

Pattale Community Health Centre

Newsletter

www.pattalehealthcommunity.org

March 2016



Welcome to the annual newsletter of the Pattale Health Trust.

This newsletter is our main point of contact with donors and friends interested in the project and Nepal life in general. Here we summarise the activities and achievements during the past 12 months and look at future plans.

We try to share something of our love for these admirable people and this wonderful country.

This past year has been one of tragedy and great challenge for the Nepalese people. The major earthquake that struck on 25 April 2015 devastated wide areas and the country is still struggling to deal with the aftermath. Over 8,000 are reported to have been killed, with 21,000 injured and over 450,000 displaced and made homeless as entire villages were flattened.

Donating

This newsletter is our main fundraising event for the year. If you would like to contribute to this grass roots organisation, you will find details on how to donate at the end of the newsletter. Big or small, all donations go direct to the clinic. A little goes a very long way in Nepal. Don't underestimate what a difference your contribution can make.

The Village

East of Kathmandu, Pattale is in a remote area of Nepal. The population is approximately 300 people who live generally a subsistence lifestyle. Transport into the area used to be several days trek from the nearest transport drop off point. A road of sorts has been pushed through in recent years so now it is merely treacherous, taking up to 18 hours by jeep from Kathmandu. Air transport into the area is tenuous at the best, if available at all, due to weather conditions or closure of runways.

The Project

During a trek to Nepal in 2005, Peter and Felicity Spear along with Margaret and Michael Evans met guide Navaraj Tamang, known as Dorje. During this trek and his subsequent sponsored visits to Australia, Dorje expressed the wish to establish a health centre in his village of Pattale. His wife nearly died delivering their first son, having to be transported hours over rough terrain to reach help. After many meetings with Dorje and people within the village to form a Committee of Management, and the formation of a Trust in Australia, the Pattale Community Health Centre was opened in March 2012.

We have been heart-broken and devastated by the events this last year in Nepal. These generally self sufficient communities who work so hard, are now struggling in the face of this enormous crisis trying to rebuild their lives with extremely limited resources. Money is one way we can materially reach out with help. It offers them the chance to make their own decisions, to help in their own communities. It also lets them know they are not forgotten but have friends who care and are trying to help.

Our friends have in the most part been lucky with no family lost and minimal damage. For this we are most grateful. However thousands still have barely the means of survival and life is a daily challenge. A summary of the impact and the amazing work being done by those we know follows

The 2015 Earthquake

As the earthquake struck, our friend and trek organiser Teresa Williams had just reached the village of Dunche with a small group at the end of their trek in the Langtang Valley. They ran for their lives as the buildings crumpled around them. The valley where they had just been was one of the most affected areas. An avalanche of 2 to 3 kilometres wide swept down the valley, destroying the village of Langtang and many smaller settlements around it. Over 250 people died in this area. A project we had known, tragically lost their entire clinic and several staff in this most dreadful natural disaster.

Many other isolated valleys also suffered devastating damage but this picture would only emerge gradually over the next weeks due to the collapse of communications and roads.

Teresa's group had to trek back into Kathmandu over landslides and ruined roads.

An avalanche triggered on Everest resulted in the deadliest day ever recorded on the mountain. Nineteen climbers mainly sherpas doing pre-climbing season work died here.

As well as the human toll, many historical and world heritage listed buildings have been destroyed. The rebuilding will take years.

The April quake was located west of Kathmandu. After weeks of aftershocks a second major quake struck in May with its epicenter to the east towards the Solukhumbu (Everest) region. Our health clinic is in the poor and isolated lower Solukhumbu area. Throughout the region many homes and buildings were damaged or destroyed.

At Pattale village the Nepal Australia Friendship Association (NAFA) has reported thirty homes in the area were made uninhabitable. The school they had helped build the year before and the government-funded classrooms are still standing but damaged.



