

Hands in Outreach

Educate a girl, change a life forever



Fall 2017

From the Director

Aside from the piles of rubble still heaped by the roadside, it's hard to tell that two years ago Kathmandu was dramatically affected by two devastating earthquakes. The ongoing cleanup, along with construction to widen city roads, has the city clogged with dust and traffic. Many HIO families had to find new places to live, but they remain strong and resilient. They adapt to change and move forward. The poor have little choice.

Many dedicated mothers of our sponsored girls are realizing a long forgotten dream: the opportunity for them to go to school, as well. Nearly every morning at six, a group of eager learners, ranging in age from 20 to 50, enter the Bal Kendra learning center's gate. This two-year pilot project, generously funded by Dining for Women, is called *Be Part of Her Dream*. Fifty-two mothers attend class for an hour and a half on five mornings a week. The project is brilliantly administered by our Nepali Directors, Ram and Palmo, along with lead teachers Lata Rai and Gita Sitaula, with help from HIO college students Sukrima Gurung and Kanchan Adhikari.

Largely through the efforts of board member John Cartwright and Senior Director Ram Adhikari, HIO is branching out with computer-assisted teaching initiatives. In November, a new deployment of Intel employee volunteers will journey to Kathmandu to install computer labs at local colleague schools we've chosen.



Bal Kendra kindergarten students, like HIO-sponsored Pratika Tamang, are assisted in learning English using the computer lab nearly every day.



Every day, Jasmin Tamang roasts corn by the roadside to support her family. Friends from the BPOHD mothers' education class often stop by to visit after they all leave class at 8am.

Not only do our digital projects allow thousands of children to access the learning potential of the internet, they also augment the teacher-training efforts we're implementing with our partner schools.

Our real-time *Long Distance Learning* project (LDL) is ramping up with several sessions each month via ZOOM media. Similar to Skype, the application allows us to hold teacher-training workshops here in the US in the evening with our colleague teachers in Nepal attending the next morning. It's amazing to see the faces of 25 teachers on our computer screens: teachers in four separate locations around Kathmandu, an HIO board member in Australia, one in Vermont, one in CT, me in MA, and our expert instructor, Linda Liss-Bronstein, in NC. Our colleague teachers are learning best practices for teaching English-language reading. The LDLs have been extremely beneficial and a great success overall.

In July, three enthusiastic veteran teachers from the Moses Brown School in Providence, RI, travelled to Kathmandu to work with our colleague teachers. In addition, Kelly Case, a very capable grad student at the Columbia College of Education, spent three weeks at our partner schools teaching early-reading skills. Third-grade teacher Laura Hunt and librarian Laura Gladding held several outstanding workshops for classroom teachers that proved an enormous benefit and a wonderful cultural exchange.

I'm pleased to report that the generous support of our sponsors and donors has allowed 18 young girls to become new HIO-sponsored students. Sponsorship support is now directly benefitting 150 poor girls and young women in six partner schools. Our small, dedicated staff members in Kathmandu, headed by Ram and Palmo, deserve all the credit for their vigilant oversight and care. Ram and Palmo tirelessly crisscross the city every day, making home and school visits. They're the heart of the HIO program, and their dedication and commitment to our families is profound and unwavering.



Sharmila and her mother Kumari live in the Balku slum. Six-year-old Sharmila is in good hands with our Strong Roots staff - Poonam, Jyoti, Yoshoda and Sunita.

By providing access to education, we're able to empower mothers and daughters to gain the skills that can change their lives and lift them out of poverty. Nothing uplifts a society more than the education of its girls and women. Heartfelt thanks for all you do to make our efforts so meaningful.

So many thanks for all you do to improve the lives of the families and children in our partner schools.

With your kind generosity, everything is possible.

Warmest wishes.

Ricky Bernstein

Deepa's Family

By Ram Adhikari

Dhan Kumari, who doesn't know her actual age, thinks she's about 45 or 50. The lines in her face tell me she is older. Among five sisters, she is the second oldest and spent much of her childhood taking care of her sisters while her parents worked in the fields. She grew up in a remote, hilly village with no electricity or roads. None of her sisters went to school. Growing up in a marginalized family with a limited amount of food, Dhan Kumari's childhood was far rougher than the life of her own three girls, and their life has not been easy. Every day she had to cut grass for the few animals the family owned and later work for neighbors in their fields, fetching grass for their animals. There was only time in her life for work and sleep.

