

‘Friends of Junbesi’ Newsletter

July 2009

‘Friends of Junbesi’ is a group set up to provide funding support for the KPHMN Medical Centre at the Sherpa village of Junbesi in Nepal.

Dear Friend of Junbesi,

Events at Junbesi have moved quickly since our last newsletter in March. In this update:

Background to ‘Friends’
New staff quarters
Community work projects
The Travel Doctor & Flight Centre donors
A new doctor
Education & Health Training Programme
CGI /Sarina Russo group scholarship for Ang

Background to Friends of Junbesi

For those recent trekkers newly introduced to Ang Tshering Sherpa and his efforts in support of the Health Centre at Junbesi here is how the informal online community called Friends of Junbesi arose.

In October 2008 two groups organised by World Expeditions Australia worked on the Medical Centre and then trekked in the Mt. Everest region. One of the groups with individuals from Australia, New Zealand and England resolved to continue their relationship with KPHMN (Kushudebu Public Health Mission, Nepal Charitable Trust) by organising an informal group called ‘Friends of Junbesi’ to facilitate donations for the Health Centre. It was felt that there were a number of people who over the last few years had trekked in Nepal with Ang as Chief Guide who might be sufficiently interested in him and his Junbesi project to support KPHMN with cash donations.

An ad hoc committee of five from Perth, Canberra, Sydney and Auckland was set-up and letters emailed to a list of ex-trekkers provided by Ang advising them about ‘Friends of Junbesi’ and requesting donations.

To facilitate donations local national accounts were opened by the Committee, in Australia, New Zealand and the U.K. under written authority from Ang as Chairman of KPHMN.

The response from donors has been positive and since the end of 2008 approximately US\$5000 has been donated and remitted to the Kathmandu account of KPHMN at intervals.

Friends of Junbesi newsletters are being written at intervals bringing ‘Friends’ up to date on Health Centre progress. Some innovative ideas in support of KPHMN have been received by the Committee from trekkers.

If you have trekked with Ang you automatically become a member of ‘Friends’ but if you prefer not to be involved please let us know at: tienny.jerram@xtra.co.nz and you will be removed from the data base.

New Staff Quarters

Earlier this year the semi-derelict house adjacent to the Health Centre was purchased by KPHMN with the generous assistance of an Australian donor.

Since then a huge amount of work has been done on the building both inside and out including a new roof and windows, painting, tiling, ground levelling in front and the installation of a new water tank.

Most building materials have been carried by porters from the road-head at Jiri, 3 days walk from Junbesi and much of the work has been carried out voluntarily by the April World Expeditions Community Project members and the local Management Committee in conjunction with local craftsmen.

When completed the building will not only provide more suitable housing for staff now living in the clinic building but will free up much of the original space for consultations and overnight accommodation for patients who in some cases must walk for up to 3 days for medical assistance.

World Expeditions Community Projects 2009

Two enthusiastic work groups took part in the renovation and painting of the 'new' house adjacent to the clinic this last April, adding to the work completed by the two first groups last October at the clinic itself. To date community group members have been drawn mostly from Australia but also from New Zealand, United Kingdom, Canada and America.

These community groups are proving of enormous benefit to the project not just for their manual labour and expertise but also for their input into fund-raising activities for KPHMN and suggestions for the future direction of the Health Centre. In return group members have gained insight directly into the health needs of rural Nepalese and returned with a sense of having made a positive contribution to the lives of others.

Further World Expeditions community work groups are scheduled. For information about these contact World Expeditions.

The Travel Doctor & Flight Centre Support

These two organisations are to be thanked for their recent much needed funding support of KPHMN.

The Travel Doctor has clinics in several countries including Australia & New Zealand at which it provides travel health advice, medical kits, vaccinations and overseas health alerts. The Travel Doctor sponsored employees to take part in the April 09 community work groups to Junbesi.

The Flight Centre operates travel agencies in several countries including Australia & New Zealand.

A New Doctor

Following extensive interviews of a number of Applicants, Ang is pleased to announce the appointment of a new doctor, Dr. Ashwani Kumar Sinha who trained in Russia and Nepal and who has held several senior positions in Nepal. His contract is for 2 years and he takes up his appointment on August 1st.

This is great news since there has been no fully qualified doctor at the Centre since the previous incumbent completed his extended contract last October.

