

Sunrise Children's Association Inc.
"Bringing a brighter future to the needy children of Nepal"



NEWSLETTER
Edition 20,
December 2011

Dear friends of Sunrise,

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL!

We hope 2012 has started off well for all of you, and has been filled with much love, joy and peace thus far. Following on from a year of some exciting milestones, it has been a great start to 2012 for us all at Sunrise and many more memorable moments are set to unfold!

2011 was rewarding in so many ways. We hope you enjoy reading the highlights from each project and can see what a positive difference your support is making to their lives.

SUNRISE ORPHANAGE

The children in our care continued to develop academically and personally, and developed even greater confidence, independence, and enthusiasm for their futures. They also continued to express a great amount of love, care and support for their Sunrise brothers and sisters and others around them and teach us valuable lessons about what is most important in life.

One major milestone which many of you have been particularly close to and contributed enormously to was the **purchase of land on which to build Sunrise Children's Village**. The children, staff and everyone involved here in Nepal are very excited and love being included in the planning of it all. **Through SCV we will be able to expand our educational support of numerous village children in need, provide training programs for the local adult community and provide a more stable home for the current and future children of Sunrise Orphanage.** Read more about our plans for SCV at the end of the newsletter!



Above: Just a few of the Sunrise children that are excited about moving to the new SCV home!

QUARTER 1

A major highlight of Quarter 1 2011 was **our first 5 youth successfully attaining their SLC (School Leaving Certificate) – Sujata Rai, Ranjit Rana, Basudev Lama, Lokjan Rokaya and Pasang Sherpa.** After a grueling year of study, where classes commenced at 6.30am and finished anywhere between 4 and 6pm, with a considerable amount of homework on top of that, we were extremely proud of their achievements; **4 Division 1's and 1 Distinction.** They have now all gone on to college (year 11). In conjunction with their studies, the youth are also undertaking practical work experience and job training in various fields. Meet our graduates on our website [www.scai.org.au/Sunrise Orphanage](http://www.scai.org.au/Sunrise_Orphanage).



Above: Sujata Rai, now studying Business Management (majoring in Hotel Management) and working part time at a hotel in central Kathmandu

Outside of school the children continued to develop their skills through **dancing, singing and thanka painting** classes, as well as **visits to museums** and other places of historic interest to broaden their knowledge.



Above: Laxmi Rana enjoying her weekly thanka painting class. The paintings are sold and proceeds put into their bank accounts for their future

Several children also participated and excelled in various **talent competitions and public performances,**

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including interviews on Metro FM radio. We celebrated **Parent's Day**, which was hosted at the children's school by Chairperson of last year's Talent Exploration Group (TEG), **Saugat Mainali** from Sunrise, the **children's birthdays** and the children went on various **fun excursions and picnics**.

Basic health care of course continued including **regular physiotherapy** for the 7 Sunrise children in need. In addition, we focused on **eye and dental treatment**, and gave all staff and children **Typhoid, Meningitis and Japanese Encephalitis immunizations** this quarter.



Above: Bharat Pariyar who has cerebral palsy is extremely dedicated to his regular physiotherapy treatment and excels in singing, resulting in 2 recent special awards

Re-integration of 2 children to their home village

While we were very sad to see **Sadhumaya and Kamdev Budha return to their home district of Humla in Western Nepal**, we are delighted that they are now happily living with relatives in the districts capital and attending the local school there.

Last but not least we were very fortunate to have some wonderful **volunteers and visitors** including SCAI Public Fund Chairperson Ian Martens, who had the opportunity to visit the main Kathmandu based projects as well as the new SCV project site in Nuwakot District.

QUARTER 2

The children continued to perform well in all areas of their lives throughout the second quarter, participating in their regular extra-curricular activities such as **singing, dancing, music, computing, thanka painting lessons and rehabilitation therapy**, as well as additional training activities, including **fire extinguisher and evacuation training**.

