

The LAMP Post

Loving Arms Mission
PO Box 213
Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

The Loving Arms Newsletter - October, 2010

THE LAWS OF LIFE

An Essay by Puja Magar

Puja Magar, who Loving Arms rescued from a life on the streets of Kathmandu as a young child, wrote the following essay, which won first prize in the Theta Alpha 10th grade girls' essay competition. What a testament it is to the power of love!

Life is the most wonderful gift from God. We only live on earth once, so it is so important to respect and understand the value of life. Life teaches us many things. It teaches us to love, develop, stand up for what is right and be grateful. Life is very important. Those who do not know that life is precious cannot be happy. To live a happy life, we have to first understand how valuable the gift of life is.

My name is Puja Magar and I am from Nepal. I've had many rich experiences in life, both happy and sad, good and bad. When I was little, I had a very hard life, but after I came to the Loving Arms Children's Home, my life totally changed. I am really happy now. I have a family, brothers, sisters and parents. And my life is meant to be this way.

Plants need water, minerals and sunlight to live. In the same way, we human beings need to laws of life to promote smooth development of our lives both physically and mentally. To make our lives wonderful, we must discipline ourselves within rules. From my life experiences and from learning about the Lord, I've come to believe in a few rules of life and try to live by them.

1. Be close to God and walk in His path. All the happiness we get is from God. If we want a happy life, we must be close to Him. God made us and we must respect Him. If we don't have faith in Him, we can't be happy because He is the source of happiness. He is the source of happiness because He is Love. When we believe in God, we believe in love. When we believe in love, we live a life of love. And when we live a life of love, we find true happiness. When I was young and had many troubles, I thought about God and believed in God. Though I was suffering, I felt that He was with me and guiding me to this place where I am very happy.
2. Look for the good in others, love and respect that as God inside them. God made everything and lives in everything. It is good to respect Him for He made all things for us. Respecting and loving others is like respecting and loving God because He lives inside of them. Serving people gives happiness and I have felt this happiness. When I went to the city for shopping, I saw a street child who was begging and was really hungry. I bought a donut and gave it to him. He was really happy and I was happy too. I felt God inside of me, loving others through me. After seeing the poor child, my heart was crying. I remembered myself when I used to live in the street. It was like I was helping myself.
3. Be happy for who you are. God made everyone special and unique for many reasons and it is good if we can be comfortable with it. We should be happy for who we are. If life were not created how it was supposed to be then life would be meaningless. I used to wonder why God made my life like this--why He chose me to be an orphan. But now I know that God wanted to use me to help change the world. He chose me for an exciting mission. People from different countries are helping us; they are taking care of us and loving us. If they were not there, or if I weren't here, then I couldn't have felt the love which the Lord is sending me through those people. He is trying to change this world and I am happy to be a part of this. It doesn't matter how clever or stupid, rich or poor, beautiful or ugly we are on the outside...the main thing that matters is how beautiful, rich and clever we are on the inside, which is to say that we have love in our hearts.
4. Forgive those who hurt us. Life is not always full of happiness. Sometimes people hurt us, and we want to hurt them back. But this is not a wise thing to do. We are only making things worse. Instead of hurting them, we can forgive them and try to make the relationship good again. We can't be happy if the feeling of revenge is inside of us. It is like living in a dark room and staying away from others. In my life, the people who really hurt me were my parents. They were addicted to drugs and they chose drugs instead of their children—me and my little sister. They both abandoned us. It hurts me when I think of that. But I can't think of it all the time and be unhappy all the time. Instead of



Puja

5. Work hard for the ones you love. Every relationship is very important and we should work hard to keep each relationship forever. We sometimes have to sacrifice our own wishes to help the ones we love. And that is the process of working hard for the ones we love. Love is not just a word, but a way of living.
6. The present moment is most important. If we live in the bad memories of the past than we cannot be happy now. We must live and work hard in the present because we cannot change the past. The lessons we learn from the past are only really learned when we live them out in the present. If we think about the future constantly we will be filled with tension. The only moment in which we can actually do any work is the present. Therefore if we take care to work hard in the present moment the future will unfold with good results automatically. Whoever we are within the present moment is at that time the most important person in our lives. We should give our attention to them rather than wishing we were with someone else.

