

inTouch

Official Magazine of The Leprosy Mission New Zealand

Issue 452 / Autumn 2023

Cure One Update

Youth Advocates 2024



The Leprosy
Mission
New Zealand

Te Mihana Tūwhenua o Aotearoa

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Welcome

Welcome to your Autumn edition of *inTouch*!

Inside you will find wonderfully uplifting stories of lives that have been transformed forever thanks to your love and compassion.

I want to say a heartfelt thank you for the wonderful support you have shown in this past year. Recently, I've been praying for you and everyone who continues to bless people affected by leprosy despite personal financial difficulties.

I am blessed and humbled to be able to journey with incredible supporters like you and our partners around the world to cure, care for and restore the lives of people affected by leprosy, and continue our fight against this age-old disease, to reach our goal of *No Child with Leprosy by 2035*.

The cost of living crisis has greatly impacted people across New Zealand. I know that for some it means a very real struggle as you make careful choices to pay for everything. The Bible tells us of 'Jehovah Jireh' – the Lord who provides. And here at the Leprosy Mission, we are trusting that Jehovah Jireh will meet all your needs.

Our staff team meets at 9.00am every morning to thank God for you, as well as pray for the work you enable around the world.

If you are worried at this time and would like some prayer for peace, or for anything else, we'd love the opportunity to pray with you.

Please feel free to get in touch by calling us at 0800 862 873 or email supporterservice@leprosymission.org.nz

God bless,



Gillian Whitley
Executive Director



Cover Photo: Image of Luthfar and her granddaughter from Bangladesh who were featured in Really Good Gifts Christmas Appeal in 2022.

The Leprosy Mission New Zealand Incorporated is a Registered Charity Number CC37638

Following Jesus Christ, The Leprosy Mission New Zealand seeks to bring about transformation; breaking the chains of leprosy, empowering people to attain healing, dignity and life in all its fullness.

inTouch is published twice a year by The Leprosy Mission New Zealand.

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Thank you to Bishal Ghimire, Bruce Millar, Callum Hammond, Daniel Christians, Dene, Hannah Davey and Kate Grant, Tom Bradley for the amazing photos we feature.

Maya's Cure One Journey



Cured by you!

Do you remember Maya? A young girl from Nepal whose life has been devastated by the ancient disease.

Leprosy has scarred 7 year old Maya's face and deformed her fingers. Maya and her family faced discrimination from the community that forced Maya to leave school. She was no longer able to see her friends.

Worse still, a natural catastrophe has destroyed the home of defenceless Maya and her family.

In the face of these terrible troubles, God is bringing hope and healing to the most vulnerable and in desperate need, like little Maya and her family... through the support from kind Leprosy Mission supporters like you.

Maya was referred to a Leprosy Mission clinic nearby where she was diagnosed with leprosy. She was put on the much needed multi-drug therapy to cure her leprosy.

Thankfully, with the supervision of the clinic staff, she has completed her full course of multi-drug therapy. **Maya is cured of leprosy – thanks to you!**



Cared for by you!

With your loving support and the expert care at the Leprosy Mission clinic, Maya learned to take care of her wounds to prevent infections. She also receives physiotherapy to make sure her hands will not claw further.

"Now I am very happy. I can one day go back to school and play with my friends."

Maya's dream is to go back to school and play with her friends. Together, we can give Maya a new lease of life. Thank you for caring for children affected by leprosy like Maya.



"If the Leprosy Mission was not there, my child's symptoms would have gotten worse. I was scared she might die. I would like to say thank you to all people who helped her," says Maya's mother.

Maya's next step

Through the Cure One Programme, Maya's mother can be part of a Leprosy Mission self-help group. She will be able to receive a small loan to start up her own business and earn a living. Maya can have the opportunity to receive reconstructive surgery to correct the clawing of her hands. She will be able to play with her friends and flourish at school.

Thank you for being part of Maya's story. The regular commitment of supporters like you allows us to follow up and ensure people affected by leprosy like Maya are not forgotten. Your love and kindness help bring light and hope into Maya's life.

If you would like to become a Cure One Supporter, please visit cureone.org.nz or contact Diane on 0800 862 873 or email diane.simpson@leprosymission.org.nz

Your *Love* Reaches Out

With your support, the Leprosy Mission NZ was able to work in some of the poorest and remote areas in the world. We work hand-in-hand with governments, local communities, partner health organisations, the World Health Organisation, and many others to provide and evaluate a range of different projects in 9 key locations around the world.



