

# NCEFYAN

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE NEPALESE CHILDREN'S EDUCATION FUND

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## INTERVIEW WITH OUR VOLUNTEER

Ms. Alina Pokhrel



**gyan:** *n.* knowledge acquired  
by direct perception

## Student selection updates

We are facing unexpected delays in collecting applications this year. Some areas, such as Palpa, have been experiencing unreliable internet access and we have been forced to mail documents using the postal system. Mail in Nepal can take a week or two, or even longer, to arrive. Once the mail is received at our address in Kathmandu, a volunteer will scan it at a cybercafe and email it to the selection committee.

In some cases, the schools are refusing to release the marksheets or taking an unusually long time to release the academic transcripts. Our policy requires that students meet the minimum academic requirement for moving on to the next grade, in addition to their financial eligibility. So we must wait until these transcripts are released and collected before we can finalize our decisions. In those cases where transcripts were collected

without much difficulty, the selection committee has already made their decisions. We hope to finalize all of our decisions by end of June.

## Climb and race to benefit NCEF!

Mr. Brad Parker, a seventh grade teacher at Locke School in Chicago, has raised hundreds of dollars from his class to benefit NCEF as a part of the International Celebration at his school. This July, Brad plans to climb Mt. Whitney with the slogan "Climb for a Cause". From this campaign, he looks forward to raising funds from friends, family, and the NCEF family at large to benefit NCEF and to ultimately provide education to those in need. In the upcoming newsletter, we will describe his plans in detail and how to encourage and support him.

In another fundraising effort, Ms. Leia Barnett is planning to participate in an endurance mountain biking race called "The Big Friggin' Loop" [sic]. The race is held in Santa Fe, New Mexico on July 5th, 2008. The course is 74 mile long and will climb a total of 14,000 feet. Leia seeks donations, pledges and encouragement in her campaign to raise funds to benefit NCEF. More on this in next month's newsletter.

If you can not wait until our next newsletter to start supporting Brad and Leia in their effort to challenge themselves and benefit NCEF, please visit [www.nepalchildren.org/donate](http://www.nepalchildren.org/donate) to send your donations. If you send a check to NCEF, please send your note of encouragement to Brad or Leia with your check. If you donate online, please send us your note and we will forward it to Brad or Leia. Thanks.

## Annual Board Meeting Scheduled

The annual board meeting will take place on June 25, 2008 at 10 PM Eastern Time. A new board for 2008/2009 will be elected during this meeting. We are still seeking nominations from individuals who want to make a difference in the organization. Please consider joining us or if you would like to recommend someone, please get in touch with us.

## NCEF on Facebook

### NCEF Cause

Are you in yet? Join our cause to view new pictures and videos. You can even make donations online and receive announcements.

Number of members: 851

Donations from Cause: \$295

### NCEF Group

Also join our Facebook Group to participate in discussions on different issues and to stay up to date with recent happenings in NCEF.

## ABOUT NCEF

NCEF is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to develop the potential of disadvantaged Nepalese children through education. Need-based scholarships are provided to deserving students who would otherwise be unable to attend school. Our social workers in Nepal meet regularly with the selected children and their parents to assist in each child's development. We dedicate our resources to each NCEF child until they complete high school (twelfth grade).

## Interview with Ms. Alina Pokhrel

Ms. Alina Pokharel is a volunteer in Patan. She recently visited students in Patan and sat with us to share her experience.

### **Q. What motivated you to volunteer with NCEF?**

A. I was waiting for my cousin at Battisputali in front of Dwarika's. A few kids showed up in rags, and started asking for money stating that they hadn't eaten for months and they didn't have the money to pay their fees for the new academic session. I gave them 100 rupees, as that was all I could afford to give them. Unfortunately, I later saw these children sniffing glue from a DDC milk packet. That was when I realized that I wasn't helping them do any better by giving them money. At that time, I was involved with Youth Initiative and Katmandu Animal Treatment Centre, but there was nothing I was doing to seriously help Nepalese kids. Seeking a way to make a meaningful impact on the lives of children, I came across NCEF's website And was excited to join.