When she was about 20, Dhan Kumari married and came to Kathmandu with her husband. She suffered from a serious illness, and at one point, everyone thought she was going to die. Thankfully she lived. After coming to Kathmandu, she and her husband worked on construction sites, earning together about a dollar for a full day of work. She gave birth to four girls, but lost her first daughter, who suffered from pneumonia, at the age of seven. Due to the desperately poor economic conditions of the family, they had no money for a doctor and could not save her life.

Dhan Kumari's other three girls are healthy, with the oldest, Sumina, 22, Alisa, 21 and Deepa, 15. Deepa loves and respects her older sisters and sees them as good role models. Deepa and her family came to our attention around seven years ago when they lived in a small, rented room next to the Bal Kendra Children's Center. Deepa came to Bal Kendra as a young child and from there was chosen to go to the Bijeswori School, with other HIO children. A big step up for her.



Dhan Kumari comes to the Be Part of Her Dream mothers' class every morning from 6 to 8am. She then goes home to wash, cook and clean for her family before leaving for work on construction sites as a day laborer.



Deepa's father worked mainly as a manual laborer. He was a mason on construction sites, did odd jobs in several factories and drove a bicycle rickshaw. After he suffered a stroke, he could not work at all, and just to get around he needs help from the family. Since he suffered from near full paralysis, he became totally bedridden.

For many years, Dhan Kumari worked as a domestic helper in the early morning, but now she comes to the mothers' literacy class instead. With the stipend of \$25/month, given by the mothers' project, Dhan Kumari was able to give up the domestic job and come to school. To be a student was always her dream. She comes to class regularly and has gained so much confidence dealing with people. After class, she goes to work as a construction day laborer when there is work. For a full day of work, she earns about \$3.50. Deepa's two older sisters go to school in the morning until 11 o'clock, and then work at a catering business. Whatever they bring in is helpful for the family, but not enough to keep the family sustained. What Dhan Kumari makes along with her daughters is their only means of support.



Deepa greatly admires and respects her mother Dhan Kumari's willingness to be a 1st-grade student at age 50 !

The room in which this family lives is around 10 by 15 feet. With only one window, the room is dark even during the day. Mice and rats often visit the room, even in the daytime. The room is damp and airless and leaks during the monsoon. Often, we have supported the family with food when they were most in need. In past years, we helped them purchase a propane stove to replace the dirty kerosene cooker. We also bought them warm bedding so that they could sleep warmly in the winter.

Even though the life of Deepa's family is full of hardship, they are proud that Deepa and her older sisters are in school. The girls hope to one day use their education to support their mother. They very much appreciate HIO's support and think that their lives are now far better. With the education of their daughters, Deepa's mother and father see their life as gradually changing for the better in so many ways.

Ram Gopal Adhikari
is the HIO Senior Director

Deepa and Her Mother

by Ricky Bernstein

Morning comes early in Kathmandu. By 5:00, the narrow streets are alive with groups of women walking to work or out buying vegetables from the many sellers on the roadside. It's foggy and cool, and the women drape shawls over their heads and faces to ward off the early morning chill. With only their eyes peeking out. Groups of teens walk by, chatting on their way to high school or college, where most classes start at 6:00am. Families on motorbikes pass, and dogs lie in packs by the side of the road, asleep from an active night of barking. On the main roads, a steady stream of cars, trucks and buses of all sizes pass. By mid-morning, the roads will be choked with traffic.

It's still dark at 4:00 when Dhan Kumari leaves the bed she shares with her two elder daughters, both college students. She's careful not to step on Deepa, who sleeps in the small space on the floor between the two beds. When Deepa wakes, she rolls her pallet neatly, placing the bedding into a corner of the tiny room. The slim area between the beds is the only place in the 10 x 15



Deepa and her family of five live in a tiny shack that's no more than 10x15 feet in size.

foot living space where someone can walk. During the day, the two beds, the only furniture in the room, are piled high with clothing. No stove, no refrigerator, no coffee maker, no bathroom and no plumbing. There is one window, but it's most often covered over. If not for a lit candle, the room is always dark.