Your Love in Action in *Timor Leste*

With your faithful support, we are partnering with the NZ Government to start a new project in Timor Leste. This new project is called **Preventative Health and Community Empowerment (PHACE) Programme**. Using our successful project in Bougainville as a model, taking a holistic approach to improve the overall wellbeing of communities in Timor Leste.

Through PHACE, in Timor Leste, we are able to

- Strengthen the communication and health referral to community health centres
- Give out information on Covid-19 vaccinations to the wider communities
- Run awareness raising programmes to educate people about leprosy and other diseases
- Go on-air on local radio shows to raise awareness for gender-based violence
- 42 community health volunteers have been trained on knowledge about leprosy and other preventative health



"I am now motivated to stop leprosy from affecting people so they can enjoy their life without fear- like I did," said Antonio.

Antonio's leprosy started with some numb patches on his skin.

"I didn't understand what this illness was. I didn't know that treatment was available".

Through Leprosy Mission Timor Leste's economic development projects Antonio was able to join a self-help group where he developed friendships with other people affected by leprosy.

Antonio was also able to join a self-help group where he developed friendships with other people affected by leprosy. He received a little loan and bought a pig. This pig has since had 8 piglets! He has been able to sell off the piglets, and used the money to support his children to attend school and buy better food for his family.



Antonio happy looking after his piglets.

Lives Transformed

Thanks to you!



The journey from leprosy is often a hard road travelled, but thanks to wonderful supporters like you, people like Satendra and Luthfar can be released from the shadows.

Restoring a Future for Satendra

Over the last year, we have shared with you Satendra's journey of being **cured**, **cared for** and **restored**.

With your ongoing support, Satendra received the much-needed multi-drug therapy to cure his leprosy at Anandaban Hospital in Nepal.

The psychological impacts of leprosy often are as devastating as physical pain. This put Satendra in a very dark place and he almost took his own life.

Thankfully, Satendra met with the hospital counsellor regularly. He was encouraged to hope and dream again. He is now back with extended family.



Satendra with his 2 nieces

Satendra's biggest dream is to set up his own grocery shop.

Your love and compassion has helped release the first instalment for Satendra to build his shop.



Satendra has gathered some raw materials to build his dream grocery shop.

At the moment, there are no shops in Satendra's village of a growing community of more than 150 houses. People in the community have to travel for more than a kilometer to get to the nearest store.

Being able to set up a grocery shop not only benefits Satendra and his family, but also his wider community.

Now there is a glint in Satendra's eyes. He can start to build a business and a positive future for his extended family.

From washing powder, snacks, hygiene products to other household products... Satendra's grocery shop will sell everything that the community needs.

 Thank you for making Satendra's dream come alive!

Good News of Peace for Luthfar



"For You have been my help, and in the shadow of Your wings I sing for joy."

Psalm 63:7

Luthfar could only dream of earning a living, because of you, she now has a successful business.



Luthfar bought some pigeons which she now raises and sells locally.



Luthfar was only 12 years old when she noticed strange patches on her arm. She was diagnosed with leprosy. She married but sadly, before she had her first child, she began to lose sensation in her hands. Within a few years, she had lost several fingers.

Luthfar was forced to stop going out to work and she struggled to take care of her children.

Thank you for your kind support and the incredible response to our Really Good Gifts Christmas appeal last year. Luthfar received help from the local Leprosy Mission team in Bangladesh to cure her leprosy. She was also able to join a self-help group where she took a small loan. With this loan she set up a business of breeding pigeons.



Your support is a lifeline to Luthfar and her family in Bangladesh!

Her pigeon business is thriving and she's able to support her young family through education and ensure future generations have the best start in life - all thanks to wonderful supporters like you.

Confidence to speak up for others

When Luthfar was suffering with leprosy, her neighbours refused to help or even talk to her because of her leprosy. She understands first hand the feeling of rejection and helplessness.

Despite the pain she has gone through, Luthfar's heart is full of love and she advocates for and helps others who are affected by leprosy in her community.

Luthfar started attending workshops about leprosy and is trying to share the knowledge with people in her community that leprosy is not a curse and it is not something to be afraid of.

