

# Hands in Outreach

Creating  
educational  
possibilities  
for poor  
girls in Nepal



Fall 2019

# From the Director

Few of us can imagine a life without a sense of security. A sense of stability and confidence that all will be well today. Most of our HIO families, especially those living in the Balkhu slum, face daily struggles to find work and feed their families.

Effecting meaningful change from half a world away is a daunting task. Because we deal with poor girls and their families, our social work is fraught with challenges. Despite the difficult issues, your kind support is allowing us to make significant and consequential gains. Your trust in our capacity is truly helping to transform the lives of the poorest women and children we serve.

Often, when least expected, problems arise that force us to become more resourceful and capable of handling crises. Around the new year, we learned of sexual harassment allegations at one of our valued partner schools. We know this happens. But, were we blinded to the possibility that horrendous behavior like this, by a teacher abusing eight and ten year olds could happen to HIO girls? It did, sadly, and we responded immediately with corrective measures. The HIO girls involved received counseling and we drafted specific zero-tolerance language in documents of understanding now adopted by our partner schools. We're dramatically more aware and vigilant that this sort of behavior won't happen again.

The benefit of facing tough situations head on, is that we and our dedicated staff in Nepal have forged an excellent working partnership with *Antardristi*, who focus on domestic violence and counseling teens and women before it occurs and in the aftermath.

We're also partnering with *Days for Girls*, a US based organization, now in many developing countries, including Nepal, who specializes in ways to make and provide reusable menstrual kits. This is a godsend for mothers and teens alike, allowing women to remain on construction sites for all day employment and our girls to reduce Kathmandu pollution by washing out their reusable pads.

## *On the Cover:*

***Indu Gurung and her HIO sponsored daughter Kripa. Indu's story is on page four.***



***Teachers Corinne McOmber and Terri Woronecki organized a brilliant project for their students to make soft cases for the glasses provided by RestoringVision, distributed to poor families.***

Our mothers' education classes continue to flourish for the women enrolled at both Chandra Kala and the Strong Roots preschool in the Balkhu slum. We're amending the daily academic curriculum to introduce a *skills for life* program. We've purchased sewing machines for some of the women to learn sewing skills along with teachers coming in once a week to teach beading and knitting. The women are loving these purposeful classes in addition to their ongoing academic training.

In early June, our co-director Palmo Tamang brilliantly organized a day of food relief distribution, along with workshops to prevent sexual harassment and domestic violence. At four different partner school locations in the Kathmandu Valley, our HIO staff and teachers distributed rice, beans and spices to 192 families. A total of 12,700 pounds of rice and 2,112 pounds of beans. We're very careful with our families not to inadvertently cause dependency. Supplying a family of four with basic food for a month simply allows our mothers a small measure of food security, a luxury they never have. The effort was made possible by a generous grant from the Berkowitz Family Foundation.



We continue to have marvelous input from volunteer teachers who travel to Nepal from the US to give selflessly of their time and energy. With abundant gratitude to Tracy Tyson for her expert Montessori trainings, along with Corinne McOmber, Terri Woronecki and Michelle Nicholson, all of whom spent valuable time with our teachers at Chandra Kala and Strong Roots giving training workshops and working with our mothers' classes.

Since joining the HIO team in January, Deputy Director Laura Hunt has been an invaluable resource, adding tremendous depth to our overall capacity. Laura's warm and sincere nature has encouraged trusting bonds with our Nepali teachers, staff, families and girls along with our board members and sponsors. As a veteran teacher, Laura brings to HIO management and programming a wealth of practical experience, innovative ideas and love for our girls.

Looking ahead to 2020, HIO will celebrate our 35th year of service for the poor in Nepal. We've organized another HIO trip in March allowing sponsors to meet their HIO daughters. We're hoping to expand our mothers' education program to 25 women in the Loyalty School community, while continuing to serve our



*As part of our skills for life initiative, mothers like Hemu are learning useful skills to generate income.*



*A generous grant from the Berkowitz Family Foundation allows us to distribute a month's worth of food relief to our HIO families twice a year.*

two existing mothers' classes. We're developing a *Coming of Age* program for our teen girls to help them deal with the troubling issues of sexual and verbal harassment, child marriage, coping with domestic violence and a host of other concerns.