Dhan Kumari quietly steps outside to light a small fire in a clay stove. She's making morning tea. She sometimes uses the gas stove HIO provided, but not often. The bottled gas is just too expensive and there's so little room inside the shack. There's a small outhouse and a well just outside the doorway with unclean water that the family uses for washing clothes. Slightly cleaner, but still not potable, water must be hauled in plastic jugs from a nearby communal neighborhood tap. It must be boiled for cooking and drinking. Clothing of all sorts - book bags, school uniforms, Deepa's Girl Scout uniform and some cooking pots - hang from nails on the walls.

At about 8:00am, when Deepa emerges from the room to leave for school, she's immaculate. How is this possible, I wonder? Her long dark hair is neatly pulled back in a ponytail with a white bow. Her dress is clean and pressed. Her worn, black shoes are polished, and her book bag is full. Dhan Kumari, who left for school over two hours earlier at 5:45, with her shalwar kameez, mothers' class uniform and book bag with pencils and primers, is often the first woman to come through the Bal Kendra Learning Center's gate at 6:00 for pre-class tea and biscuits. Dhan Kumari walks the 15 minutes to her mothers' class in the early morning fog, sometimes with other women in the class. A rare chance to chat with friends, all fellow students, before class begins at 6:30. It's perhaps the only time, in a day filled with the purpose of living another day, that Dhan Kumari and the other mothers may claim for themselves.

Later in the day, as Ram and I enter the dark space of Deepa's one-room shack, with my eyes still unadjusted to the dim surroundings, it looks as though Deepa and her mother blend in with the piles of soft clothing. If not for their warm greetings and sparkling smiles, it would be difficult to tell where the voices begin and the heaps of clothing end.

"What a great idea! How can I get involved?"

by Arden Rogers

I first met Ricky Bernstein in the early 1990's at Penland School of Crafts in North Carolina. He was my glass instructor, and his warmth and enthusiasm for his subject and his students was evident from the very first day. Later, I found out that Ricky was the Director of Hands In Outreach. I knew little about the educational hurdles facing girls in Nepal, but as Ricky explained the mission, I knew I wanted to contribute. And once I became a sponsor, I experienced firsthand the real benefits of the organization.

I had no idea that for such a small amount of money, I could make such a large difference in the life of a young girl. I've sponsored two girls, Mingmar Lama, and now Deepa, and I've been rewarded far more than the girls. I've written many letters and in return received beautiful cards, letters and drawings that I've proudly hung in my office. The letters received from the girls, and the emails from HIO, included vivid descriptions and touching photos of the girls' lives at school, at home and with their friends. And now that Mingmar, the first girl I sponsored, is an adult, we even video-chat on a regular basis.

Over the years, I've watched the girls' writing improve, their confidence grow and their horizons expand. I've felt pride and satisfaction that I had a hand in their development. The girls have always been appreciative of the financial help, but more so the fact that a person living so far away in the US cared about them and wanted them to succeed in their education. Being a sponsor with HIO is like entering into an extended, supportive family.

Whenever I tell anyone about HIO, they invariably say, "What a great idea! How can I get involved?" And I completely agree. HIO is a great idea with a wonderful organization behind it.



NY City financial planner Arden Rogers has sponsored HIO children since 1995 and currently supports Deepa. Arden's partner Wendy Pollack is also involved, sponsoring fifth-grader Apsara Thapa. Arden and Deepa frequently correspond, as Deepa shows us a letter from Arden that was hand-delivered last spring.

A Tapestry of Hope and Possibility

by Laura Hunt and Laura Gladding

We felt the first spark of inspiration to become involved with Hands In Outreach at an informational meeting with the Moses Brown School faculty in May, 2016. Ricky Bernstein, Maida McKenna and Carolyn Schmitz, all Hands In Outreach board members, captured our imaginations with impassioned stories about Nepali girls whose lives are forever changed because they gained access to quality education. They shared their hopes for creating powerful learning exchanges between their partner schools and Moses Brown. Positive energy flowed. Clearly, HIO was onto something special, and we noticed our hearts being led in the same direction.