My life experiences have taught me these lessons and when I live by them I find happiness. Therefore, I try my best to implement these laws and will attempt to live by them forever. My life has already been improved by living by these laws and it will continue to get better.

NEWS FROM KENT ROGERS ABOUT THE FIRST LAM HOME IN NEPAL



Back row L-R Ganesh, Rajendra, Santosh, Alisha, Evan, Kent
Front row L-R Sharmilla, Puja, Amrita, Sunita, Shovha, Avia, Nick, Pasang

This year has been a happy year in many ways. Our wonderful daughter Avia was born to us a year ago and has been filling our house with her joy and gentleness—the very same qualities she brings out in us well. She is practicing her first few words and toddling about. Like her mother, she adores dancing. At the first hint of music, she’s up to boogie. She’s not picky, she even dances to the noise of the coffee grinder and the pressure cooker. She and the other 12 children keep Shovha and I busy.

We were also blessed with a wonderful group of guests, some of whom you will hear from later in this newsletter. From

different corners of the world Carla Friedrich, Kymri Wilt, Felicity Wright, and Brett and Kalar Holland all converged at our home bringing with them an awesome wealth of spirit and love. The time they spent with us was a true blessing of joy and sense of spiritual family. It was wonderful having so many wise people in our home all at once. Carla is a Swedenborgian pastor in the Convention; Felicity, a pastor in the United Church of Christ; Kymri, a travel photographer, travel guide and world adventurer; Kalar is a spiritual healer. Her husband Brett Holland, a phenomenal jazz guitarist, has recently released two professional recordings, one solo and one with his band Mr. Nobody. Please go to iTunes to download his music. One of the songs you will find there, “In Loving Arms” Brett wrote while visiting us. He is donating all proceeds for the purchase of this song to Loving Arms Mission. We are grateful and honored. You can also order his CD’s from outofthebluemusic@ts.co.nz.

We are celebrating the fact that Pasang and Nick both passed the School Leaving Certificate exam in first division. This is an extremely grueling test and the boys worked very hard for months preparing for it. These same two boys also were awarded full scholarships for grades 11 and 12 based on their basketball performance. We are very proud of them.

We are also proud of Puja for winning first prize in the Theta Alpha tenth grade girls’ essay competition on “The Rules of Life.” Puja wrote from her heart about what she believes to be the most important rules by which she tries to live her life. She is using the harsh and dark sadness of her early childhood as fertile soil from which she is growing in wisdom.

Santosh has recently been trying his hand at a good number of different jobs. He has liked some better than others. We’ll see where he settles. Chandra has moved in with some friends in a nearby apartment. He visits us a couple of times a week is always welcome at any time. Amrita has begun training as a care-giver and teacher at a local daycare and pre-school. She is good with the children and seems to be enjoying this new venture. The other children are continuing with their schooling and daily routine as normal. We thank the Lord for steering us safe thus far. We work and rest trusting He will continue to guide our families and the whole Loving Arms Mission to make His love real on earth for those young lives who have no mothers, no fathers, no homes, no food, no education, no guidance and no one to love or be loved by.

We thank all of you who have joined us for the sake of accomplishing this goal. Whether you visited us, offered a donation, sent gifts or just gave a word of support, we thank you. We are all united as a family by the purpose of sharing the blessings which the Lord has given us with those who are in desperate need. Please help us to continue fulfilling this goal.

NEWS FROM NADINE ROGERS ABOUT THE SECOND LAM HOME IN NEPAL



L-R Sangita, Mina, Rajan, Bina, Nadine, Rupendra, Krishna, Jonathan, Kumar, Suman



Nadine and Rajendra's children reading together

This year has possibly been the most stable in our home since we opened 4 years ago. The children are used to each other, the routine, Rajendra and me, and school. It is my hope that this stability grows each year as we live together as a family