Access to education is the key to success for our sponsored daughters. With your continued support and the profound dedication, vigilance and compassion of our Nepali co-directors Ram and Palmo, we're truly changing lives. The educational programming made possible by your generous contributions is allowing a group of poor girls and their mothers to help lift themselves from deep-rooted poverty.

*Heartfelt thanks for all you do to make our efforts so meaningful and life affirming. We couldn't do this without you!*

*Warmest wishes,*

*Ricky Bernstein*

# Dreams For Her Children's Future

*By Palmo Tamang*

Indu Gurung and her family live in the Balkhu Slum. They are originally from the Lamjung district, far from Kathmandu in the north, in the foothills of the Himalayan mountains. Where Indu and her family live now, in one of Kathmandu's poorest slums, could not be more different than where she grew up. Lamjung is home to the Gurung ethnic group, a beautiful forested area. Indu's husband, Manoj, is from a nearby village, even more remote and undeveloped than Indu's former homeland. Families who live there are in great poverty and have almost no access to electricity, plumbing, health care or education.



*Indu and Kripa in front of their small home in the Balkhu slum.*



*Kripa and Rasmita learning to read at the Strong Roots preschool.*

When Indu and Manoj married, traditionally, it was her role to move to her husband's family home. An unusually strong-minded woman, Indu refused to live in her husband's village, so the family moved to Kathmandu. Indu's relatives were already settled

there, so it was easy for her to get a job as a mason on construction sites. When the government opened the Bagmati River bank in Balkhu for poor people to build shacks, Indu's family applied for a spot and was fortunate enough to receive a small piece of land not far from Strong Roots Preschool.

Soon after, Manoj left for Dubai where he stayed for two years. These days many Nepali men and women go for work in the Middle East in hopes of saving and sending home money they earn. He dreamed of building a house for his family. Manoj found work doing hard labor outdoors in hot weather. People who could read and write English were given better jobs inside the air-conditioned buildings.



While Manoj was in Dubai, Indu continued working on construction sites. She left her two young sons to take care of themselves during the day. Swimming and playing on the banks of the polluted riverbank, both boys developed blisters, open sores and itched all the time.

One day, Indu's youngest son had a high fever and passed away suddenly the very same day. She couldn't know the full truth since she was working, but Indu believes her son may have become sick from eating trash and playing in the filthy river.

This tragedy was a great shock to Indu, especially since she had to face it alone without her husband. Indu began hating life in the slum and wanted to earn more money so she could leave. But with few options, she decided to stay home to look after her other son.

Two months after this horrible incident, Manoj returned from Dubai. Soon Indu gave birth to their daughter, Kripa. Indu didn't want to stay at home earning no money, so she started selling snacks and treats from a small cart. Business was going well and Indu was feeling happier, but the landlord asked her not to sell in front of his house.

Since Indu is a good planner and a hard worker, she did not give up. While her husband was working in Malaysia, with money she had saved from her Womens' Education Class, Indu bought a small house by the roadside. She started a small business selling the snacks near her doorway where no one could move her away.

When Kripa was about four she started going to class at Strong Roots. Now she's seven and in the first grade at the LMV School. Indu is also a new student enrolled in our *Be Part of Her Dream* womens' education class that meets nearly every afternoon at Strong Roots. Indu is very thankful to Strong Roots and HIO for giving her the opportunity to learn how to read and write. She says with a smile, *I feel like a child in the women's education class. I can forget all my worries while I'm learning in class.* Indu appreciates the many different things besides alphabets and numbers that she has learned.



