



EDUCATE THE CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL

Dolakha Project Gets Going Fast

Christopher London, Executive Director

I recently returned from a trip to Nepal and am very excited about how things are going. Our work in Dolakha has gotten off to a fantastic start. Often schools in Nepal will compete against each other for resources from an organization like Educate the Children. But once principals and teachers understood our 5 year commitment to their community, and that they had to work with us to distribute fairly what resources we can provide for school improvement, a very encouraging thing happened: the attitude changed from "what's in it for my school?" to "how can we all get the best benefit from what Educate the Children has to offer?" Because of this, they all agreed that the most desperate schools should get first attention.

What this means is that everyone is on board with working to make all schools as good as they can be. Sometimes it takes awhile for this

spirit of community to emerge. I am very encouraged by the fact that it has taken off so quickly.

It helps that we have been working with three of the schools for a couple of years now in collaboration with the Thami Education Project, a small scholarship program founded by anthropologists Sara Shneidermann and Mark Turin. The photo below tells an important story about what we have been able to achieve thus far. In Nepal there is a two-tiered education system: underfunded government schools that the majority of children attend, and private academies, funded primarily by tuition payments from parents. Though the quality of these private academies varies considerably the perception is that if you can afford to (or even if you can't) you're better off sending your children there. In particular, families will try to

send their sons to such schools, relegating their daughters to the government schools. The children in this photo used to attend such an academy but this year they have switched to the local government school. The reason is that the quality has improved so much due to our work that parents feel the children are



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Ithaca Youth Reach Out

Sue Schwartz was one of the first volunteers with Educate the Children in Nepal in the mid-1990s when she worked with Bal Bikash School in Kathmandu. All these years later she continues to work with kids but now with The Learning Web, an Ithaca, NY organization "dedicated to helping youth make a successful transition to the roles and responsibilities of adulthood." Last summer Sue ran a program for youth on global awareness and citizenship and invited Chris London to talk about Nepal and Educate the Children's work. It can be hard for kids in the United States to truly understand



the conditions that students in many other countries have to work under, so Chris told them about two of the poorest schools ETC is working with in Dolakha district: Bosimpa and Saraswoti Primary

Schools. After learning about the hard conditions there, they wanted to contribute something to making the schools nicer places. As Sue remarks, the Ithaca students "were really excited about making something that would go to the other side of the world, and they also wanted to make something that would encourage the Nepali students. When Chris told them that the walls of the school were plain and gray they were inspired to make something colorful to send as a gift to the schools." They ended up making colorful banners and attaching to them art work and personal messages of hope. Chris delivered the banners to the schools this past September and they were received with a great deal of excitement. At Bosimpa School dozens



of community members were busy working on building repairs that ETC is helping finance. They are proud of their school, which they built themselves, so when Chris presented the banner they were very happy as it gave them something special to hang when they reinaugurate the building. The banners will be treasured items at Bosimpa and Saraswoti for years to come.



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better off at the government school! This means that the educational prospects for all children in the community, but for girls in particular, is rapidly improving in those three schools. By the time we finish our full Integrated Community Development cycle in 2014 all 26 schools will be much better and thousands of children and their families will benefit.

Friends of Educate the Children

Special Friends Remembered



Sanna Serog of Ithaca, NY and a former Educate the Children Board Member passed away on November 13, 2008. Board Member Colleen Thapalia writes of Sanna: "Sanna was a great ETC friend. I remember meeting her for the first time around 1994 when she and her husband, Mike, attended an ETC open house. They told us that they were adopting a girl from Nepal. Turns out they adopted two girls, Dhiki and Chenga, and made a wonderful family. Sanna became a good personal friend. My daughter had many fun times with Dhiki and Chenga when Sanna and I attended ETC meetings. Remembering that first meeting with Sanna, when Pamela recruited her to ETC's cause, gives me a moment of sadness for losing friends too soon, but also a moment of gratitude for the example of their friendship, dignity and generosity." Sanna's family has

requested that in lieu of flowers contributions be made to Educate the Children.

Mary Craig McLane of Acton, MA passed away in October 2008 and also requested memorial donations be made to Educate the Children. Mary was a great friend of ETC's founder, Pam Carson, and for years she and a group of friends have supported women's groups in Nepal. Her neighbor and friend, Martha Rounds writes: "What I have discovered in talking with 'Mary's people' is that she created a deep, personal, unique and unforgettable relationship with many of us. It was one of the gifts she brought to the world: her passion for connection with others, and her dogged pursuit of intimacy and understanding with many people."

Larry Tapper of Van Nuys, CA passed away last June. Larry loved Nepal. With his wife Joyce, Larry was a long time sponsor of women's groups in Nepal.

Our deepest condolences go to all the friends and families of Sanna, Mary and Larry.

Thanks to our volunteers: Margaret Myers and Joyeta Basu helped get a mailing out the door.

Walt Baschnagel contributed a ton (not really but it felt like it) of printer cartridges to our cartridge recycling effort.

Linda Farthing presented Educate the Children at a Pennsylvania State Employee Campaign Association event in Philadelphia.

Long-time Educate the Children staff person Suzanne Cullen retired at the end of June. Suzanne served Educate the Children for 14

years! We all hope she has great fun with her grandkids, quilting and everything else that she now has time for!

Patti Meyers made Educate the Children the cause of the month for her bread sales. Thanks Patti!



It's not too late to contribute to the Fund for Dolakha! Every dollar you give will be matched dollar for dollar by our Board of Directors. Go to www.etc-nepal.org for more information.

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