



## WELCOME TO OUR DECEMBER 2023 NEWSLETTER

### GIVING TUESDAY

Giving Tuesday was awesome thanks to the eleven people who donated. We had four huge donations in there of more than AU\$750 which was amazing. Ten donations were received through Global Giving and eight were matched. We also received another single very generous donation of \$1000 into our bank account.



We always try to make the point that we know many of you have given already, or give regularly, and also give to other causes and completely, totally and utterly understand that you may not be able to give again.



This will help us continue to pay AU\$1500 of MeRO's pharmacy bill for the first six months of 2024 and will be used to purchase essential medications and medical, nursing and physio equipment and supplies for use by patients both in hospital and at the Shelter. In Nepal patients have to provide everything they need prior to surgery including but not limited to syringes, needles, catheters, cannulas, oxygen tubing, IV tubing, dressing products, surgical implants and so forth.

### MeRO NEWS

Usually the last quarter of the year is MeRO's quietest. The two biggest festivals in Nepal are held at this time – Dassein and Tihar, and everyone goes home, including any patients at the Shelter who are able to. During this period hospitals operate with a skeleton staff and elective surgery does not happen. Civil unrest and doctors strikes added to the difficulties of getting patients admitted and operated on in a timely manner.

Since our last newsletter eleven patients were admitted and nine were discharged and we have two momentous stories to share with you and a few little ones... If you regularly follow us on Facebook, you can skip the two momentous ones as you will be familiar with their stories.

### SHORTER PATIENT STORIES



Pasupati and Mamota had both had abdominal pain for many years but could not afford investigations or treatment. They were referred to MeRO. Pasupati had surgery for multiple ovarian cysts and Mamota had her gall bladder removed. Nice simple patients for MeRO as both made a great recovery and were discharged home! Markhi was admitted with what was thought to be an obstetric fistula and is undergoing assessment.



26 year old Ram had surgery for lumbar spondylosis and made a great recovery too. 21 year old Dilli had a below-knee amputation for osteosarcoma. Chemotherapy was not required and he too made a good recovery and he was discharged home. Two siblings were investigated for osteosarcoma but were both found to have osteochondroma which is a genetically acquired non-malignant tumour.





Gautam was operated on but his sister was too young and has a bit more growing to do before doctors would perform surgery on her, so she will be back.

30 year-old Min was admitted with cancerous tumour of the jaw that was bleeding and required urgent surgery and blood transfusions. He too was successfully operated on and will receive three radiotherapy treatments and then hopefully will be on his way home too.



And then we come to Sarbendra.....

### SARBENDRA'S STORY

14 year-old Sarbendra is pretty happy to be here today ....

Three months ago he was out grazing the family's goats and saw something lying on the ground. He picked it up, but it was a live wire. He was electrocuted and sustained severe injuries and burns to an estimated 80% of his body. This carries an 80% chance of survival. He was taken to a local hospital but due to the severity of his injuries, they recommended he go to India or Kathmandu for treatment. India was closer, so he was treated there but after 7 days the loan of US\$6000 that the family had taken out was gone. Without money, the hospital would no longer treat Sarbendra, and his family were told to take him home to die (with no medical care, pain relief or anything else). His parents took him home, but he was in such a terrible state that in desperation, they took him to the local health post who then sent him to the district hospital. From there luckily, someone knew of MeRO and contacted them. As always, MeRO went 'all systems go' and organised Sarbendra to be brought to Kathmandu by ambulance.



The hospital system in Nepal can be incredibly frustrating not just for patients and their relatives, but for MeRO too. It was late at night when Samrat and Devindra met the ambulance at a government hospital in Kathmandu where arrangements had been made to admit Sarbendra. They breathed a sigh of relief as his injuries were so critical. They were then greeted with the news that there was no bed for him after all, and that he needed to go to a paediatric hospital as he was under 16. Samrat contacted the Government children's hospital but were told there were no paediatric ICU beds there either and they were turned away. They thought about a private hospital, but with limited funds and the severity and nature of his condition they knew this would

not really be an option. Samrat and Devindra were getting desperate – they did not know what to do, so they took him to the Shelter.

In the morning Samrat rang a hospital 10km away who agreed to admit Sarbendra. The next day he had his right hand amputated and surgery to debride the burns to his torso, legs and head.

Sarbendra spent many days in ICU, before being transferred to the High Dependency Unit. Eventually he was transferred to a general ward. He has now had over a dozen surgeries including weekly debridement of the burns to his back. Once these wounds are no longer infected he will be transferred back to the Shelter and his road to rehabilitation will begin.



As you can imagine, he and his family are so grateful for your support.

### KRISHNA-HARI' STORY



When the earthquake happened in 2015 Krishna-Hari was a young man in his late 20's who was guiding a group of trekkers in the Langtang Valley. He was one of the few people to survive the avalanche that devastated Langtang and he sustained only a leg wound. When he was eventually helicoptered out and received medical care no one gave him a tetanus injection. He contracted tetanus and ended up ventilated in ICU. One day, the power went off and staff did not bother to ventilate him by hand, as he was not expected to survive. He did, but was left with a hypoxic brain injury and was referred to MeRO.

Krishna-Hari had a few hospital admissions for pneumonia early on but must be as strong as a yak.... He also had amazing care from MeRO's nurses and physiotherapy from Anjeela. Over the

years, his main caregiver, his father, remained at his bedside 24 hours a day for seven years, hoping and not wanting to miss the day he dreamed of when his son would wake up properly and talk to him. Sadly it never happened. Eventually, his father acquired all the medical, nursing and physiotherapy skills to feel confident in managing his son at home and at last his family were reunited. It was bittersweet.



Samrat and Devindra followed the ambulance which took him and his father back to their village to make sure everything went smoothly. They also had meetings with the District Hospital and village community to facilitate continuity of care and ongoing support for this family.



We hope he recognised his mum and his home and knows he is home.... His father will be so much missed as he played an integral part at the Shelter, and did whatever was necessary, no matter what it was, to help. Family members are so essential in helping with the day to day running and management of this 'home away from home', and Lila was always responsible for the great veggie gardens.

In the beginning, MeRO pledged to support earthquake victims and as always, they have done what they promised. They could not send him home until his family could care for him, and there was no other facility in Nepal for him to go

## OUR NURSE & PHYSIO SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

**If you would like to help sponsor the wages of one of MeRO's nurses or physiotherapist please read on.**

GlobalGiving is matching the first payment of all regular recurring donations under US\$200 which is about AU\$300 until the end of the year. The link is on the donations page of our website. You will also find our account details If you would prefer to set up a fortnightly or monthly direct deposit.

## THANK YOU

As always, we cannot thank you enough for your generosity. If you missed any of our newsletters, you will find them all, along with our annual reports on our website <https://roads-to-rehab-nepal.org/reports>

We would like to take this opportunity to wish you a very merry Christmas and a happy new year. We hope you have a wonderful time celebrating with family and friends, and we wish you all the best for 2024.

Any questions, email us on [info@roads-to-rehab-nepal.org](mailto:info@roads-to-rehab-nepal.org) or contact us via our website [www.roads-to-rehab-nepal.org](http://www.roads-to-rehab-nepal.org)

With best wishes and grateful thanks, from all of us, everyone at MeRO and all their patients and their families for another amazing year of ongoing support and incredible generosity.

Take care,

*Virginia Dixon*

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