They also enjoyed picnics and other outings, **Mother's Day celebrations, birthday parties, festivals, sporting activities, public performances**, and a rally for **World Environment Day**.

In their final term exams in early April, **4 children came 1st, 2nd or 3rd** in their class, **21 came in the top 10** and 51 improved from 1st to 3rd term. With up to 70 children in a class this is a great achievement!

The schools Talent Exploration Group (TEG) **was again heavily represented by the Sunrise Children** this year, with **Laxmi Rana, Ganesh Rokaya and Mansing Aidi** being elected **Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Treasurer** respectively. **Mansing is also Chief Editor** of the school's newspaper.



Above: Ganesh Rokaya, Vice Chairperson of the school's 'Talent Exploration Group' (TEG)

Lal Bahadur B.K. was elected as Volunteer Incharge, **Yuvraj Karki and Khim Maya B.K.** as drama & speech coordinators respectively, **Lasang Lama, Bijay Tamang and Mariam Tamang** as dance coordinators, **Palsen Lama, Buddhiman Shrestha and Bishnu Sharma** as music, sports and discipline coordinators respectively. **Amber Bauju, Mangaldas Shrestha, Chham Gurung and Bipin Tamang** as Vice Coordinators for music drama, quiz and arts respectively.



Above: Siblings Lal and Khim Maya BK in their leadership roles of Speech Coordinator and Volunteer In-charge.

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We have continued to reward the children not only for their academic achievements but also for their **efforts made in the areas of love, care, kindness, respect, responsibility and positive attitude** through our **Sunrise Encouragement Awards**. It's always a tough decision as so many of the children excel in these areas!

QUARTER 3

This was a very exciting quarter in particular as we celebrated the **6th birthday's of SCAI Australia and Sunrise Orphanage Nepal and our wonderful partnership**, welcomed **new 7 year old boy Manoj Subba** to Sunrise, **secured the land for our new SCV** in Gurje, Nuwakot District and held **3 very successful fundraising events in Australia!**



Above and Below: Some of the Sunrise children enjoying the celebrations of SCAI and Sunrise Nepal's 6th Birthdays, the children's birthday's and the SLC graduations.



In addition to their regular activities of Sunrise as outlined in Quarter 1 and 2 and the key highlights mentioned above, the children participated in many other activities including 1st Term exams (with **15 children came in the top 10** in their class), **quiz and poetry competitions, Children's and Teacher's Day programs, an Environmental Awareness rally, an International Day of Peace program and an inter-homes sports day**. And again we were blessed with the presence of a **wonderful group of volunteers**.

QUARTER 4

The final quarter of 2011 was as action packed as ever, with the children enjoying the major festivals and other celebrations, their ongoing studies and training programs and more visitors and volunteers!

Dasain Festival

The final quarter kicked off with the annual **Dasain and Tihar Festivals**. **Dasain** is the most important festival in the Hindu culture and is celebrated widely across Nepal. It is traditionally a time spent with family, so many people from Kathmandu travel back to their villages. On the main day, Dasain Tika, people are honored to receive a tika blessing (red dye placed on forehead) from their elders for a long, happy, healthy life. Most households feast on various delicacies and exchange gifts.

We have been focusing in recent years on re-connecting as many children as possible with relatives in their villages, and this year **62 of the 74 Sunrise children spent a few weeks with relatives**, which was a great development! The children who remained at Sunrise **enjoyed various outings around Kathmandu and the older children enjoyed a trip to Manakamana and Chitwan National Park**, where they experienced elephant riding and bathing, canoeing, swimming, visiting the elephant breeding centre and enjoyed the culture show by the local people of Chitwan, the Tharu people.



