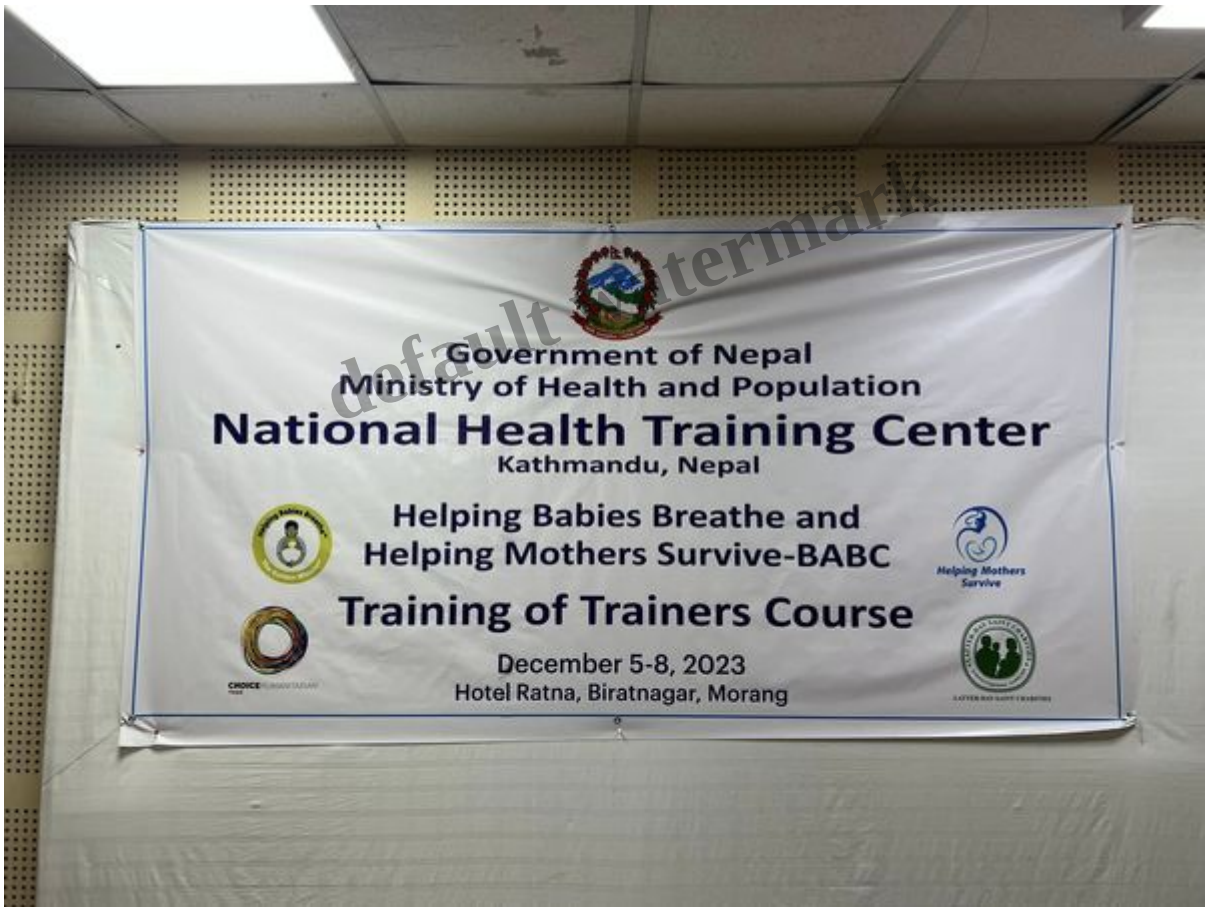
HBB/HMS TOT, Tender Mercies

Description

We have come full circle since our arrival in Nepal in May!

Yes, this week was the “Fall Training” Taunya mentioned in her post then.

In case you forgot (!) HBB/HMS is short for Helping Babies Breathe/Helping Mothers Survive, and TOT stands for Training Of Trainers, the extremely successful program that has the full support of the Nepal government agency called the National Health Training Center.



Wall banner

Last time there were 50 participants, 8 trainers from Nepal, 2 doctors and a nurse from the US. This time there was no team from the US, and just 6 trainers from Nepal, and 33 trainee-to-become-trainer participants.

Taunya said about the May group that “everyone was engaged and happy to learn” — and the same was true of this group.

Fully certified as trainers after two intense days of HBB training followed by two more days of HMS

training, they can return to their own facilities and teach others these vital skills.

Taunya said last time:

“I’m so very glad we were able to be here for this and see how everything works so that in the Fall we will know what we are doing for the next training.”

Not so sure we knew exactly what we were doing, but this time we got to be full-blown “organizers” in addition to being dignitaries and celebrities (with opportunities to have our picture taken with everyone who wanted a picture with us — which was a lot of larger and smaller groups)!