We have had the good fortune to have 4 of our children admitted to the Montessori House School due to the generous scholarships they give to disadvantaged children. To my knowledge, there are three separate orphanages represented in the student body at this school. Our children are receiving 80% scholarships in monthly fees as well as other fee reductions and waivers. This school limits class size to 12 students, which means they get much more individual attention and help than they are able to receive at a typical Nepali school. In addition, the school has a philosophy of fostering thinking and self expression instead of mere rote memorization. This will help the children both in terms of future educational pursuits and in life. The teachers work to foster emotional well-being as well as academic fitness, and they are experts at encouragement. I have been very touched that they all praise one of our kids who happens to struggle academically for his leadership, diligence, and effort. We are so grateful to Nina Rana, the founder and principal of the school for being a champion for underprivileged children, and to Rev. Carla Friedrich and Rev. Felicity Wright, who connected us with this school and thereby have given an amazing boost to these children's futures. I hope that in the future more scholarship positions will become available and more of our children will be able to go to this school.

Academics continue to be a struggle for some of our children. Reading skills in both Nepali and English are weak, and speaking and understanding English is another major barrier. I feel somewhat dismayed by this since I am a native English speaker and I feel I have not adequately enforced using English at home. I have been trying to encourage the kids to speak English with me, but I have found it very hard to remember not to speak Nepali myself! However, we have been more successful in another teaching strategy. We have established a new routine of having family Bible reading time 6 evenings a week, alternating between a Nepali and an English children's Bible. Every child reads a paragraph or two out loud. Then Rajendra or I translate as needed and explain the deeper principles that the stories are teaching. We have three aims which we hope this time together will achieve: 1) to improve reading skills in both Nepali and English. 2) to familiarize the children with the stories in the Word and to teach the children spiritual and moral lessons for life. 3) to reinforce family ties by focused activity with the entire family together. Although there are inevitable times when squirming, squabbling, and drifting off seem to be taking precedence over the usefulness of the endeavor, I have already seen improvement in the children's reading skills. More importantly I have felt a special happy atmosphere as we talk together about meaningful topics such as forgiveness, diligence, acceptance, kindness to others, and using the gifts that God has given each individual. It is my hope that the children are also feeling these warm emotions and that this will help develop their sense of security, well-being and worth as they grow, as well as build a spiritual foundation to guide their lives long after they leave our home.

A big change is coming to our household. By the time you read this, Rajendra and I will have welcomed our 11th child into our home - this time a biological child. The children are excited to have a new baby brother. There is a special kind of love that Nepali children show those younger than themselves. I know that our littlest one will be so blessed by having 10 wonderful older brothers and sisters. It is my sincere hope that this baby will also bring happiness to the other children. I hope that it will help solidify in their minds that despite the unconventional way we came together, we are indeed a real family, committed to each other and growing together in love and harmony.

You, too, are a part of this family. Thank you so much for caring about our children and partnering with us to give a new life to them. Without you, this organization could not operate. It is only through the combined effort of all of us that we are able to rescue and support these children. Rajendra and I are so very grateful for the love and generosity that you show us daily.

I hope everyone reading this knows how vital you are to giving these children the things God promises in Jeremiah: "For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "Plans to prosper you, and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

OUR TRIP TO THE LOVING ARMS MISSION ORPHANAGE IN RIOUNDE, KENYA

By Callista Barritt and Angela Heldon

Callista Barritt (19) and Angela Heldon (25) are from Canberra and Sidney Australia, respectively. They visited Riounde in July and August, 2010.



Callista (L) and Angela ® with orphans in Kenya

When we discovered that we shared a long-held dream to do volunteer work with the New Church in Africa, the Lord opened our way. Soon we were in contact with Loving Arms Mission through Kent Rogers and Amanda Rogers-Petro. They led us to Rev. Khalid Obiri of Riounde. We were overjoyed to receive an enthusiastic welcome from Rev. Khalid, which filled us with excitement to meet him and his many orphans, who he calls his children. Together with his wife, Josephine, Rev. Khalid manages The General Church of the New Jerusalem Riounde School and Orphanage in Kisii, Kenya, where just over fifty orphans are being supported by LAM.

