



Trips with a Mission

Helping the Least of These



FROM THE FRONT LINES

February 2005

Memories of St. Devi's

By Mike Cassidy

Little did I know how welcomed I would be at St. Devi's Academy on that rainy Sunday in mid-November 2004, as I left Narayangath and my former students.

It was 'hand-in-glove' with David and Devi as I moved-in easily to the fourth floor room next to their apartment. These were 'deluxe' accommodations compared to the \$45 a month room at Bhairahawa where I spent six months previously teaching English at the Lumbini Rana Eye Hospital.

I most enjoyed breakfast with my new hosts after a 6:30 'morning walk' with Bibek, my fourteen year old guide, whom I befriended when I noticed his reserved nature.

9:30 assembly in the courtyard brought back memories of Parochial school in Philadelphia.

- lines of students in sweaters with black pants and shoes
- instruction by vice-principal Ashok
- a reading of a poem, story or current event by the students
- a daily exercise program
- finally, all marching in single-file to their first period class



Six classes a day in English-medium kept me busy and entertained.

- 'Good morning, sir', as they stood to welcome me to each class
- struggling to hear their Nepalese-English accents when they stood to recite or answer

Sixth period break in the courtyard was a cacophony of running and games. I added to this malay with the purchase of two basketballs, a volley and soccer ball, badminton sets, skip-ropes and two sets of ping-pong for the concrete tennis table. It was little to give to see so much happiness . . .

A special part of my stay was the evenings spent with the 70 + children who live in the home.

- helping them with their school work
- getting to know them personally
- searching the surrounding shops with either Shyam, Umesh or Bibek for the 18 - 20 packs of biscuits needed for 'cookie time' each night

I was called 'uncle' by these children, an endearing term for neighbors, friends of family and respected adults. Each of them have their own story of abandonment, neglect, alcoholism or poverty.

I will sponsor Rajan K.C., a ten year-old boy taken by the Maoists from his father's village and returned because he was too slight to carry a backpack. His father found him refuge at St. Devi's when the communist abductors promised to return for Rajan when he was older.

Yes, St. Devi's Academy is a refuge. The children are provided for in a country where there is so much poverty, uncertainty and concern about the future. They are safe . . . safe to grow-up in an environment of care and learning. Is this so much to expect from life?

Mike Cassidy, from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, volunteered to teach English at St. Devi's Academy in November & December 2004. *Thank you for the time, attention and love you gave the children!!*



Sujana Lama's Story

Sujana is 13 years old and has lived at St. Devi's Academy 6 years

Thank You

Special thanks to our
new sponsors!

Byron & Cheri Barber
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Thanks for renewing
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Robin & Mary Ann
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David Steward
Darlene White

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We are most grateful
to those who
participated in the
*Christmas for Children
2004 Campaign* and
found loving sponsors
for more children.

* * * * *

Many thanks to
Mary Ann Paquette
for sponsoring a child
and **Bob Hablutzel &
Sue Worley** who gave
a donation as Christmas
gifts.

My name is Sujana Lama and I study in class 6. My favorite subjects are math and science and my favorite animal is rabbit.

I have one brother and one sister. They are younger. They live far from here. I was 7 years old when I came here. When I lived at my mother's house she was working, like field work then working feeding buffalo. I was working in field too. Sometime digging, then sometime bringing that stone and throwing it out of field. I had to carry water from the river. Every day I did that. I did other work. Cutting grass (with sickle) then going to clean the kettles, that much only. Sometime I going to school in day time.

In village there is not sense of education. Teachers are also not good. They will just looks and tell about little other and nonsense things also. Some of the children are going to school and some will not go to school. They stay at home only. Most of the children staying home. This school, St. Devi's is much better school than village government school.

My mother cooked outside on the fire. We were sixteen living in one house. My grandma and grandpa, uncle, aunty, smaller uncle and aunty, sister and others. We ate rice and sometime other vegetable. I have seen my mother once (since coming to St. Devi's).

My life was different before coming to this school. Hard working. In our village they beat us and scold also. In village they will marry soon, then we have to go another home (husband's) and get beatings. Someone will beat and that is a problem. In here we can have our future, our aim. If I were in the village I would be getting married.

I feel happy here. I getting this good education. I love Jesus. He is very good and He has helping me every day. I am happy to be here. I can learn about Jesus from Miss Devi and Mr. David. Then I hearing this story and I believe in Jesus.

I like this school because we can learn many things. Here we can learn about true Lord also. First time I was come here I was Buddhist then I don't know about God. When I come here I learn everything good, decent. In village they are all Buddhists and Hindu and no one Christian in our village.

If I was not coming this school I think I will be not like this. I will be married. Then I will do many works in village. I will not get good education and I will not know about the Lord also. I have a better life now. I love to play music and write poems If in my life I get good education I will be nurse. I can cure people. Nurse is good job. Nepal nurse not very intelligent and I like to be really good nurse. Better than others.