***Gaining self-reliance, Indu and her husband Manoj have opened a tiny roadside shop to sell vegetables and snacks.***

Indu is a wonderful role model for other women in the Balkhu slum. She's even become more compassionate with her own children as they learn to read and write, realizing that it's not as easy as she once thought. She discovered from her own experience how difficult learning can be. Everyone at HIO wants to help Indu realize her dreams. She wants to stay connected with her friends and family by learning to chat on the phone and work her way out of her difficult life in the slum. We know Indu's strong determination, solid work ethic and dreams for her children's future will help her find a brighter path for her family.

# Grit, Strength and Heart

by Ricky Bernstein

Yangchen was raised in a remote village in far western Nepal at 17,000 feet. No electricity, no running water and very little chance for education. Fortunately, her father Norbu had another vision for his children. As a child herself, Yangchen took care of her younger brothers and faced the prospect of a marriage at 14, arranged by her grandmother. But this was not to be Yangchen's karma.

Norbu and his wife Sonam traveled thousands of miles with their young family to Kathmandu, where Yangchen was enrolled as a boarding student at nine. Most of the children at the Dorji School were either Tibetan or Sherpa, from the northern border of Nepal. On a crowded street behind the world heritage Bhoudhanath Stupa, the school was home to 500 children, mostly boarders.

At the Dorji School, HIO sponsored about 15 boys and girls and Yangchen clearly stood out as a star even then. Within a few years, she quickly progressed from kindergarten to eighth grade, as the top student in her class. On my first solo trip to Nepal as HIO's director, I found myself pretending to be a monkey, trying to get the group of HIO kids to smile for the camera. Yangchen's in the middle with glasses, and her first cousin Karma is on her right, a bit taller. A few years later, while Yangchen was in the US, Karma tragically died from TB. Shortly after, Karma's younger sister also passed away from TB.



*As a young sponsored student, 13-year-old Yangchen, in the center with glasses, was the top student at the Dorji School in Kathmandu.*

Heartbreaking for Yangchen and her family and I think this set her resolve to be successful in her career and to prevent this from happening again to those she loved.

In ninth grade, Yangchen was the top student in the school. We had the wild idea to see if she could get a scholarship to Moses Brown, a wonderful Quaker school in RI where we lived. We were successful and Norbu and Sonam gave their blessings for Yangchen to leave Nepal. Yangchen became our daughters' *older sister*. Rudi and Jeff Scheuer, Lynn Mary Munson and Betsy and Roy Zimmerman, were lovingly instrumental in Yangchen's transition and her life in America.



*Yangchen now lives in Los Angeles with her husband Steve and daughter Maya.*

Through her characteristic tenacity, perseverance, courage and grit, Yangchen blossomed. She and her HIO sponsor Rudi, who lived in NY City, grew close and Yangchen went on to Cornell for undergraduate and graduate school. Now, as a Senior Vice President at Morgan Stanley, she's listed with Forbes as one of the 200 most successful female financial managers and serves on the HIO board. *Tu-jay-chay*, Yangchen-lak, for becoming such an inspiration to us all. *Thank you* in Tibetan.



# A Generational Change

by Ricky Bernstein



*In one generation, Shrijana, Nishma, Sujata, Pooja and Samjana have broken an endless cycle of poverty and now have self-determination.*

*Access to education is the single most important factor in the life of a poor, young girl in Nepal.* A tag-line we so often use when explaining what HIO does. We help educate poor girls, keeping them safe from child marriage, being trafficked or leaving school for a dead-end life on the street and the prospect of daily menial labor.

While catching up with e-mails on a Sunday afternoon, Palmo sent a report about several of our young women now 18 or 19 years old, having completed the 12th grade. She filled us in on their plans going forward. This in itself, *their plans going forward*, is utterly remarkable, I thought. Their dedicated sponsors, Susan, Nancy, the Randolph Union High School Interact Club, Jack & Beth and Elsa, have been supporting these young women for ten years or more. An *investment* in their future. The girls graduated from three of our four partner schools in the Kathmandu Valley and all are going on to college within a few months.

