

# 100 FRIENDS project

April, 2001

Dear Friend,

This is a report from my last trip overseas in the summer of 2000. This was the 5th time I have done the 100 Friends Project. The itinerary was: San Francisco-Holland-Israel-South Africa-Mozambique-India-Nepal-Thailand-Vietnam-San Francisco.



Funds were dispensed during the summer of 2000 in South Africa, India, Nepal and Vietnam. In past trips money distribution was chiefly focused in South Asia. It was really interesting and rewarding to dispense funds in other countries this time.

This summer we will be doing the project in Turkey, India, and Nepal. If you want to contribute to the 100 Friends Project for this summers work, send your contribution to:

**Marc Gold**  
100 Friends Project  
409 Washington Ave.  
Point Richmond, CA 94801  
(510)502-9319 ¥ [marcgold@hotmail.com](mailto:marcgold@hotmail.com)

We will be leaving on June 3, 2001 so if you wish to support the project please send donations as soon as possible. Donations after that date can be sent to the address above. Checks should be made out to Marc Gold. Any amount you can afford is great. We re just glad to have as many people as possible support the project.

## What is the 100 Friends Project?

This project began in 1990. I had a dream about going to India as a boy and then I had the same dream as an adult. When I finally went (and I had no idea exactly why I went there) I met a Tibetan woman in Darjeeling, India, who had raging ear infection and needed a hearing aid. She could not afford treatment because her family income was approximately \$ 600 per year.

I took her to a specialist three hours from her home. The doctor diagnosed her infection and said that, left untreated; she would die from the infection. The antibiotic that cured her cost less than one dollar. A hearing aid that cost \$ 75.00 opened up a world that had been closed to her for years. As long as I live I will never forget the look on her face when I switched on that hearing aid. At that moment I realized that you do not have to be rich to do a world of good. You don t have to be rich; you only need a few good friends to accomplish miracles.

The next time I went to India (1992) I wrote a letter asking one hundred friends, co-workers, relatives and other if they would contribute towards the project. I thought I might raise a couple of hundred dollars. To my great surprise, we raised \$ 2,111 (approximately 67,000 Rupees). We went to several Mother Teresa Centers, pediatric clinics and other places to dispense the funds. Such amazing events occurred! People invited me into their lives and showed me things a tourist would never see. There are so many stories to tell!

Sometimes I just sort of wander around third world countries and I often just happen to meet somebody who really needs some help. They may need medicine for their child, a month s rent, glasses, or funds for medical treatment. This has happened many times over the past five journeys. For example, on February 27, 1992 in Trivandrum, India I just happened to meet a woman who needed money for a heart operation. The cost? \$ 75!

In 1996, I met a priest in Southern India who needed money for 100 pairs of shoes for some orphans he looked after. It cost the project \$ 200. Mission accomplished.

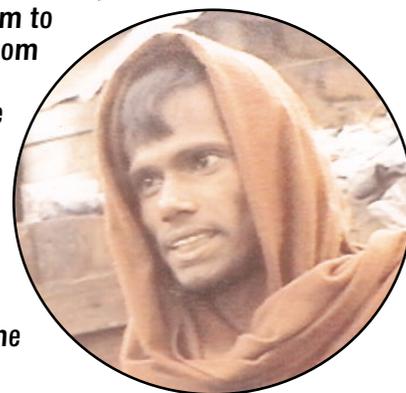
Another time I met a young man with three children who was going to die of TB because he couldn't afford the life-saving medication. \$ 60 saved his life and another \$ 70 put him in business for life! We bought him a huge amount



of supplies from a general store warehouse (pens, pencils, notebooks, paperbacks, nail clippers, hairbrushes, chocolates, etc.) He set up shop right in front of his house in the New Delhi slum. I heard from him again two years later and he has been doing rather well.

I never know how it s all going to turn out. But the donations always seem to get to the right person just in the nick of time. And we really love the almost random nature of meeting someone in incredible need for whom I just happen to have a financial solution. This is a project without any red tape that goes directly into the hands that need it. I pay for my own travel expenses and only a very small amount is used for items such as mailing and printing the newsletters and transportation to remote villages.

There are places where I always donate the project funds because I know the money is well spent such as The Calcutta Children s Rights Development Services. This is an orphanage run by Thierry Damaudet (of France) for 82 street children. Thierry s home really transforms their lives by taking the children off the streets, giving them a loving home, an education and much more.



