

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Covid in India

With the terrible situation in India due to the Covid virus, we at Working For Animals want to help our shelters and those working there in the best way we can. We want to inform you of what's happening in the Kalimpong (KAS) and Darjeeling (DAS) animal shelters.

Just recently the Kalimpong shelter was closed for a week because of a Covid case and the animals were fed on a rotational basis by staff who were not in quarantine. Do see Yogita Chettri's latest *Combined Report (on the website under NEWS)* for a description of just how difficult life is presently in India.

I am president of Working For Animals, an organization supporting animals in need in India. Christine Townend and her husband Jeremy are the founding members of our organisation.

Previously they managed *Help In Suffering*, an animal shelter in Jaipur that remains very close to our hearts.



Committee members Christine Townend and Ace Bourke in Sydney with Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson, internationally renowned author of many books on animal emotions and behaviour. His most recent book is *LOST COMPANIONS Reflections on the Death of Pets*. Photograph by Jeannette Lloyd Jones.

I was drawn to the organisation by the worldwide reputation of Christine for her work in animal protection, including the foundation in Australia of Animal Liberation (1976) and Animals Australia (1980).

I have come to love India through several visits there, firstly as a tourist, then as an animal advocate.



Young buddhist monks sending puppies to KAS so they are put up for adoption.



Owner carrying his dog in a sling.



Happily carrying a dog after her health check-up is done at Village ABC camp by KAS.

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Kalimpong and Darjeeling Animal Shelter



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More recently I have been taking small groups there, an extension of my careers as a yoga teacher and photographer, and I always include animal experiences.

In this newsletter there are examples of the wonderful photographs of the shelters, staff, their work and the animals we look after, taken by animal care director of the shelters Yogita Chettri. Do see more photographs on Facebook and Instagram, and regular reports on their work with more photographs posted on our website under NEWS.

The Kalimpong (KAS) shelter is funded by Animaux Secours from France, and we are also very grateful to One Voice, the foundation funder of DAS. Animal Protections Network funds the important outreach program of camps in remote villages, their only veterinary contact.



Treatment of dogs fighting Parovirus.

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Vet Mihir hugging a dog on Kukur Tihar.

DONATIONS



Many of you that have followed the Working For Animals work at the animals shelters DAS and KAS realise we are very grateful to our donors and your contributions to the considerable day to day expenses that include staffing, feeding and our programs. Then there are unexpected additional expenses.

Currently we are most urgently seeking donations towards a new ambulance for the Darjeeling Animal Shelter. After 11 years of service over hilly, narrow and rough roads the present ambulance needs to be replaced. It is of course essential for our work, and estimated to cost about \$AUS20,000.



Dr. Deo and Lil spaying a cat at Village camp.

We at Working For Animals hope that you also may be able to support the animals, shelters and the staff who have been working under duress there for quite some time, and more so now than ever.

With very best wishes,

Jeannette Lloyd Jones



Sick puppies under treatment at the Animal Shelter.



Mr. Sanjeev makes a home visit to treat a goat.



Dr. Mihir from DAS running the spaying Programme.



Animal Treatment in progress at KAS.

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Message from Founder Christine Townend

It all started when I saw a dog dying of strychnine poisoning in 1993. He was obviously in agony, and, as he crawled along the gutter, I vowed then and there to start an animal shelter in the Darjeeling area. My husband Jeremy and I had come to Darjeeling from Jaipur, where I was managing trustee of Help in Suffering (HIS) Animal Shelter, and where we had been conducting a trial ABC (Animal Birth Control) programme. In the following year Maneka Gandhi, MP, daughter-in-law of Indira Gandhi, and fervent animal activist had launched the Jaipur HIS ABC programme proper. We are grateful to her for endowing her prestige on ABC programmes.

Consequently, one of the foremost projects of the Kalimpong and Darjeeling Animal Shelters is to catch, neuter, vaccinate and release street and community dogs (ABC)

The dogs are given post-op care, vaccinated against rabies and within a few days released at their original point of capture. Both shelters importantly carry out this work. In addition, the team visits remote and often difficult to get to villages where vets are unavailable, to vaccinate and neuter dogs, and to give treatment to all animals presented by the villagers.



Kalimpong Animal Shelter

Darjeeling Animal Shelter

Dr Mihir Mazagaonkar has been working with Simona Zito of the Dogs Trust Worldwide, who has agreed to fund the shelter's ABC programme. There are many roaming dogs in Darjeeling, carrying rabies, so they need sterilisation and vaccination. Dr Mihir and his team have not stopped working, despite the coronavirus pandemic, rescuing and giving treatment to dogs and other animals including wildlife.

Most will have heard about the fact that India is badly infected with Covid-19, and the West Bengal Government has extended the time of lockdown until 15th June, but hopefully there is going to be an easing of restrictions. Members of the DAS staff are still in isolation. There have been earthquakes in the region but fortunately neither the Kalimpong nor the Darjeeling shelters was damaged.

For the purposes of the ABC programme Dr Mihir has divided Darjeeling into zones, where operations will be carried out and vaccinations performed sequentially. Some zones have already been completed. Usually while vaccinating strays in a particular zone the staff will also vaccinate owned dogs from that community.

What is important is that not only are dogs – and other animals, including cows, pigs and goats – rescued and treated, but our work extends to temporary camps in remote villages where access to a proper veterinarian is almost impossible.

I would especially like to thank Harry Bohm and Laura Louie for their generous donation funding the new cattery and purchasing additional land for the shelter. I'd also like to thank Alain Dupont the volunteer builder who has given all his time to overseeing the building of the cattery. My thanks to all our other donors and supporters, and of course our caring staff.

Townend

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