



Shenpen

Winter 2008 ~ Issue III



# Shenpen Newsletter

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## Dear Friends of Shenpen,

Shenpen aims to help the poor and disadvantaged gain access to healthcare, education, shelter and improved livelihoods and further works to improve the care and treatment of animals.

In this issue of Shenpen News you will find a report of our progress in the past year including several personal accounts of how your support has contributed to the betterment of the lives of many people in Nepal.



## Knitting Brings Back Hope

### Helping a Mother Support Her Family

Tsering is a very poor, uneducated Sherpa woman from the Himalayan mountains. Her husband abandoned her and their two children. She had a series of serious illnesses that brought her close to death twice. During her illnesses, she was so weak and incapacitated that her 8-year old son and 11-year old daughter had to fend for themselves.

Fortunately, her daughter is extremely bright and mature, and took on the role of 'head

of the household' for the time her mother was sick.

In the past year and a half, Shenpen has helped Tsering and her family in many ways. Shenpen was able to save her life by providing appropriate medical care and sponsored both of her children at local schools.

Recognising that paid work would lift Tsering's spirits, Shenpen organized the sale of the socks, mittens, sweaters, and other knitted wear that she had

made. She was able to sell them at a very reasonable price, as opposed to the sad few rupees she would otherwise have earned from a local wholesaler, which had always been insufficient to even pay for the family's food.

Last week, she delivered her latest order, and it was wonderful to see how happy and proud she was to be able to provide for her family.

## News from the Education Committee

The Education Committee has been very active this year and continues to support several ongoing projects. These include school sponsorships, both for day and boarder scholars; salaries for three teachers at differ-

ent school sites; weekly teacher-training workshops educational materials for two schools, **CHANCE for NEPAL (UK)** sponsored sign-language classes, a washing machine and a sandbox for the boys at Maitri

Griha Home for Mentally Challenged Boys. All but one of these projects are in the Kathmandu Valley, the other being at a school in the Gorkha District, a mountainous region of Nepal.

### School Sponsorships

The Shenpen Education Committee has supported the sponsorship of 14 children in several schools in the Kathmandu Valley. Seven of the children are boarders and seven are

day scholars with 11 on full scholarships and three on partial scholarships. The Committee remains committed to supporting the education of poor and disadvantaged children.

If there is a change in a family's economic status then we review the child's sponsorship agreement and make any changes in their sponsorship support as required.

### Teacher Salaries

In 2008, **CHANCE for NEPAL (UK)** sponsored the yearly salary for three teachers: one third grade teacher at Pegasus School in Jorpati; one Tibetan teacher at a village school in Gorkha district, and the salary of a part-time teacher at Maitri Griha, a home for mentally disabled boys.

Another of the committee's favourite projects is working

with the boys at Maitri Griha, a home for mentally challenged boys. The home is located near Boudhanath and is housed in a lovely setting that offers lots of love, educational stimulation and support to 8 boys. This year Chance for Nepal (UK) sponsored the purchase of a washing machine, linoleum and carpets for the boys' bedrooms, sign language classes and transportation to these daily classes for one of the older boys living and

working at Maitri Griha. Funds from our committee were also used to purchase an outdoors sandbox, complete with toys.



### Providing a New Lease on Life

Ram is a smart boy who was brought to the home by his parents, thinking that since he could not communicate he must be mentally challenged. Maitri Griha learned quickly that Ram was merely not able to hear or talk, so they immediately fitted him with a

hearing aide, which has given him some hearing ability. Ram has also been studying the art of traditional Tibetan thangka painting for three years now, but we noticed that he is also keen to open his world to communication through learning sign-language. Ram

loves his classes and we have noticed that he is communicating more with others—even a young girl he met at a local swimming pool who also communicates in sign-language! Ram is 20 years old.



## News from the Street Children Committee

### First Aid and Medical Services for Street Children and Youths

Shenpen has continued its on-going partnership with SathSath, a local NGO working with street children. For the past year, Shenpen support has allowed 400 street children and youths to access basic medical services at the drop-in centre with 15 children referred on to hospitals. The care provided included first aid treatment for minor cases, medical check ups, medicine,

hospital support and 24-hour emergency case management.

A medical doctor also visited the drop-in centre on a monthly basis providing check ups for the children as well as referrals. Facilities such as showers and washing areas ensure that the street children are given the opportunity to bathe themselves, wash

their clothes and maintain a decent level of hygiene. The above projects were sponsored by **CHANCE for NEPAL (UK)**.

