



The Mystic Masala Supports “Maina’s Home for Children” in Nepal

Shelter for displaced children helps victims of conflict and violence, and offers guidance, education and support for the future.

VANCOUVER, BC Canada (Sept. 10, 2008) – The Mystic Masala sells all-natural body bars and massage oils hand-made by **Wild Earth**, a women’s fair trade cooperative in Kathmandu, Nepal. **Glynnis Osher**, CEO and founder of The Mystic Masala, met **Devi Sunawar**, at Wild Earth in January 2007 and was inspired by her courage and profound story. Devi has since left the cooperative to devote her time to the “**Maina Home for Children.**” The Home is intended to help children who are orphaned, forced to be on their own or victims of political conflict or domestic abuse, blossom into their fullest potential in society.

Devi Sunawar’s own family history is filled with tragedy. The Nepali Revolution began in February 1996 and thousands of people, including children have since been killed, illegally detained, raped, or tortured. As a result many children have been left orphaned and homeless. Devi witnessed the execution of her 17-year-old niece, Reena, when Nepali security forces broke into their home. Then in February 2004, when Devi was away at work, **her own 15-year-old daughter Maina was taken away by these same security forces.** Two months after her disappearance, a local newspaper published an anonymous letter stating Maina’s death. Maina had been tortured to death in detention. To this day, despite efforts by the UN Human Rights Commission and other organizations, no one in the Nepali Army has been sentenced.

Maina Sunawar was a social visionary who worked hard in her short life to fight for human rights, and wanted to help children in her community. Devi has created the “**Maina Home for Children**” to carry out Maina’s dreams and to honour her daughter's memory.

With the help of other organizations, Devi has begun to seek victims of conflict to offer them concrete ways of getting back on their feet. The “Maina Home for Children” assists in these essential areas: By rebuilding family relationships or finding a substitute family when that is not possible. By helping to build the child’s professional future through self-discovery of personal aptitudes, and offering an appropriate educational path. By assisting the family and supporting the parents of the child psychologically, professionally and financially. And by seeking the support of the community to encourage local people to be part of this project, helping the children become contributing members of society.

In the long-term the “Maina Home for Children” hopes to tackle some of the larger economic, social and environmental issues linked with the community. As tourism in Dhulikhel expands and “Maina’s” home, already in contact with various tourism groups, wants to provide activities to teach visitors about Nepali culture. Working with the Fair Trade Group of Nepal, they also have plans to sell handicrafts to help raise money for the home and integrate it into the community.

Eco-agriculture also plays a role as “Maina’s” home has concrete plans to become financially independent by teaching the children to grow food for the home, and to sell the surplus to the community. Locally there is a major plastic waste problem riddling rivers and roadsides. The “Maina Home for Children” plans to help establish a local recycling program. The biggest goal for the project is to eventually create “**Maina’s Village for Women and Children.**”, an entire village dedicated to helping not only children, but to offer support and empowerment to women who have suffered abuse in vulnerable situations.

In Vancouver BC The Mystic Masala is committed to supporting the “Maina Home for Children” with funds raised at the annual Diwali event. When Glynnis Osher and Devi Sunawar connected at Wild Earth and Devi's incredible story was revealed, Glynnis knew that she needed to seek out people in her own community to help those living in vulnerable situations in Nepal.

This year’s fundraiser will be held at **Heritage Hall on October 28th** from 7-11pm. In the past, **The Mystic Masala** donated enough money to cover the annual rent for the land and the buildings for the “Maina Home for Children”. **The Mystic Masala hopes to raise even more money this year** to help develop the many crucial projects that will integrate “Maina’s Home for Children” in the community and to achieve financial independence, bringing Maina’s vision to life.

Press Release for The Mystic Masala

Diwali: Tuesday October 28, 2008, 7-11pm, Heritage Hall

For further information contact info@themysticmasala.com