We decided to spend six weeks in the company of this community, and we will be forever grateful that we did. God has a plan for everything, and we felt this strongly as everything seemed to fall into place. We contacted Gretchen Keith, a good friend of Angela's mother, for more informa-

tion on Riounde, as we knew she had traveled here last year. Gretchen told us that she and her husband, Bishop Brian Keith, were going to be in Kenya again this mid-July, which was exactly when we had planned to go. It was providential that we arrived in Nairobi on the same morning as the group from Bryn Athyn, which included Brian and Gretchen Keith, Kay Alden, Rev. Eric Carswell and Rev. Jay Barry, so that we could all go to Kisii together. We arrived at Kisumu airport to a warm welcome from a large crowd of smiling Kenyans. Rev. Khalid, his wife Josephine, Rev. Samson, his wife Jacqueline, and soon-to-be-ordained Rev. Nicks, (Nicks' wife Stella was absent as she had just given birth the day before), and many more happy faces. One of those greeting us was Adam Cole from Bryn Athyn, who had been in Riounde for a few months already. Adam said he was happy to show us the ropes here, as Nicole Pitcairn had done the same for him. We thank the Lord that Adam had extended his visa, so that our stays there overlapped, as his friendship was invaluable, and his already established relationships with the people here helped make our transition to life in Kenya much smoother. We were also fortunate to benefit from Nicole Pitcairn's knowledge and experience through our contact with her as we prepared for our arrival.

Looking back, we can still vividly remember the excitement we felt the morning we first met all of the children. Their enthusiastic welcome was so infectious, and we immediately felt at home there. We were a part of the family. Right from the very beginning, we were well looked after by all involved there. We were fed very well, maybe too well at times, when we were even served two or three lunches in quick succession! Khalid and Josephine, the managers of the orphanage, have many responsibilities and work hard to run this very large family. Their generosity seems limitless, for they somehow always took care of our needs as well as all their other responsibilities. The children wanted to assist us with everything from carrying our bags to washing our clothes and fetching our bath-water. They anticipated our needs even before we did. For example, they let us know when our feet needed to be cleaned. This was done very lovingly with soap and water as we rubbed our feet on a large rock, an experience which was as pampering as a spa pedicure!

We felt the Lord's presence very strongly there. We saw it in their great sense of community spirit. They share everything, especially their food. Leftovers never go to waste and are distributed well. If there are any extra treats, like avocados or tomatoes, everyone gets their fair share. We thought it would be difficult to give gifts if we didn't have one for each child, but a few torches go round to whoever needs them, and a toy koala was shared by all. Another quality that impressed us there is the simplicity of life. Their resourcefulness continually surprised us. In Australia we think children need expensive toys, a variety of television shows and complicated computer games to keep them entertained, but in Kenya the children were happily playing with skipping ropes made from reeds, hopscotch games with stones, or using balls made from socks stuffed with leaves. Worshipping and praising the Lord through song and dance seems to be an integral part of the lives of the people there. From the smallest babies to the oldest grandmother, they seemed born to express their spiritual affections through music. Learning and teaching songs was a wonderful way to share and connect with the children, particularly the younger children who are very shy about speaking English. However, they have no trouble confidently singing a song in English after hearing it only a few times. Our hearts were deeply touched when we heard hymns that we knew from childhood being sung by beautiful, strong African voices in a heavenly chorus. We taught the children the Hebrew hymn, Hodhoo lai HOWAH, and it was so special to hear them sing it before dinner each day.

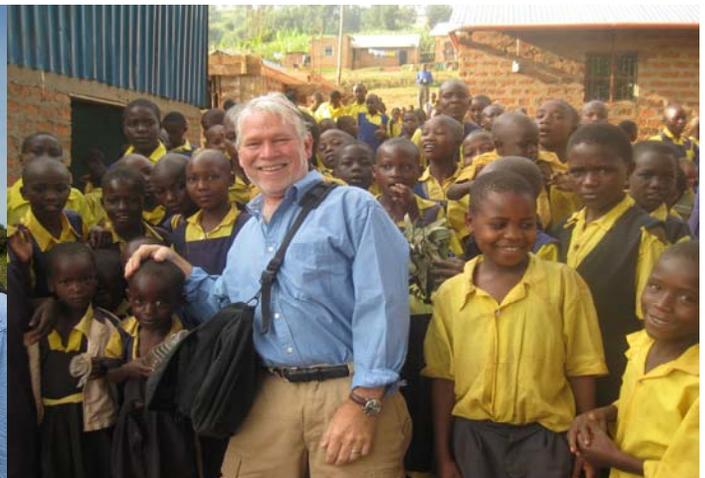
There were inevitably some challenges adjusting to cultural differences and a level of poverty that we are not used to. The Western obsession with punctuality seems non-existent there. We called it "African time" when the hour named to meet seemed to be taken by all as a mere suggestion. The event may not actually take place until an hour or two after the time first mentioned. We felt challenged at the beginning of our trip, not knowing what to expect or the best way for us to contribute there. However, we can look back and see how things unfolded and see our purpose in being there. At the beginning we met regularly with Jay Barry and Adam Cole to share ideas, thoughts, and prayers. The priority of our involvement there was, for all of us, the well-being of the children. Jay reminded us that simply being a non-anxious presence here among the children is very useful, because children learn so strongly from the example of those around them. Loving them, giving them individual attention, making an effort to learn their names, and learning a few words in their local language was immensely enriching for both us and them.