SathSath is hoping to expand its facilities to include rooms for children who are being treated for their illnesses – partly to ensure that they take their medication on time.



*SathSath Staff Dressing Wound of Street Child*

### Research Study on Street Children Organisations

Shenpen recently hosted a UK volunteer, Leila Afshar, who carried out a study on the various street children organisations working in the

Kathmandu Valley. This study provided an overview of the different shelters and services provided and included recommendations to Shenpen

for its future support in this important sector.

### Drop-In Centre for Street Children and Youths

This year, Shenpen and **CHANCE for NEPAL (UK)** continued its support to JAFON, an organisation working for and with street children. Its 'Our World' project provides a safe place for street children and youths to drop-in on a daily basis where they can receive a healthy hot meal, use shower

facilities and find a safe place to sleep.

'Our World' is an entry point for street children in the Patan area of the Kathmandu Valley, where efforts are made to reintegrate the children back with their families. The project also provides street children with an opportunity to

attend non-formal education classes which may lead to formal schooling should they show sufficient interest and commitment.

The older street youths are offered a chance to receive vocational skills training in order to help them become self-sufficient.



*Street youth earning an income.*

### Finding His Way Back Home

One evening on 13 March 2008, Prakash, a street youth was eating in a local restaurant. After paying his bill, he left the restaurant. Suddenly, he was attacked by junkies who took the little money he had, and left him badly beaten by the roadside.

The whole night he lay unconscious in an isolated area. He had no money to go to the hospital and no one to help him. Finally, he went to two other local organisations for medical help, but they could only dress his wounds. Prakash felt he needed

urgent medical attention so he asked other street children about organizations that might help.

One gave him SathSath's emergency card that Shenpen had previously provided support for. He called SathSath and their Emergency

### Finding His Way Back Home *continued:*

Support Unit immediately responded to his call, taking him to Bir Hospital.

The doctor checked his injuries and referred Prakash for a CT scan for further treatment due

to his severe head injuries. After reviewing the CT scan report and finding no serious harm, the doctor referred Prakash to ENT for other treatments.

After receiving this medical support provided by SathSath, Prakash left the streets and returned to his home in Dhading District.

## News from the Health Committee

In 2008, the Health Committee was able to provide support to over 3,500 people through various initiatives, including dental camps. Financial support from **Tashi Delek (Germany)** was provided

to assist four disadvantaged women in Nepal in need of emergency healthcare. This included procedures needed for a woman who suffered a cerebral vascular accident (stroke), tests

and exam for a woman with gynecological problems, dentures for a woman suffering from poor nutrition, and x-rays and medication for a woman with heart problems.

### Bir Hospital Burn Unit



The government-run Bir Hospital Burn Unit was provided with financial support from **CHANCE for NEPAL (UK)** this year to cover the salaries of two counselors and a physiotherapist. Both of these services are essential for the effective recovery of burn patients and their families. These invaluable services help the patients deal

with the long term emotional, mental and physical scars resulting from their severe burns. In addition, Shenpen also helped to purchase blood, supplies, medication, and occasionally paid the bus fares to allow poor patients to return to their villages.

The Health Committee plans to continue funding the Burns Unit including salaries

for a physiotherapist and counsellors.

Shenpen would also like to fund a Burns Prevention Education Outreach Program in schools in the outlying areas of Nepal and purchase physiotherapy supplies including splints, cervical collars and exercise equipment to assist in rehabilitation.

### Dental Camps



*Free dental camp*

The Health Committee once again provided support to the group of Singaporean dentists, assistants and doctors who came to Nepal to provide dental and medical care in November

2008. Two camps were run in Western Region with 2,800 patients treated in three days. Shenpen contributed to meeting the costs of supplies, transportation and food for volunteers. The camps

were a great success and the team plans to return to Nepal in 2009 to offer similar services to other disadvantaged people.

### Acupuncture Clinic

This year Shenpen welcomed four American volunteers from the Acupuncture Relief Project to the Vajra Varahi Healthcare Clinic in Chapagaon which officially opened its doors to the public on

11<sup>th</sup> November 2008.

Chapagaon Clinic takes a holistic approach to treatment and combines the best methods from the West and East, including Tibetan

medicine, ayurveda and acupuncture.

The acupuncturists treated a wide range of patients suffering from ailments including headaches,

### Acupuncture Clinic *continued*

backaches, joint problems, ulcers, asthma, gastric problems and paralysis. Patients included a man who was mauled by a tiger 22 years earlier but who was still suffering considerable pain. Ten treatments later he is now pain-free for the first time in years. A second patient, Almira, felt burning all over her scalp where an eagle landed on her head in 1994. The first treatment brought considerable relief as the burning began to ease and she is now completely cured.

