



WINTER 2012

INTRODUCTION

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Happy Holidays!

Board Vice President Marilyn Mitchell makes the December newsletter more exciting for our readers by reporting extensively on her recent trip to Nepal—including many fabulous stories and photos. On her trip, Marilyn met with our Country Director, Nepalese advisors, and scholarship recipients. We know you will enjoy seeing all the places she visited and all the new faces she met during her stay in Kathmandu and Nepalgunj. Her trip coincided with the early stages of establishing a Nepal non-profit status for our organization under the name Mahilaa Sikshya Nidi (Women's Scholarship Fund) and she tells us about that too.



We are reminding our supporters to **save the date** for **Mahilaa Night** and to start saving pennies for the **2013 Phoenix Penny Drive**. Phoenix is excited to be raising money for BMKF again, and she has found a very enthusiastic "penny partner" in a little boy named Taejas! Read about the two of them in this issue—their story is sure to warm your heart for the holidays no matter what the temperature is outside.

During this special time of giving and sharing, please consider making a donation to the Bo M. Karlsson Foundation. We are very proud that each year, thanks to the generosity of people like you, we are able to support more and more young women in Nepal. In 2008 and 2009, we were raising enough money to provide scholarships to five girls at a time. For the past two years we have been able to support 11 young women at once. This year, we will support 13. It's a trend we want to continue and we will succeed with your help. Please renew your giving today and be part of this amazing journey.

With deep appreciation for your continued support and wishing you a happy and peaceful holiday season,

Sonnja J. Karlsson
 Founder/Executive Director ■

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EVENTS & FUNDRAISERS

PHOENIX PENNY DRIVE 2013

MORE PENNIES AND A NEW PARTNER!

Put aside your pennies... Phoenix will soon begin collecting them for us again! The 2013 Penny Drive will be launched in January and run through April 2013. This time, 7-year-old Phoenix will be joined in her efforts by 4-year-old Taejas!

Taejas is the son of Board member Jaya Ramesh and her husband Ravi Subramanian. When his mom told him about Phoenix and how she was able to raise lots of money for us by collecting one penny at a time, Taejas became enthusiastic to help. This is how a new alliance was formed between two very special Seattle children with one common mission: to empower underprivileged women in Nepal through higher education. "He is so excited about it and can't wait to get started!" Jaya told us recently.

During the 2012 Penny Drive and with the help of many supporters along the way, Phoenix raised \$1,203. With no expenses and hardly any work involved (besides counting and wrapping a thousand pennies and hauling them to the bank) every cent collected went straight to the scholarships. We are hoping to double that amount in 2013 and we need your help to reach our goal! Please give generously to Phoenix and Taejas. These two small children are making a big difference in the lives of Nepalese women. They are also proving, once again, how even a penny can add up. Do not keep your pennies forgotten in a drawer—Phoenix and Taejas know exactly what to do with them and they want them all! ■





EVENTS & FUNDRAISERS

MAHILAA NIGHT 2013

SAVE THE DATE: SUNDAY, MAY 19 2013

After skipping a year, Mahilaa Night with Auctioneer Laura Michalek is returning better and bigger than ever in the Spring of 2013 at the Mount Baker Clubhouse. We are currently accepting gifts for the Silent and Live Auctions. Please let us know if you would like to contribute an item to the auction, or if you are able to volunteer your time and skills to the event. We would like to hear from you! ■



NEEDED!

PROFESSIONAL OR AMATEUR BAKERS

We are looking for people willing to donate delicious home baked goods for Mahilaa's Dessert Dash.



Are you a baker or know of one? Please contact us!

info@bomkarlsson.org

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REPORTS FROM NEPAL

BOARD VICE PRESIDENT MARILYN MITCHELL'S TRIP TO NEPAL

By Marilyn Mitchell

Each year in Nepal, the Hindu holiday of Diwali, also known as Tihar, is celebrated over five days. Tihar is also known as the celebration of lights, and for one night, the entire city of Kathmandu lights up in festivity with thousands of strings of lights and candles allowing the city to glow. Lorrie and I landed in Kathmandu just in time to savor this festive occasion.

I should right away extend a huge thank you to Lorrie McKay, BMKF donor and volunteer photographer for this trip to Nepal. For her effort in capturing so many incredible moments and candid shots of all the wonderful people we met, along with all the support provided in completing the goals of the trip, I am extremely grateful.