She educates other people affected by leprosy about the importance of early diagnosis and encourages them to speak up and seek help.

Because of you, Luthfar's life has undergone this radical transformation - thank you!

Youth Advocate Scholarships for 2024 are Now Open!

Connecting young people to our mission is something we do with great joy. We are moved and humbled by the incredible young people that come with us every year to witness our work and experience the wonder of Nepal. The dedication that follows the visit is inspirational, as they give their time and heart to fundraise. If you know of any suitable applicants in your church or family, please encourage them to apply!

Due to the global pandemic, we had to suspend our Youth Advocate Scholarship Programme for the last 3 years. But we have good news for you – **the Youth Advocate Scholarship is back in 2024!**

Each year, we choose a group of enthusiastic young people (18-24 years old) to become advocates for the vital work we do with people affected by leprosy and their families.

A mission trip to Nepal in early 2024 – will you join us?

The Leprosy Mission New Zealand's Youth Advocate Scholarships enable students with a passion for overseas missions to experience the work of the Leprosy Mission, learn about the causes and consequences of leprosy, share time with people affected by leprosy and raise awareness and funding for Leprosy Mission projects.

This is a life-changing opportunity that will shift your perspective on what is truly important, whilst you make some amazing friends along the way.

During the trip, you will meet with those affected by leprosy and talented staff team at Anandaban Hospital, visit community self-help groups, complete a two-night trek in Nepal, and possibly even watch a reconstructive surgery take place (actually in the theatre!).

Take a leap of faith, apply for the Youth Advocate Scholarship and be prepared to make a difference for people affected by leprosy in one of the most remote regions of the world.

Come with us in 2024!

For more information, and to apply, go to leprosymission.org.nz/youth-advocates



2020 Youth Advocates in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Reflections from a 2017 Youth Advocate...



Callum, 2017 Youth Advocate

I went to medical school because I was captured by the vision of using medicine to serve Jesus by helping those most in need, in New Zealand and worldwide.

While in my second year of medical school, I was selected as one of the Leprosy Mission's 2017 Youth Advocates. I was very grateful to receive this scholarship – I learnt about leprosy, raised funds to support those with leprosy in Nepal, and saw how God is moving, all at the same time.

Cherished memories from that trip include nearly fainting as it was my first time ever in an operating room!



But most of all, I remember the excitement of seeing how treating a neglected disease like leprosy combats stigma, presents Jesus well and gives people hope.

Observing how leprosy can be treated, and how disability can be prevented and treated, gave me much food for thought. It was a joy to continue fundraising for the Leprosy Mission on my return home.

I'd like to point out how my involvement with the Leprosy Mission taught me unique and valuable

lessons as part of my on-going training and practice as a doctor. I graduated in 2020 and have been working since then.

From July to October 2022, I had the opportunity to work as a doctor in Mukinge Mission Hospital in Kasempa, Zambia.

While I was there, I treated one patient who really sticks with me – a middle-aged man who had lost all the feeling in his feet. I tested him for common causes of anaesthesia, but they all came back negative. After conferring with some colleagues, I tested him for leprosy – and after some determined investigation, his test came back positive.

I had just made my first diagnosis of leprosy!

He is now safely recovering under the care of a dedicated TB and leprosy team, as well as Dr David Friend, who is very experienced in treating leprosy.



In most countries, leprosy is not exactly a common disease, so I came back to New Zealand expecting that I probably wouldn't ever see another case again.

After a short stint in paediatrics, I joined Auckland's public health team. **On my very first day, we were notified of a case of leprosy.** This patient had acquired their infection in our own backyard, on one of the Pacific Islands, before coming to New Zealand and being diagnosed.

We swung into action to get this patient the care they needed. **I was delighted to find that the teaching the Leprosy Mission gave me in Nepal six years ago is still relevant, and I'm grateful for how it's helped me treat these two patients.**

I was also astonished to find out for myself just how close to home leprosy is. This reinforces how important the global fight against leprosy is – and how important it is to keep teaching my generation how to look after people who have leprosy.

Supporter Spotlight

Dene is lovely young husband and father. He, like you is an integral part of our Leprosy Mission family and for over 9 years has been an important part of our Cure One Regular Giving Programme.