Above L-R: Suruchi Mainali, Susmita Lama who was re-integrated to her family in 2010 but still regularly visits Sunrise, and new orphan to Sunrise Manoj Subba enjoying Dasain festival holidays



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Above: Niraj Ghimire and Shreya Magar enjoying Chitwan National Park during the Dasain Festival Holidays

Tihar Festival

Tihar followed only a week after Dasain, making it a month long holiday for the Sunrise children as well as many others in Nepal. **Tihar is a beautiful colourful festival of lights** which runs for 5 days, each day with a different offering and blessing. Day 1 is to honour crows, day 2 dogs, day 3 and 4 Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity and day 5, known as 'bhai tika', is to offer blessings to ones brothers. **This is one of the most special days of the year for the Sunrise children when they re-confirm their devotion, love and respect to their Sunrise brothers and sisters.**



Above: The Sunrise girls enjoying blessing and feeding their Sunrise brothers during 'Bhai Tika', Tihar Festival

2nd Term Exam Results

Following their month of holidays the children got back into their studies without hesitation and again did very well in their 2nd term exams. **Manor Subba came top of his class achieving 100%, with Khim Maya BK and Mansingh Aideo coming 3rd.** 15 children in total came in the top 10 in their class, and more than 37 children improved from 1st to 2nd term.

Encouragement Awards

We continued to reward not only the academically successful, but those who strive to excel in the areas of;

- Love, respect, care, kindness and service to the Sunrise family members;
- Have a positive attitude and dedication to their education and personal development and;
- Show responsibility and care of themselves and their belongings, including prayer, meditation, personal cleanliness and hygiene.

The final award for 2011 went to: Durga Shakya, Saugat Mainali, Bikal Pun and Lal Bahadur BK.

Sunrise children hit the airwaves on Metro FM

Many of the Sunrise children continued to **give interviews, sing and tell jokes on Metro FM radio** in Kathmandu. Ranging from the youngest to the oldest, the children overcome any nerves they may have and jump at the opportunity to participate. The feedback from the radio station is always very positive, which is why the Sunrise children continue to be regulars on one of the weekly programs.

New Sunrise puppies!

The children were thrilled to have another litter of **7 puppies** to play with, thanks to much loved mum and dad Annapurna and Makalu.

Himalayan Hash House Harriers Adventure

The challenging cross country run is held every Saturday afternoon on the outskirts of the Kathmandu Valley. 15 minutes in to the 12km or so run the monsoon rains started so we struggled through thick mud, rivers and rice fields but finally made it back in one piece (just!). With a mix of young and old, foreigners and Nepalese, and some traditional club songs at the end (and some great chocolate cake), it was a great adventure!

Visit to new SCV site

A group of the staff and children were thrilled to go on a picnic to **Gurje, the village where Sunrise Orphanage will be re-locating to in 2013.** Both the staff and children loved the beautiful scenery, fresh clean air, nearby forest and can't wait to move there!

Christmas celebrations

Although Christmas does not tend to be celebrated widely in Nepal, the Sunrise children were keen to celebrate and organised a wonderful party! The day started with an **introduction to Christmas**, some examples of how it's celebrated in other countries, the **nativity story** by one of the Christian boys Basu Lama and **carols** and other **singing and dancing performances.** Being the middle of winter in Nepal, the children each **received a pair of socks and gloves** which were greatly appreciated!



Above: Ranjit Rana, Arati and Marium Tamang enjoying some Christmas cookies at the Sunrise Christmas party

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Farewell to Sunrise sponsor and Grandma, Lorna Jackson

In December, we unfortunately had to say farewell to our much loved Grandma Lorna, as she passed away at 99 years. Since the beginning Grandma Lorna (Emma's grandma from Adelaide) has been one of Sunrise's most enthusiastic supporters, and has followed the children's progress closely, in particular **her sponsor child Sadhumaya Budha**, who was re-integrated to her family in early 2011. Her room was decorated with cards and photos from Sadhumaya and one of the highlights of her year was the **annual Sunrise fundraising event**. **Despite never meeting, many of the Sunrise children kept her close to their hearts and held a beautiful ceremony in her memory**. Whilst it was a sad occasion on one hand, everyone most certainly made it a wonderful celebration of her life and still laugh and talk about her fondly.



