

NEWS

November 30th, 2011

from:

MUSSOORIE GRAMIN VIKAS SAMITI
of the Christian Retreat & Study Centre, Mussoorie

Dear Friends,

Greetings from MGVS!

It is a joy, as it is always, to write to you and share news of progress here at MGVS. Your continued support has changed the lives of so many more marginalized families living in remote communities of Garhwal, this year, and we have included a few of the highlights in this newsletter for you.

This past year we suffered the loss of our mentor, MGVS Founder, Rev. R. C. Alter, when he passed away on the 19th of June. The foundation Rev. Alter laid for helping people with respect and understanding has shaped our work as well as our lives. We are so blessed to have been part of the vision and life of such a wonderful man and friend. We will always miss him. The honor of upholding Rev. Alter's sincere aim to uplift those in need, in these parts of the Himalayas, together with all of you, is one that I find difficult to put into words.

If you are interested in learning more about our sustainable development program, please don't hesitate to contact us. It will be our pleasure to send you a copy of our Annual Report and answer any questions. Please take note of our new address, as the MGVS Office has also moved this year, (after seventeen years!):

**Mussoorie Gramin Vikas Samiti,
Springview, Landour,
Mussoorie - 248179,
Uttarakhand, India.**


Our phone number and e-mail address remain the same:

Ph: 0135-263-1437

e-mail: mgvs1@vsnl.com

The MGVS Team joins me in wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

With kind regards,



Surender Singh
Coordinator, MGVS

Understanding Disability – A Beginning

On April 21st, 2010, Beemal Gaud of Village Suwakholi joined Kaplani School, along with his friend and interpreter, Pravesh Negi. Pravesh has been in school with Bimal since Kindergarten, making it possible for Beemal to study in seventh grade this year through the use of a sign language the two boys created in early childhood. By November 2010, Kaplani School staff arranged visits to three government disability camps and the Doon Hospital for Beemal, so that his family is now receiving a government pension of Rs. 300/- per month. Beemal's academic performance is average, but he is able to read and write in both English and Hindi.



Pravesh (Left) & Beemal (Right) of Suwakholi at Kaplani School - Oct/11

MGVS efforts to understand and improve the quality of life of disabled persons are also underway in the Naugun Patti area. Beginning in April, 2010, a total of sixty-six families with disabled persons, across fourteen villages, were interviewed at least twice. In December, 2010, MGVS Community Organizer, Dharendra Rawat, and MGVS Health Staff, Raj Kumar, attended a workshop on Disability, organized by the *Community Health Global Network - Himalayan Cluster*, in Dehradun, where they had an opportunity to meet and share ideas and information with 40 other NGOs of Uttarakhand. Following the workshop, Dharendra and Raj shared what they had learned about disability, govt. and non-govt. schemes with the rest of the MGVS team. From February to September of this year, the MGVS Staff then shared, and explained the contents of, a copy of a small information booklet (in Hindi), which MGVS had obtained from the *Latika Roy Foundation, Dehradun*, with each of these sixty-six families, so that they are now aware of national as well as local government and some non-government schemes/services available to them. Follow-ups with each family are ongoing.

Contributions can be made **directly to MGVS** in India. Make checks **payable to:** "Mussoorie Gramin Vikas Samiti." **Mail to:** Mr. Surender Singh / Mussoorie Gramin Vikas Samiti / Springview, Landour, / Mussoorie - 248179, Uttarakhand, India. (Bank drafts / checks should be sent by registered mail.)

For **tax deductible donations in the USA** make checks

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Mail to: MGVS-FEED / c/o Chris Petrak / 408 Dover Road / South Newfane, VT 05351

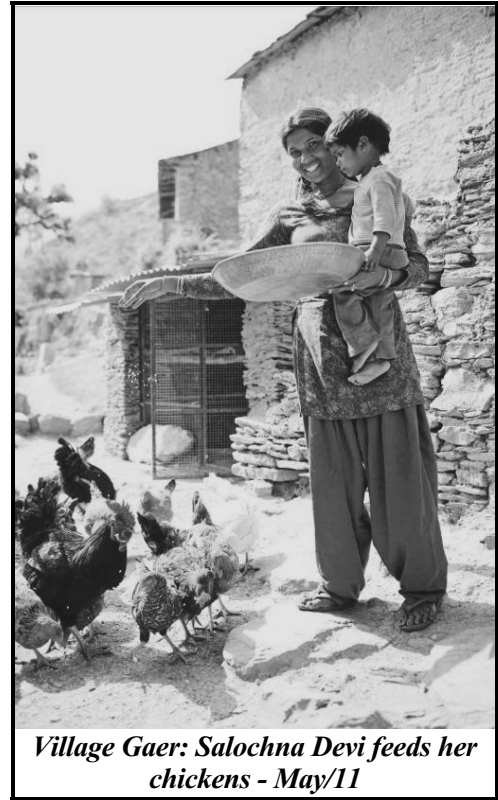
The MGVS Newsletter is prepared by Surender Singh, Coordinator, from the office of MGVS in Mussoorie, India. It is sent by e-mail to the United States where it is duplicated and mailed by friends of MGVS in Wooster, Ohio, Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, and Newfane, Vermont. The newsletter is also available in "pdf" format. It can be downloaded from the MGVS News website: www.mgvsnews.org.

The mailing list is maintained by Chris Petrak, 408 Dover Road, South Newfane, VT 05351. E-mail: chrsptrk@svcable.net. Please report additions, corrections, or deletions to Chris. If you would like to receive an e-mail notice instead of, or in addition to, the regular mailing, please send your request to Chris Petrak: chrsptrk@svcable.net.

Small Scale Poultry Businesses Make Change

There are four people in the Das family: Chaepku Das and his wife Kanta Devi live together in Village Bayaar with their younger son who is in school; their elder son has left the valley in search of work. The Das family lives in a two room house with electricity, but no running water. MGVS had been working with Chaepku Das' family to ensure that their documents are in order so that the family may access relevant govt. benefits for poor families, but this is not enough keep the family out of debt. So, Chaepku Das decided to start a poultry unit with MGVS assistance in July, 2010 after he had attended an MGVS training, along with nine other poor farmers, on how to run a small scale poultry business in June 2010. Chaepku and Kanta started out with 22 chicks. Four chicks died, but from the eighteen that survived, the family was able to sell 9 chickens and earn Rs. 1800/-. Chaepku and his wife then decided to put their earnings into three goats at Rs. 5500/-, and with Rs. 1000/- as a down payment they were able to arrange the purchase. Today the family is raising 9 chickens and their goats have multiplied to eight!

Bhim Das and Salochna Devi have four small children, and they too live in a two room house, in Village Gaer. They decided to start a poultry unit with MGVS assistance in July, 2010, with 27 chicks. Seven chicks died, and from the twenty that survived, the family sold 11 chickens and earned Rs. 3025/-. Bhim Das was encouraged by the success of the business and so on November 2nd, 2010, he purchased 29 more chicks through a government scheme, at Rs. 15/- each. He adjusted space for the new chicks in the poultry house MGVS had helped him build, by fitting in wooden planksto make another storey: the chicks were placed above. In July, 2011 the business earned Rs. 6,200/-. Currently, Bhim Das is working on building another chicken house, and his family is eating the eggs laid by four hens. Salochna and Bhim have opened savings accounts for each of their children and they are depositing what they can each month. MGVS has also ensured that Mr. Bhim Das is accessing his right to 100 days employment through the *MANREGA* scheme. The poultry business is ideal for their family, says Salochna, who needs to stay close to home with the children when her husband is away at work.



Village Gaer: Salochna Devi feeds her chickens - May/11