WELCOME TO OUR JUNE NEWSLETTER!

How the world has changed since our last newsletter! Virginia, our founding Trustee, went to Nepal in early March and she and team NHEDF got a lot of work done despite her 4 week stay being cut short due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

When she arrived, it seemed like Nepal might emerge from the pandemic relatively unscathed, but that was wishful thinking. To minimise the spread of COVID-19, all flights between China and Nepal had been cancelled in mid-February (573,082 passengers travel between China and Nepal annually) and the government had directed everyone who could to return to their villages.

During Virginia’s stay, Kathmandu was very quiet, and the lack of pollution meant there were awesome views of 270km or so of the Himalaya range.

The day after she arrived things changed. New tourist visas were cancelled as were climbing and trekking permits which impacted heavily on the employment and economy for the thousands of people who rely on tourism for an income. On March 24th the airport and land borders closed and the country went into lockdown. Nepal is still in lockdown now and as we publish this newsletter the number of Covid-19 cases is over 5000 and still climbing.
Life has been very different and very stressful for Samrat, NHEDF’s Director. Before Virginia arrived in Nepal NHEDF had sent as many patients as they could back to their villages, especially those who were immuno-compromised like Mansur who had been receiving chemotherapy.

Some patients were almost ready for discharge like Sanker, a young boy with a neurological disease which had been misdiagnosed as a brain tumour and was unconscious when he first came to NHEDF. Nariyan who had undergone significant orthopaedic surgery and Lila who had a successful obstetric fistula repair were also safe to discharge. Others like Ravi who sustained a head injury as a result of a motorbike accident still needed significant nursing care. However his family were scared about the impact of COVID-19 and decided to take him home.

Discharge was not an option for 7 patients at the Shelter. One of these patients was Kamala who was scheduled for urgent cardiac surgery soon after Nepal went into lockdown. Despite two emergency visits to hospital and Samrat’s best attempts to have her admitted, the hospital would not accept her. She had a major heart attack at NHEDF and passed away leaving behind a husband and young family.
Throughout this crisis, Samrat has had to skillfully negotiate with local authorities before he was allowed to take a patient likeGovindra to the Emergency Department for IV antibiotics for cellulitis, or deliver gas bottles for cooking to theShelter (his motor bike was briefly confiscated at one stage during a gas delivery).

There is no public transport operating in Kathmandu and NHEDF’s clinical staff were initially prohibited from working so during the first three weeks of lockdown nursing instructions were provided by tele-health. As we write this Samrat is literally making life and death decisions regarding which patients to accept and who to turn away.

New patients include Galchana who fainted whilst cooking dinner and fell into the fire sustaining burns to a large part of her body which require lengthy daily dressings, scar massage and gentle physiotherapy.

Bipana has a badly broken leg; Dhanamati fell out of a tree whilst collecting fodder for their animals and sustained a multiple leg and spinal fractures. She was airlifted to hospital in Kathmandu by the army which was a first! Arun had a badly broken arm and Kanchi Maya and her baby are being supported in hospital until they come to NHEDF – both have significant burns.

After 3 weeks of lockdown, Samrat finally obtained permission for staff to continue their duties and has acquired an extra job as a taxi driver (as there is still no public transport operating) as he delivers them from home to work and work to home every day. PPE is in short supply as it has been used for non-purposes. We worry for not only everyone at NHEDF but all those health care professionals working in Nepal.
Thanks to the amazing generosity of our bronze, silver, gold and platinum nurse and physio sponsors we have been able to continue to pay the wages of NHEDF’s clinical staff throughout this pandemic.

**FUNDRAISING EVENTS**
As many of you know we usually hold our major fundraising dinner in Canberra in August. However due to the pandemic we understand many people would be uneasy about attending even though social distancing measures are being eased. Depending on circumstances we may hold either a dinner or a wine-tasting later in the year.

**SILENT AUCTION**
If you were hoping for auction items at our fundraising dinner, Virginia brought back 23kg of beautiful handmade Nepalese products so we have a wonderful selection of different packages to bid for. If you live in Canberra these can be delivered, or for those living elsewhere in Australia we can add the postage. The silent auction opens on

**DONATIONS & GLOBALGIVING**
In the meantime we know that there will be an even greater demand for NHEDF’s services due to this pandemic and welcome all donations which can be made through our website www.roads-to-rehab-nepal.org Alternatively donations can be made to us through GlobalGiving during their 24 hour Bonus Day. An email will be sent out prior to this event which starts on July 15th in US which is July 16th in Australia.

During the 24 hours of Bonus Day $250,000 in matching funds and $30,000 of bonus prizes will be given to member organisations like us. All donations between US$100 and $499 will be matched at 15%; donations of US$500 - $749 will be matched at 30%; and donations of US$750 - $1,000 will be matched at 50%.

If you would like to ask those friends who you normally bring to the dinner or would like to do a little fundraiser of your own to raise over $100 let us know!

contact info@roads-to-rehab-nepal.org

**THANK YOU'S**
Our grateful thanks go to Ausmed [http://www.ausmed.com](http://www.ausmed.com) for providing NHEDF’s nurses with a free annual
subscription to their wonderful library of professional development lectures, videos, books and other resources. It certainly helped keep them occupied during lockdown! Our thanks also go to Flat Gecko Design https://www.flatgeckodesign.com.au for continuing to care for our website.

Last but not least our grateful thanks goes to all of you who have continued to make regular monthly or annual donations and have supported and continue to support our work. Your generosity continues to make a huge difference to people who are lucky enough to have the support of NHEDF. One thing it certain – many more people in Nepal will be unable to afford health care and rehabilitation services which means the need for our services will only increase as people’s financial situations worsen due to this pandemic.

NHEDF’s three new nurses are completely ‘blown away’ by our donors’ generosity, particularly in light of the fact that people in different parts of the world are donating money to provide a service in a country in which they do not even live. They, as well as us, think you are absolutely amazing!

We hope you are staying safe during these difficult times, and on behalf of all past, present and future patients, and everyone at NHEDF, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your kindess and generosity.

If you would like to become a nurse or physio sponsor and contribute to their wages visit our website http://www.roads-to-rehab-nepal.org for more information and email virginia@roads-to-rehab-nepal.org
With best wishes and grateful thanks,

Virginia Dixon,

President Roads to Rehab Nepal

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