



May 2011

## NEWS FROM NEPAL

The ISIS Foundation is committed to ensuring that all their children are well-loved and enjoy a safe, healthy, happy, productive and spiritually fulfilling life in the short, medium and longer term. This also includes linking them back to their original families. Here are some recent stories from the third quarter of 2010 that reflect some of their successes in this area.

### Graduations!

Sabin, Himal and Sunita graduated from the ISIS Children's Foundation this summer and a farewell ceremony was organized for the three young graduates. They thanked the organization for its genuine support, love and care and received best wishes from ISIS staff. The two boys have decided to stay in Kathmandu together and continue their studies and hopefully find good and worthwhile opportunities in the city. Therefore, the money that would have ordinarily paid their way back to Humla will be used, under supervision of the Nepal Country Manager, Pralhad, to help them settle in to their new life in Kathmandu.

Sunita was keen to move back to Humla as she felt Kathmandu was not an easy place to find an independent footing. Sunita decided to return to Humla with the goal of becoming a school teacher or social worker and with help from ISIS she is on her way to doing exactly that. She has received training from the Humla District Development Committee on educating women and children and is currently back in her village and helping her community by imparting non-formal education to local women and children.

**Sabin, Himal and Sunita pose for a final photo and meet with Pralhad, who will help them transition into their new lives.**



### Kids Excel in SLC Exams

There was great academic news from the ISIS kids in 2010 this summer. All ISIS Kids taking the School Leaving Certificate exams this year passed in First Division. And for the first time ever, an ISIS student has been able to clinch a Distinction. Lalit Gurung, ISIS' Manager in the Programme Support Team exclaimed: "Heyday for ISIS Nepal! These kids are the 4th batch of our SLC students to pass with phenomenal results - a big round of applause! Hurrah!" Here is a picture of three of the boys celebrating! One of the boys, Himal is profiled on page 2.

### Well done boys!



### Children's Day

In Nepal, September 14 is Bal Diwas or National Children's Day. It marks the anniversary of Nepal's ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child by Nepal and is a day of celebration throughout the country. For this year's children's day 2010, ISIS children participated in activities that interested them, such as singing, dancing, art and painting at the Nepal Child Organization, Kathmandu. The ISIS Foundation and the Himalayan Medical Foundation also set up a free health camp at the Nepal Police Club where hundreds of people came for free examinations. You can also see below, some of the children performing cultural dances.



As part of their Children's Day activities, the ISIS kids also took part in a programme with the elderly at a local care home on September 18. The programme's goal was to celebrate Children's Day in a meaningful and productive way as well as encourage the kids to care and respect the elderly. Girls from ISIS 3, 6 and 10 spent half a day with elderly ladies, talking, giving out fruit, combing their hair and giving head massages. The ISIS staff recorded the day with photos. Lalit Gurung said: "At the end of the day, we could see some grannies shedding tears as they bid our children goodbye. Some blessed them to be good people, some were pulling the hands of our children and were still in the mood to chat. The girls felt really good to be amidst the grannies and it also made them remember their own families in Humla. It was a touching moment for all of us. Later, two of the staff visited the care home again and gave photos to each and every granny. They thanked and blessed the staff and conveyed a huge remembrance to all those girls who had visited them."



**Free health camp**



**ISIS girls enjoying a day with the elderly to celebrate Children's Day**



## **Youth Flat to Youth Stipend**

ISIS continually monitors and evaluates the success of their projects and programmes so that they can be sure they're doing the best and most effective thing for the kids. In some instances, their findings lead to changes in their programmes. A review of their Youth Flat system has led them to change the way they help their kids transition into adulthood. Previously, the few kids that were 16-18 and still under the care of ISIS were able to move into their Youth Flat, so called because they were given responsibility for the organisation and up-keep of their own flat while their bills and living expenses were still paid directly by ISIS. However, after evaluation, ISIS found that although the kids were more independent than those still in the kids homes, they weren't independent enough to confidently 'go it alone' after they graduated from the ISIS Children's Foundation. They also weren't learning about the real cost of living, like an ordinary young Nepali person might in this same period in his or her life. In short, the kids were experiencing dependency on ISIS that was hindering their transition to adulthood.

