

Kathmandu



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KIDDEIWINKS

KATHMANDU Kids Club

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*Both the Torah and the Qu'ran
teach, "To save one life is as if you
have saved the world." Not many
people can say that they have
genuinely saved someone's life.*

But some people in Bermuda can...

The Kathmandu Kids Club, a unique Club formed under the auspice of The ISIS Foundation, was recently launched in Bermuda. As it is run by volunteers, all net donations to the Club go directly to caring for kids in Nepal. It costs less than \$1 a day to join and those dollars are helping to save the lives, and reduce the suffering of, literally, hundreds of children.

Here's the story of one of those children, a four-year old little boy called Birendra, who would have died if not for the donations of Bermudians, and the work of the staff of The ISIS Foundation.

Birendra's* father and mother were very young, and very poor, even by Nepali standards. They lived with their two children – Birendra and his young sister – in Lower Humla, an area of intense Maoist activity. His Mother used to eat dirt to satiate her hunger while she was in the fields working. She was very weak from malnutrition, and while leaving the fields one day, she fell off a cliff to her death. The father, desperate and afraid of being abducted by the Maoists, left Humla and came to Nepalgange (a city on the Indian border) with a newly born daughter of 3 months, and Birendra who is 4 years old. In Nepalgange he met a man who was running a children's home in Kathmandu, who told him that he would take Birendra into his 'orphanage' and look after him, for a fee.

There were already 24 children at this 'orphanage', and before The ISIS Foundation became involved, they were being kept in appalling conditions – they had scabies, lice, were not going to school, and were



being sent out to beg in the streets. They were persistently hungry. The ISIS Foundation had made as a condition of their support that no further children were to be brought into the home. But the opportunistic manager of the home hid five additional children in the attic, bringing them out at night to eat, so that he could collect fees from their parents. Birendra was one of these children.

When a staff member of The ISIS Foundation finally found him, little Birendra was terribly ill. He was sickly with chest infections and in constant pain. In taking him to doctors, they discovered that he had a very large hole in his heart, limiting his oxygen intake and depleting his immune system. After days of tests at the Galanga Heart Hospital, they advised that Birendra would need immediate surgery to repair the hole, even though it was an extremely high risk procedure.

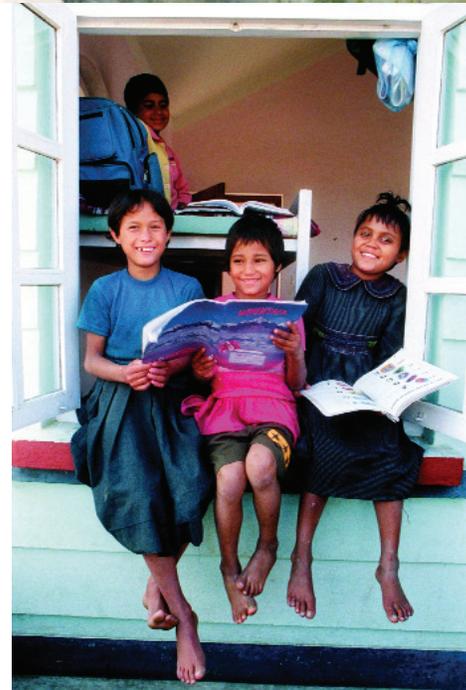
The risk to Birendra was that he may not have come out of the surgery. However if he did nothing, he would have lived to perhaps 10 years old, with his health deteriorating monthly, and dying a painful death. The team at ISIS decided to support the surgery after discussing his situation with a leading Pediatric heart specialist in the US, who looked at all the test results and agreed with the diagnosis. As is Nepali custom, they also found three people with type B blood to take with them to the hospital, to donate blood for Birendra the day of the surgery.

On December 1st 2005, Birendra underwent heart surgery. It was a day where all concerned held their breath worrying about how he would

The kitchen (top LEFT) and living area (below LEFT) show the horrendous conditions in the first kids home before ISIS got involved. ABOVE: Yeshi Lama, one of ISIS's staff in Nepal, and Birendra's little sister, now around 18 months old and is living at a women and children's shelter in Kathmandu (courtesy of Evan Morgan, 2006)



ABOVE: When we first found the children in this home, they were starving, being forced to beg on the buses, and covered in scabies and lice. They hardly ever smiled. They had been brought down from the villages into Kathmandu for their safety from the civil war, but were even worse off, until we began to help them. Now they are all at school, happy, and healthy. They have tutors going into the home, house parents, good food, clean water, and much love. This photo was taken in October last year, when Audette Exel, one of ISIS's founders, was working in Nepal with our partner organisations. RIGHT: Three children at a home supported by The ISIS Foundation. These children were absolutely destitute before The ISIS Foundation began supporting them. (courtesy of Ewan Morgan, 2006)



Visit www.kathmandukidsclub.com for further information, or contact:

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 * Names have been altered to protect the safety of this family.

cope and whether he would come out of the anaesthetic. To their joy, he came through with flying colors, and he is now living in a very clean and protected environment, so that there is no impact to his heart from playing or being active.

The Kathmandu Kids Club was the brainchild of Kim Carter, who felt that forming a Club was a great way for locals to connect with kids in Nepal, but not as administratively onerous as individual sponsorship of individual children.

“Bermudians can get involved as little or as much as they wish,” says Kim, the Chairman of the Club. “We have a great team of Managers, all volunteers – from Publications to Audio Visual to Website Design – and we have also already had a number of local businesses donate products and services. For example, Tim Taylor of Crissons donated the design of our promotion cards, Glen Astwood from Triangle Press very kindly donated the printing, and Michael Swan from XL Insurance designed our Membership Certificate for free.”

Leonie Exel, General Manger of The ISIS Foundation and Club President, says that members are keen to join for a variety of reasons. “It’s an unusual structure,” says Leonie, “and it’s a fun way of doing something which in the end is deadly serious – saving lives and reducing suffering of children who are in dire need. People are joining up because they want to help out, they know that they are so much better off than these kids, and they want to give to a community of children from their community here in Bermuda. Some have also found that this is a great gift for the friend who ‘has it all’ – it’s a present that gives twice – once to the recipient, and once to the children who will get help with critical things like school fees, clothes, shoes, and food.”

Members get a Membership Certificate and a regular newsletter, both via email, and can get involved in a range of events run by the Club. The key resource for members is the website, designed and run by Tom Quinn, the Club’s Website Manager.