When these young women began their HIO sponsorship, they were young, shy and poor. All of their mothers were illiterate, having been married and pregnant by the age of 15. The lives and potential of these young women couldn't be more different than the lives of their mothers, who were marginalized at birth simply by being born female.

Their fate was fixed and determined. By contrast, their daughters' lives have choices. This represents a monumental *generational change*, sending a powerful message that a population can change for the better over time if given the chance.

All of these astonishing young women are in charge of their own destiny. In one generation, they'll have broken an endless cycle of poverty passed from mother to daughter, uninterrupted if not for an *educational intervention*. Shrijana and Sujata are entering law school, Nishma, a four-year business IT course, Pooja will soon be starting medical school and Samjana will spend a year preparing to take the medical school exams next year.

These extraordinary young women represent Nepal's present and future. A vital untapped asset yet to be realized. This is the *generational change* that may chart a path toward gender equality. The lives of these young women have been transformed. All have distinct goals and all are taking a strong role in determining their future.

Sujata talks about one day entering politics. Palmo says, *don't be surprised if she becomes Prime Minister!*



*Sital, the caretaker at Chandra Kala Preschool, leads a group of women learning to sew, as part of the skills for life initiative in our mothers' education class.*

## A Caring Network of Support

Being born a girl is a distinct disadvantage in Nepal's patriarchal society. Too many of our girls lead troubled home lives and are easily influenced by the street. HIO's approach to education and social work is *family-centric*. Our care for the whole child increases her chances of staying in school, avoiding early marriage or pregnancy and a lifetime of low-wage, menial jobs.



*HIO 12th-graders were given reusable menstrual kits, helping to break down menstruation stigmas while reducing pollution in Kathmandu.*



Our approach to education is family-centric.



*HIO Board member Laura Gladding expertly trained Sunita Rana to implement new library programming in the Boroff Community Library at Strong Roots.*



*HIO teachers and staff coordinated two reading glasses distribution days, helping over 300 impoverished people to see more clearly.*





*The piggy bank savings project piloted at Bijeswori School was so successful that we're distributing piggy banks to all our girls.*

## Your Gifts to HIO programs support...

- *The Be Part of Her Dream*, skills for life training program, empowers our mothers with viable ways to support their families.
- Twice a year food relief efforts provide a small measure of food security to families living from day to day.
- *Our Coming of Age* initiative is providing valuable, practical tools for our teens to learn about reproductive health and receive reusable menstrual kits.
- We've established strategic partnerships with Nepali NGOs, providing practical workshops for prevention of sexual harassment and domestic violence.
- Through a fun and creative piggy bank program, our girls are learning the value of money through savings while doing environmentally helpful projects.
- On-site and long distance teacher training initiatives are benefitting thousands of students in our partner schools.
- In the Boroff community libraries at Chandra Kala and Strong Roots, children and adults are reading for the first time from culturally sensitive books.



*Kabita Tamang's family received rice and lentils for a month during an HIO food relief effort generously funded by the Berkowitz Family Foundation.*



*Nepali Co-Director Palmo Tamang, coordinates several teacher training workshops each year, enabling teachers to improve the quality of education for thousands of students in our partner schools.*



# In Ram's Footsteps

by Laura Hunt

I arrived at Strong Roots Preschool in the Balkhu Slum, one of Kathmandu's poorest neighborhoods, early one March morning with Ram, our dedicated HIO Nepali co-director. Women in colorful skirts and loose blouses gathered near the community water tank next door. Each one carried a bundle of dusty clothes. They chatted and joked as their shallow bins began spilling over. At this rate, they'd be washing all day, only for another soiled heap to be there tomorrow. Days move at a slower pace in Balkhu. For people whose lives are so compromised, the simplest tasks take astonishing effort.

This was my third trip to Kathmandu's inner-city, now as HIO's new Deputy Director. I yearned to discover what drives the marginalized girls and women we work with to continue persevering, despite the seemingly insurmountable obstacles they face. What inspires the profoundly poor to lift themselves from deep-rooted poverty? Walking side-by-side with Ram for twelve days helped my answers take shape.