So in August, ISIS initiated a Youth Stipend for kids in this phase. This living allowance is given directly to each person to cover the cost of their room rent, food, utility bills, transport costs, clothing and minor medical expenses and must be managed by the young people themselves. This also gives the kids the freedom to choose where they want to live. Instead of only the Youth Flat, they'll have the option of living at a hostel or with relatives or with friends if they wish. And so far so good! Under the new system, the kids in the Youth Flat have been attending their classes punctually, their rent is being paid on time and all the household chores and other priorities are still intact! They are slowly learning how to budget their money. Raju said of his new independence: "It is funny sometimes. When you have money in your hand, you feel like buying stuff. It is very tempting. But we are slowly learning to manage money." Later he said "I couldn't resist myself from buying a shirt which I had seen a couple of months ago hanging in one of the clothes stores. For this, I had to be quite clever in saving money. And I did it in the last month. I managed to save NPR 700 (\$9) for it!"

## **ISIS Kids Profile: Himal**

A report from the ISIS Children's Foundation team:

"If you are never too old to follow your dreams, then you are never too young to get them underway. While the majority of the youth in Nepal are unemployed and scratching their heads as to what to do about it, others are busy honing their hidden business skills and inventing innovative ways to make a living on their own or through small grants from others. This is a story of an exceptional youth entrepreneur who recently graduated from the ISIS Children's Foundation (ICF).

"Energetic, knowledgeable, passionate, driven, and positive are some of the qualities that strike you when you meet Himal a young and dynamic graduate from ICF. Himal, who recently hired a shutter stall at Golfutar Shopping Centre, has

started to sell vegetables and fruits to the local community. The hidden entrepreneurial potential of Himal was revealed by the hardships that he faced in search of a living in Kathmandu valley, where opportunities for jobs are scarce for people his age. But his idea was appreciated by his parents in Humla who supported him with a small amount of money.

#### Young entrepreneur, Himal



"He gets up early in the morning at 4:30 am and heads towards Kalimati – the only wholesale market for vegetables and fruits in the valley – on the bus. He has a contact person in the market and buys all his goods from him and brings the items to his shop around 7:30 AM. He then starts arranging them in their respective baskets and waits for the business to flourish! With a blink of an eye, you can see local people walking in the shop, especially the housewives. Even some of the ICF homes have started buying veggies and fruits from this young entrepreneur.

"And despite busily building a great little business, he has been keeping himself free during the day time so that he can look for some part time job nearby. He is also planning to bring his younger brother to Kathmandu so that he can help him in his work and also so that Himal might help his younger brother's education too. None of us ever imagined that his simple idea would turn into a real business but it's never too early to be an entrepreneur. If you have an idea to make something, at least give it a try. You might be surprised at what you can do!"

#### ISIS Kids Profile: Rushni

One facet of ISIS' commitment to their kids is that their homes should feel like homes and not institutions. They work every day to ensure that each child is treated as an individual and each child receives equal and positive attention from the Home Supervisors and other staff. This story illustrates this perfectly.

Rushni is a 14 year old girl from ISIS-6 who has been acutely suffering from anaemia. She visited doctors several times, consumed iron tablets and vitamin B complex regularly, and even worked hard on her food habits. On August, 2009, she even underwent a blood transfusion (1 pint) at the International Children's Hospital in Kathmandu. Time passed by, but the haemoglobin level in her blood was still found unsatisfactory. No matter what she did, Rushni never managed to reach the normal level of 11-16g/dl, instead her

haemoglobin level remained at a meagre 6.5g/dl.