### **Q. How has the experience working with NCEF been?**

A. Reading the children's forms, writing and posting their biographies has enlightened me. Learning about the living conditions of many children who do not have access to education, which is supposed to be a basic human right, has motivated me to do something for them. This is one reason why I decided to make field visits. The children I have met are great, and have potential to do big things in the future. I plan on taking some good books and stationeries for them. Additionally, working with NCEF has made me feel good about myself. It feels great to know that you can actually make a difference in somebody else's life in a positive way. However, as a student myself, it has been a challenge at times to balance my volunteer work with school.

### **Q. What difficulties do you face commonly while communicating with NCEF volunteers in the US?**

A. I am fortunate enough to have 24-hour access to the Internet, which allows me to communicate with members of NCEF fairly easily. And thus far, NCEF staff members have replied to all of my queries promptly, motivating me to reply to their questions quickly!

### **Q. What difficulties do you face commonly while interacting with NCEF students and their guardians in your region?**

A. The students and guardians are very friendly in my region, Student guardians are very frank from the get go and in fact, they treat me like a family friend. They're very good people. The students, on the other hand, take more time to open-up, but I find their behavior perfectly normal, as they have every right to be anxious about talking to a new person. Fortunately, only a few interactions are necessary to appease any initial nervousness. Students generally open up after a few meetings, and some students have even asked me to drop in and play carom-board and ping-pong with them. And since some students are my age, I have developed friendships with many of the NCEF students.

**Q . Please describe a memorable moment with children or volunteering.**

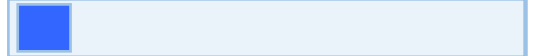
A. My most memorable moment has to be my visit to the Sai Bal Ashram at Hattiban. There was this cute little kid who loved to draw. I had given him some crayons and paper to draw something and we got along very well. When it was his nap-time, he went to bed, giving me a chance to speak with his guardian. His orphanage guardian told me that he was discarded when he was 2 days old at Koteshwor. This story brought tears to my eyes. Hearing his story made me realize how 'low' we humans could get. If the Ashram people hadn't found the child, he would probably have died, and his drawing talent would remain undiscovered! This was when I truly appreciated the efforts of NCEF volunteers and Shaisik Abhiyan, as they were doing whatever they could to care for children with great need. And seeing this small child who had been abandoned being cared for made me realize what a difference we can have.

**Q. What improvements do you think will be beneficial for children?**

A. Regular field visits and timely funds are very important for the children. If funds are not distributed to children before the new academic session, the children are put in a difficult position trying to find alternative means of funding their education. Regular visits are also very important because the children, I believe, need to feel loved and cared for. NCEF volunteers can have an incredible impact by interacting with the students – listening to their problems, playing games with them, sharing our experiences, and teaching them important life skills.

**Q. Could you tell us a little about your background?**

A. My name is Alina Pokhrel, and I am a 16 year old who is trying to make a difference in any way I can. I have been involved with NCEF since September 2007. Since then, I have completed my IGCSE (International General Certificate for Secondary Level - October 2007) and SLC (School Leaving Certificate - March 2008) exams at Rato Bangla School, Patan Dhoka. I have enrolled in a 2-year A Level program at Rato Bangla, and I am taking courses in Sociology, Psychology, Environment Management, Economics, and English Literature. I look forward to being involved with NCEF throughout my life, as I feel NCEF is doing a great job and I really appreciate all the work that it does. I am glad to be a part of an organization with such a noble cause, and look forward to becoming even more active in NCEF in the near future.

**2008 FUNDRAISING METER****MAKING DONATIONS** **Online:**

[www.nepalchildren.org/donation.html](http://www.nepalchildren.org/donation.html)

 **Checks:****Make checks payable to:**

Nepalese Children Education Fund or NCEF

**Mailing address:**

Nepalese Children's Education Fund

P.O. Box 380061

Cambridge, MA 02238-0061

**Questions?**

Website: [www.nepalchildren.org](http://www.nepalchildren.org)

Email: [contact@nepalchildren.org](mailto:contact@nepalchildren.org)

THANK YOU!

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**NCEF PAMPHLET**

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