

Friends of Junbesi is an online community formed and supported by trekkers who have been guided by Ang Tshering Sherpa in Nepal. We operate with a group of five volunteers from Auckland, Sydney, Canberra, Perth and Cornwall in the UK., raising awareness and financial assistance for Kushudebu Public Health Mission in Junbesi. Please contact any of the three names on the last page if you no longer wish to receive this communication.

News and Updates from Ang

Ang is currently in Kathmandu where his mother is seriously ill. We are sure that all Friends will join us in letting Ang know our thoughts are with him and his family at this very difficult time.



Reports from the Medical Centre include the completion of all the facilities for the Maternity Services. Equipment now needed for this facility include a delivery bed, baby warmer and forceps. Construction of a toilet and shower for the staff quarters is progressing, and funds are needed to complete this project. The local Chief District Officer has arranged training for a maternity nurse which will improve the quality of services supplied, A health camp was recently held at Thuptengcholing Monastery, which while only one hours walk from Junbesi has a lot of elderly people who are unable to walk the distance. Many of the patients were found to be suffering from advanced arthritis. The Medical Centre is working at providing a health class at Junbesi Higher Secondary School for grades 8, 9 and 10.

Items urgently needed for the medical centre include basic supplies such as medicines, sutures, needles and scissors. Further requests are for an autoclave drum, and a desktop computer with printer for keeping medical records. Items urgently needed which cost between \$50 to \$100 USD include dental extraction sets, and x-ray films.

More news is available on the web page and Ang would always love to hear directly from you all. The Gallery section contains many photos of past Community trips, visits from schools and colleges and details of the tasks that have been completed by volunteers.

Visit www.kushudebu.org.np
or email Ang direct on kushudebu2005@yahoo.com

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If you would prefer not to receive this Newsletter please let us know and your name will be deleted. Please also keep us up to date with email address changes and advise us if you have friends would like to be included in our mail outs. We would also love to hear from you if you have some ideas for fundraising for the medical centre.

The KPHMN story

Some of the newer recipients of our Newsletter might be interested in some background to the setting up the Medical Centre at the Sherpa village of Junbesi in Nepal. Nepal is one of the most beautiful countries in the world, but is also one of the poorest – almost half of its 28 million people are unemployed and 31% of Nepalese live below the poverty line. Health-care facilities, hygiene, nutrition and sanitation generally are bad and Government funding is approximately \$2.30 per person. Hospitals and health clinics are usually in the cities and rural facilities lack funding, staff and medicine.



Ang is from Junbesi village where medical centre buildings had fallen into disuse in the absence of government funding. Villagers, including pregnant women, were forced to walk for 5-6 hours in all weather for medical centre. Junbesi is in the Solukhumbu district and is accessed from Jiri, which is a day's bus ride from Kathmandu and then a three day walk. Junbesi is a three hour walk from Phaplu which is only accessible by air from Kathmandu.

In 2006 with the support of an Australian family, a charitable trusted named Kushudebu Public Health Mission Nepal (KPHMN) was formed. The old centre was renovated and it now provides health services for approximately 4,000 disadvantaged and socially remote people in Junbesi and the surrounding district. The medical centre is run by a Local Management Committee with Ang Tshering Sherpa as President. The centre has grown rapidly and now includes staff quarters, provides Health Educations programmes and health care training for locals, provides a full maternity service, runs health camps for local areas with an emphasis on vaccination and has a Scholarship programme for students in Lab Technology and Radiology. Further information is on the very interesting and up-to-date web site at www.kushudebu.org.np

Dr Kevin Sweeney and Liz Sweeney, Newcastle

Liz and Kevin participated in the inaugural 'Friends of Junbesi' Community Service trek to Junbesi and Gokyo in April 2011. They are regular and generous donors to Friends of Junbesi via the Commonwealth bank account. We asked Kevin to tell readers what inspired him and Liz to travel to Nepal, how they met Ang and how they became motivated to be regular and committed donors. He comments also on the future challenges faced by Ang and the Board of Management in Junbesi and whether he might return to Junbesi in the future.

Mountains and mountain views are what inspire me the most so I had a long held interest in going to trek in the Himalaya. I finally took my chance in 2002 to trek the Annapurna Circuit with World Expeditions. The trek was magnificent - visually stunning and fascinating and thought provoking from a cultural point of view. Our group leader was Ang Tshering Sherpa. We got to know Ang very well over the course of the three week trek. I was very impressed by Ang - thoughtful, knowledgeable, tolerant, respectful and very capable - all in his characteristic quiet and unassuming way. After returning to Australia I did manage to keep in occasional contact with Ang by email over the ensuing years. Around 2005 Ang contacted me to say that he was establishing the Kushudebu Public Health Mission in Junbesi near his home village. I remembered from our discussions during the Annapurna trek that his village had no access to health care other than by a day's trek to Phaplu. Ang was looking for donations of equipment and money to help get KPHMN set up. They were actually doing surprisingly well in terms of equipment and it seemed to me that what they needed most was regular donations to be able to employ staff with some certainty of being able to pay their wages! I became involved in supporting KPHMN by donating every six months or so.

