an hour. For a quick fix, canned chickpeas will also do the trick.

Ingredients:

15 oz can of chickpeas
1 medium onion (chopped)
1 small tomato (chopped)
1 teaspoon garlic paste
1 teaspoon chana powder (or curry powder)
½ teaspoon lemon juice
½ teaspoon black pepper
1 green chilli
1 teaspoon [ghee](#) or butter
Salt



Cooking Instructions:

1. Heat ghee on a medium heat in a pan and sauté onions until light golden brown.
2. Add garlic, pepper, chilli and chana powder; stir for few minutes.
3. Add chickpeas, salt, lemon juice, and tomato.
4. Simmer for 8-10 minutes on a low heat.
5. Serve hot with rice or roti.

World News

10 years after...

This month we travelled back in time ten years to the events of September 11th. We all remember what we were doing that day, the moment we heard the news, glued to our television screens watching the tragedy unfold. The adage is true; we were all New Yorkers for some time, united in heartbreak and the will to go on living. It is nigh on impossible to measure the ways in which our world has changed since that fateful day. Yet it is a time for self-reflection, for being together with our fellow man, to realize the complexities of this modern world and how our relationships to each other have real-world impacts. We witnessed the brutality of hate and in the days following, how through grief and with love we can catch each other and rebuild.

Wish Lists

Projects Abroad Nepal's volunteers often want to bring items out here for their placements but find it hard to know what the different placements need. We've put together some 'wish lists' for some of the centres and schools to give new volunteers an idea of what is most needed...

DMD Centre (8 boys aged 10-18)

*Games
Bubbles/straws
Clothes
Toothbrushes
THEY LOVE SPIDERMAN!*

Physio Placements

*Therabands
Gym Balls
Exercise Sheets
'Tuffie' wipes*

Snowland Ranag School (160 kids aged 5-19)

*Notebooks/Crayons
Clothes
Shoes
Balls*

Surya Vinayak English Secondary School

Reading books

Anal Jyoti Boarding School

*Notebooks
Pencils/Sharpener
Eraser
Materials for creative
activities*

Life Development Centre

(38 people aged 7-40)

*Clothes
Underwear
Socks
Pens, Crayons, Paints
Pillows
Toothbrushes
Soap*

Patan & Bhaktapur CBR

*Wedge Mats
Floor Mats
Bubble wrap
Blankets
Children's clothes
Games/toys/blocks
Folders/Filing
Medicine Balls
Nappies*

Medical Placements

*If you are
coming to Nepal
to do a medical
placement then
please
remember your
lab coat!!!*

Friendship/Happy or J & K Houses

*Reading books
Creative materials
Clothes
Shoes*

NRH/MSPN

*Creative Books
Reading material
Clothing
Shoes
Towels*

OR...if you would like to fundraise before you leave for Nepal then we can help you to buy things for your placement whilst you are out here!

What to do in Kathmandu??.

More information on these trips will be given nearer the time so remember to check emails and phones for updates!

**October 1st – 2nd
Nagarkot
overnight trek**

**October 8th – 9th
Bicycle tour of
Kathmandu
Valley**

**October 14th –
16th
Chitwan National
Park**

**October 29th – 30th
Trishuli rafting
trip**

**October 3rd – 12th
Poonhill trek!!!**

If you have a special interest in an activity then get in contact with the team and we can try to organise a group trip to take the pressure off you! And also Hotel excelsior is very happy to arrange trips or transport if you don't fancy what Projects Abroad have organised.