Damage in Pattale 2015 (NAFA)

Terraces for crops were not badly damaged but there was a critical food shortage for some families as they were not able to salvage any of their basic food items from their collapsed homes. Some families had been living on boiled nettles and community donated food. The water supply,

grinding mill and electric turbine which were installed in the village in 2013 have been damaged. You can read the full report on their website <http://nafa.org.au>



Pattale 2015 (NAFA)

Dorje (Navaraj Tamang), our friend and trekking guide, is our link to Pattale. He has been our colleague and partner in establishing the health centre and we are full of admiration for his good character and the work he does for his people.

The home of Dorje's parents suffered some damage. Lec (a health committee member) next door lost nearly his whole house. Luckily the clinic was not damaged.

Dorje himself was in Kathmandu. He and his family, along with most of the population, spent many nights outside camping wherever they could find some flat ground. His home was not damaged but many in the area collapsed. They were all very frightened. Aftershocks continued at 15-20 minute intervals for sometime. There were several further quite serious shocks over the following days.

Despite his own fears, Dorje was soon co-coordinating relief and trying to help his community.

Teresa became a conduit for donations flowing in from past trekkers. This money went directly to buying tarpaulins, rice, water and immediate necessities for those in the local area.

As the weeks went on, Dorje was able to go further afield around the Kathmandu valley trying to make contact with those they knew from Langtang Valley from years of trekking up there. Survivors had been evacuated out and set up in camps at monasteries and other open spaces.

Here are his own words taken from emails over several months:

Thank you very much for your kindness and encourages email to me. I am feeling great today because I am feeling I can do some more things.

The Langtang people are staying at yellow Gumpa at Shyambhu now. I will go to visit there and find out some one I know. I will try to do my best for the people from Langtang and Dhading (hill part) I am writing this email to say Big Big thank you to all our supporters who helped to Nepal and Nepali people in that very bad situation in many cases. We love you and thanks to you all.



Dorje took shoes and school items to this group as part of a package for the whole village

Firstly... I went to Sindhupalchok district with tents and food supplies. Secondly, I spent money around Kathmandu by proving tents for sleeping open fields and drinking water supply few thousand cash direct given to Boudhanath re- contructions. The stupa is renovating now. (Ed. This is an important Buddhist site -

Tibetan merchants have rested and offered prayers here for many centuries. When refugees entered Nepal from Tibet in the 1950s, many decided to live around the stupa.) I have given some cash when I went to break the dangerous house in the different parts of the country. Cried my heart sometimes while I saw the really poor and old people. I have trying to do something for them too. As being a trekking guide, so many people knew me and said thank you very much. Most of the places, I replied, Thanks not to me, Thanks to Teresa didi and all her friends. People are so happy, so happy ...



I would like to go to Langtang region with some supplies... Langtang is only open trail from today the news said. We have been trekked many times that valley, so lot of people know me and you. I like to go with some supplies food and roofs (Tin)..... I can't do with out your or our friends help. I am not reach to provide such supplies to the

people but I have hope and heart, friends and thinking possible.....

We are proud of our friend and colleague in the wonderful work he is doing at this most difficult time.

You can read a fuller account of Teresa's experiences and more of Dorje's work on the Slow Trekking website (www.slowtrekking.com).



Dorje and his mate Lec

The trustees made the decision not to use our funds for the emergency situation. This was a difficult decision to make but our funds are limited and we are not set up as an emergency response organisation. Individually we all donated both in the immediate aftermath and over the year, mainly through Teresa to Dorje so he could use the funds as he saw fit. Teresa's network of trekkers donated over \$20,000 for Dorje to distribute. Keeping the clinic functioning and viable is important in this difficult time as it provides a valuable resource at the centre of the community.

Clinic Update

The clinic continues to be a well-used and vital part of the local community. The six-monthly payments were made this year by telegraphic transfer to Kathmandu, with Dorje taking the salaries and rent up to the village himself. He reports that Chet Kumari, the female health worker employed in 2014 is a great asset. Binod the CMA

continues to provide excellent service as well. They have purchased some new equipment for the clinic.

The idea of purchasing land or constructing a purpose made building in the future has been put on hold due to the earthquakes.

Peter and Felicity hope to visit Pattale later this year and talk to the committee and see the local situation first hand.

It is encouraging that the government has provided some funding to develop tourism in the area. Dorje feels that the clinic is playing a role in supporting this kind of investment and interest. He emphasised again in his report from August 2015, that the local people are very happy to have this facility in the centre of their area.