## 100 Friends Fund Raising by Year

<u>Year</u>	<u>Funds Raised and Dispensed</u>	<u>Total</u>
1992	\$ 2,111	\$ 2,111
1996	\$ 3,367	\$ 5,478
1998	\$ 4,159	\$ 9,637
2000	\$ 2,478	\$ 12,115
2001	(goal = \$ 5,000)	

## Here is the report for 100 Friends Project for the summer of 2000

Your donations contributed to the following:

### June 15, 2000

Capetown, South Africa. We went to visit a township (as in slum) called Mandela Park. We were greeted extremely warmly, especially by the children. We saw the childcare center, the health clinic (where we had a talk with a man with AIDS who was unable to receive any of the treatments enjoyed by those in the West) and the homes of several local people.

Craig Hepburn was the man who arranged the visit to the township. A \$ 400 donation (2,029 Rand) was made for the purpose of job creation (the unemployment rate among Black South Africans is incredibly high). They are now producing wire bicycle trophies, which had been ordered by the Cycling Club Convention in Nelspruit, South Africa during July 2000.

They made a profit of 1000 Rand (\$ 143), which has now been reinvested into more wire, pliers & salaries for two more people from Imizamo Yetho Township. They have subsequently received 2 more large orders that they are currently working on. They hope to make it grow so that more people can find employment.

### July 10-19, 2000

Annapurna Circuit Nepal (\$ 57= 4,246 Nepali Rupees donated to numerous people on hiking trip) I went trekking for 9 days through some of the most beautiful country you can imagine. By some estimates the average income for this part of Nepal is a paltry \$ 194 per year or about 14445 Nepali Rupees per year! As we trekked my guide help me to find needy people.

### July 15, 2000

Thonchu Village on the trail to Manang. Met an old paralyzed Tibetan lady. Her name is Chutter Gorung. She s been paralyzed for 15 years. Her daughter Nanda (single Mom) takes care of her and the baby. The husband abandoned them. We stayed for tea and made a donation just for medicine and food (500 Nepali Rupees=\$ 6.71).



### ← July 15, 2000

Salagari Village on the trail to Manang. Met a lovely couple. He is Bizil Razkelel (Nepali Gurung) and his wife is named Tachun (Tibetan). They have a very small guesthouse where we stayed overnight. They have one child, a 3-year-old boy named Dorje. They also have two adopted daughters. One is named Kalpana (4 years old). I didn t get the older adopted daughter s name.

These two girls lived in the village living in extreme poverty, living only with

their mother (father is unknown). The mother had some form of mental illness, perhaps schizophrenia, and grew completely unable to care for her daughters. When Bizil and Tachun found the girls they were in very poor condition. Even though they are quite poor themselves, they took the girls into their home and more or less adopted them. Made a donation of 3,000 Nepali Rupees (\$ 40.00) for the welfare of the children (warm clothing, doctor visits, school supplies etc.).

### July 17, 2000

Went trekking near the village of Humde on the way to Manang. Met a 65 year old Nepali cowboy who was on a 52 day trip with some cows going to a very remote place called Mustang. The man who owned the cows was paying him a very small sum to deliver the cows to their new owners. He came up to me pleading for me to buy a small necklace so he could buy some food. My guide told me he looked and was desperately poor. He had shoes that we would have discarded a long time ago and no socks (only straw for socks.) He had hardly any teeth as well.

He did have a nice sense of humor and we talked, using my guide as an interpreter. I bought his necklace for 200 Nepali Rupees and then gave him 750 Rupees (\$ 10.00) from the fund. We also gave him some clothing, including a t-shirt from a high tech firm that my girlfriend worked for. He didn't know what a computer was and asked (while pointing to the sky) if it was something like an airplane. He was very grateful and said that the necklace would result in the Buddha watching over me.

### July 21, 2001

Pokhara, Nepal. Went to the local hospital (Western Regional Hospital) and met with counselors and social workers from the Social Work and AIDS Prevention and Care Project. They are also part of the International Nepal Fellowship. We had a long talk and I told them about the 100 Friends Project.

They were very honest and professional and I left \$ 700 from the fund to help people from their caseload in desperate need of assistance. That is a lot of money here (\$1 equals approximately 70 Nepali Rupees so this is almost 50,000 Rupees. You can do a lot with that!)

The fund is being handled as a "revolving loan fund" for the destitute and needy. For example, a 14 year old boy was raped and is now HIV positive. His family is extremely poor (annual income slightly over \$ 230 per year). They will provide a job-training or an income generating program (for example, provide a sewing machine or tools) for the boy and his father. After a year or two they may be able to repay the money (maybe \$ 100 or somewhat more) and then someone else can make use of the funds.

Another client has already started the sewing and cutting training from 14th January 2001. This is a 6-month training. She needs about Nepali Rs. 50,000 for whole training. The 100 Friends Project is providing Rs. 10 000 for purchasing a sewing machine and the rest of the amount will be met by the social work program. The 100 Friends Project will provide some 10,000 rupees to a client named Madan Devi. The vocational assessment for Madan Devi has been already done and she has joined the vocational training in February, 2001. Her late husband infected her with the AIDS virus.