Above: Sunrise sponsor and Grandma, Lorna Jackson, at the Adelaide fundraising event in Sept 2011, only a couple of months before she passed away at 99 years

Volunteers

We were delighted to have several volunteers throughout the last quarter, starting off with **Tom Carrangis** in early October. Tom was a tremendous help throughout the year leading up to his visit, playing an active role in the organization of the Adelaide fundraising event in September, in the making of the Sunrise Children's Village information booklet, and various other things. Upon arrival in Nepal Tom enjoyed the Dasain and Tihar festivities with the children, then spent some time with the architects and engineers who are working on our Sunrise Children's Village project, as well as some time at Sunrise helping some of the older children with their homework in particular. He then ventured out on a trek in the beautiful Himalayas, a great way to end his time in Nepal.



Above: Tom Carrangis, with Niraj and Ganesh from Sunrise, at Manakamana Temple during the Dasain Festival holidays

Megan French, Kate Bonney and Steven Roberts were also able to enjoy Tihar Festival with the children at Sunrise, with Steven receiving blessings for 'bhai tika' (brother/sister day). In addition to this they spent time doing various activities at Sunrise during their time here, including helping the children with their homework, enjoying general playtime and helping in the kitchen.



Above: Megan French with Bhuturi, one of Sunrise's much loved dogs during Tihar Festival, on the special day where dogs are also blessed with a tika and garland of flowers

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Above: Kate Bonney and Steven Roberts at Sunrise

James Watkins also joined us during November and December. James has been involved with Sunrise for a while, helping out with fundraising events in Melbourne in recent years, so we were glad to finally have him spend some time in Nepal with us. He kept himself very busy, and was extremely helpful, spending several days teaching at the children's school, as well as lots of quality time with the Sunrise children and staff. James also helped with the recording of the Christmas carols and cards which all sponsors should have received from their sponsored child.



Above: James Watkins with some of the young Sunrise boys

Matt Soper and Reena Solanki

Matt and Reena arrived in December and were our last volunteers for 2011. Staying at the beautiful area of Boudha, about 15 minutes from Sunrise, they spent most of their time volunteering at the children's school, which was greatly appreciated by the children and teachers.

Thank you to all our wonderful volunteers who contributed so much over this quarter!

Visit from SCAI Treasurer

We were all thrilled to have SCAI Treasurer Kumaran Yogaranandan visit us again in December. Kumaran has spent time volunteering at Sunrise every December for the past 6 years and has become a much loved member of the Sunrise family. Kumaran not only spends a few weeks each year volunteering at Sunrise Orphanage, but throughout the year works tirelessly in Australia on top of his full time job in his role of Treasurer. **Thank you sincerely Kumaran for your ongoing dedication to both Sunrise in Australia and Nepal!**

SUNRISE CHILDREN'S VILLAGE (SCV)

SCV has been in planning for the past few years so we were thrilled to have finally saved enough to **purchase just over 2.5 acres of land in the village of Gurje, Nuwakot District mid last year.**

Through the development of SCV we will be able to significantly **improve the education facilities** for the local community (including the Sunrise children), **provide training for the local adult community** and create a **permanent home for the current and future children of Sunrise Orphanage.**



Above: Ganesh from Sunrise enjoying a visit to the site of our new Sunrise home in Gurje, Nuwakot

Educational support

Around the village of Gurje there are limited school facilities, resulting in most children being **poorly educated and a migration of youth as well as whole families to Kathmandu for a better education.** In partnership with the local community, we plan to **expand the educational facilities** in the community by **developing the infrastructure** at the existing primary school, as well as **building more new classrooms** and other much needed facilities for mid primary and secondary classes on the land we have bought nearby.

