

KAILAKURI HEALTH CARE PROJECT

(Kailakuri & the Mati NGO)

Village Kailakuri, Madhupur Thana, Tangail District, Bangladesh



CHRISTMAS 2015: Edric's Legacy

The four months since Edric's passing has brought its own challenges but the health centre is running well, and we are seeing similar patient numbers. Sr Dr Jenny continues to visit from Dhaka for a few days each month. In this newsletter, Edric's niece Rebecca writes about her visit to Kailakuri, and two of our staff, Salam and Onen, share their stories. We offer our sincere thanks to William Munford, who has offered much-needed assistance to the project since August 2015, especially in Edric's absence, and wish him all the best as he returns to New Zealand this month.

Rebecca's Visit

It was a great privilege to visit the Kailakuri Health Care Project in June this year with my parents, Hilary and Nelson Lynch.

The setting for the project is truly amazing. Both the inpatient and outpatient side have buildings surrounded by trees and flowers providing a very relaxing and peaceful healing environment.



Hilary, Nelson and Rebecca with our Japanese doctor Mariko & our staff member/interpreter Selim (on the right)

The staff and Dr Edric Baker (my uncle) welcomed us with huge smiles as if we were not just part of Edric's family but theirs as well. On each morning at 8.30am we attended the combined prayer, where patients and staff begin the day as they propose to go on, working together with respect and love. I was impressed with how smoothly the hospital ran and the expertise of the paramedics not only in their knowledge but in their rapport with the patients.

We were also impressed by the education that the patients and their support person receive while they wait to be seen. No gossip magazines here, rather education which relates to their illness (e.g. if diabetic, how to inject insulin), as well as general topics (such as how to avoid and treat burns). On two days I travelled by bike with the midwives. There was much laughter and a real sense of care for the patients. I can see why Edric and his team feel that paediatrics is so important.

By teaching the mothers (and often their sisters and friends as they gather around) the health not only of her and the child but the whole family is influenced. Edric commented how basic behavioural change has been brought about in this way (e.g. hand washing before eating) as well as benefits to the wider community (e.g. 100% child immunisation).

The achievements of the Kailakuri Health Care Project are incredible especially considering that most of the staff are previous patients. Perhaps this is why we saw first-hand that they can relate so easily and confidently to those in their care. Visiting the Kailakuri Health Care Project was life changing. It was terrific that we got to spend time with Edric before he passed. He was so thrilled that we had come.

Salam's Story

My name is Abdul Salam. I am 67 years old. My village name is Bhoro Thal. It is one kilometre from the Kailakuri Health Care Project. I started working here in 2008. At the time of my marriage my family's situation was good, and I owned enough land to be able to live comfortably. I have five daughters and two sons. I had to spend a lot of my money marrying off each of my daughters (i.e. paying dowry). At that time I became involved in different court cases that were brought against my land and I lost a lot of my land (unfortunately, false court cases are common in Bangladesh).

Even after my daughters' marriages I still had to provide for eight members of my family. At that time I was their only source of income and we could only afford to eat twice a day. I couldn't afford to buy eggs, fish or meat even once a month. I would do any job day or night but often I couldn't find work, and on these days it was difficult for me to provide food for my family. I could only afford enough food for five people but we had to divide the food amongst eight. I was depressed most of the time. I kept asking myself how could I provide for my family? I was constantly stressed.

In 2008 the Army gifted five cows and built a small bio-gas plant for the Kailakuri Health Care Project. I approached Dr Bhai (Edric Baker) and had a discussion and it was decided I could work at the project. My job was to look after the cows. Since that day I have been working with the project. I provide for seven members of my family now. My youngest son is mentally disabled, my oldest son works as often as he can. Now thanks to my income I am able to provide well for my family.

Like me there are so many staff whose families rely on this project. I believe thanks to the Kailakuri Clinic thousands and thousands of poor patients are able to get treatment.

I pray to God that even with the absence of Dr Bhai, this organisation continues to run as it always has. I ask that those people who helped Kailakuri before continue to help and support us as they did before. To all my Christian brothers and sisters I hope you have a good Christmas day.



Onen Mangsang



My name is Onen Mangsang. I am a Garo Christian and a family man. My village is seven kilometres from Kailakuri.

In 1987 as per the Garo tradition I moved into my mother-in-law's house where my wife lived. My family was very poor. The clinic was close to my home. At that time I worked on other people's land as a day labourer to provide for my family. I had no land to my name and I had three sons to provide for. If you had a problems with your health at that time there was only Thanarbaid clinic. I heard from Leo Bhai (KHCP's village programme leader) that Thanarbaid clinic needed staff at that time.

From the moment he saw me Dr Bhai treated me like family and he gave me a chance to work in the mother-child village health programme. I worked in the village for three years. As time went on I worked in many different departments at Thanarbaid and I learnt a lot.

In 1991, there was a time I will never forget. There was an outbreak of Cholera throughout our community. I heard that there was a woman who lived near to me who was suffering from Cholera. She was so ill that the local villagers thought she would die, that there was nothing to be done and no hope. I explained the situation to Dr Bhai. He decided to bike out and go and see for himself. He realized she was in shock and need treatment as soon as possible. We treated her by administering a Cholera saline drip and once she was strong enough we took her back to the Thanarbaid clinic for further treatment where she was able to slowly recover. At that time we had 70 patients who had Cholera. Some patients came to us too late and died due to Cholera. There was such a shortage of bags of saline that with the help of Dr Bhai we had to create our own saline. I don't think we would have been able to save as many people as we did without the help of Dr Bhai.

In 1994 Dr Bhai came to me and asked, "Is there any land for sale in Kailakuri"? I began to look for land. I found about one acre of land. After purchasing the land Dr Bhai built four small buildings for the purpose of a diabetes rehabilitation centre and for treating tuberculosis. Little by little the Kailakuri Clinic began to treat different kinds of patients with various health issues and we finally became the Kailakuri Health Care Project. Sometimes I was sent to work as a paramedic in the Kailakuri Clinic when Dr Bhai needed me. In 2005 I transferred to Kailakuri as a fulltime staff.

I see our patients as my brothers and sisters and I love working here. When working here at the Kailakuri Clinic I get love, respect and appreciation from our patients and the public. I believe that is thanks to God's blessings that the three religious communities are able to continue to work here in harmony. Dr Bhai passed away leaving a beautiful organisation in our hands. I don't know how the project will continue to run without the support of you. I am praying that you continue to help us.

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WEBSITES

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FACEBOOK www.facebook.com/kailakuri

(Like our Facebook page and receive regular updates)



William alongside many of our staff on the day of his farewell service...

Donations can be made by...

- Paying online through our website via Paypal at <http://sites.google.com/site/kailakurihealth>
- Making a telegraphic transfer (TT) payment to our New Zealand Bank Account (ANZ, Whakatane, New Zealand). Account Name: Kailakuri Health Care Project - Link Group; Account Number: **01 0486 0185024 00**, **SWIFT code ANZ BNZ 22**. Please email Glenn Baker at treasurerkhcp@gmail.com with your donation and contact details.
- If you live in the United States, you can write a cheque to "Asia Connection Inc". Please indicate on a separate note that the donation is for Kailakuri and send to Ted Rose, Treasurer, Asia Connection Inc, 7 Colby St, San Francisco, CA. 94134-1136, and give your contact details for a receipt.

*Thank-you so much for your support.
Our greatest need is gifts towards on-going running costs.*