*Kritika's grandmother Tulasha beamed about her granddaughter's excellent grades in school.*



*Ram helps Sharmila read a letter sent by her sponsor Marion*

Ram toted three backpacks. His own lovingly worn daypack and two smaller, brand-new bookbags with cheerful stars and flowers. They were loaded with clothing for two six-year olds from their generous sponsors Jeff and Jessica. T-shirts, undies, socks, hair ties, letters and photos. Strong Roots lead teacher, Poonam, reached her hand into a circle of excited kindergarteners and gently grasped little Sanam's.

Ram, Poonam, Sanam and I walked single file down the narrow alleyway leading to Sanam's home. It's dangerously close to the frequently flooded Bagmati River that turns this place into ankle-deep muck during monsoon season. Ram stooped to enter a makeshift shack, and beckoned the rest of us in. Sanam's two 19-year old aunties sat cross-legged on the family's bed. One girl held a schoolbook, reading by the scant light from an open window. The other cradled her 3-month old daughter. Sanam's grandmother was out, working at a recycling plant, earning about \$3 for her 9-hour day.



One auntie moved some blankets aside and pointed us toward the hard bed. It was the only seating off the floor in the two 6' x 6' rooms Sanam shares with six family members. They roll extra bedding out in the evenings for sleeping. Sanam playfully put on a new headband, her bright eyes lighting up the dingy room. Ram asked about Sanam's mother, Sangita, a 20-year old who'd had Sanam when she was just 14. Sadly, teen pregnancy is so common for girls in Nepal, sealing their fate of a dead end life of servitude and poverty.



***Sisters Amrita and Lina began school at Strong Roots and now attend the LMV School.***

Leaving Sanam's, we wound through Balkhu's complex system of tiny alleys, stopping in at several shacks. First, Asmita and Rasmita told us about a new learning program at school and showed off their certificates. Amrita asked for help writing a letter to her sponsor. Next, we saw Sharmila's mother, Kumari, looking upbeat and eager to talk. My heart skipped a beat. Her eyes had appeared so blank and empty the first time we'd met a year ago. Then Kritika's grandmother, Tulasha, welcomed us into the cozy room she shares with her husband and two grandchildren. They beamed about Kritika's excellent marks at school and expressed gratitude for HIO's support. Tulasha is a regular participant in our women's education classes, doing well in her lessons too.

Kripa was playing with her baby cousin in a tiny bedroom when Indu called her to the kitchen for a snack. She skipped in wearing a well-worn undershirt and leggings. After Indu shooed her back, Kripa reappeared in a flowered dress with lace collar. So prideful. I sat at a tippy kitchen table helping Kripa tie up her hair while Ram and Indu reviewed a paper from school.

Soon, Indu offered me a hard-boiled egg. I glanced at Ram, whose eyes said no. Though my stomach growled, I smiled and reluctantly declined, eyeing Ram peeling his own. The egg may not have fully boiled, possibly causing stomach problems for me later. Oh, how I wish I could accept food, that wonderful cultural equalizer, from these lovely, generous people.

Visits like these are the core of HIO's *family-centric* approach to education. This daily practice for our Nepal staff is where HIO's transformative influence begins. Both for those being served and for those serving. Simple chats with girls and their families. Sharing letters and small gifts from sponsors. Listening and learning. Celebrating achievements and offering advice about school, marriage, jobs, birth papers, life. Laughing. Crying. Holding a hand. It's these deep, personal, connections that make a place as destitute as the Balkhu Slum feel like a home every bit worth improving.



***Sanam holds a book bag and letter from her HIO sponsors Jeff and Jessica.***

***Laura Hunt is a veteran teacher and the HIO Deputy Director.***

# Putting Her Children First

by Ram Adhikari

As the mother of three children, she was a loving, hard-working woman who never complained about the challenges she faced each day. Thulimaya's day began at five, tending to household chores that she set out to finish before her children left the house for school. Rushing to get water, cleaning the house, cooking for the family, washing everyone's clothes and cleaning up after each meal was her daily routine. She accepted her job as the family housekeeper and was a caring mother. About a year ago she mentioned some abdominal discomfort. By the time she went to the doctor it was too late. Sadly, Thulimaya passed away due to liver and pancreatic cancer in April.