Dorje's mother brews up some raksi on her heart – it was good too!

Keeping in Touch

No one from the Trust was able to travel to Nepal in 2015 but we have been in constant touch with Dorje and friends as they have worked their way through the difficulties.

Peter and Felicity plan to visit in April this year.

Michael is planning a trip to Dolpo in May, a long held plan to trek this interesting and isolated area.



Thinking of Travelling?

Now more than ever Nepal needs tourists and trekkers. Many areas are only slightly affected or not at all. Teresa has run treks up to Muktinath and Upper Mustang in west Nepal. The increasingly popular Cultural Trek ran in December. In Kathmandu she found that some famous monuments had been destroyed but the majority were still standing and a huge reconstruction is already underway. She will be trekking in March and October this year. Don't put off that adventure you have been dreaming about. Go now!

Nepal Contacts

Nepal is not just about getting to the highest peaks. You can trek or you can just visit. Both bring great rewards.

If you are thinking of visiting Nepal we can heartily recommend the following guides.

Teresa Williams of SlowTrekking offers both full trekking and a cultural tour, which is a great introduction to the country. The website is a mine of information about conditions, what to

wear and what to expect. This is an ethical company that respects the local culture and treats their porters and guides kindly and responsibly.

<http://www.slowtrekking.com>

Dorje himself is an excellent contact with years of experience in guiding and arranging treks.

<http://www.nepalonfoot.com>



Another view from Pattale



Budhau Tamang (grandmother), Panu (aunt) – Kancha's family from Juke.

Farewell to Trustee Ian Eyles

In 2016, we reluctantly farewelled Ian Eyles as a trustee. Ian has been invaluable in assisting us with the establishment of the Pattale Health Centre. While trekking in Nepal, he visited Pattale with Michael Evans and drawing on his expertise as a first aid instructor he made an initial assessment of the medical requirements of the village. This research assisted us in developing the clinic together with the village committee of management. Ian has also created the Pattale Community

Health website. He feels a real connection with Nepal and its people and we hope and expect that he will continue to be a supporter from the sidelines. We offer our heartfelt thanks for his participation in the project.



Rhododendron season in Pattale

The Final Word

Thank you for taking the time to read the newsletter. Not so much about the project this year but hopefully a glimpse of what is happening and how it is for the people there. While we are not directly giving aid for reconstruction, our clinic is providing important material and psychological support to this small community at this difficult time.

Please consider supporting us if you can. A little goes a long way in Nepal and the money goes direct to the project. Feel free to forward this newsletter to others who may be interested in this kind of project.

All the large aid organizations are in Nepal of course but there are also many small worthwhile projects which are making a direct difference to people's lives. Small can be beautiful and sustainable and make an impact.

All of us are available and interested to talk to community groups about the Pattale Community Health Centre. We are passionate about this area and the people.

We welcome your enquiries.

Thank you for your interest and we look forward to hearing from you.

Namaste.



These boys had found a sunny spot to do some study early before school.

Pattale Health Trust

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Donations primarily pay for salary of staff, rent, electricity, phone and support the purchase of medical supplies. If there is available funding, equipment, training and the expansion of facilities are considered.

We do not have tax deductibility. We deal with relatively small amounts of money and the process of registration for the tax deductions is not feasible at this stage. Except for a few small expenses, for example the web site or freight for donated supplies, donations go directly to the project.

Remember a little goes a long way in Nepal. Our contributions have made a significant impact already in this small village, bringing reliable and cost effective basic medical support.

Donations

can be made at any branch of Bendigo Bank or by **electronic transfer**.

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ACCOUNT 151099801
ACCOUNT NAME
F M Spear, I D Stanley-Eyles, M A G
Evans & D R Rawling ATF The Pattale
Health Trust

*please email Margaret Evans when you deposit or transfer so she can track the finances! Thanks!

margaretevans@westnet.com.au

Cheques or money orders

can be sent to:
Mrs. Margaret Evans
Honorary Secretary
Pattale Health Trust
50 Grimshaw's Road
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The people of Pattale thank you.