The children can list the names of all the overseas visitors who have come there and spent time with them. Each visitor brings his or her own unique energy for the children to benefit from. We could definitely feel Nicole's presence there and sense her positive influence in the children through what they say about her. In their daily life, we can see many things that they have learned from her. We were glad our visit overlapped with Duncan Smith, as his commitment to infrastructure improvements there is inspiring with all the obstacles he overcomes along the way. Visitors aren't the only positive influence on the children. There are some wonderful staff and teachers there who look after the children's needs. There are many people who give their time and energy freely to the children, but one individual we feel deserves special mention is Madame Ribera, whom they call the matron of the children. Ribera seems to hold things together there. When Ribera is around, there is an atmosphere of harmony, things run more smoothly, and the children seem to feel more secure. She stays in the dorm with the children, giving them all her time and love, and they go to her to solve their problems.

We know there is no way we can ever possibly forget the people we have met there and the times we have shared with them. They will always be in our hearts and minds, and we hope that our involvement there does not end even after we have left. We are both very grateful for the opportunity to come to Riounde. We feel blessed to have been able to experience such vibrant life in the love that flows so freely here.



Callista Barritt Angela Heldon Adam Cole Jay Barry



Rev. Jay Barry and orphans in Kenya

JAY BARRY'S REPORT ON HIS VISIT TO KENYA IN JULY, 2010

I spent two weeks in July visiting the LAM orphans in Riounde while staying in the home of Rev. Khalid and his wife Josephine. It was a wonderful time of getting to know the kids, the staff, and get a taste of the environment they live in. They live in a remote are of Kenya west of Lake Victoria, called the *Gusii Highlands*. The area averages 4000 feet above sea level, dominated by green hills and small farms; the local crops are corn, tea, coffee, bananas and other tropical fruit. This area of Kenya is yet without electricity. I was very impressed with all of the kids. They are hard working, up at the first light of day, going down to the stream in the cold morning air to get fresh water to clean up. They work hard at their studies, help whenever called on, and love nice things. Though they live in an environment with dust and mud, they love things to be clean and neat. In the evenings as they wait for dinner (which is late by our standards, about 8pm), they study in groups in the open-air pavilion under a single light bulb.

It is moving to see how dedicated they are. It will take time to implement all the improvements we want, but we have come a long way in three years of supporting these children. In some respects, they have significant advantages compared to other parts of Africa: fresh mountain water is available nearby, and local food is abundant. Also, they are growing up in a thriving New Church school and community, which is wonderful. Yet, life there is still very basic: no running water, no lights, few classroom materials, none of the basics we are accustomed to, let alone the frills.

We have a lot of work to do in Kenya, and we have made a good start. With your help, we are giving these beautiful children a better life.



Gaudence, Ribera and Nora - caretakers for the girls

Rev. Khalid Obiri and his wife, Josephine

OUR VISIT TO LOVING ARMS MISSION HOMES IN KATHMANDU, NEPAL

By Kalar Holland

LOVING ARMS FAMILY HOME - These four words represent a bounty of love in action. The presence of spirit upon arrival at Loving Arms engulfed me as I walked up the driveway. Having just completed almost 24 hours of travelling from our home in New Zealand through Singapore to Kathmandu, my husband and I needed it. It didn't matter what we had conjured up in our minds as to what would greet us in Kathmandu, everything disappeared when we saw the smiling, welcome faces of children waving. With this, we knew we had found a home in Nepal. And every moment of our visit at Loving Arms there was a genuine, loving and joy-filled smile somewhere amongst the children and caregivers, who now were our life-long family. No sooner were we introduced as Brett and Kalar, did we become aunty and uncle to 23 children. This term of endearment was not contrived, either. It was a genuine heartfelt connection, both honoring us and also assigning us a level of care for these bright young spirits.