One day, one of the staff at ISIS-6 heard about 'wheat grass therapy' and out of curiosity, immediately went to explore it. She found that wheat grass juice strengthens the body's immune system, can be an effective remedy for anaemia, and has been used by many patients successfully. The staff in the home and the ISIS Nepal Office discussed the findings and decided, in light of its inexpensive nature and there being almost no known side effects, that ISIS 6 should try it for Dhan. ISIS 6 bought several pots for growing wheat grass and now has seven flourishing pots. Now, every day, Dhan drinks a glass of wheat grass juice. After 17 days of regular consumption of wheat grass juice, her haemoglobin level has rocketed up to an astonishing 11.8g/dl!

Fancy giving wheat grass juice a whirl? At Bermuda's health food shop Down to Earth, they sell it by the shot!

#### ISIS Discretionary Fund: Asim's Story

The ISIS Foundation has set up a discretionary fund which allows for funding of items that do not fit neatly into the specific mandate of the Foundation in Nepal and which are one-off requests where urgent help is needed. Here is an example of how this discretionary funding pool was used last summer.

Asim is a young boy from one of the Humli villages in which ISIS works (Challa) who is very sick. He was first struck ill when he was 3 years old. While visiting Yalbang with his parents, he suffered from high fever and nausea. He was seen by a traditional healer and after about 10 days he seemed to recover. He had a similar episode when he was five, and again a few months ago, at age 7. Asim would sleep all day and night, he had no appetite and had frequent bouts of vomiting. A traditional healer thought he must be cursed by the snake god, Naag and a local Tibetan doctor thought he might be suffering from a jaundice-like disease and prescribed him some medicine. It was only when Asim seemed to be having difficulty seeing things that he came in to the path of Dr. Kelsang, our Tibetan Doctor. Unfortunately Dr. Kelsang couldn't establish what was wrong with Pema so Pema's dad, Gagan, took Asim to Simikot hospital. At Simikot he was immediately referred to Kathmandu.

In Kathmandu, tests revealed Asim had a brain tumour and that he needed an operation. His dad, Gagan, was terrified to admit Asim to the hospital as he didn't know how he would pay for the treatment but Asim's doctor insisted that he needed the operation urgently and waived the admission deposit to that Asim could stay and be treated. Gagan's family is amongst the poorest families in Challa. During the farming season (about 6 months) he is able to provide food for his family and at other times he is dependent on making small amounts of money through trade. Gagan had a small amount of money to pay the hospital but after doctors performed one of two operations that were needed to help Asim, the doctor's bill was already far more than Asim's father could ever pay. On hearing about Asim's plight, ISIS' Country Manager, Pralhad, visited the hospital and managed to convince the doctors to heavily discount Asim's hospital bills.

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We also used some of our discretionary fund to help Gagan with his hospital bills and eventually got him and Asim back to Humla. The cost of Asim's operations, medication, stay in hospital and travel costs to return to Humla amounted to a little over \$700.



## Key Financial Details for Q3 (July 1 to September 30) 2010\*

### Income

In Q3 of 2010 a total of **\$42,037** was donated directly to The ISIS Foundation from KatKids donors.

This amount has predominately come from the fundraising efforts of the ISIS Trek for Kids participants and brings the total funds raised by the trekkers (and sent directly to ISIS) to **\$45,002**.

The total amount of funds donated to the Foundation from KatKids in first three quarters of 2010 is **\$56,556**.

This represents a **49%** increase in funds raised by KatKids compared to the first three quarters of 2009.

### Expense

The total expenses for this quarter were **\$33,770**.

**\$20,650** was sent to Nepal, towards supporting our INGO, The ISIS Foundation (Nepal), for their work which includes working with the Child Welfare Board, building partnerships, monitoring project outcomes and administering the discretionary fund.

**\$1,685** was provided to the Tibetan Doctors programme, to cover the costs of primary medicine for the people of Humla.

**9,001** was spent on covering the costs of our Research Manager, Kimber Haddix McKay who has been conducting research work in the Humla region, which will guide the work we do in Humla over the next 3 years.

