

Ghar Sita Mutu - House With a Heart

A home for abandoned children, a training program for destitute women, and a support program for needy families in Kathmandu, Nepal

Summer 2011

April 2011 marked Ghar Sita Mutu – House with a Heart's tenth year anniversary. The time has passed so quickly I can hardly believe it, but when I look at our children and see how much they have grown, there is no doubt that many years have passed. We now have a house full of young teenagers as well as 10 children under age 11. Without question, this is the most challenging work I have ever done and at the same time, the most rewarding. I am so grateful to friends and supporters who have helped me along the way to provide a loving home for some of the many abandoned children in Nepal.

In May we said goodbye to Puspa who came to live at GSM last October when she was 15 months old. Puspa, who was adopted from a state run orphanage, was unable to get an American visa due to a change in US policy regarding Nepal adoptions. Mark and Karen Mendes, her new parents, had to



Puspa loved participating in all the children's activities. Here they are doing their morning yoga.

wait another eight months before they could take her home. With no one to care for their new baby, they turned to GSM and left her in our care until visa arrangements could be made. It was very hard for these new parents, but all of us at GSM really enjoyed having a baby in our home. Puspa is now happily settled in Vermont. The children and I regularly talk to her via Skype. We are so pleased that we can stay in her life. Welcome to the USA, Puspa, and happy birthday! Puspa, now known as Margaret, celebrated her second birthday on July 4th.

Every year we expand our programs to reach more people. With this growth comes the need for more

Wanted: Angels with a Heart

We are looking for a group of 10-15 committed individuals for our inaugural **Angels with a Heart** group to make a real difference in our organization. Angels each commit to raising \$1,000 a year for GSM. You can host an event in your home (brochures & slide shows provided), sell lovely crafts from our Women's Training Program, invite friends to GSM celebrations—or come up with your own creative way to raise funds.

Angels are open to *any* interested person and are not limited to New York residents. We will provide an online template for you to personalize in order to network, gather online funds, and raise awareness.

Our Angels group is based on the Angels Alliance of the Lower East Side Girls Club. Many thanks to them for their support in our effort and for connecting us with **Amanda Ashcraft** who is serving as the volunteer coordinator for our Angels. Please contact her at GSMangels@gmail.com for more information about becoming an Angel with a Heart.

fundraising both in Nepal and New York. If there ever was a time to contribute to GSM in any way, it is now. No matter what you can do, large or small, your help is always appreciated. Letters of encouragement and suggestions are always welcome, as are donations. We need volunteers to help in our New York office to write grants and help with fundraising events and



GSM family and friends.

organization. We also need to identify and tap into larger funding sources—a priority as our organization increases in size.

THE CHILDREN

Kamala's little brother, Buddha, is now living in our house. In the past we have provided sponsorship for him and his two brothers, Dorje and Dhundup, to live in a school hostel nearby rather than with their troubled parents. They spent their school holidays with us at the house.



Kamala with her little brother Buddha.

Unfortunately, we don't have the room to house any more boys on a full-time basis. Next year Kamala will leave our house to go to college, and GSM will pay for a room, food, and other living expenses, and she will be able to look after all three boys as she used to when they were all small. Kamala has always felt bad that she

lives in our lovely home, while her brothers live in a hostel. Despite the hardship she suffered from an early age, Kamala is a very bright, loving, hard working, and caring member of the GSM family.

HOUSEHOLD NEWS

Retirement. Our long-time live-in Auntie, **Sanu Maya Shrestha**, whose primary responsibility was to care for the younger girls, retired this past November. She has returned to her family village, Hetauda. Like all full-time staff members, she is eligible for and received a retirement bonus from GSM.

Wedding. In April our house manager **Rajina** was married to Ram Chandra on Ghar Sita Mutu grounds. It was a beautiful day filled with Nepali tradition, rituals, and food. The children enjoyed helping to prepare for the big day.



Our children loved participating in the wedding of our house manager Rajina Banepali and her new husband Ram Chandra.



We are grateful to Auntie Sanu Maya Shrestha for the many years she spent working for GSM. She's shown here with her grandson who needs a sponsor to continue schooling.

Solar project. Work on our solar back-up system for the House has been completed. The children no longer have to study by candlelight during the many power outages! We are very grateful to **Dr. Branka Pavic** who requested grants on our behalf and to the Rotary Clubs who generously awarded us funds sufficient to complete this project: **Rotary Club Napoli Posillipo, District 2100, Italy** and **Rotary Club Napoli Posillipo, District 2100, Italy**. Thanks to **Pasquale Daponte** for his technical expertise.