The four acupuncturists treated an average of 84 people a day and by the end of December had seen over 900 different people during 2,500 appointments. These four volunteers worked tirelessly with Nepali

interpreters six days a week using Chinese herbs and acupuncture. They supplied needles, Chinese herbal medicine and other necessary equipment for only 5 Nepalese rupees per treatment, allowing even the poorest of villagers an opportunity to receive care.

Given the great success of the programme, the acupuncturists have now extended their stay until the end of March 2009 and have plans to make their collaboration long term. Two problems they are particularly interested in addressing are working with IV drug users and with women suffering uterine prolapse.



*Receiving acupuncture at Chapagaon Medical Clinic.*

### Acupuncture Restores Voice and Hope!

One of the many success stories of the Acupuncture clinic: "Today Mr. Thapa shook my hand. Not so remarkable perhaps except that when he first came to see us, he was unable to move his whole left side following a stroke nine years earlier. Today his grip is firm and he holds his walking stick with pride. At that first visit we could not understand a

word of his slurred speech – and neither could anyone else. After four treatments he clearly tells me how much the treatment has meant to him and the people he talks to every day now, and how happy he is to walk an hour to get here. He hopes in the end to make the journey in half an hour like the others from his village!"

Shenpen is particularly encouraged by the increasing number of volunteers offering their services to the organisation and especially welcomes more acupuncturists, ayurvedic and Tibetan doctors and other health professionals to support activities at Chapagaon clinic.

### News from the Elderly Committee

In 2008, Shenpen continued to provide financial support for eight senior citizens living in Pharping, a rural village on the western rim of the Kathmandu Valley. The funds offered were used to provide

food, clothing, medical and living expenses. This has made a major difference to their lives including the opportunity to allow them to undertake extended meditation retreat without the need to worry

about food, shelter and other expenses.

A separate initiative to provide hospice care at home for the elderly, in and around Boudhanath, is currently being explored.



## News from the Animal Committee

### Animals Rabies Vaccination Program



*Locals help get the animals protected.*



Each year in Nepal, around 200 people die of rabies and over 16,000 people are treated for dog bites. Since children normally play in the streets, they are the most vulnerable to being bitten. For these reasons, Rangjung Yeshe Shenpen organized rabies vaccinations of around 500 street dogs in several villages in the south of the Kathmandu Valley and Swayambhu. This program proved especially effective, since it not only saved the lives of dogs, but also made the environment safer for other animals and humans.

In addition to vaccinating the animals, villagers, including children, were educated on the humane treatment of animals,

on how to avoid and treat dog bites, and on why taking care of animals will benefit people too. Several dogs were treated for other diseases and some were taken in for spraying.

Following the last Shenpen rabies vaccination campaign sponsored by **CHANCE for NEPAL (UK)** in Fall 2007, we have noted remarkable changes in these villages. Knowing that dogs will no longer be able to transmit rabies, villagers began treating them with greater kindness and it was noted that the general health of dogs was much improved with no cases of rabies or dog bites reported.

In 2008 we were also happy to welcome two volunteers, one from the Shenpen Animals Committee, and one from Rangjung Yeshe Shedra, who went to the villages to help with this program. A big thank you to these two kind ladies! A further thank you goes out to the many villagers who offered their time to support this program and particularly those who helped track down street dogs in small alleys!

Finally, we would like to thank the magnificent staff of the Kathmandu Animal Treatment Centre (KAT Centre) who administered the program. Without their generosity and compassion this would have not been possible.

### Other Initiatives by the Animals Committee

- The Shenpen Animal Project was once again able to save the lives of several dogs using funds from its newly established animals' emergency fund.

- Shenpen continued to treat sick animals, feed street animals, provide information about vets and the humane treatment of animals, and also help find families for homeless animals.

- Shenpen also became involved with a "Roots and Shoots" programme at a local international school in Kathmandu. Over 80 students committed to helping animals, disadvantaged people and the environment.

### Another Animal Success Story!



*Ryan, the Lucky Dog.*

One day, a Nepali teenager came to our house and told us that a severely injured puppy was lying in a ditch. It was a sight of horror: The puppy was close to death. It must have been run over by a car and laid in the ditch for days. One leg had already died, being all black, while the other one had no skin left and the paw was completely disfigured.

Ryan, as we named her, stayed at the vet for two months. She had the black leg amputated and skin graft treatment and surgery on the other.