We were excited to welcome the HIO Nepali directors Palmo Tamang and Ram Adhikari along with Madhab Sitaula, the LMV School principal, to Moses Brown in the fall of 2016 when they traveled to the U.S. from Kathmandu. Our guests were eager to learn from our teachers and administrators. Everything we had previously heard about their gentle, generous, and curious nature held true. With wide-open eyes, they quietly observed in classrooms. They entered into conversations with us easily, asking poignant questions that prompted us to deeply reflect upon our own teaching practices. How do we foster learning where critical thinking and problem solving is the norm? What steps had we taken to create a Lower School library that encourages a lifelong love of reading?

At the time, we didn't fully recognize just how quickly their gears were turning. We now realize that the beginning of our partnership with these three vibrant forces was like a silken thread. They were gently weaving us into their intricate tapestry of hope and possibility for underprivileged girls and their teachers. In their eyes, every moment is precious, and opportunities are meant to be seized when it comes to serving their people.

We were thrilled to learn in the spring that our paths would merge with HIO again in June. Thanks to Yangchen Lama and the Leonard Miller family, funding had been secured to send four Moses Brown teachers to Kathmandu. We were to be joined by Upper School science teachers, Katharine Rosenfeld and Kate Kenny Turner. In addition to working in schools, they were exploring the possibility of developing a student service trip to Nepal. What good fortune that this possibility is now quickly turning into a reality.

Our two-week visit was both humbling and rewarding. While tending to the realities of their everyday lives, Palmo, Ram, Madhab and their families graciously served as our warm and attentive hosts. What a blessing. They provided comfortable beds, delicious meals and reliable transportation throughout our stay. They shared stories and laughs, local insights and a few tears. They carefully mapped out our busy agenda, which included observing classes, conducting teacher workshops and revamping a library at LMV. Considering how selflessly our hosts live daily, we felt compelled to rise to their high expectations. It was early monsoon season, and the rain that fell daily caused once dry roads to flood. When Palmo hopped out of our taxi one morning to tiptoe her way across the seemingly impassable muddy road to the Strong Roots preschool, Laura and I skeptically looked at one another, hiked up our skirts and followed Palmo's path.



Laura Hunt and Laura Gladding teach a workshop for our colleague teachers at the HIO-funded Strong Roots preschool in the Balku slum of Kathmandu.

Our first few days were a whirlwind of activity at LMV. Madhab's strong leadership was evident, and the impact of our work took on new meaning. One morning, a fourth-grade teacher learned with us about building classroom community. She immediately used one lesson to guide her students toward creating a display in their classroom that reminded them of their aspirations for a productive school year. Spontaneous groups gathered at the library doorway, chatting excitedly in hushed voices. A magical transformation was unfolding, and they were ready to take part. We nearly burst at the seams when we learned that a little brainstorming had led to an "aha!" moment for the librarian. In our absence, she had developed a sustainable new system for checking out books. Madhab snapped photos of the new library space with delight.

We spent ten days within five different HIO partner schools. At every turn, we discovered more people who were heavily invested in their work. Administrators beamed proudly as they oriented us to their schools. Teachers welcomed us into their classrooms with open arms. They arrived to school early and stayed late in the afternoon to participate in our training workshops. New teaching methods were embraced, and our feedback was regularly sought.

Throughout our second week, we were struck by Ram's consistent, guiding presence and Palmo's remarkable tenacity and resolve. One morning at the Bal Kendra preschool, a group of young students magnetically flocked to Ram's side to share stories. At Loyalty, Palmo tenderly grasped a little girl's hands as she asked about her new living arrangements. She was hopeful that providing this fresh start may one day soften the girl's harsh childhood memories. Central to every exchange we observed was the level of care and concern one often reserves for closely knit relatives. Toward the end of our stay, we delivered a half-day workshop at Bal Kendra. Palmo, Ram and their staff had meticulously organized all of the details so that a large group of teachers could be exposed to new strategies for teaching reading comprehension and improving classroom management. So strong is their dedication to advancing Nepal's education, they extended HIO's reach by inviting teachers from nearby government schools to join partnerschools for this learning. A collective sense of



Librarian Laura Gladding modeling a reading lesson for third-graders at our partner, Bijeswori school.

collegiality permeated the building. Participants mingled with one another, engaged with new ideas, and took learning risks together.

As we read their heartfelt reflections at the end of the day, we envisioned the broad smiles we'd become accustomed to seeing. We were touched by the number of comments that suggested we spend more time learning together. We imagined how excited our students in Providence would soon be to learn about these resourceful people and their beautiful country, to begin building pen-pal relationships with new Nepali friends. What a gift the time we spent in Nepal was to us. What a tapestry of hope and possibility.