"Being a Cure One supporter, gives me the chance to walk with one person affected by leprosy, like 7-year-old Maya. I feel connected to Maya being a part of her journey over 12 months of being cured, cared for, and restored back to health."

I rang Dene a few weeks ago to see how he was doing and whether he would be prepared to share his personal testimony on why he is a loyal supporter of the Cure One Programme.

Unfortunately, I rang on a particularly bad day for Dene as he was in more pain than usual. Dene's life has been greatly changed by chronic pain, causing him to struggle even with many basic tasks, and forcing him to give up all the things that he most loved doing. On this day, his back pain was so bad he could no longer stand, and his headache was making it difficult for him to continue working.

"The endless setbacks are probably the hardest thing to deal with. Sometimes when I'm feeling at my worst, it causes me to think about others who are suffering even more than me" said Dene.

"When I first began supporting Leprosy Mission, I had read the story of a young girl in India, who had suffered greatly because she had leprosy."

"Whilst her suffering was far greater than mine, I could draw many parallels to my own situation..."

"Her story really moved me, and I realised that by giving even a small amount of money, I had the power to completely transform the lives of others like her with leprosy."

"...My own suffering has given me a greater appreciation for others who are suffering."

"If I can help someone affected by leprosy to be cured, cared for and restored, and make that difference in their lives, then I am able to do something positive to help others."

"In sharing God's light and love with others in this way, it is my hope that they may also come to know His amazing grace."

I pray that you are inspired by Dene's generous heart and perseverance. We are constantly grateful for supporters like Dene and you!



Below is a beautiful photo taken by Dene at Port Jackson. He shares "We were stuck somewhere we didn't want to be, then suddenly God did this. The rainbow lasted 15 minutes as the sun was setting. We left our dinner and stood in awe of God's magnificent display."

If you would like become a Cure One regular giver, please visit www.cureone.org.nz or contact Diane on 0800 862 873 or email diane.simpson@leprosymission.org.nz for more information.



Save the Date Global Prayer Day 10 May

For the 3rd year in a row, we are inviting you to join an international prayer session online.

All 30 countries within the Leprosy Mission Global Fellowship are setting aside 10 May in prayer. There will be large, global prayer sessions for people connected to the work of the Leprosy Mission worldwide through Zoom (the link will be available on our website).

Prayer has always been essential to what we do, so we are bringing our staff, volunteers, supporters, churches and partners together to unite in prayer for a world without leprosy.

Please contact Nadia if you want to know more about the Global Prayer Day at 0800 862 873 or email Nadia.Paul@leprosymission.org.nz



Please join us on this special day of prayer to start the journey towards ending leprosy!



The Leprosy Mission Prayer:

*Almighty Father, the giver of life and health, look mercifully on those who suffer from leprosy.
Stretch out your hand to touch and heal them as Jesus did during his earthly life.
Grant wisdom and insight to those who are seeking the prevention and cure of the disease;
Give skill and sympathy to those who minister to the patients;
Reunite the separated ones with their families and friends;
And inspire your people with the task set before the Leprosy Mission,
That it may never lack either the staff or the means to carry on its healing work.
In accordance with your will, and to the glory of your holy name,
We ask this for the sake of Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. Amen.*

Thank you so much for standing with us in prayer.

If you wish to receive our monthly Prayer & Praise diaries, please contact Denise on 0800 862 873, or email denise.herd@leprosymission.org.nz

Call Nadia about your bequest

Nadia Paul would love to answer your bequest questions, either on the phone or even better, over a friendly cup of tea. Nadia will also send you a fascinating leaflet about bequests. It tells a beautiful story of how a lasting gift like yours can restore hope and family to those affected by leprosy. The easy process of including the Leprosy Mission New Zealand in your Will is also explained.

Call Nadia now on 0800 862 873 or email: Nadia.Paul@leprosymission.org.nz



YAS!



YOUTH ADVOCATE SCHOLARSHIP 2024 IN NEPAL WITH THE LEPROSY MISSION

A life-changing chance to shift your perspective on what's truly important, while making amazing friends. Youth Advocates (18-24 yrs) travel to the capital of Nepal and be part of New Zealand's work to support people affected by leprosy.



APPLY BEFORE 31 JULY 2023



leprosymission.org.nz/youth-advocate-scholarship



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