

Ghar Sita Mutu - House With a Heart

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

Early 2012

Celebrating our 10th Anniversary!

It doesn't seem possible but this year marks Ghar Sita Mutu's Tenth Anniversary. If someone had told me 12 years ago that I would be responsible for 33 children in a country far away, I would have had a hearty laugh. Ghar Sita Mutu is a true family—one that includes the women and children we help, our staff, and *you*—we wouldn't be able to touch all these lives in such a positive way if it weren't for the generosity of our friends and supporters. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

FAMILY MATTERS

It's a Girl!

On September 17 one of our staff members rushed into the house saying, "Mummy Mummy, come quickly. You must help!" She took me to a small room where there was a two-day-old baby and her mother on the floor,



The newborn baby was found sleeping on the ground wrapped in a shawl.

while another woman and her two children sat on a bed. The baby was naked and wrapped only in a shawl. She had an eye infection and was not eating. The mother

was trying to feed the baby cold milk out of a cup with a spoon.

I found out that the mother had given birth to the baby in an outdoor toilet and was overheard telling the other woman



The most recent GSM family photo, taken during the festival of Dashain in September 2011.

that she was going to kill the baby. Fortunately the man who overheard the plan stepped in and threatened to go to the police. The new plan then was to throw the baby



Baby Ahbaya after spending three weeks in our House. She is flourishing under our care.

in the rubbish so she could go back to her village.

My attempts to reason with the mother and my offers to help her and the baby were dismissed. Knowing that Nepal is not allowing adoptions at present, and the terrible condition of the state orphanages, I contacted our lawyer and the next day, the mother signed the baby over to my care. The decision to take the baby in was an easy one even though I am struggling to meet the financial needs of the children already under my care. What else could I do??

We named the new baby Ahbaya Kalyani which means fearless/protected. She is a lovely little girl, and the other children are very excited about their new baby sister. I want to thank those of you who have provided financial help during this crucial time and to those who have sent baby clothes and other items. **Kyla and Matt**

Rodgers from the US sent a box of baby necessities via Fedex, **Georgina Palmer** (UK) sent a box of clothes via couriers **Rose Wood** and **Alli Campbell**, and **Katerina Bhoopal** in Malaysia introduced us to **Tjasa Boh** in Hong Kong who is sending GSM supplies via her pilot friends. **Jenni Lund** from the US sent much needed gripe water for Abhaya delivered by **Joseph Treftz**. I don't know what I would have done without all of the help. Now, as she nears her fourth month, she is bonnie and bright, enjoys her daily massage and sunbath, only wakes once in the night, and gurgles and wiggles when we see each other on the computer via SKYPE.

It's Another Girl!

Another baby in need; this one was abandoned at 11 days old. The mother put the baby in the basket on the street and ran away after the father of the baby left her. Dev Kala, one of our staff members, took her in, and we will be providing the support necessary for Dev to rear the baby, including giving Dev extra work. We expect that the new baby will be spending much of her time at our house.

Unfortunately, discarding babies here in Nepal is a fairly common practice. Many people in the West asked if they could adopt these young girls, but Ghar Sita Mutu is not an organization that is



The two new baby girls: Anjana & Abhaya.

authorized to put children up for adoption. Even if we were, the Nepali government doesn't let parents choose which baby they want—they are assigned at random.

We do, however, look for sponsors for our children to pay for their education. In return, sponsors receive photographs, updates, and drawings and letters from their children. And they, of course, are most welcome to visit us in Kathmandu.

Difficult Visits

We had an unannounced visit from Sujita and Sushmita's birth mother, Tara. She is an alcoholic and ran away ten years ago; this is only the second time she has come to see her children. It was a very emotional and difficult day for the girls. They were unable to look at her, and they were clearly uncomfortable. I gave her a bus ticket back to her village and urged her to return with a citizenship card.

Until she does so, my girls will be unable to get citizenship cards themselves.

Another two of our kids went to visit their birth mother during the month long Dashain holiday. When I went by to check up on them, the mother had them working all day every day at cleaning and rolling wool—a process that is labor-intensive and unhealthy because of the wool dust that is breathed in. I made it clear to the mother that the kids will not be allowed to visit again if they are forced to work. This incident served to remind me of the kind of life these children would be living if they weren't living in our House.



Bother and sister Buddha and Kamala worked all day for their mother during their visit.

EARTHQUAKE

If having two new babies is not exciting enough, the first night we had Abhaya home, a 6.8 magnitude earthquake hit along with 130 aftershocks. It was very scary, but we all survived it and there was only a little damage to the House in the form of cracks. I was grateful we had practiced earthquake drills with the children, and for the most part, they responded quickly and appropriately. To be safe, we all camped out on the ground floor that night in case we had to get out of the house quickly. The quake reminded me all too well that stockpiling emergency supplies is a must.