Laura Hunt & Laura Gladding are veteran teachers at the Moses Brown School in Providence, RI. Both are eager to return to Kathmandu to continue building libraries, literacy and love for reading in Nepal.

Improving the Quality of Education for All WordScientists.org

by Ricky Bernstein

Three years ago, a few of us sat in Lisa Sheble's living room, wondering what might be the best way to improve the quality of education for all the students in our partner schools in Kathmandu. Not just the girls that HIO sponsors, but several thousand additional students. A daunting task for a small organization, but one with an abundance of enthusiasm, educational expertise and heart.

To move forward with our initiative, we decided on several actions. The first would be hands-on classroom tutorials, with trained teachers from the US traveling to Kathmandu to spend short, concentrated periods of time working directly with our colleague teachers. Maida McKenna and Linda Liss-Bronstein, both expert teacher trainers, would lead our educational programming. Our efforts would be enhanced by the potential of the internet and an innovative pilot program we devised of real-time, *long distance learning* (LDL) using video conferencing.



Lead teacher Poonam Maharajan giving a reading lesson to her Strong Roots preschool students, assisted by the WordScientists.org website on her iPad.



Linda Liss-Bronstein, a leading expert in teacher-training for early-learning reading, conducts a real-time long distance learning session.

We had little idea how to incorporate the digital part of our plan, but, thankfully, we asked a lot of questions and found the right people to guide us.

To get started, we explained our goals to the Waterford education software company in Utah. They suggested we contact Luke Filose, director of the Corporate Responsibility Division at Intel Corporation. Intel was sending teams of highly skilled employee volunteers to developing countries for two weeks with an educational mission. A great way for Intel to give back to the world.

Amazingly, Intel granted HIO a slot for setting up a computer lab at the LMV school in Kathmandu, one of our most progressive partner schools. Once the enthusiastic team of Intel volunteers installed the new computer lab funded by HIO, the possibilities increased dramatically for active communication with the LMV teachers. Miraculously, our dream of a *long distance learning* initiative took shape using the new computers.



Kindergartner, Amima Shahi sponsored by Sarah and John Zarbock, practicing English reading in the new HIO/Intel Corp. computer lab at our partner, Loyalty School.

It's been three years since the meeting at Lisa's, and the results of our *long distance learning* tutorials have been remarkably beneficial for the teachers at our partner schools. Twice a month at about 9:45pm eastern time and 7:30am the next day in Kathmandu, we video-conference live with about 25 Nepali teachers halfway around the world. A small miracle of technology!

In conjunction with our LDL sessions is the creation of a new website called *WordScientists.org*, that any person with internet access can use for free. Developed by Maida, Linda and Jake Bronstein, the site offers free literacy resources for beginning readers and their teachers. Nepali teachers who have great potential as instructors often need more knowledge to teach young children how to listen, speak, read and write in English. The goal of this innovative site is to provide this knowledge to teachers with free, research-based English literacy training, along with companion classroom resources.

Throughout the website's inception, HIO has partnered with the *National Educational Support Trust*, founded by Maida. As English is the world's language of commerce, the better our students can read, write and converse in English, the more opportunities they'll have for advancement. The methods outlined on the website encourage

critical thinking and problem solving rather than the current Nepali system of *read and memorize*. Our colleague teachers are finding the *WordScientists.org* site extremely useful and practical.

The goal is for the website to be a free hub for teacher training in Nepal, as well as a place for teachers to access resources and reading materials for students. Parts of the website may be downloaded, thus available to those without internet access - a key feature in a country like Nepal, where internet access is acutely limited. These materials are helping to provide innovative instruction for teaching learners to read in English and actually understand what they're reading. *WordScientists.org* is now being used in 115 countries around the globe.

Our efforts to improve the quality of education for all of the students in our partner schools has blossomed well beyond our vision that afternoon at Lisa's. The *long distance learning* sessions are available to all of our partner schools throughout the Kathmandu valley. The *WordScientists.org* website is now a major learning tool for our colleague teachers in Kathmandu and, potentially, for the farthest regions of Nepal, wherever there are schools, teachers and students to learn.