They are providing her with vocational training so she can make and save some money to help support her two young sons after she dies, whenever that comes to pass. I met her and another client as well. They recently emailed me and told me that they still haven't spent all the money donated by 100 Friends and they will keep us informed. →



### July 22, 2000

Donated \$ 7.00 (520 Nepali Rs.) to Kamal Gurung, a client at the Western Regional Hospital to buy books and then resell to make some money for him for general survival purposes.

### July 24, 2000

Calcutta, India. So I always make the primary place for donation the Children's Rights Development Center. This is a home for children who previously were living on the streets of Calcutta. My dear French friend Thierry Darnaudet has been running this program for about 13 years. There are 82 children; about two-thirds of that number is male (because most street kids are male.)

These children have incredibly difficult beginnings in their lives, some arrive as young as 3 years old. Sometimes their parents died or could simply not look after them for a variety of reasons. Sometimes they are abandoned by their parents (who are unable or unwilling to look after them) at the huge Howrah Train Station in Calcutta. Others are runaways from very difficult situations and have been physically or sexually abused.

They are great kids and having been there on five different occasions I know many of them well. They all live

in one building and they have bunk beds, they help with the chores, they go to school, take day trips and it's all sort of one big happy family. Sometimes they run away back to the dangers and excitement of street life, but many have stayed there for years. Some have graduated into adult life and are married with jobs.

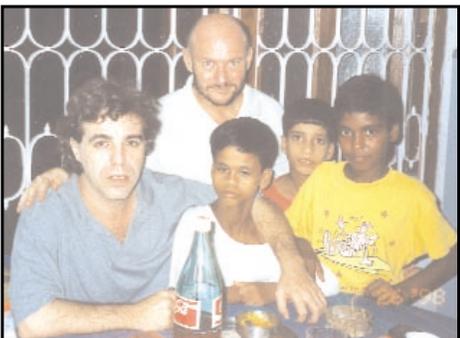
Finances are always touch and go so I make a fairly large donation because I am totally convinced that this is a great cause. It's nice to buy someone a blanket or a meal, but Thierry's program really does transform the lives of these kids. Thierry's program is often in financial difficulty but somehow they manage.

I came at the nick of time because Thierry's project was in severe financial crisis. The electricity had been turned off, they were behind in their rent by several months and bill collectors were hounding them (food, medical expenses, school tuition etc.) A donation of \$1253 (57,638 Rupees) to Thierry's program from 100 Friends gave them several months breathing room. They are in the process of getting about 30-40 people in France who will sponsor some of the children. Hopefully this will provide them some financial stability in the long run.

By now, many of the children know me and they are incredibly sweet and loving, They call me "Uncle" and wrap their arms around me. Lovely! One of the older boys even invited me to his wedding in 2008! I spent a lot of time with the kids and one night Thierry and I stayed up until 6am just talking. I really love this guy..what a gem!



Me, Thierry and the kids!



they will have a bright future. He was very sweet, very grateful. He said to say thank you to the 100 Friends.

### July 25, 2000

Calcutta. Gave 500 Rs. (\$ 11) to Babaloo, a poor cook I know. He is just a nice guy who really, really struggles. The money is basically just a little help to assist him in his daily expenses.

### August 7, 2000

Nha Trang, Vietnam. Today I met a man on the beach off the South China Sea in a resort town about 450 km north of Saigon. He had no legs, but he had a huge smile, spoke some English and he sold me a good book and some postcards, two things I really needed. His name is Tran Thanh Binh but he asked me to call him Iban (ee-bahn). He was a soldier as a young kid in the South Vietnamese Army and while on patrol he stepped on a land mine. Since South Vietnam lost the war, the present government doesn't help him at all, because he was on the losing side. We had a talk about the war, and he said he doesn't blame America for the war. He just feels it was a waste and a tragedy for all sides.

He invited me to his house (tiny, one room apartment). His living conditions were as simple as imaginable. The big luxury item: a transistor radio. Iban told me that he had a brother in the US and asked if I would I help to locate him. I tried but nothing ever came of it. 100 Friends donated 700,000 Vietnamese Dong (worth almost \$ 50.00) towards paying several months back rent (his rent was \$ 11 a month, a lot of money for him), food, and a visit to the doctor because his stump was infected. I met his wife and teenage son. The teenage boy is learning English and Iban feels that if he can learn it well then they will have a bright future. He was very sweet, very grateful. He said to say thank you to the 100 Friends.

Thanks to your generosity...

100 FRIENDS  
project

can continue to help people.