After the earthquake, everyone slept on the first floor in case immediate evacuation was necessary.

NEW PROGRAMS

We opened our new Wellness Center in September with a free health camp and were pleased to have 68 women attend. A visitor and certified Healing Touch Practitioner, **Aparna Bhatta**, gave a very graphic presentation on reproductive health. This information is badly needed as many women in Nepal go untreated for a myriad of health problems because they are either too shy or too poor to go to a doctor. Almost one million women suffer from prolapsed uterus alone, a very uncomfortable and easily prevented and treated condition, yet one rarely discussed.

Twenty-nine women were given physical check-ups and not surprisingly, only two were in good health. We did our best, providing them with free medication.



A rapt audience listens to a presentation on reproductive health at our recent health camp.

Alok Shakya, an acupuncture detox specialist from Bhaktapur, treated many women while **Rajina Banepali**, our House manager, and **Rama Devi Bhuj** provided healing touch treatments. Rajina has had great success helping Laxmi Sapkota recover from many years of illness and depression.

Although the center is in its infancy, and we don't have much in the line of medical supplies or instruments, we are holding regular clinic hours every week. We are looking for donations of any supplies from blood pressure cups and stethoscopes to medication, and we hope to attract medically-trained visitors who will volunteer in the clinic. I am most grateful to **Keir Oxley** for donating a brand new massage table and for hand delivering it all the way from San Francisco. Many thanks to his 11-year-old son **Nicholas Oxley**, who donated \$400 of his own money to buy the table.

ANGELS NEEDED

We are looking for Angels with a Heart who can commit to raising money for Ghar Sita Mutu. Angels can be from anywhere and can host an event in their home (brochures & slide shows available), sell lovely crafts

from our Women's Training Program, invite friends to GSM celebrations, or come up with other creative ways to raise funds.

Our Angels program is based on the Angels Alliance of the Lower East Side Girls Club. Many thanks to the Girls Club for their support and for introducing us to **Amanda Ashcraft**, who serves as our volunteer coordinator for our Angels. Please contact her at GSMangels@gmail.com for more information.

SECURITY UPGRADE

In October, two men climbed over our compound security wall. Luckily, our guard scared them off. This is the second time in two years we have had intruders, so I am relieved that work has begun on an interior and exterior security system. The compound wall has been fortified and intruder lights and a security camera are being installed along with panic buttons and sirens throughout the House. We are so grateful to the **International Rotary** for matching donations from the **Corning, NY Rotary** and members of the **Bhaktapur, Nepal Rotary** for funding this badly needed project. Special thanks go to **Dick Puccio** and **Dr. Hari Sharma** of Corning, and to **Shyam Dhaubadel** and **Sundar Rana** of Bhaktapur for their efforts on our behalf.

VISITORS AND VOLUNTEERS

In the summer, **Monica Witt**, a math and science teacher from Friends Academy in New York volunteered here for three weeks with her husband **Abe Witt**. Monica worked non-stop with our children helping them with math and science. She also volunteered daily in their school where she observed and assisted the teachers. Abe worked with the children on carpentry projects and computer skills. We benefitted greatly from their visit. The children were especially captivated by Monica's storytelling.



Monica Witt (in red) with some of the GSM children.

In early November, **Dr. Hari Sharma**, from Corning, NY's Rotary, and his wife **Indira Sharma** visited the House. He was accompanied by Bhaktapur's Rotary (*cont.*)

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past President **Shyam Dhaubadel**. It was a wonderful opportunity for us to express our deep gratitude to both clubs for all they have done to get us funding for the new security system. They took a tour, saw a dance by our younger girls, and heard an earful from me about our future plans.

Here is how you can help

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

Please make all checks payable to our fiscal sponsor:

The Candy Jernigan Foundation for the Arts
and note "Ghar Sita Mutu" on your check.

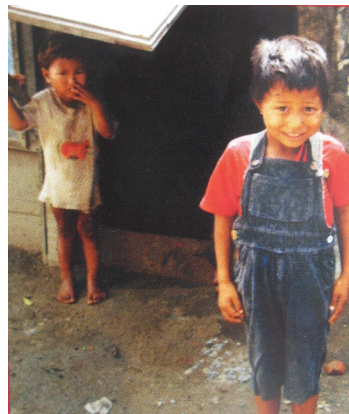
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New York, NY 10003*

You can also give online at www.GharSitaMutu.org

Thank you!

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

A LITTLE BACKGROUND



Babu & Krishna, ages 2 & 5

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

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

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