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Community Training and Development

As with our other Community Training and Development Centres, we plan to **provide an easily accessible, community minded facility which will meet the emotional and educational needs of adults in the local community.** This will enable them to gain the skills necessary to make them more employable, earn a regular salary and raise the standard of living of their family. It is likely that training will commence in sewing, computing and Nepali and English literacy, and will be developed in line with the needs of the community.

Sunrise Children's Home

When the SCV buildings are complete, **Sunrise Orphanage will re-locate from its rented premises in Kathmandu.** The new Sunrise children's home will provide an even greater opportunity to create a real home environment for the children, with more space, flexibility and direct involvement in its development, giving the children a greater sense of security and ownership. The home will comprise 8 separate flats (across 2 buildings), each with a parental figure and a maximum of 10 children. Each flat will contain bedrooms, a bathroom, a kitchen, and a spacious living, prayer, study and activities area. Most daily activities will take place within the individual flats, closely resembling a natural family home. See www.scai.org.au for more details.

Status of SCV

The building plans are finalized and the team in Nepal is ready to go. The funds raised at the events in September 2011 are going towards the building of SCV, however we still have a long way to go!

If anyone is interested in sponsoring a classroom, library, science lab, computer room, a child's bedroom or study room, or simply making a general donation, please contact emma@scai.org.au. We need your help!



Above: Some of the community children in their old school building that will benefit from the new SCV school development

EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS

In addition to the ongoing work with Sunrise Orphanage and planning of SCV, we have **continued to expand our Education Scholarship Programs, and now sponsor around 400 children!**

We strongly believe that being with one's biological family is the most important factor in a child's well being and healthy development. Due to extreme poverty and various social, economic and political issues such as the recent decade long civil war, thousands of families have been enticed to sell their children to traffickers, use them as labour or send them to orphanages or other children's homes in Kathmandu, predominantly for a better life and good education. The result is that many children unnecessarily lose contact with their families often for several years and in some cases permanently. **Our Education Scholarship Programs were established to encourage families to keep their children at home with them and help reduce this trend.**

Through these programs, which span **Kathmandu and several villages across 5 other districts,** we provide all education materials for the children as well as various forms of support for the local schools and families. Without these programs many of these children would not be able to attend school, or are likely to have been sent away from their homes. See www.scai.org.au for more details.



Above: Siblings Sabita and Anita Moktan who are benefiting enormously from their Education Scholarship (Anita recently came 3rd in her class of 64 students)

Below is a brief overview of the 5 project areas:

i. Kalimati Slums

These slums, located on the banks of the heavily polluted Bagmati River are one of the largest in Kathmandu. Thousands of families live in make-shift homes and whilst some have regular work paying minimal wages, many still scrape by begging, rubbish collecting, and doing other forms of menial daily labour, barely earning enough to feed themselves let alone send their children to school.

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Running since May 2008, we have continued to provide:

- Sponsorship of over **100 children** to attend a good quality, local government school
- **Before and after school tuition in the slums** to help them with their homework, as they receive little support if any from their parents/guardians who are generally illiterate;
- Classes during the day in the slums 'school' for around **40 pre-school children**, and some of the children from the **lowest caste's** who are not permitted to attend proper school by their parents, often preferring their children to help support the family by begging on the streets.

Several of the children did very well again in 1st Term, with 14 of them achieving top 10 and 2 of them topping their class. A great effort considering their living conditions, a lack of formal education prior to joining the program, and **classes sizes of up to 65 students!**

In addition to the above regular programs, we were thrilled to be able to **give almost 350 children in the slums a new winter jacket for Christmas.**

ii. Kathmandu Valley

Running since May 2009, this project was expanded in April 2011 to provide education scholarships to 90 needy children from around the Kathmandu Valley. These children generally have a single mother who does some form of manual labour work earning \$30-50 per month, barely enough to pay the rent of a room and food.