Sharing, Learning and Laughing Together Lata and the Mothers' Class

by Palmo Dawa Tamang



Mothers' education class teacher Lata Rai, helping Dhan Kumari with her writing.

Lata Rai is a wonderfully dedicated teacher. She is very hard working and committed to helping her young students at the Bijeswori School and the mothers in her adult literacy class achieve as much as possible. Teaching two different age groups is very challenging, but Lata sees this as an opportunity to learn and grow as a teacher. *After 16 years as a teacher, Lata says, I still have much to learn.* Lata is quiet, steady and beloved by all who know her. We are so fortunate that Lata is a devoted part of our teaching team.

When we first thought about the womens' education class for the mothers of our HIO-sponsored girls at Bal Kendra, Lata was our first choice as lead teacher. She has a wonderful way of using early childhood teaching techniques with adults, while greatly respecting the mothers. Lata was already familiar with the background of many of the women, as they are the mothers of the students she sees in her regular classes. Slowly she came to know each mother far better, seeing them for class every morning. Each had a different story and learning capability. Every story was unique and heart touching.

Both Lata and I have the greatest respect and admiration for these women. They come here at six in the morning for tea, and their class is from 6:30 until 8:00am. Their day starts very early and ends very late. Except for a few hours of house chores, they spend their time working to earn enough rupees to feed their families. Most are single mothers, as their husbands have left them for many reasons. These brave women work on construction sites hauling bricks and mixing cement. They carry bags weighing 50 to 75 pounds on their shoulders. They work as housemaids, cooks and knitters, as weavers and washer-women. It's back-breaking work, but they have to feed their families.

Lata often talks about Nirmala Pariyar, the mother of Nisha and her two boys. She never had a chance to go to school as a girl. Nirmala is in her mid 30's and always had a dream of being able to read and write her own name. She is very happy and thankful to HIO for creating this opportunity, bringing her dream into life. Nirmala says the evening is the best time of her day. She sits with her children on the bed while they do their homework together. Nirmala, Lata and I giggle when we think of this. A grown woman with three young children all chatting and talking about math and English words. There is much laughter as her children try to be her teacher.



Nirmala Pariyar, doing homework with her fifth-grade daughter Nisha, sponsored by Sisters for Peace.

Nirmala is always looking forward to the evening while hauling sand and cement on the dusty, cold winter days. As her daughter Nisha, now 13, was growing up, Nirmala was always very worried about Nisha not going to school. She believes that a good education can change a life. She could never dream of Nisha mixing cement for 10 hours a day as she does.

The mothers' education group has turned into a caring support group for all of the women in the program. Twenty-five mothers meet across town at the LMV school, and 25 come to Bal Kendra. The women see each other only once in a while, but all feel a part of the same group. After all the mothers were given full health checkups, Shardha Magar, from the LMV group, was diagnosed with stomach cancer. Shardha is one of the most dedicated in the mothers' class. She has completed five cycles of chemo treatment and is now going through radiation. Nirmala led an effort from the Bal Kendra mothers to raise and donate \$62 for Shardha's treatments. The amount was not so much, but it was a sign of friendship. Shardha cried when she learned of this and was so grateful for these women whom she barely knew to give such hard-earned money for her treatment.



Shardha Magar, with her sixth-grade daughter Jarmit, sponsored by Chip and Alice Brewer.



HIO sponsored college students and mothers' class assistant teachers Sukrima Gurung and Kanchan Adhikari are part of the new generation of educated women who will greatly benefit Nepali society. Sukrima's sponsor is Jacy Davidson, Kanchan is sponsored by Laura Donefer and Dave Hicki.

Lata says that her journey for teaching the mothers' class would have been much more difficult if it were not for the help of her assistant teachers, Kanchan Adhikari and Sukrima Gurung. Both have been long-time HIO-sponsored girls since they were about five. Kanchan is graduating from college with a degree in accounting, and Sukrima is taking medical school entrance exams in the fall.

I also greatly value the guidance from Ram Dhair and Palmo, Lata says. She guides us and suggests what to do or how to teach. Teaching small children means to encourage the children to have the love of learning. I also learned this from Laura and Laura, who came from the Moses Brown School. To act like a mother offering love, care, food and direction. Teaching the mothers is almost the same, but more about sharing, learning and laughing together. With loads of love, Lata.