In the intervening years World Expeditions had taken KPHMN on as a project and organised the first community trip to Junbesi to assist with needed building works. Following the first of these trips, some of the participants banded together to form the Friends of Junbesi and start a regular Newsletter. I was very pleased to receive regular updates on the progress of KPHMN. Late last year I read about the Friends of Junbesi trip planned for March/April 2011. It was the perfect combination of a chance to visit KPHMN and to do another trek in Nepal. Numbers were looking too low to make the trip viable, so my wife and five friends joined the trip - making up half the group. My friends had no prior involvement with KPHM and none of them had been to Nepal before - but that didn't diminish their enthusiasm or engagement. It was great for me to catch up with Ang and to see the KPHM setup in action. It was very impressive to be able to see all that they have done and to meet the staff and some of the locals. Nepal was again a fascinating mix of culture, religion, beauty, poverty and mayhem. The Gokyo Lakes/Renjo La trek was superb - culturally engaging, stunningly beautiful and sometimes challenging. We had a fantastic time!

Starting from nothing, KPHMN have done a truly amazing job of setting up a community based health care service. Ang and the local community have shown great foresight in the way they have set it up. They have created a local Board to run the organisation, harnessing the skills and contacts of Board members, giving the community

ownership, and creating a model of sustainable leadership for the project that is not dependent upon Ang or any one individual. Ang has utilised the goodwill that he has built up over his years of leading trekking groups as a means of securing donors and supporters for the project. From the early days they have had an excellent website - which is a key tool for attracting donations and retaining donors. They have slowly but surely grown the health centre by recruiting staff, building quarters, acquiring more equipment and facilities (pathology, X-ray and now a birthing centre) and expanding the rooms. They have grappled with the difficulties of recruiting and retaining staff in a remote area of Nepal. In response to these difficulties they moved quite early to a program of recruiting locals and establishing scholarships to fund them to go to Kathmandu to train as nurses, laboratory technicians and radiographers to provide a future workforce that is committed to the community and the health centre. They have had no government funding or assistance apart from the supply of some medications. Yet they now have a health clinic that I suspect surpasses the government funded remote clinic in terms of facilities, staffing and services. What they have achieved is extraordinary.

I donate to a number of different charities, many of which do important work but I have no personal connection with them. KPHMN was different in that I knew Ang; we had talked about his family, his village and his people. After trekking in Nepal I felt a sense of connection with Ang, the Nepalese people and their needs. As a doctor, I also felt a particular interest in the future of this fledgling health centre that was beginning in such challenging circumstances. I could see that their greatest need was for regular donations so that they could employ staff with some surety that they would be able to pay them! One-off donations are great for purchasing equipment and funding building works, but regular donations are essential if the whole venture is to be sustainable. Donating by international transfer was initially tedious as it meant visiting the bank each time and paying fees on each transfer. The Friends of Junbesi have set up local bank accounts in Australia,

New Zealand and the UK - this makes the whole process much easier as I have set it up as an automatic monthly transfer. It also means that less is lost in fees at each end as donations are consolidated and sent as one large transfer.

The future challenges for Ang and the board of management are many and varied. Recruiting local doctors will continue to be a challenge. Junbesi is remote and many would not see spending time there as assisting their career. It is difficult for KPHMN to pay the sort of salary that would make it financially attractive. Therefore KPHMN will probably continue to have difficulty in attracting doctors - and attracting them to stay for any length of time. The same may apply to the other health staff, but possibly to a lesser extent and KPHMN seem to be making headway with recruiting and training locals for the other positions. While KPHMN are providing a good primary health care service at Junbesi, it is still relatively inaccessible for those who are a few hours walk away if they are seriously ill. The large population

at the Thubtencholling monastery is a case in point. KPHMN are trialling a regular clinic there which may be helpful - but it will leave the Junbesi clinic unattended for periods and means a lot of staff time is spent travelling.

Responding to existing illness, and particularly acute illness, is a natural and appropriate place to start. However, with low levels of health care and limited resources, greater gains may be had by embarking on a program of health education in the villages, schools and in the monasteries. To KPHMN's credit they are already starting on this. Fortunately, the clinic has a very manageable workload and therefore they can afford to devote time to this.

There are so many other fascinating places to see in the world that I am not sure that I will be returning to Nepal for a trek or holiday. However, if I had the chance to return to do some medical work I think I would be very tempted!



Our group's three doctors (Dr Noela Kwan, Dr Kevin Sweeney and Dr Garry Lyford) with the doctor and other staff at KPHMN



Liz and Dr Kevin Sweeney with Mt. Everest in the far background .. on the road to Namche, April 2011

Budgets and fund raising results

KPHMN Budget 2011-2012

'Friends' will be interested in the KPHMN budget for the current financial year August 2011 to July 2012. The Budget is calculated in Nepalese Rupees and also shows the approximate amount in US\$.