Thulimaya lived in a small brick house on a busy road by the Bagmati River with her two sisters-in-law. In truth, they treated Thulimaya like a servant. When Thulimaya came to live with her husband and two sisters, she became the household servant. Because she married into this family, they seldom offered Thulimaya a hand while she worked in the kitchen or when she cleaned.

Thulimaya had three children. A son who is now 17, and two daughters, Jyoti and Chadani, both HIO sponsored, who are now 16 and 14. The children started their basic education at our Chandra Kala Center, when they were around five. Her oldest son finished high school this year and wants to become a lawyer. Jyoti is in 10th grade and Chadani in 7th. All are good students.



*In the womens' education class Thulimaya was a top student and loved to learn.*



*Thulimaya and her daughter Jyoti*

Growing up as the oldest daughter in a traditional Newari family, Thulimaya began taking care of her siblings when she was only six or seven herself. Even though she was born in the city where there was access to education, Thulimaya wasn't allowed the chance to attend school because she was needed to care for her younger siblings. This is common in Nepali society. While her sisters enjoyed their schooling and fun time, Thulimaya was never able to join them. She was so busy caretaking at home, she never learned to read or write.

In her early fifties, when HIO started the *Be Part of Her Dream* womens' education class, she enthusiastically joined. Her sisters-in-law didn't like her attending class, because they wanted Thulimaya to take care of the chores at home. While in class, she was happy to be with a supportive group of women and learned a lot. This was the first chance in her life to do something she chose to do. Unfortunately, Thulimaya's sisters forced her to drop out of class after six months.

Thulimaya was a very kind spirit. It's hard to imagine the pain she held within herself during her tough life. Her strong desire to put her children first showed brilliantly. Though Thulimaya is now gone, we hope her soul is in a better place and she's at peace.



# Coming of Age Program

by Laura Hunt



***Antardristi, a strategic partner in Nepal, donated 30 reusable menstrual kits for our teen girls including Kanchi, Apsara and Menuka.***

In developing countries like Nepal, talking openly about sex and feminine hygiene is taboo. This can make adolescence a particularly confusing time for many HIO girls. Too many have troubled home lives and are easily influenced by the street. Sexual harassment and domestic violence are all too common in Nepal's patriarchal society. As they navigate these challenging years, HIO's loving support and guidance are vitally important to our teen girls.

Palmo Tamang, HIO co-director, has taken incredible initiative to launch HIO's new *Coming of Age* program, designed to help our girls understand, take care of and be proud of their developing bodies. As an educated, articulate, and successful woman herself, Palmo is an excellent role model and trusted advocate for HIO girls. She connects especially well with our teens, most of whom she's known since they were young.

Palmo put her brilliant organizational skills to work designing a series of workshops for the beginning of the school year. She sought to raise our girls' understanding of reproductive health and hygiene, providing them with knowledge and skills to help prevent sexual harassment. To deliver the best program possible, Palmo drew upon the expertise of two well respected NGOs in Kathmandu that work to resolve gender-based problems.

A long-time HIO supporter, Mary Cary, introduced Palmo to *Days for Girls* (DfG). This groundbreaking organization increases access to menstrual care and helps break down limitations for girls and women in developing countries. They have an active branch office in Kathmandu. Local women run a small enterprise making reusable menstrual kits, while staff members and trained volunteers organize educational programs and distribution efforts. The kits are environmentally friendly, which helps alleviate the overwhelming pollution that chokes Kathmandu's rivers and streets.

*Antardristi* is one of few organizations in Nepal that address social issues related to child sexual abuse. Since 2003, Antardristi has conducted awareness activities with schools, community groups, and law enforcement agencies throughout Kathmandu. They offer counseling and residential services for children who require more extensive interventions. In a country where access to mental health care is extremely limited, Antardristi provides vital resources for victims of abuse.



