

ETC Nepal Tour & Trek

“Exceptional experience in every way.”

November 2023 Tour & Trek:



Last fall’s ETC fundraising trip to Nepal, led by ETC board member Barbara Butterworth and Mike Gill, was a definitive success! The group of 15 from throughout the U.S., ranging in age from 60-80 years, were a cohesive and harmonious group, easily establishing a connection with one another and an immense appreciation for their trip leaders as they traversed a series of adventures.*

Starting in ancient Bhaktapur in Kathmandu valley, they traveled to Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve to see birds and elephants. From there they visited ETC’s current project area where they observed women’s group meetings, kitchen gardens, and schools, as well as examples of ETC-supported toilet-building. The group expressed how uplifting and impressive it was to see the work ETC does with so few resources.

Next was a long drive to Bhojpur for the 5-day trek. In reaching elevations as high as 3,333 meters, some group members found the trek very demanding, but they were able to manage it and everyone found awakening to the breathtaking views of the Himalayas to be more than worth the challenge.

They enjoyed continued views of the Himalayas as they flew back to Kathmandu, and ended the trip in the historic city of Patan on the occasion of Lakshmi Puja, when families invite the Goddess Lakshmi to bring them good luck for the coming year. *As the trip participants reflected on their recent experiences and absorbed the fun and vibrant Nepali festivities, they all felt that good fortune had already come their way!*

*in partnership with Nepal Sanctuary Treks

*“Each part of the tour was amazing. The visits to ETC projects and women’s groups is **something that no other tour can provide.**”*

*“The Women’s Group saving and lending circle was **powerful to experience...** **impact on these women’s lives** and by extension, their families, is tremendous.”*

*“A local council member told us that 18 months ago they would not have been able to look a stranger in the eyes and say their names. **My entire concept of what empowerment means changed in that moment.**”*

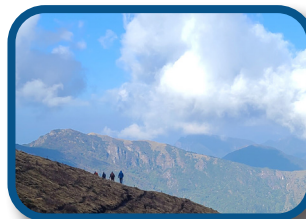
*“ETC is so finely tuned into communities/individuals who need assistance. Your granular on-the-ground **presence through your staff is inspiring.**”*

*“The trip was **very well thought out**, giving the participants varied experiences. It was impeccably organized. **The day at ETC was the highlight...**all of activities of the trip were wonderful!”*

*“Thank you a million for your work creating **a truly memorable trip.** We were really touched by our experiences with the ETC projects... All the other components of the trip were also about perfect. We enjoyed our co-travelers so much, and **Mike and Barbara were amazing trip leaders.**”*

*“Mike and Barbara were wonderful, our co-travelers were great, guides and cooks on trek great, ETC staffers so nice and helpful... **people were welcoming beyond belief.** A million thanks!”*

*“An **extraordinary opportunity** to immerse yourself in a country with a rich traditional culture and fantastic ‘eco-tourism’ venues.”*



UPCOMING Nov 2024 Tour/Trek and beyond:

In November 2024, ETC is offering another special travel experience in partnership with Nepal Sanctuary Treks, led by Beth Prentice, ETC U.S. Board President – this trip filled via word-of-mouth before it was even made public!

Participants will journey from the cultural and architectural sites of ancient cities in the Kathmandu Valley to modest and remote villages, and from the low plains along the Indian border up into what Nepalis call “the Middle Hills.”

The group will stay at a wildlife reserve on a major river and again visit ETC’s untouristed current working villages to meet ETC project staff and women’s group members, visit schools and farms, and see firsthand what ETC does and why it is so effective. From there they’ll embark on a trekking circuit offering spectacular views of the Himalayan range and a variety of marvelous vistas as they hike through forests and meadows and along ridgelines, rivers, and hilltops.

We are likely to offer similar trip opportunities in the coming years, with adjustments unique to each adventure. Please e-mail lisa.lyons@etc-nepal.org if you would like to be among the first informed when more information becomes available.