**\$2,401** was spent on setting up new Humla offices in Simikot and Nepalgunj.

**\$33** went to bank fees and charges.

### Balance

As of 30th September 2010, the balance of funding available from KatKids was **\$312,746**, which is earmarked for ISIS projects in Kathmandu and Humla going forward.

### Correction

In Q4 of 2009 we incorrectly reported that \$75,773 was donated by KatKids to The ISIS Foundation. The actual amount donated was in fact \$74,638, bringing the total figure donated in 2009 to \$112,664.

\* all amounts are rounded to the nearest dollar.

\* names have been changed in order to protect privacy

## **2010 Humla trekkers share their stories**

Our March 11th event at BUEI was another inspirational evening! It was the perfect opportunity to hear the entertaining and informative stories from some of the 2010 Humla trekkers who took part in this challenging and life-changing journey through the remote mountains of Nepal. After the talks our guests were able to mingle with the trekkers over a glass of wine and peruse our market stalls. A huge thank you to our volunteers and our brave speakers: Jennie Lee O'Donnell, Derek Stapley, Neil McConachie and Judy Tavares. The evening raised \$4,000 and all proceeds will go directly to The ISIS Foundation projects.

## **Our Wonderful Fundraisers**

On October 27, 2010, Kathie Knox held a gorgeous and delicious Nepalese Feast at Spanish Point Boat Club. Authentic Nepalese food was served and photos from the 2010 Humla Trek were shared. Around \$700 was raised for KatKids. Many thanks, Kathie!

## **Schools Update**

KatKids continues its involvement in Bermuda schools in trying to raise the students' awareness of the work carried out by KatKids and of the very different lives of the children in Nepal.

At Somersfield Academy this month, presentations were made by Derek Stapley and Neil McConnachie to both the primary and middle schools, telling the kids of their experiences on the recent Nepal trek for kids.

Somersfield also held a mini market, at which the children sold prayer flags and other Nepalese items. They raised \$310 from the mini market. A further fundraiser is planned for later this month. Well done Somersfield.

At BHS, Jennie Lee O'Donnell, Judy Landsberg and Calista Todd also spent time with the girls sharing their experiences on the Nepal trek. A grub day was held and to raise money for KatKids. Thank you BHS.

## **Volunteers Wanted**

KatKids is thrilled to welcome on board our new Marketing Manager, Marthe Peterson. Marthe is creating a marketing sub-committee to help promote the KatKids story and encourage people to get involved. She is seeking people with skills in advertising, public relations, copywriting, social media, and general marketing. If you have these skills and are keen to join a friendly and vibrant team, please contact Marthe Peterson ([marthe@kathmandukidsclub.com](mailto:marthe@kathmandukidsclub.com)) or KatKids Volunteer Manager, Lorraine McConachie ([lmconachie@northrock.bm](mailto:lmconachie@northrock.bm)) for more information. Thank You

## **KatKids Christmas Market 2010**

The annual KatKids Christmas Market held at MSA Auditorium on November 19<sup>th</sup> was a tremendous success, raising a staggering \$55,000 during the evening. Over 600 people attended to witness the transformation of the auditorium into a bustling Christmas market. Guests perused our unique market stalls whilst sampling mulled wine, Nepalese cooking and enjoying performances from the Bermuda School of Music and Bermuda Donquili. Naranja Bailey caused bidding wars in the live auctions and The Knock Ons gave a headline making performance bringing this memorable evening to a close.

The success of this evening was all possible due to the kindness and generosity of over 60 volunteers and donations from over 40 local businesses, as well as everyone who came along and bought, bid or donated on the night. Thank You!

All of the money raised has already been sent directly to The ISIS Foundation, aiding ongoing projects to make significant differences in the lives of children and families in serious need in Nepal and Uganda.

## **Membership - renewals and new members**

We are now able to offer a new and much improved system for joining our club, renewals and donations. KatKids now has an on-line payment facility directly through the payee system of Bank of NT Butterfield, (please place your full name when you are prompted for an account number). In addition, you can join or renew your membership directly through our website, on our new online payment page at <https://donate.kathmandukidsclub.com/>