The total budget is approx. US\$30,140. As one would expect staff salaries (\$15490) amount to half of that with student scholarships (\$4090) and medicine (\$3460) distant second and third greatest expenses.

In the financial year 2010/2011 'Friends' raised approx. US\$13,000 which with US\$6000 from Craft Nepal, totaled close to US\$20,000. This was a marvelous effort in these difficult times and our thanks go to all donors with special thanks to those who arranged regular direct credits on a weekly or monthly basis.

The Budget provides health care for about 3400 people in Junbesi and surrounds. Thankfully a little goes a long way in Nepal.

We hope to raise at least the same amount this year, ie. more than two thirds of the current budget. The remainder will have to be covered from other sources or budgets cuts will need to be made. KPHMN is not supported by any of the international agencies and is therefore dependent on individual and a few company donors

Expendure :-	Amount In Rs.	Amount In US\$
Particulars		
Staff Salary	1,230,000.00	15,490
Telephone & Fax	31,780.00	400
Cargo & Courier	18,676.00	240
Printing & Stationery	60,224.00	760
Airfare Exp.	59,849.00	750
Airport Tax Exp.	509.00	10
Wages Exp.	49,975.00	630
Medicine Exp.	275,052.00	3,460
Web.Sit Exp.	20,150.00	250
Email & internet Exp	5,055.00	60
Repair & Maintenance	6,000.00	80
Scholarship for Student	325,000.00	4,090
Raw Materials Exp.	59,835.00	750
Programme Exp.	13,525.00	170
Water & Electricity Exp.	11,250.00	140
Meeting Exp.	3,500.00	40
Loding & Fooding Exp.	67,630.00	850
Adverisement Exp.	32,408.00	410
Office Exp.	8,885.00	110
Staff Walfare/Dress	40,450.00	510
Office Rent	24,000.00	300
Miscellaneous Exp.	24,650.00	310
Local Transportation	16,255.00	200
Audit Fee	10,000.00	130
Total :-	2,394,658.00	30,140

Health Centre Doctor's Report

June 2011 to September 2011

Total patients

525

Out patient department	490 (male 262, female 228)
Children	29 (male 20 and female 9)
Emergency	6 (male 4 and female 2)

Summary of patients

APD (auditory processing disorder)	64
Trauma	35
Headache	22
Arthritis	22
Hypertension	18

Donations and acknowledgements

We have received some generous donations and have increased the number of donors who are making regular monthly payments. We would like to thank you all for your generous support which is enabling KPHMN ensures better medical outcomes for the people of Junbesi and the surrounding districts. Since October 2010 to the end of October 2011 we have received donations from Ralph, Barbara, Deb, Anne, Kevin, Ian, Mark, Joss, Ben, Jennifer, Rosemary, Luke, two Jacks, Keith, three Christophers, Laurie, Richard and Denys. Many of you have also bought Friends of Junbesi T-Shirts via Tim in Auckland. We also acknowledge donors who prefer to donate funds directly to Ang and all those who have donated goods and services directly to the medical centre in the past year. There are also some donations on the bank statement which cannot be acknowledged due to lack of identification – thank you also!!

We are not able to compete with the big charities that can offer enticements such as income tax relief, a goat for an impoverished family and personalised return address labels. However we can offer a quick transfer of your donated cash to the medical centre for prompt use by Ang and his team and guarantee that no expenses are ever deducted from your donations apart from bank and transfer charges which we keep to the minimum.

Please pass this Newsletter on to any family or friends who have expressed an interest in Nepal, or who have asked you about the time you spent there. Please contact us if you need any more information, and just to let us know you are out there – we would love to hear from you.

NATIONAL ACCOUNTS FOR DONATIONS:



CBA, Potts Point NSW, Sydney, Australia
- Kushudebu Public Health Mission Nepal
BSB: 062014 Account: 10402716



Westpac, St. Heliers, Auckland, New Zealand
- Kushudebu Public Health Mission Nepal
Account: 03 02630223978 00



Nationwide Building Society,
4 Pydar St., Truro, Cornwall, UK
Kushudebu Public Health Mission Nepal Treasurers Trust
Sort code: 07 00 93
Bank account: 33 33 33 34
Acc. No.: 0402/704 138 407

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Beverly & Chris Hill, UK bhill@cornwall.gov.uk

For detailed information about the Kushudebu project at Junbesi please access the KPHMN website: www.kushudebu.org.np

Friends' T-shirts

These attractive shirts are still available in support of KPHMN and we have good stock of all sizes from XS-XXL.

Prices now reduced to clear:

NZ\$39 AU\$30, STG22 & US\$34.

Prices include the cost of shirts, a margin for KPHMN and postage worldwide.



Your purchase supports the Health Centre at Junbesi.

To order, simply send name, mailing address and shirt sizes required to Tim at tienny.jerram@xtra.co.nz and deposit the appropriate amount in one of the national accounts shown on the next page, including your name in the bank fields provided. Once confirmed the shirt(s) will be mailed to your given address. Proceeds will be transferred to KPHMN in KTM with other donations to fund necessary expenses at the Health Centre.