Palmo Dawa Tamang is the HIO Educational Coordinator and the Deputy Director

A Letter to Martha From Palmo

Hello Martha,

I am so happy and proud to tell you that Binita is now a grown young woman. Last time when I met her, I told her that you have sent some money for her to do shopping. Out of curiosity I asked her what she wants to do with the money. She said, my mother is having problems so I will hand the money to her. Then again I told her that the money is for her to go shopping. Then she told me that she will use half and from half she would buy diapers for her grandmother. I couldn't talk for a moment. My heart was heavy.

Her grandmother is half paralyzed. Binita is fully taking care of her now as she has not started going to her new school for 11th grade. Her mother has to clean her twice everyday as she cannot walk to the toilet. She thought a diaper would help. I was thinking, is this the same Binita who was about to loose the track when she was in 9th grade? She was carefree and didn't listen to her mother at all. Wow, what a change! This is a clear sign that she is going to work hard and look for a better life. She now wants to become a teacher.

We are kind of busy now with visitors from the US, so I couldn't take Binita for shopping. Last time she was busy taking care of her grandmother and her sick sister, so she couldn't go. But I will take her next week for sure.

With regards, Palmo



Proud that Binita is now a grown young woman



Pictured are Binita Magar's mother, grandmother, Binita and younger sister Dina, who all live together in two small rooms near the LMV School.

Binita is sponsored by the Seacoast Rotary Club in Portsmouth, NH and fourth-grader Dina is supported by Jim and Sharon Morgan.



Changing Lives

by Joyce Catsimpiris

In the summer of 2016, I worked closely with Hands in Outreach (HIO) as a graduate intern while studying International Educational Development at Columbia University's Teachers College. While in Nepal, I conducted teacher trainings and did classroom observations at HIO's partner schools in Kathmandu. I observed lower school classes, as well as the adult literacy courses HIO offers for the mothers of their sponsored students. I was consistently impressed with how involved HIO is with ensuring the academic success and overall well-being of their sponsored girls. Not only does HIO provide these girls the opportunity to attend some of the highest-quality schools in the city, their staff is actively involved in the lives of the students. Their social workers know each family well, and work to meet the many challenges the families face in order to keep the students successful at school.

The *Be Part of Her Dream* adult literacy classes are one example of this extra effort, as they bring mothers into the children's school environment and motivate them to understand the importance of an education. Of course, they also teach these mothers new literacy and numeracy skills, expanding their job opportunities and income earning potential significantly. In addition, HIO communicates with the leadership team at each partner school, making recommendations for improvement.



The Bal Kendra caretaker Sital Tamang and Hemu Sanuwar having a math lesson in the mothers' education class at Bal Kendra.



Bishnu Maya Basnet being helped by her 11th-grade daughter, Shreejana. In the mothers' class, daughters serve as project partners to assist their mothers in learning. Before the project, Bishnu had never held a pencil in her life!

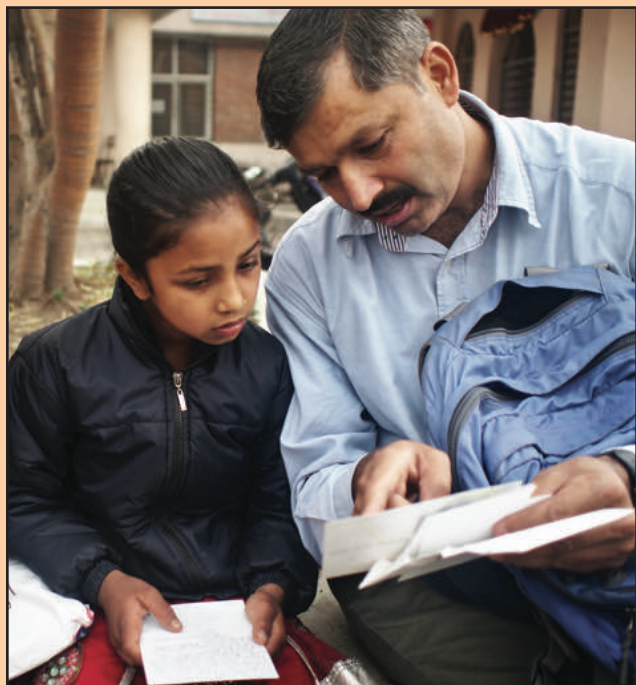
Promoting childhood literacy has always been a major goal of HIO. In recent years, a greater emphasis on helping to educate the illiterate mothers of HIO girls truly encourages a family-oriented approach to learning. I spent a few years teaching in Mongolia, another developing nation, and found that Nepal's social context presents unique challenges. Families in poverty have to make difficult decisions, and women's education is simply not a priority. For this reason, I was so inspired to be a small part of the ongoing HIO/Dining for Women project, *Be Part of Her Dream*. Seeing the project implemented first hand gives me hope that adult literacy efforts can truly be effective for improving the lives of women and their families. While educational development movements are almost always focused on children, giving these opportunities to their mothers has the potential to change entire families' futures.