Above: Ashmita Thapa, one of the children supported through the Scholarship Program in Kathmandu

iii. Jhapa District

Running since May 2010, this project was expanded in April 2011 to sponsor 90 girls from the surrounding areas of Rajgadh Village in Jhapa District in South-Eastern Nepal. The standard of living of these

families is extremely low, with the majority of families living in simple mud-dung houses. The parent/s rely on minimal daily wages earned on an ad-hoc basis through construction work and basic farming.



Above: Sunrise staff, Sita Siwakoti in Jhapa, on a regular monitoring visit to one of our sponsored children's homes

iv. Sindhupalchowk District

Running since April 2011, this project provides scholarships for 38 children. Sindhupalchowk is one of the districts in Nepal with the highest incidences of trafficking. In many cases families voluntarily send their children to work in brothels in India. We hope to continue expanding this program, so that we can help break this cycle by providing an alternative, better solution for these families.

v. Mustang District

This is the newest project area, being established in June 2011. As with all of our scholarship programs, the children are sponsored for all of their educational needs, including fees, books, uniforms, shoes, bags and stationary.



Above: One of the families supported through the new Mustang Education Scholarship Program. The parent are deaf and dumb and are extremely poor but are dedicated to educating their daughter

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COMMUNITY TRAINING CENTRES

Family is usually the greatest influence on children so, in addition to educating children, **we believe it is important to encourage the children's parents and other adults within the family and community to develop their personal skills** and become better educated, employable and earn a regular salary. **This reduces the risk of children being sent away from their homes, used for labour or exploited in other ways.** It also results in an improved standard of living for the family and improved physical and emotional support for the child.

Currently we run 2 centres but plan to continue expanding into more village areas. The centres are developed in line with the needs of the local community - currently we provide training in sewing, computing and Nepali and English literacy and some other smaller programs such as candle and incense making.

We have found that in addition to developing their skills, the **centres provide a place for women to gain emotional support** through being able to communicate with other women in similar situations. This has resulted in greater confidence, increased self esteem and a more positive attitude to life and their future.

i. Jorpati, Kathmandu

Running since **October 2008**, this program provides training to teens and adults from the local community who lack skills, employment and income opportunities. Since its establishment, **over 500 students** have joined the centre.

ii. Kalimati slums, Kathmandu

Running since **April 2010**, the centre provides training predominantly in **sewing, and more recently Nepali and English language.** **Over 120 students** have registered at the centre so far.



Above: Sangita Lama one of the graduates from the sewing program, now working as a Supervisor in a handicraft centre

Please read more success stories from some of our past students on www.scai.org.au and see what they are doing now!

What is in store for 2012

Many exciting things are in store for this year! We have already kicked off the year with some exciting training programs and other activities which you can read about in our next newsletter, but briefly our plans are as follows:

Sunrise Orphanage

- Continue to provide a safe, loving home for the children in our care, providing them with a good education and various extra-curricular activities and training programs;
- Continue to re-integrate children back to their families where possible and place them in one of our education scholarship programs;
- Broaden the training schedule for our staff, to empower them as individuals and fully prepare them for the move to our new home in 2013

Sunrise Children's Village

- Make significant progress on the building of the new Sunrise homes in Gurje, as well as the school and the multi-purpose centre. **However we need significantly more funding to achieve this!**

Education Scholarship Programs

- Increase the number of children supported in the current program areas;
- Launch 1 new program in a district outside of Kathmandu where there is great demand and need.

Community Training and Development Centres

- Continue to expand the existing centres to meet the needs of these local communities.
- Launch 1 new program in districts outside of Kathmandu where there is great demand and need.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved in the work of Sunrise both in Australia and in Nepal, from our committees and staff, to our fundraising event teams, to our donors, visitors and volunteers and everyone else that has supported us in some way. We hope you can see what a significant difference your contributions continue to make.

There are so many exciting opportunities in front of us that we are just bursting to make the most of with your ongoing support. We look forward to sharing the positive progress of all of the programs throughout the year, and wish you all a happy, fulfilling year ahead.

Please contact emma@scai.org.au for further information on any of our current projects or future plans.

The Sunrise Family