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Dec. 5-8, 2023
Ministry of Health & Population
NHTC
Helping Mothers Survive
CHOICE HUMANITARIAN
ORGANIZER
Richard Neff
TRAINING
Helping Babies Breathe (HBB)
Helping Mothers Survive (HMS-BABC)
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On Monday afternoon when we arrived at the hotel in Biratnagar, among the fun tasks we were able to help with was filling the NeoNatalie (“newborn”) mannequins with water. Another not-as-fun task was setting up the registration table and getting the spreadsheet ready to track registrants and their progress in the training. Taunya took on the job of helping to grade tests and entering scores in the spreadsheet. She was assisted by Abhishu, Kiran’s daughter, who was also there helping in May.

At the opening ceremony on Tuesday morning, I was asked to give a little speech, representing LDS Charities, which I did. Taunya got out of it, because I said I was representing both of us. On Friday at the closing ceremony, when they asked me to speak again, I thought I was getting out of it by gesturing that she would represent us this time. She was expecting this and so gave her well-prepared speech in which she incorporated the powers of two to powerfully illustrate the cascade effect of trainers training other trainers who then train still others, and so on. Then they surprised me by also asking me to speak again — so my extemporaneous remarks were short, like Taunya’s. The other speakers were much more long-winded than either of us, at both the opening and closing ceremonies!

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Taunya giving her speech

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Government of Nepal
Ministry of Health and Population
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Kathmandu, Nepal
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Presenting certificates

All us dignitaries got a chance

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A definite highlight of the week!

The week was full of tender mercies. One was being protected while walking the streets of Biratnagar in three of our evenings. We were with Prateek, Kiran and Abhishu the first time, and the latter two the next two times. All three of them are such good people! We are blessed to be able to be friends and collaborators with them.

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Us with Prateek and Kiran (Prateek is the Executive Director while Kiran is the Program Director of CHOICE Humanitarian)

http://firstthreeodds.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/evening-walk-1.mp4

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Kiran in front of “his” cake parlour

Prateek in particular was instrumental in getting government permission for us to provide some relief to the earthquake victims. This was much harder than it should have to be, but a tender mercy nonetheless. We just need to get the project approved and then we can send some blankets to people who are suffering from exposure, and learn more about how else we can help.

Marring this week where health professionals were in abundance were a couple of health challenges. Our landlord, Krishna, is from Biratnagar and warned us to use mosquito repellent while there. Despite precautions, Taunya was bit on the feet and suffered from the itching at the very least. When we told Krishna, he had some treatment recommendations, but Taunya had already consulted a doctor and gotten some medicine to help. Krishna agreed when we mentioned how advantageous it is when you need some medical advice to be around doctors and nurses!

Taunya had another more serious bout with disease Thursday night. Probably from a little food poisoning she had several, shall we say, “regurgitative episodes” throughout the night. That wiped her out. Leaving her to rest I took on her Friday computer responsibilities. Through faith, prayers, a priesthood blessing and rest she felt better Friday afternoon, another great tender mercy.

Another tender mercy was, while just sitting at our registration table, because he came up and introduced himself, we met the president and founder of another NGO that we might possibly be able to collaborate with. He took us to the airport so we could drop by his office on the way and meet a couple of his staff, and talk a little about what they do.

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The tenderest mercies of the week happened after that. Because we got to the airport a little earlier than required, they put us on an earlier flight. Had we not done that, we would not have gotten back to Kathmandu Friday night. Our traveling companions on our original flight who left later than we did had to stay in Biratnagar another night, because the flight was canceled due to the plane not being able to land because of the very smoky air!

Because we got back to Kathmandu we were able to go to Church as usual and provide crucial help with the Primary Program (especially Taunya, who has been heavily involved in the preparations — like planning/writing it!) that happened during sacrament meeting. The program went well, the kids did great, and the Spirit was there — and we are so grateful for those tender blessings!

Another addition to the “It’s a Small World” file:

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This former BYU-Idaho student and his wife came into the branch meetinghouse a few minutes before sacrament meeting started. He was one of my students during the pandemic remote-class-only time,so it was great to have a brief face-to-face conversation with him and his wife. They were on their way back home to Denver after visiting family here, so it was a tender mercy they happened to drop in right when I had a few spare moments.

Thanks to Elder Bednar, whose conference talk is indelibly etched in and brought to my mind whenever tender mercies are abundantly evident. And thanks be to God, the source of these and so many other blessings!

“When words cannot provide the solace we need or express the joy we feel, when it is simply futile to attempt to explain that which is unexplainable, when logic and reason cannot yield adequate understanding about the injustices and inequities of life, when mortal experience and evaluation are insufficient to produce a desired outcome, and when it seems that perhaps we are so totally alone, truly we are blessed by the tender mercies of the Lord and made mighty even unto the power of deliverance.”

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