After a couple of days of acclimation and sleep, I met with BMKF scholarship recipients, Bindu Shrestha and Sharada K.C, two women who are living successful journeys into their careers. Bindu, who was our very first recipient, is now a nurse in Kathmandu and continues to add to her education with an additional Nursing degree. Sharada has completed the first part of her medical schooling and will be continuing her studies while choosing a specialty as a physician. Both ladies have proved to be shining examples of the vision we hold for girls in Nepal, given the opportunity of higher education.

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REPORTS FROM NEPAL

BOARD VICE PRESIDENT MARILYN MITCHELL'S TRIP TO NEPAL

By Marilyn Mitchell, continued...

I also had the opportunity to spend some time with our new director in Nepal, Daya Rimal. You read about her in the previous BMKF newsletter. After my first in-person meeting with Daya, I was jubilant in my enthusiasm for the direction we are taking with her in a leadership position within the borders of Nepal. Daya's advocacy, intellect and passion for supporting our mission are already proving to be indelible strengths. Currently, Daya is working hard to set up a local office for us in Kathmandu, including a not-for-profit status within Nepal, and has already sought out potential board members.

One subject we have begun discussing at length is expanding our visibility within Nepal. Our goal is to have advisors and volunteers covering all regions so we can find those girls in the remote villages who wouldn't otherwise hear about us. We know there are many young women who have a dedication to their education, though they lack resources, who would be exceptional candidates to receive a scholarship from the Bo M. Karlsson Foundation. We want to find those girls and introduce them to new opportunities. This will continue to be a focus as we establish ourselves as a professional organization in Nepal. As a growing foundation always looking to improve upon itself, we have certainly found a dedicated, energetic leader to create positive impacts. I look forward to continuing to work with Daya.

Another inspiring person I had the opportunity to meet was Dorji Sherpa. In 2010, Dorji's daughter, Sarah, passed away as the aircraft she was a flight attendant on crashed into the remote area of Shikharpur, Nepal. Dorji, along with the fathers of two other young ladies from that flight, started a memorial foundation benefitting the village where the crash occurred. I encourage everyone to read about all of the wonderful work they are doing at the [SKY Memorial Foundation](#).

Dorji and I met at his request, as he is hoping to connect with BMKF to introduce the local girls from the Shikharpur area to opportunities of furthering their education, something that is very rare in that area. As it is, the nearest high school is a two hour walk away. There are some dedicated young women who make that trek every day, and they could thrive with options for attending college and pursuing their professional dreams. As we continue our conversation, I look forward to introducing this and other opportunities of connecting locally in Nepal.

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REPORTS FROM NEPAL

BOARD VICE PRESIDENT MARILYN MITCHELL'S TRIP TO NEPAL

By Marilyn Mitchell, continued...

One of the most exciting days on this visit to Kathmandu was getting to spend an afternoon with current and former scholarship recipients at a lovely luncheon at Dwarika's Hotel. A big "Thank You" to Nirdosh Shahi of Dwarika's Hotels, for helping us set this up! Dwarika's itself is a sanctuary within the city. It provided a wonderful atmosphere for getting to know one another. A few of the current scholarship recipients traveled to Kathmandu for the event, including Srijana Thapa, who rode a bus for 7 hours to join in the event. Attendees also included Meera Tamang, who is pursuing a career in Management, Sarita Sharma, one of the very few female Engineering students in Nepal, and Sabita Ghising, studying Business Administration.

Living so far away in Seattle, it can be difficult to feel the full extent of the impact we are making with each of these young ladies, but being privileged enough to hear Srijana talk to me about how happy she is, how appreciative she is and how motivated she is, makes every ounce of work worthwhile.

Throughout the afternoon, Daya and I heard feedback about the process from all of the recipients. I also introduced a new "Buddy System" that will connect each Seattle board member with one or two scholarship recipients to communicate with throughout their studies and beyond. We are looking for ways to have more interaction with the women we are supporting and believe this will be an exceptional opportunity for that. Also discussed was a new BMKF Alumni Group where current and past recipients can get to know and interact with each other, also incorporating a mentoring system within this group. This is in the process of being made and will most likely find its way to being its own Facebook page. Overall, it was a sunny afternoon filled with smiles and momos, and I'm so thrilled to have had the occasion for face-to-face interaction.