Joan Catsimpiris works on a State Department-funded project providing free online courses for TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages).

In 2016, Joyce provided valuable teacher-training workshops at our HIO partner schools.

The Joys of Sponsorship

One of the many joys of sponsoring the education of a girl in Nepal, is the chance to create a unique bond between a child and her family halfway around the world. Your care can truly inspire a young girl to believe in her ability to become a teacher, a lawyer, a doctor or a social worker. To gain the confidence to one day go to college and lift herself and her family out of profound poverty.



A letter from Dave & Margaret Rose for 7th-grader Shrijana Khadka.

Our girls and their families love getting your letters. It's never too late to begin a relationship with your sponsored child. If you've never communicated directly, why not start now? English is the curriculum language in our partner schools. If your sponsored child is young, Ram and Palmo always help the children read your letters.

At first, simply painting a picture of yourself in words will go such a long way toward helping your child in Nepal understand who's supporting her education. And there's no substitute for photos of you, your children, your pets, or whatever's meaningful to you that you'd like to share.

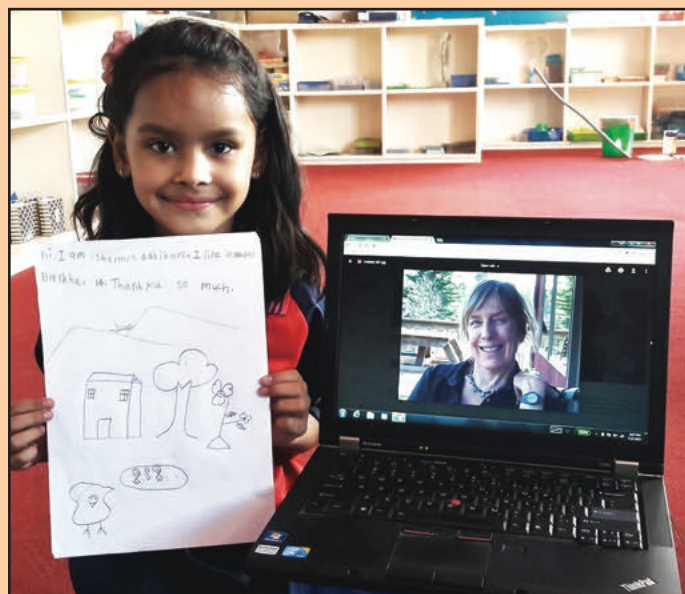
The rewards
can be
heartwarming

There are no street addresses in Kathmandu, and no postal delivery service. So we rely on friends going to Nepal to hand-carry letters, and we also use e-mail.

You can either send a handwritten note with photos to my address below, and we'll see that it gets to Nepal with the next person we know is going there. Or you can send an e-mail to our Nepali Directors Ram or Palmo, and they'll deliver the e-mail to your sponsored child on their iPad. We encourage you to communicate with your sponsored girl as often as you wish. Over the past 30 years, we've seen many efforts to correspond blossom into wonderful friendships. It sometimes takes persistence to establish a bond, but the rewards can be heartwarming.

Ram Adhikari - HIO Senior Director
ramhio73@gmail.com

Palmo Tamang - HIO Deputy Director
palmo_tp@yahoo.com



7-year-old Sharmila Pariyar holds up a letter for her sponsor, Marion Jansen. Marion had sent an e-mail letter introducing herself.

If you'd like to learn more about sponsoring a young girl's education or sponsoring the education of many children by supporting a program, like our Strong Roots preschool or the Bal Kendra Learning Center, kindly let us know.