



Co-investment Project
Hope Partnership Nepal and
Kathmandu Animal Treatment Centre
June-July, 2009



How One Dog Lover Is Changing a City

By Carolyn Rafferty



Top: Founder, Jan Salter with mascot, Mango. Middle: 2 KAT staff members bathe and treat a street dog with mange, an easily treatable yet highly contagious disease that plagues many of Kathmandu's dog population. Bottom: Staff and volunteers grab their favorite dogs to pose behind a table full of medication donated by veterinarian Dr. Park.

June 20th, 2009 marked my fourth visit to Kathmandu in five years. I had dreamed of this return and was excited to share the exotic wonders of Nepal with the team who had joined our first Friendship Trek. In preparation for the trip together I had tried to be honest about both my fascination with Kathmandu as well as its harsh realities. I was emotionally prepared for the return but how would the first time visitors on our team react?

I had warned them that one of the most evident signs of the extreme poverty is the thousands of stray dogs that live throughout the city. Everywhere you go, they are wandering through piles of trash looking for food, huddling in doorways, many of them starving and suffering horrible mange and other diseases or injuries. These sick dogs live in and around the homes of families, outside where children play. For me this was a heartbreaking sight, both the sick and dying animals as well as the potential health hazards to the children who interact with them on a daily basis. On my previous trips, I believed that dealing with these issues in a humane way was an insurmountable problem.

During the final weeks of my last visit to Kathmandu, in the spring of 2006, I met a woman who saw the same horrors I did, but made it her life's work to address the problem. Starting with one sick puppy, Jan Salter built the Kathmandu Animal Treatment Centre and began to tackle the problems of disease and over-population in Kathmandu's canine community. I had stayed in touch with Jan over the last three years and knew that her work throughout the Kathmandu Valley was continuing but I still wasn't prepared for the evidence of the efforts of her team at KAT.

As our Friendship Trek team walked out of the airport to our hotel van we were hit with the hu-



Left: Jan enters Bal Mandir, the government-run orphanage in Kathmandu, with Mango and Tara, two rescued street dogs. This therapeutic dog program was designed to enrich the lives of children living at Bal Mandir, as well as provide education regarding the humane treatment of animals. Middle: Carolyn introduces Tara to three of the children. Right: Delighted children play with Tara.

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mid smoggy air that settles over the whole Kathmandu Valley. On the drive through the city I was excitedly pointing out the various sights to our new comers, reveling in the joy of being back in my favorite city. As we neared my old neighborhood of Lazimpat, I had a sense that something was different but my jet-lagged mind couldn't put it into words. The next morning as we were walking around our neighborhood, it seemed to hit all of us at once. Where were the dogs? The few we saw were well groomed and healthy, not a case of mange in sight. My old neighborhood had been transformed!

The next day we took the whole group to visit the KAT offices and introduce them to Jan Salter. What a joy it was to thank her for the difference she had made in the health and well being of both the human and canine residents of major sections of the Kathmandu Valley. In only five years she and her team had dramatically reduced the dog population through an organized spay and neutering program as well as treating other serious animal health issues. By addressing these issues she has improved the quality of life for both residents and visitors in the Kathmandu Valley. There remain areas that are still over-populated with stray dogs, but wherever the KAT team has targeted, there is significant and visible improvement in the standard of living.

As I was privileged to spend more time at KAT, I discovered more projects Jan has taken on. Among them is a pet therapy program she is conducting at the large government run children's home in Kathmandu. Amazingly, the first puppy Jan rescued, Mango, has grown into a beautiful shaggy haired dog who loves to be with people. Mango and her canine colleague Tara, a paraplegic dog who bounces around on her bottom steadying herself with her two good legs, have become regular visitors to the children at Bal Mandir. Upon seeing them there are delighted shouts of



Carmen Berry presents Dr. Park from West Foothill Animal Hospital in Glendora, CA with an award of appreciation for donating over \$4,000 in vet medical supplies to KAT through Friendship Trek 2009.

CAROLYN RAFFERTY SERVES AS TREASURER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF HOPE PARTNERSHIP NEPAL. HER PARTICIPATION IN THE FRIENDSHIP TREK 2009 MARKS HER FOURTH TRIP TO NEPAL. A PROFESSIONAL VIDEOGRAPHER AND PHOTOGRAPHER, CAROLYN COMBINES HER PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE WITH HER LOVE OF NEPAL THROUGH HPN. SHE OWNS A MEDIA PRODUCTION COMPANY CALLED RED BOOTS MEDIA.

