

Goethals Himalayan Hope & Welfare Society

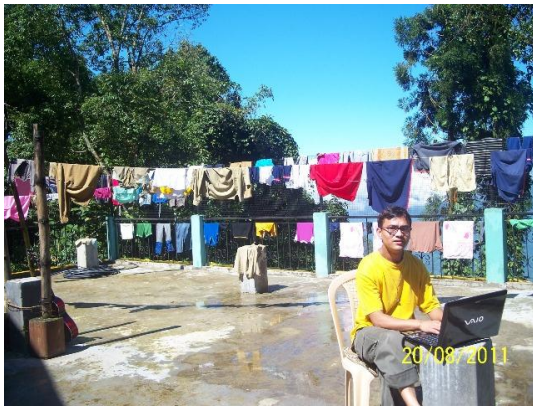
Chris Niwas, Goethals Siding, PO St. Mary's Hill, Kurseong, Darjeeling, West Bengal, 734203 INDIA

Website: www.himalayanhope.org Email: sushsaso@gmail.com Phone: (91) 801 679 0757

September 2011

Dear friends,

It's a beautiful day here today – bright and sunny, something we have been looking forward to for the past four months. It is strange how much control weather has over our daily lives. There are activities which we absolutely cannot do if the weather is not right. So this morning when I woke up at 4, my usual wake-up time, and looked up at the sky, I knew I will get a lot done today. So before the kids woke up at 6 (today being Saturday, they get half an hour more of sleeping time!), I immediately got down to work. There were two big duffle bags full of laundry to be done – kids' uniforms, their spare bed sheets, pillow covers, some of their 'Sunday best'. When you have a big family, you do end up with a lot of laundry. For me the rule is, you only do your laundry if there is 100% chance that it will dry the same day. Because if it doesn't, your laundry could be hanging for the next three or four weeks in the moist monsoon weather and nothing smells worse than moist and wet clothes. Before the kids woke up, I finished washing all the clothes – 78 pieces in all, to be precise. The operation is not complete once you finish washing the clothes, you also have to stand guard because weather can change within minutes from a sunny day to a stormy day and if you are not quick enough your half-dried clothes could be wet in no time. So here I am on our terrace guarding the laundry and writing this newsletter.



(L) Sudhir guarding the laundry (R) Kiran, Abhinoy & Andrew cleaning the windows

It is a busy day today here at Chris Niwas. While I am busy turning my laundry and typing this newsletter, Subani, Punam, Anushree and Apeksha are helping Sashi in the kitchen, get lunch ready – some are sorting rice while others are peeling potatoes and cleaning vegetables. The kids are extra-excited today as it is our 'meat day' – a once a month treat for us. The boys are not sitting idle either. Kiran has a group of boys working on cleaning the windows and the verandah while Wangchu and his gang are picking up bits of garbage from around the compound and pulling out overgrown weeds from around the trees we have planted in the last two years. It's amazing how much contribution our children make in running this big family. The children are also taking turns and going for their weekly bath. Running a big family is like conducting an orchestra – everyone has to do exactly what they are supposed to do at the right time otherwise things can run haywire. But Sashi and I must admit that we have been blessed with beautiful children who are responsible, well-mannered, eager to learn, always ready to help and full of gratefulness – qualities not easy to find in many young people these days, I'm afraid. So thank you for making it possible for Sashi and me to have such wonderful family. Without your love and support, this would not have been possible. May God bless you profusely for your generosity.



(L) Punam & Subani – future chefs -- enjoy helping Sashi in the kitchen (R)Apeksha, expert ginger & garlic peeler

During the last month, looking at the number of times our kids have been in and out of hospital, I was seriously thinking of shifting my base to Kurseong Hospital permanently. First, Priyanka had to be admitted in the hospital with very high fever and ended up having measles and stayed in hospital for ten days. A couple of days after Priyanka was discharged from hospital, Punam caught measles and was in hospital for a week. Now Namita has been in hospital for a week. Her problem seems to be bit complicated. She constantly complains of headache. The doctor advised us to have her eyes examined, which we did and Namita has a pair of glasses now. But the headache still persists accompanied by very high fever and nausea. After spending a week in hospital, Namita was released yesterday. Both Priyanka and Namita are staying with their parents for some time because the best medicine when you are not well is the tender loving care of parents. When one of our children is in hospital, Sashi and I make sure at least one of us is in hospital to see them during all the four visiting hours of the day. Looking at the medical history of our children over the past three years, our girls seem to be much more sickness-prone. In the last three years, only once have we had a boy hospitalized whereas every year we have had three or four girls admitted with various ailments. Does that mean in the villages a girl child is not given the same care as the boys? Well at Chris Niwas we make sure our girls are given all the care that they need.



(L) Priyanka's mother watches as her daughter is examined by Dr. Lama (R) measles infested Punam

During my frequent visits to the hospital, I have come to know many of the doctors in the hospital quite well. But one doctor who stands out is Dr. Wangyal Lama. He has turned out to be a 'Good Samaritan' for Chris Niwas Family. Last month he came to Chris Niwas and gave our children a free medical check up. He also gave hundreds of rupees worth of free medicines and vitamins for our children. When our children were admitted in the hospital, he gave them extra-special attention. We did not have to buy any medicine. Dr. Lama made sure all the medicines and injections were made available to our children from the hospital. At a time when doctors are raising their consultancy fee beyond the reach of ordinary people, for somebody from Chris Niwas, Dr. Lama writes the prescription and asks for x-rays and blood tests and pays for them himself. He is giving special attention to Apeksha, who may have growth hormone deficiency. He has committed to pay for a more expensive test which we need to do for Apeksha which can only be done in Siliguri. Dr. Lama's free service has cut down our monthly medical bill a great deal. Thank you, Dr. Lama for being the 'good Samaritan'. I like to share with you an email Dr. Lama sent me after his visit:

.....

Dear Sudhir,

I will not be able to explain with my limited vocabulary the joy I felt in visiting Chris Niwas and its inhabitants. It is so heartening and beautiful to see faith in practice. I was and am truly inspired by you all. You and Sashi's commitment, ideology and hard work, the children's determination and their innocence. It was, I must say, a memorable event in my life. I was happy that I could be a part of all this. I wish the best of life to you and your children. Above all I wish that they come to know the Creator, and that His presence be with them now and forever.

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to serve. It was a privilege to be in the midst of you all.

I know that you are worried about Poonam but I believe and am confident that she will be alright.

My best wishes to you and your children.

Wangyal



(L) Karan & Wangchu (R) with Dr. Lama



The 'old' laptops which Chris Bake brought on his last visit have been a great source of education and entertainment for our children. Whenever I have some free time, I show them a few tricks. But kids learn on their own. Computer is a compulsory subject in their school but they had never been close to a computer before. Now when the computer teacher tells them about 'enter Key' or 'touch pad' or paint, our children know exactly what the teacher is talking about. Thank you, Chris!

Thank you, my friends, for sharing your lives with us. With your generous support, we are able to give our children nutritious food, good education and medical care. The more support we get, the more poor children we can help. Pray for us, please!

May there be a flood of God's favours and graces in your lives.
Sudhir, Sashi and all our fifteen children