We were arriving to "be" with the people at Loving Arms. We had no expectations, no goals, except to share love. Little did we know, we would also be on the receiving end of such extraordinarily pure love. Being seasoned travelers, we were able to slip right into the routine of life here. I have always operated with the motto "Many hands make light work", and this was proved time and time again at meal time. Shovha, master mother, cook, and beauty, all in one, constantly seemed to be stirring a curry over the two-flamed portable cook top. Often this was done by candlelight, as the constant brown outs would come and go without rhythm. Life adjusted around these outages. They were a normal part of life. Shovha did this in her long red and white cotton dress, fully pregnant and ready to deliver within a couple of weeks. She may have felt tense sometimes, but never was this revealed. She was a marvel to behold.



Visitors with some of the LAM family members, Kathmandu, October 2009

Every young one had something to do to pitch in such as setting the table, washing the dishes, or helping cook. While those on kitchen duty scurried to ready the meal, four or five others sat on the floor putting together the puzzle of New Zealand we had brought. Two more children sat on the sofa, strumming guitars, just waiting for Uncle Brett, the guitar tutor and performer to join in.

And we ate, and we ate, and we ate. Dahl baht was the menu usually, but as we were there during a special Nepalese holiday, wonderful treats were added throughout the visit. Sharing everyday English was a treat for the children. Of course, they had studied but to have simple English conversations was one of the easiest and best things we could give them. A handwritten sign on the wall

said USE ENGLISH, HAVE A BETTER FUTURE.

Life didn't stop for our visit. Children bathed, and studied and went to school, came home, argued, played, cried, communicated, sat in the sun, washed clothes, got sick, patted the dog, watched TV, played music...but most of all the every child at the two Loving Arms homes openly welcomed life. Throughout our visit, we adults would sit and chat and share our life stories with a few moments here and there between getting 23 children ready for school, picking them up, making snacks, doing homework, and living.

Having heard some of the sad stories of how these children became orphans, it was amazing to see how bright their souls shone through the stories. Everyone was alive and full of hope. Each night, Kent humbly bowed to the floor in prayer. I loved the sound of the night time prayers echoing through the four storied house through the stairwell. Voices in every timbre blended together to create a prayer of thanks.

To be with Shovha and Kent, and Rajendra and Nadine, loving married couples committed to a better life for the children...well, it polished my and Brett's own marriage commitment to be a loving spiritual partnership dedicated to improving the world. We had found old new friends. And we truly wanted to give our best to the matrix that is Loving Arms.

Nadine and I talked and laughed and walked to the seamstress together. We scooted and collected foods from local markets so that Brett and I could cook an Italian meal for everyone. We bought ice cream to celebrate Brett's birthday. And Nadine made me a grilled cheese sandwich to die for. Her heart and mine melted together as we shared our life's journeys and caught up with the present moment. Throughout all of this, Nadine had the responsibility of being mother to 10 children aged 6 to 15.

One evening the teens took me with them to their favorite little Nepalese fast food place. I walked through the village streets, up stone steps, through twists and turns, and sat in the moonlight, watching the beaming faces of these beautiful teenage girls. How marvelous that their faces only showed beauty, and not the strain of having been orphans. This is what the power of love can do. This is the love that is given by Kent and Shovha, Rajendra and Nadine, and all the others who care.

There was no austerity at Loving Arms....there was only fulfillment, even in the daily dahl baht and rice. There was no shortage, only an abundance. Why? Because everyone there had a sharing and kind heart. No one exhibited selfishness. Everyone worked together to create a HOME for each other. There was always enough to share.

When Kent took us all trekking into a high country through Shovha's village, our van was packed. But as we drove through the narrow street (where I truly attest the paint on the van was quivering because roads were so tight) Kent could see the local bus, bulging with too many passengers and a line of others apprehensively waiting to get on board. He opened the door and invited another 6 to join us until we bulged with people and laughter.