Scholarship for Ang

It was announced earlier this month that Ang had been awarded one of 10 Clinton Global Initiative/Sarina Russo group scholarships at the instigation of an April community group member. This enables him to attend training sessions in Brisbane 26th September to 6th October next at no cost to himself or to KPHMN.

The Clinton Global Initiative was established in 2005 by past U.S. President Clinton and reflects his belief that collaboration between governments, the private sector, NGOs and other global leaders can effectively confront the world's most pressing problems.

The primary aim of CGI is to turn ideas into action and to help our world move to a more integrated global community of shared benefits, responsibilities and values.

The Sarina Russo group is well known in Australia.

Junbesi Education & Health Training Programme

At present there is a rising trend for young people from Junbesi and surrounding district, to migrate to Kathmandu in search of work, business, further education and better facilities.

At the same time there are difficulties in employing trained staff for such an isolated location as the Junbesi Health Centre.

KPHMN that runs the Health Centre has developed a self-sustaining programme to counter both these problems.

Three local students have been chosen from 86 applicants for 3 year training courses at Kathmandu in Lab Technology, Radiology and Nursing. Upon completion of training the students are bonded to work at the Junbesi Health Centre for several years.

This programme gives bright local students an outlet for their abilities and encourages them to stay in the district and contribute back to the agricultural community from whence they come. For the community at large having a local person as health trainer or health assistant encourages local participation in the programme and a feeling of ownership.

The cost per sponsorships is US\$3900 over 3 years or US\$1300 each per year, paid annually.

An Australian member of one of the October 09 community work-groups has generously agreed to sponsor the training for Lab Technician and for an existing Junbesi Health Assistant to train in Family Planning. However sponsors have yet to be found for Radiological and Staff Nurse training. The requirement is urgent as students begin

training in Kathmandu this week and as things stand training costs will have to be deducted from funds earmarked for building renovation, staff salaries and medicine.

In the absence of sponsors the ad hoc committee of 'Friends' has a plan which could provide sufficient funding for at least one student for one year (US\$1300).

We need a minimum of 20 'Friends' to donate the equivalent of US\$65 urgently. In return donors will receive one Nepalese water-pashmina scarf (150 cm x 30 cm) in a colour of their choice and worth approx. US\$25 retail, postage free to all countries.

Water-pashmina is a fine-loomed and ultra-light 50/50 blend of pashmina wool and silk, so-called for its almost transparent texture. Colours are in muted shades, see photo attached.

Also, sponsorship donors who contribute the equivalent of US\$65 before August 7th next will go into the draw for an original Buddhist Thangka painting (photo attached) from Nepal valued at US\$100 retail.

If you feel able to make an urgent sponsorship donation may we suggest you bank it in one of the accounts listed below including the word 'sponsor' in the bank fields provided. Also please let us know at: tienny.jerram@xtra.co.nz with your postal address so that your donation can be acknowledged and a water-pashmina in the colour of your choice can be mailed direct to you.

World Expeditions and one of the 'Friends' committee have already started the ball rolling with AU\$100 & STG40 donations.

Guys; don't be put off by the pashmina offer. It is a great gift for partners, mothers, sisters etc!

NOTE: The Nepal Government is unable to contribute to KPHMN and therefore it is totally dependent on private donations for funding.

The accounts for donations are:

**CBA, Potts Point NSW, Sydney, Australia
Kushudebu Public Health Mission Nepal
BSB 062014
Account: 10402716**

**Westpac, St. Heliers, Auckland, New Zealand
Kushudebu Public Health Mission Nepal
Account: 03 0263 0223978 00**

**Nationwide Building Society
4 Pydar St., Truro, Cornwall, UK
Kushudebu Public Health Mission Nepal Treasurers Trust
Sort code: 07 00 93
Bank account: 33 33 33 34
Account number: 0402/704 138 407**

Kushudebu Public Health Mission Nepal
Himalayan Bank, Tridevi Marg, Thamel
Current A/C No. 001-01417120018
Kathmandu, Nepal
Telex No. 2789 HIBA NP
SWIFT: HIMANPKA

For further information if required, contact one of the following:

Jennifer Dagg, Australia Tim Jerram, New Zealand Beverly & Chris Hill, UK
jenniferdagg@ozemail.co.au tienny.jerram@xtra.co.nz bhill@cornwall.gov.uk

For detailed information about the Kushudebu project at Junbesi feel free to access the KPHMN website: www.Kushudebu.org.np

Tim Jerram

‘Friends of Junbesi’

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