When “Someday” Arrives: The Trip of a Lifetime



One couple who joined ETC's 2023 excursion to Nepal had a uniquely extraordinary experience! In the early 1990s, Leni worked next to ETC's Ithaca office and connected with Pamela Carson, ETC's founder. Leni and her husband, Tim, decided to sponsor a sister and brother, Januka and Rameshwor. Leni and Tim loved the letters, drawings, and updates they received from the children, and Januka and Rameshwor thought fondly of their sponsors from the moment they used the first pencil from their ETC-provided school supplies. They felt a special bond, but lost touch when the children graduated from primary school and ETC moved to a different project area.

Leni and Tim continued to support ETC's program and years later heard news that Januka was the first "ETC graduate" to become a teacher, but when Leni inquired she was told it wasn't possible to contact her. [Astonishingly, Leni discovered that Januka had made similar efforts to try to find her by asking at ETC's Nepal office.] Then in 2017, Mira, the long-time (and recently-retired) executive director of ETC Nepal, spoke at a fundraiser in Ithaca. Leni attended and asked Mira if she happened to know Januka or Rameshwor, and to Leni's amazement she knew Januka and agreed to help connect them! Mira forwarded an email from Leni and Tim to Januka, and soon afterward they received a lengthy email update from her.

Januka was overjoyed to hear from them! Though sadly, Rameshwor had died in a bus accident, Januka's life was going remarkably well. She was happy to share that she was married with two children and had a good job teaching English, and said that although her mother did her best even if she herself had to go without, ETC and Leni/Tim had given her life-changing opportunities she wouldn't otherwise have had. They became Facebook friends and communicated regularly, and Januka frequently asked Leni

and Tim to visit her in Nepal. Their response was always "hopefully, someday"... until Leni read in an ETC newsletter about the two-week fundraising trip to Nepal, and she and Tim decided that "someday" had finally come! They committed to the tour and made plans to spend a week with Januka and her family afterward.

Like everyone else, Leni and Tim had an incredible time during the ETC trip and were so busy and captivated by all that they saw and did that they had little time to dwell on their excitement over the approaching visit with Januka and her family. But at the end of the tour, the long-awaited day arrived at last when Januka met them at their hotel for a tearful and joyous meeting.

Januka first took Leni and Tim to her mother's village, then on to her home where her husband, Dinesh, warmly welcomed them and the children immediately began calling them "Grandma and Grandpa." Leni and Tim were elated to see how well Januka's life had progressed. She and her husband treat each other as equal partners and own a house together in a nice neighborhood, and she loves her job as a public school teacher. Januka and her family were delighted and proud to display the beauty of their region to Leni and Tim as they showed them around, and even brought them to meet Dinesh's parents who treated them as long-lost family.

It was incredible for people from such different cultures to so quickly and deeply connect, decades after becoming known to each other via a seemingly inconsequential manner. Yet they all felt the experience was a dream come true, bonding them for the rest of their lives. After Leni and Tim returned to the U.S., Januka wrote to them to express that "their sacred relationship will remain strong forever," and her gratitude:

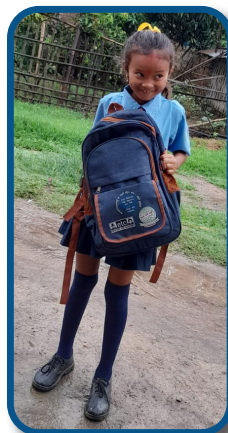
"Thank you so much for coming to Nepal and fulfilling my wish by making me your daughter. Thank you for all the gifts you have given me."



Above: Leni, Januka, & Tim; Januka w/some of her students
Below: Leni & Tim w/Januka, Dinesh, & "grandkids"



More on SPONSORSHIPS...



Leni and Tim's connection with Januka was certainly one-of-a-kind, but many of our Children's Education sponsors have expressed how happy it makes them to hear from "their" kids, and we know from the photos of their beaming faces that every child feels special when they receive their sponsorship-supported school uniform and supplies from ETC. You too can have a tremendous impact on a child or women's group, or pre-primary classroom – by becoming a sponsor! Annual rates are \$275 for Children's Education, \$600 for Women's Group, and \$1,000 for Pre-Primary Classroom sponsorships, and we are grateful for a minimum 3-year commitment to ensure continuity for the beneficiaries.

For more information go to: www.etc-nepal.org/become-a-sponsor/