

An Essex and Suffolk Collaboration: Colchester Nepalese Society's Nepal Earthquake Disaster Relief Effort



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A DISASTER STRIKES NEPAL:

On 25 April 2015, Nepal was struck by a 7.8 magnitude earthquake that decimated rural villages from the epicentre of the Gorkha District and outward. The earthquake killed nearly 9,000 people and injured over 22,000. It became one of the worst recorded natural disasters of the last century that Nepal had ever experienced.

When members Colchester Nepalese Society (CNS) received the terrible news of destruction from various news outlets in the UK, an effort was executed organising a relief effort. CNS is primarily comprised of retired Gurkhas and their families who have settled in the UK.



CNS members with earthquake relief efforts at Ipswich

CNS found it imperative to extend a helping hand to those suffering in the wake of the Nepal earthquake, and in the months of April and May 2015, took to the streets of Colchester, Chelmsford, Ipswich, Lea-on-sea, Southend, Manningtree, and Clacton-On-Sea in an effort to raise funds. Staff from Colchester General Hospital aided with collection buckets. Thanks to collective efforts, CNS managed to collect £26,092.68 to aid in rebuilding the lives of those impacted by the Nepal 2015 earthquake. The response from the public was overwhelming, showing the true generosity of those living in both Essex and Suffolk.

ON SITE - THE RELIEF EFFORT:

Despite the global donations accepted by the Nepalese government, many villages still have yet to receive any aid from them. Many of these villages are comprised of poor and simple Nepalese who have lost everything, with no way to rebuilding their lives again. Grassroots organisations like CNS who travel with funds to directly lead an effort to rebuild on-site is the only means of relief these people will ever see.

Results of relief efforts are never immediately apparent, as time is required to raise and disburse funds in order to effectively create a plan of action for recovery and reconstruction. CNS is pleased to report that in the years since the earthquake, the relief efforts have gone toward rebuilding schools in the Lapu and Sourpaani Villages in Gorkha, Nepal through the leadership of CNS members on site. Although the recovery efforts have been slower than originally anticipated, the construction of these new schools stand as evidence to prove that all charitable efforts are being put to good use.

COLCHESTER NEPALESE SOCIETY DONATIONS AND PAYMENTS RECORD:

Debits/Credits	Donation
Total Collection in Essex and Suffolk	£26,092.68
Total Spent for Street Collection Prep (making banners, leaflets, hiring halls)	£850.63
Total spent for 60 boxes of clothing sent to Nepal (cargo + airport tax)	£1,920.92
Donation to Shree Himalaya High (Secondary) School	£14,621.00
Donation to Shree Shanti Primary School (to be paid)	£4,929.00
Total Donations Paid	£22,321.55
Total Donations Remaining (£26092.68 - £22,321,55) =	£3,771.73

CNS has donated £14,621,00 to rebuild Shree Himalaya High (Secondary) School in Sourpaani Village, and a further £4,929.00 to Shree Shanti Primary School in Lapu Village. All donations have gone toward paying for materials and skilled workers, with labour provided by local villagers. All remaining funds will be used toward recovery and development work toward rebuilding the Girl's Hostel in Lapu Village.

Despite the various barriers we encountered, CNS eventually delivered 60 boxes of donated clothing to earthquake victims.

RELIEF EFFORTS IN GORKHA, NEPAL:



Temporary boy's hostel at Lapu Village



Community-led construction of
Shree Shanti Primary School in
Lapu Village



Reconstruction of Shree
Himalaya High (Secondary)
School in Sourpanni Village



Aftermath of Nepal 2015 Earthquake:
Shree Himalaya High (Secondary)
School in Sourpanni village



Donated clothes from Essex
and Suffolk distributed amongst
thankful villagers

COLCHESTER NEPALESE SOCIETY PRESS RELEASE DAY:

Despite the extreme weather conditions, CNS held its Press Release event on 28 February 2018. The programme began through the welcoming of former MP and High Sheriff of Colchester Sir Bob Russell, amongst other Councillors, CEOs of NGOs, members of CNS and members of local media.

Chairman of CNS, Mr Udai Bahadur Gurung MBE, expressed thankfulness toward the generosity of local residents, through which so many children affected in remote villages now have the opportunity to return to school and continue their education. Captain Umesh Pun MVO introduced his work on the Lapu Village, and Staff Sergeant (Retired) Kumar Shrestha presented the progress of the school project led in Sourpaani Village. Both presentations provided comprehensive illustrations, to completely relay all happenings and intentions of reconstruction and rejuvenation. Captain Umesh Pun MVO will be returning to Nepal to oversee the rebuilding of Girl's Hostel in Lapu Village. Unfortunately, due to the treacherous weather conditions, the Mayor and Mayoress of Colchester, along with media outlets ITV East Anglia, BFBS Gurkha Radio and BFBS Colchester were unable to attend.

CNS Press Release Day was successful in providing transparency to the public on how donations have benefitted the lives of those affected by the 2015 Nepal Earthquake. The difference made by the people of Essex and Suffolk will be felt for years to come. Through the rebuilding of these schools, the people of Essex and Suffolk have invested in the future of Gorkha, creating a lasting legacy in the villages of Lapu and Sourpanni. If you ever happen to visit, we encourage you to feel pride in knowing that your legacy will forever exist there.

Sir Bob Russell has expressed his sincerity toward the relief efforts conducted by CNS and local peoples from Essex and Suffolk.

We, the Colchester Nepalese Society, thank you for your support and hope that you will continue to support us and our ongoing relief efforts into the future.

By Staff Sergeant (Retired) Kumar Shrestha
Media and Spokesperson
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