***Palmo leading a workshop for our new Coming of Age initiative.***

HIO piloted a DfG workshop in March for 20 HIO girls. After this program's success, Palmo assembled an enthusiastic team to present workshops for all of our HIO girls. A remarkable undertaking that took place in four different locations, engaging nearly 200 girls and women.

Partnering with Days for Girls and Antardristi is adding strength to HIO's ability to educate and empower our girls. We're exploring ways to actively engage more boys and men in this important work too, as they play a critical role in abuse and harassment awareness and prevention. How very grateful we are for Palmo's wise, caring, and dedicated leadership in preparing our girls to manage adolescent life in an increasingly complex world.

# Sanisha – A Bit About My Life

by Sanisha Shrestha



***Sanisha, Manisha and their mother Maya.  
Manisha is the lead teacher at our Chandra Kala Center.***

Guess what? I am writing from Sydney, Australia about my life with HIO. My childhood in Nepal, was full of happy moments and good memories still fresh in my mind. And the credit goes to the sponsorship provided to me by HIO. I needed a sponsor because my family could not afford my education. My mother was the sweeper at the Bijeswori School where my older brother and sister Manoj and Manisha were HIO sponsored students. Thankfully, I was chosen for sponsorship too. I worked hard in school and achieved good marks. After high school, I spent the next four years in College earning a degree in IT. I felt more training would help me get a good job so I'm pursuing my postgraduate studies in a Master of Technology Management program at Federation University in Sydney.

HIO supported my education and mentored my everyday life from childhood until higher education. Because of this support, I am now able to stand up and continue my further education abroad. It was not easy for me to take this journey. The new environment and the Australian lifestyle was a totally new adventure for me to learn and cope with. First time living away from my family too. Although it was hard for me to settle down, I was lucky enough to get support and guidance from Ricky and Dorothy, which really helped me adjust.

I was also blessed to meet Dorothy, Vice President of HIO, who lives here in Australia. Dorothy has guided me, and I am lucky to be connected with such a good human being. After meeting her, I realized I am not alone here. With Dorothy, I had the opportunity to visit Adara, a non-profit organization and a longtime supporter of HIO, who is also doing a great job supporting people living in poverty. I got a warm welcome from Madeline Vaughan, Senior Programs Director, along with all of the other Adara staff people.

It's been nearly a year that I began studying in Sydney. I've adjusted to my studies and even have a part-time job working in a restaurant. Today I feel proud of my growth. HIO has enriched my life and made me capable of what I am accomplishing today. Now, it's my turn to show how HIO has shaped my life by being a successful woman.



***Dorothy took Sanisha to meet our friends at the Adara Foundation  
in Sydney, one of HIO's valued partners in Kathmandu.***



# The Joy of Meeting Sanisha

by Dorothy Jakab



*Sanisha and Dorothy enjoy a feast of traditional Nepali momo dumplings.*

I first came across Hands in Outreach while traveling in Kathmandu. I had trekked in Nepal many times, and realized it was time to give back. Adara, an Australian organization who has supported HIO projects for 20 years, kindly took me to the LMV school to see the work of HIO. Our sponsored girls were the sweetest, in plaits and navy uniforms, doing schoolwork on borrowed laptops. I was hooked. I couldn't think of a better way to spend my money. Little did I know that sponsoring a girl would bring so much richness to my life. It is now five years that I have been a sponsor and HIO board member.

I am proud of the tremendous work that HIO achieves with so much dedication and care. My life has gained depth from knowing Ram, Palmo, Ricky and the HIO board members. I know that my donations go straight to the education of girls who can now go on to college and make real choices for themselves. HIO sponsored Sanisha's education from the time she was five through to college. Now, she's bravely come to Australia to pursue a Masters degree while supporting her own education.