New security system. I am happy to report that the **International Rotary** working with the **Corning, New York club** and the **Bhaktapur, Nepal club** has awarded us a \$12,000 grant to install a security system, outdoor lights, and panic buttons in our house and compound. This is a much needed

improvement that will ensure everyone's safety. Our previous system proved inadequate during a robbery that occurred in Nov 2009. Special thanks to **Dick Puccio** and **Hari Sharma** in Corning and **Shyam Dhaubedel** and **Sundar Rana** in Nepal.

Age has its benefits. One day in March a committee to tar the dirt road by our back gate came to see me to ask for my share of the cost. I was surprised that our share was so large and asked why. "Well", they said, "your compound is so big." Yes. I argued, but I paid a lot of money—my share—to tar the road by our main gate and I don't think it is fair to be charged more than anyone else. I only have a small piece of land leading to this back road. We argued back and forth. They smiled but didn't want to change the price.

Finally, I explained through a translator, that despite the fact that we had a large compound, we did not have a lot of money and that money was very hard to raise, and I was pretty much the only one trying to raise it. They looked at me kindly but again did not waiver. As a last resort, I said, "Look how old I am—see my grey hair!" (A rare sight in Nepal). This did the trick. They smiled sheepishly in agreement that yes, I was indeed old, and was working hard to help these Nepali children. In the end we agreed that I would pay the same as my neighbor: \$300. Bronson Boulevard (as I like to call it) has now been tarred.



The GSM kids enjoyed their time with Friends with a Heart. Aarti Shah (left rear) and Katerina Bhoopal pictured with (front row) Sunil, Krishna, and Kamala.

VISITORS

A group of our supporters has formed an informal team called **Friends with a Heart**. **Aarti Shah** and **Katerina Bhoopal** returned this year to work with the children and women of GSM with two new volunteers



in tow: **Pryanka Bhoopal** and **Lynn Dunn**. They stayed for two weeks that were filled with fun and laughter as everyone participated in confidence building games, leadership skills, and vision boarding exercises where the children were encouraged to dream and set goals for themselves.

The Friends also worked with some of the women in our program. They provided instruction about hygiene, contraception, and safe sex, and the women were encouraged to share their thoughts and issues. These types of discussions rarely occur in the patriarchal society of Nepal, and there was a lot of giggling.

The new team has contributed greatly to our programs. I was thrilled to receive £1,600 from them, which they raised before their visit. We are so grateful for all of their support.

(See www.gharsitamutu.org for their stories).

MANY THANKS TO...

- **Chicago Public Radio** for hosting and **Bill and Liz Andrews** for representing us at the Global Activism Expo 2011 in Chicago in April.

- **Colleen Boland** and **Ayurveda** for holding their third annual fundraiser in Ithaca, NY, where they raised close to \$2,000. We are so grateful for their commitment to GSM. *(Cont. on next page).*



Bill Andrews (left) hosted the GSM booth at Global Activism Expo for GSM.

Ghar Sita Mutu
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Visit us online:

www.GharSitaMutu.org

MANY THANKS TO... (cont.)

- **Jimali Garden** (jimaligarden.com), a local hardware store in New York City, who will add an opportunity for customers to donate a dollar to Ghar Sita Mutu on their website's checkout page.

Here is how you can help

*Ghar Sita Mutu relies on the generosity of friends like you. All donations are **tax deductible** and go directly toward running and expanding our programs.*

*Please make all checks payable to our fiscal sponsor:
The Candy Jernigan Foundation for the Arts
and note "Ghar Sita Mutu" on your check.*

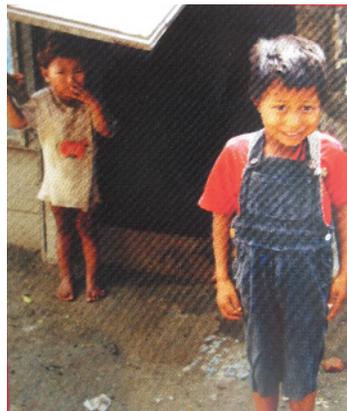
*Mail checks to:
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You can also give online at www.GharSitaMutu.org

Thank you!

For more information, call Beverly at 212-529-0832.

A LITTLE BACKGROUND



Babu & Krishna, ages 2 & 5

My name is Beverly Bronson. I own a small antique shop called A Repeat Performance in New York City. In 1999 while working as a volunteer in Nepal, I found two abandoned children named Babu and Krishna, ages two and five. After searching for a loving home for them I had no choice but to put them in boarding school. Safe but bleak.

The school appointed me as guardian and I went back to New York with plans to raise money to establish a centre to house abandoned children and help destitute women.

I returned to Nepal later that year with enough funds to rent a house. We opened Ghar Sita Mutu - House with a Heart in 2001 and have been expanding our outreach to the community every year. We moved into our own home in 2004. I split my time between New York and Nepal.