When Ryan joined our family after her

long treatment at the vet's, she turned out to be the most loving, playful dog, doing all the things one would expect a puppy to do, such as playing catch with the other dogs, running around the house, and even digging holes ☐.

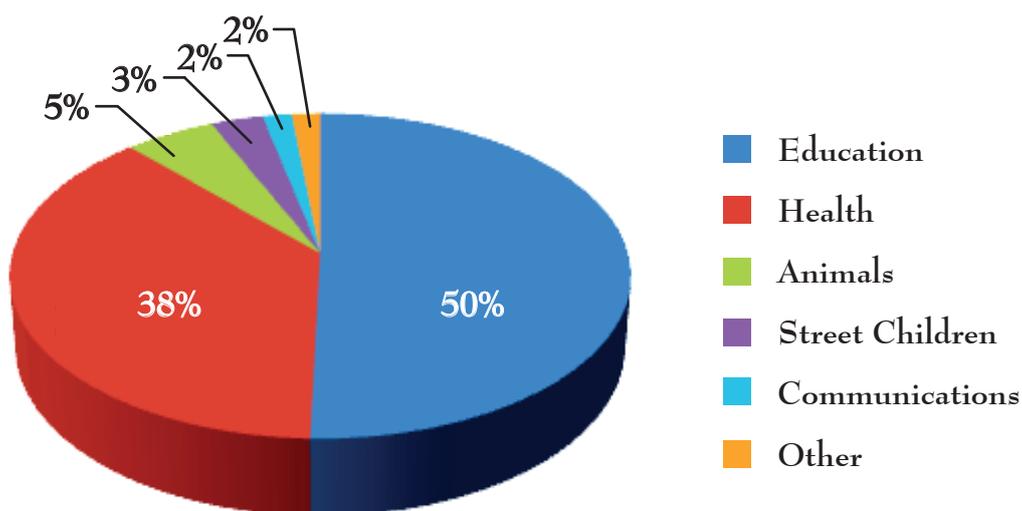
The following spring, a friend of ours, an American dentist who is an amazingly kind animal lover, visited our house, also completely fell in love with Ryan, and adopted her.

Even though Ryan suffered immensely in the beginning of her life, she ended up incredibly lucky.

## Shenpen Income & Expenditure Report

	INCOME \$US	EXPENDITURE \$US
<b>Brought forward</b>	<b>5.250</b>	
<b>2008 Income</b>	<b>38.155</b>	
<b>Education</b>		<b>10.494</b>
<b>Health</b>		<b>7.828</b>
<b>Animals</b>		<b>1.120</b>
<b>Street Children</b>		<b>647</b>
<b>Communications</b>		<b>363</b>
<b>Other</b>		<b>351</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>43.405</b>	<b>20.803</b>
<b>Balance</b>	<b>22.602</b>	

Activity Expenditures as Percentage of Total Expenditures





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## Getting Involved

For further information on projects please visit our website at [www.shenpennepal.org](http://www.shenpennepal.org)

To make a financial contribution follow the Paypal link appearing on our website.

If you would like to volunteer your time, skills and experience, please contact us at [enquiries@shenpennepal.org](mailto:enquiries@shenpennepal.org)

## Acknowledgements

Rangjung Yeshe Shenpen considers itself most fortunate to receive strong financial support from two generous philanthropic organisations led by two remarkable women. These are **CHANCE for Nepal**, founded by **Ms. Barbara Datson**, and

**Tashi Delek, Germany**, founded by **Ms. Ulli Olvedi**. Shenpen would like to extend its sincere thanks to Barbara and Ulli without whom Shenpen would still be in its infancy.

Much gratitude also goes to the Singaporean dental team and local volunteers-

notably Samten O'Sullivan who tirelessly organised and managed the event. Likewise, many thanks go to the American TCM volunteers, Leith Nippes, Garret Fabain, and Andrew Schlabach from the Acupuncture Relief Project.

The Street Children Committee would also like to thank Ms. Leila Afshar who carried out research into various street children organisations in Kathmandu. Her comprehensive report provided excellent guidance on our future direction.



*Ayelet Idan*  
Education Committee Volunteer

The Education Committee was sad to say goodbye to a longtime volunteer member, Ayelet Idan, who left us to make a new home in Hong Kong with her family.

Before Ayelet departed she donated some invaluable teaching materials to Maitri Griha - by far her favorite project. Ayelet, while greatly missed by us, has inspired

us to continue our work to support the underprivileged in Nepal.

Finally, Shenpen would like to acknowledge, with much appreciation, all those whose financial and personal support allowed it to continue its voluntary efforts. These include:

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