It's been a joy seeing Sanisha do so well in her studies and watching her grow as she negotiates a city of five million people with a complex public transport system, hot summers, new food and a totally different culture. I can't imagine myself in her situation. Sanisha rang me very excited one morning to share that she has a job. It's at a local family run cafe just a short walking distance from her apartment. Getting this job was such a lovely boost to her confidence.

We've shared some fun times, including eating famous Australian cakes, visiting a church (Sanisha's first), visiting Adara and celebrating her good marks and success in finding work. I've also been fortunate to be the recipient of one of the biggest momo feasts anyone has ever had!

Being involved in HIO has enriched my life immensely. I encourage you to reach out to get even more involved in the beautiful work that we're collectively doing. Let's continue to give more girls like Sanisha the opportunity of a lifetime.

***Dorothy Jakab lives in Sydney and will  
be the new HIO President***

# Two Cups of Tea – Amalie Kass, 1928 – 2019



***Amalie's philanthropy is making a world of difference for our HIO girls and their mothers.***

One morning I picked up the phone and a woman with a kind, but no-nonsense voice explained that she knew who I was from Katherine, a fellow book-club member and long-time HIO supporter. *I'd like you to come to my home in Lincoln*, she said. More an implied directive than a request. *We'll have a cup of tea and you'll tell me all about your organization.* OK, sure, I said, and we fixed a date. Their group was reading *Three Cups of Tea*.

Amalie met me at the door, a bright, cheerful woman in her 80's. She was the essence of dignity and grace with a welcoming countenance. She asked many pointed questions about our mission and goals. After two cups of tea, Amalie asked if we had an endowment. We did, I said, though I was slightly embarrassed to tell her we'd raised about \$250K, safely invested in a community foundation. If we had money tucked away in a fund, why would anyone give us more, I thought? The answer was just the opposite.

She excused herself and when Amalie returned, she handed me a check for \$15,000, the largest donation HIO had ever received. *You put this in your endowment fund young man*, she said. She went on to say that if we'd had no fund, no way to protect our program in the future, she'd have handed me \$150 and sent me on my way. I learned so much from that simple lesson.

For the past 15 years, I've had a cup of tea with Amalie every year until her recent passing on May 19th. A thoroughly pleasant experience, updating her on the progress with our girls and their mothers. As the years passed, her trust in our work increased. Amalie loved children and had a keen interest in helping those at a disadvantage. She valued education and graduated from Wellesley College in 1949.

When Amalie stopped teaching high school, she turned to writing about medical topics, often concerning women's health and social justice. She loved to travel and often planned extensive family trips with her children and grandchildren. At 87 Amalie became HIO's most senior sponsor, committing to seeing nine-year-old Devika through college. This alone speaks volumes about her desire to help transform lives through her inspiring giving.

This spring we missed our cup of tea, as Amalie was too weak to accept visitors. As her vital legacy lives on, Amalie's philanthropy is a meaningful and significant force for good. She's the face of Hands in Outreach, and will be dearly missed.



***Devika, with her mother, Rama***



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**Co-Executive Director**  
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Nothing uplifts a society more  
than the education of its girls



*Rojina at Strong Roots with a book bag full of useful clothing from her loving sponsors Jeff and Jessica.*

### **Special HIO Advisors:**

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Help sustain the HIO program

☐ **\$50** An after school meal and extra tutoring for a group of children for a month

☐ **\$75** One month supply of lentils, rice, potatoes and cooking oil for 3 families

☐ **\$100** Uniform & books for one HIO girl

☐ **\$150** Healthcare coverage for five mothers

☐ **\$250** Underwrite a training workshop for our girls or colleague teachers

☐ **\$500** Support HIO girls in college and graduate school

To Donate by Credit Card, go to: [www.handsinoutreach.org](http://www.handsinoutreach.org)

for additional information:

**ricky@handsinoutreach.org**  
413-229-7993

**laura@handsinoutreach.org**  
508-951-1287

Name

Address

City

State

Zip

Email

Photos: Ram Gopal Adhikari  
Design: Harry Dickens

**Hands in Outreach • 1504 Silver Street Sheffield, MA 01257**

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