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Sujana's Story - continued

When I lived in village home, most of time I was sad. There was misunderstanding. Uncles also fighting against brother. That things and property. Sometimes aunty saying, I am working, your mother is not working. There is many problem and they beat. My father did not beat me one time but I get many beats from mother. I was not really naughty. She would not give reason, just beat. When I was small I was not working. My sister was beating me with one rope and my eye was bleeding so bad. I remember it. She was beating me because I was not working. I was not feeling well.

When I pray I thank God for giving me this opportunity read in this school, to bless other students and other children who are not well. Children staying in streets, roadside, so they can also come and stay like us in this school. And get good education and that love of Jesus.

The most important thing at this school is that Miss Devi and Mr. David being like mother and father and they are giving love to us and they are also teaching good education. We are happy that we are staying in this beautiful place. I feel special because we are getting more love than father and mother are giving. More love than our parents give. My mother did not have time to give love. She went morning to field then come evening also she be tired. She will sleep fast and we cannot get more love. My father is in Delhi. I don't know him.

When I get married I will work hard to make family happy then I give love to them. Not by that scolding and beating but sometime we have to scold also in bad things, but give love also, saying them we should be love and interested in others. God will help.

If I could talk to my sponsor I would tell them thank you for helping me and my future. I will be so good behavior. I also think my sponsor was like my mommy, daddy working hard for me, my future. Thank you for those things.

My favorite bible verse is Matthew 25:40, 'Verily I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brother, you did it to me.'

This story was told in Sujana Lama's own words

These Children really need your help!! They all need sponsors.

Basanti Pun - St. Devi's
Bimla Subba - St. Devi's
Dinesh Subba - LOT India
Gita Karki - St. Devi's
Pratiba Gheising - LOT India
Ritesh Rai - LOT India

Salina Dirksal - St. Devi's
Samita Rai - St. Devi's
Sankar Gautam - St. Devi's
Shamila Bhujel - St. Devi's
Shristi Rai - LOT India
Siva Nagula - Neena's

Swapna Kohlapali - Neena's
Subarna Gheising - LOT India
Sujan Gautam - St. Devi's
Vlad - LOT Belarus
Yaren Lepcha - LOT India



From our Mailbox



For Joy - my sweet son in Nepal. Thank you for taking care of him. He is beautiful and thriving and I have both you (TVAM) and God to thank for that. I want you to know how much I love and admire you for your selfless work for these children. All my love, Lauren, Colorado

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FROM OUR OFFICE

The tsunami touched me in a more personal way than other natural disasters have. I don't know if it's just the sheer magnitude that is so shocking and overwhelming; or because I am in the 'children saving business' and I know there are thousands of orphaned children needing attention; or perhaps because recently I visited Sri Lanka and a small Indonesian island where I stood on the very ground that has now been washed away! It's a very humbling thought.

The tsunami has touched me in more than one way. The first being that we never know when our life will end. I don't believe there was one person who died that fateful day, who woke up with the knowledge that they were living their last moments on earth! A few days ago my friend's children were in a car with their dad. They were stopped at a traffic light and were rear-ended by a woman driving 55 mph. The woman died but my friend's family was unharmed. Wow! What a wake-up call! I have really been impressed that I need to make sure to live in the present - live my life following the example of Jesus Christ. I saw a bumper sticker which stated: Don't be caught dead without Jesus.

More than one month later, the media still has daily coverage. I am touched that so many people have stepped forward to help, donating time and money. It seems that many people have opened their hearts to the victims. I saw a commercial on television with presidents G.W. Bush and Bill Clinton, soliciting funds for the victims. They said that we can't erase what happened in the tsunami but we can help change the future. On January 24, Oprah Winfrey interviewed an American couple who had survived the tsunami. Apparently the husband dove into the water to save his wife. With a voice choked with emotion he told how he was in the water struggling to rescue his wife, while dozens of people were crying out for help. He couldn't save them and his wife too. The mental image of those people and their voices daily haunt him.

You know, we can't save everybody, but we *can* save some. The children in our homes are not survivors of the recent tragedy but their lives have none-the-less been tragic. Every one of our children is a testament of what a saved life looks like. If you read the story of Sujana Lama (pgs 2-3) you will see how happy she is to have a future. As Americans we sort of take 'futures' for granted, but I can tell you for certain, the children in our homes don't! They know how close they came to being washed out into the waves of life, where their was no chance of survival. They know they are as fortunate as the tsunami survivors.



I thank those who have so faithfully sponsored our children. I also thank all of you who have donated money and who have taken time to pray for us. I truly appreciate it.

Most sincerely, *Suzy Sims, Director*

OUR SCHEDULE

January 30: Leaving for Ghana, West Africa

April 2: Suzy Sims & Tom Roth will speak at the Escalon Church @ 11:00 am and 2:30 pm, 2149 Jackson St., Escalon, CA. 209-838-7815

April 18: Volunteer work team from *Insure Me* leaves for Ghana, West Africa.

April 28: Grand opening ceremony for the new LOT Home in Ghana.

Please keep this ministry in your prayers.

Needed for boys & girls ages 6-14:

- boy shorts & short-sleeved shirts
- dresses & skirts (not mini)
 - underwear
- sweatshirts - boys & girls



• **FUNDS** for the
LOT Home in
Ghana, W. Africa