This journey to Nepal, my fourth time being in the country that I have come to love so much, was inspiring. I feel so fortunate to have been introduced into the lives of these bright and motivated young women of the Himalayan Kingdom. I hope one day that anyone who is reading this newsletter gets the privilege of visiting such a lovely country with such phenomenal people. ■



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REPORTS FROM NEPAL

CATCHING UP WITH SHANTA

By Marilyn Mitchell

Shanta Sapkota was a BMKF scholarship recipient from 2008-2010, pursuing a degree in education. Shanta is from the village of Banepa, about a two hour drive from Kathmandu, and comes from a family who did not have an opportunity for education themselves. Shanta's passion to make education more accessible to people in and around her village remains, and she plans to help start a college in the area which will offer a Master's degree in Education.

Shanta got married six months after her Bachelor's degree was completed, and while it is not uncommon for Nepali women to abort their studies after marriage, Shanta has remained steadfast in pursuing her professional dreams. Currently, she is in her second year of a Master's Degree, continuing to study in Kathmandu. In speaking with her about her intentions immediately after graduation, she stated that she would like to get a job in a high school teaching History or Sociology. Further down the road, along with her strong desire to bring more education to Banepa, she also would like to work toward becoming a school Supervisor. It was a wonderful opportunity to meet with Shanta and be able to see firsthand the passion she holds. I have no doubt that she will one day be a person who brings a successful impact upon the educational system in Banepa, Nepal. ■





REPORTS FROM NEPAL

CATCHING UP WITH NEEMA

By Marilyn Mitchell

Neema Sherpa is in her second year of receiving a scholarship from the Bo M. Karlsson Foundation. Neema is also one of the most driven people I met while in Nepal. Presently, she is continuing to apply herself to her Development Studies degree. Neema talked about the fact that she was a very successful science student while in high school, but after graduation, she realized her passion was to be studying something more relevant to her country, a subject that included economic, social and environmental aspects of Nepal. I asked her to talk about a project I had heard she worked on at school within her Development Studies program—one that focused on climate change effects in Nepal. Here's what she had to say:

“One of my classes at the college started a project with visiting Japanese students, where we would work together in different parts of Nepal, especially around the Kathmandu Valley and also including the Chitwan area. Our major focus was on climate change and the affect it has on farmers. We studied soil and water and learned about the changing of the monsoon season’s affects upon irrigation. Tourism studies also factored into the project, looking at both the positive and negative impact it has on Nepal. Besides economic factors, we were able to notice the environmental consequences as well. The entire project proved to be successful in that we learned much about the direct outcomes of climate change in Nepal. I would not have been able to be a part of this if it were not for Bo M. Karlsson Foundation funding my education. I am very grateful to them and look to be a part of the organization in some capacity after I am done with my studies.” ■





REPORTS FROM NEPAL

MARILYN'S VISIT WITH SUNITA DANGI

By Marilyn Mitchell

Sunita Dangi was born in the western district of Surkhet, a day's bus ride away from Kathmandu. She was born to parents who were farmers of rice and barley—it is common for Nepali farmers to crop rice for part of the year and then barley for the other half of the year—though now neither are able to work due to ongoing health problems.

At nine months of age, Sunita fell into a cooking fire at her family's home, severely burning both of her legs. The nearest city, Nepalgunj, had a hospital big enough to help with such burns, and she ended up living there for ten months. After being released, treatments for her legs continued at home. When Sunita started school, for the first two years one of her family members would carry her on their back to and from school, so that she could get an education.

At age 13, Sunita went to Kathmandu for surgery on both of her legs. She ended up staying there at a center where they helped disabled persons. Though she was given the opportunity of education and a bed to sleep on at night, times were tough. The director of the facility proved to be abusive and she was far away from the support of her family. When Sunita graduated from high school, she moved back out West to be closer to her parents and siblings and also continue her education—something she was dedicated to maintaining. She was able to study for two years with “+2 education” which is similar to a Community College. Fortunately for Sunita, she connected with an organization that helps people with disabilities, and they helped her to get into even higher education where she began University, studying Sociology and Rural Development with Journalism concepts.

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REPORTS FROM NEPAL

MARILYN'S VISIT WITH SUNITA DANGI

By Marilyn Mitchell, continued...

Sunita received her first BMKF scholarship this year to continue her studies, as she is currently in the third year of her degree, hoping to graduate next summer. She will then be looking for work both in the private and government sector. Added to her résumé will be the volunteer work that she has been doing for the past three years, helping other disabled people, doing home visits and awareness programs.