Brett celebrated his 39th birthday while we were there. Nadine made a chocolate cake. The children performed for him and sang Happy Birthday, and several of the children had spent their own money and bought cards for Brett. Rajendra wanted to get his "brother" a gift, so Nadine and I zipped to the market and came home with a turquoise t-shirt, which though still too small for Brett, he keeps on his shelf in memory of his Nepalese family. I loved when I hugged Nadine's waist as the two of us Western woman dressed in Nepalese attire scooted our way through the streets to meet up with Brett on the back of Rajendra's motorcycle after Rajendra had taken Brett to visit his village. We passed each other and stopped and chatted. It is a moment that I will treasure in our marriage.

We were most blessed to visit during October, which is a huge holiday celebrating victory over demons. The parents had created a paper goat, like a piñata, to allow the children to celebrate like all their Nepalese neighbors. Most Nepalese people sacrificed a real goat, but we all got to watch the kids knock down the paper goat stuffed with candies. A large part of the holiday is the eating of special foods and receiving tikka, or prayers and blessings.

One of the blessings I received while visiting was Ama, Shovha's beautiful, wise, loving and kind mother, giving "tikka" to each of us. This ritual entailed prayers being said over our heads as colored rice was set on our foreheads and special blessings with grasses delivered. Ama loved me as she did all others, with deep open eyes and a pure heart. Even though we didn't speak the same language, I felt no limitation in sharing the great joy of our friendship. It was with wonder and pride that I received blessings and tikka from Evan, not even 3 years old.

Brett shared his talents as a guitar tutor and performer to the family. Daily Brett would rehearse and teach, and laughter and song would be wafting through the air. Later, at a family talent night, Nick performed his original love song with the band they put together. Alisha and Puja sang a duet. Afterward, we were amazed that such open heartedness could come from children who had such hardship. The best I could offer the children was to assure them they were alive in my heart and would continue to be forever. I asked them all to write their dreams on paper for me to carry with me so that I could energize their dreams. I still have these in a sacred place. They have travelled with me many places. I carry this string of handwritten papers like it is a treasure chest, because it is. It represents the dreams of children who, because they have been given a loving home, can dream and create a life worth living.

As the days wore by, Shovha was ready to give birth. I returned from a trek to help out as best I could. And what a privilege this was for me. I helped the children with dinner, and we prayed while Shovha was in the hospital. I sat with them and asked how they felt about a new sister coming to the house. Each and every child said the same thing. "I already love her. I can't wait." When Kent arrived with Shovha and Avia, the entire FAMILY gathered to coo and aw at this miracle of life. Avia looked up wide eyed at her 23 brothers, sisters, cousins, aunties and uncles, her mother and father, her FAMILY. The pure love that came from the children to their new sister was a testament to quality of love that Shovha, Kent, Nadine and Rajendra have given these children. Their love was pure and untarnished, just like God's. During the days afterwards I was moved so deeply to be able to share in the Nepalese traditional rituals for new mothers with Ama serving her daughter Shovha, and Shovha serving her daughter Avia, and extended family and friends coming and going. In all of this, I was treated as a beloved member of the family who belonged. I was wrapped in the Loving Arms Family. I was home.

It was hard to leave, but the day arrived. We were packed and almost ready to walk out the door. A knock announced a visitor, a wayward Scotsman who had just made his way through India on a bus. In his suitcase he had carried football uniforms for children from his village in Scotland to Loving Arms. He had heard about this special family home through a Nepalese traveler. Once again, I witnessed what had welcomed us....smiling faces, filled with love, recognition that we are all brothers and sisters in God's family. The fire of love that was ignited in my visit to Loving Arms Family Home will burn forever. Whatever anyone can give to keep feeding the fire of love and nurturing that is given at Loving Arms, that gift is exponentially potentized. Whether it be money, a visit, books, clothes, cards, food...a gift to this organization is a gift of keeping spirit alive and well and producing loving results in our world. Truly, this organization is a living demonstration of Christ's love in action.



Brett

Rajendra

Nick

Pasang

Talent Night