Lorrie and I made the trek (not a “trek” in Nepali terms, but the simplified version of a domestic flight then micro-bus ride) to Kohalpur to visit with Sunita. Although it took us an hour of wandering around in the heat and dusty roads of the town trying to find each other, we were all smiles when we walked away.

I'll leave you with a quote from Sunita's original essay which was included in her application to BMKF:

“I don't want to be dependent on my family or others. I want to be independent and stand on my own two feet. There are so many women with disabilities in my village and most of them are illiterate. The families of those few that pass the SLC exam (equivalent to graduating high school) don't believe there is any point for them to go on with their education—they are disabled so they can't do anything. I want to be a role model for these women, an inspiration for them.” ■



MEETING ADVISER CHIMEY SHERPA

By Marilyn Mitchell

I met with Chimey Sherpa, who has been an adviser with BMKF for three years. Chimey has found creative ways of finding appropriate applicants for our scholarships, including Neema Sherpa. Chimey will be focusing on the Himalayan region for continuing to locate deserving young ladies who hope to continue their schooling. We look forward to meeting new applicants that he is able to help connect with BMKF. ■





REPORTS FROM NEPAL

BRINGING HOME A BIT OF NEPAL FOR MAHILAA NIGHT

MAHILAA NIGHT WILL BE HERE IN NO TIME

Each year at Mahilaa Night, we enjoy being able to bring Nepal to you by presenting authentic Nepali crafts, jewelry, art and more to be auctioned off. This time will be no different. I had thrilling rides all over Kathmandu on the back of my Nepali friend's motorcycle, meeting the different artists and being able to purchase their work directly from them. You may recognize the exquisite silver jewelry from Rajman Bajrachara (I already purchased a ring for myself). It was a pleasure for Lorrie and I to meet with him and listen to him describe the process of how he creates the designs in his jewelry and what the meanings of those designs are.

We also met with Hem Sakyra Ratna, who is a 6th generation metal sculptor living in a very old, very steep, six story home. Beginning on the ground floor, we were introduced to one part of the production of his sculptures. After each staircase up, we saw all the different tools that lead to the next step in his creations. When we arrived at the top, on the roof of his building, the view was breathtaking. We sat there quietly with a cup of fresh brewed chiya and a magnificent view of the Himalayas. Meeting with Hem and learning all about his process for business, I felt privileged to be there.

Buddhist Thangkas can be found easily amongst the many tourist shops in Kathmandu, but I was on the hunt for more originality and personal interaction with the artist. Fortunately, I was in luck. My Nepali family—who helped me out in this adventure more than I could have possibly imagined—introduced me to Pasang Sherpa, a local Thangka artist, who was just finishing up one very beautiful thangka. I purchased it on the spot after seeing the craftsmanship involved and the flawless design. Make sure to look for this magnificent piece of artwork.

One more fun stop on the exploration for Nepali crafts, was to Neema's aunt's Felt business in her nearby cottage. Lorrie and I were given step-by-step lessons on how the entire process works of making a handful of felt into a nice little wallet. Or a cute pair of slippers. Or an over-the-shoulder bag.

Being able to meet with each of the artists and getting introduced to their trade was a thrill. I had no idea I'd get to learn so much! And now I can't wait for the auction, so I can put my bids in. ■



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SUPPORTING OUR MISSION

WAYS TO GIVE SUPPORT

INDIVIDUAL GIVING

- One-time donation by check or money order
- One-time donation by credit card via PayPal on the [BMKF website](#)
- Set up automatic monthly donations

MATCHING GIFTS

Check with your employer to see if they have a matching gift program.

OTHER WAYS OF GIVING

- Participate in fundraising events (make in-kind donations, volunteer, or purchase items)
- Donations in Memoriam
- Donate stocks and securities
- Use [GoodSearch.com](#) and [Goodshop.com](#) and select us as your charity of choice
- Purchase a BMKF gift card (for any occasion)
- Host a party (with our support)

CORPORATE GIVING

Corporations or small businesses can sponsor one of our events, sponsor a recipient, or share revenues with BMKF.

For more information please contact us at info@bomkarlsson.org. ■

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\$250+	Room and Board Fees
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\$750+	Tuition/Expenses for Accounting or Media Studies
\$1000+	Tuition/Expenses for Nursing, Physics, Business, Math, or Law
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\$2500-3500	Tuition/Expenses for MGDP - Country/Rural Physician Program

