

LAMORINDA WEEKLY



Wednesday, March 5, 2008 ▪ Volume 01; Issue 28 ▪ www.lamorindaweekly.com

Teen Scene column

By Sarah
Henningsen
Campolindo

100 million.

It's a pretty big number. I struggle to believe that 100 million children around the globe lack access to books and libraries, yet the statistics rings true.

Most statistics are irreversible: the number of deaths in a war, the number of homicides in a given year. The upside to illiteracy however is that, over time, it's something that we can CHANGE. The problem is far from permanent.

Thanks to a local organization called Room to Read, steps are being made to eradicate child illiteracy. The charity, based in San Francisco, has built over 5,000 libraries in developing countries like Nepal, South Africa, and Laos since its inception eight years ago.

After reading about Room to Read in John Wood's book, *Leaving Microsoft to Change the World*, I felt inspired to contribute to such a great cause because of my own passion for reading that I've fostered since childhood.

Since a young age, books have been the gateway to the world for me, illustrating places and cultures that I can't experience first-hand. I've developed many dreams of travel that I can attribute almost entirely to books that gave me insight into the world and the people who share it.

Unfortunately, over 100 million children don't have that same magical access to books that you and I have been blessed with. It's not

their fault or lack or desire to learn, but the lack of resources in such impoverished communities. In Nepal, where most families earn less than \$2 a day, children don't have the opportunity to jump on opportunity because it simply doesn't exist.

I want to continue sharing my love of reading with the world; Room to Read seems like the perfect avenue to do so. My goal for this project is \$20,000, which is definitely lofty. But with that money, an entire school can be built in Nepal for a rural community. When I meet with CEO John Wood next month, my hope is to present him with a substantial check that can be immediately directed towards the building of a spanking-new Nepalese school room.

To contribute to this project, please send a check made out to Room to Read to 2180 Sky View Court, Moraga 94556. If we reach the \$20,000 goal, I'll be able to share information in the *Lamorinda Weekly* about the new school once production starts—in turn, a piece of you will be invested in the project, not just your money.

We've all had our room to read throughout childhood and adult life. It's time to pass the gift of education along to hundreds of Nepalese children who want, and deserve, that gateway to the world. A world of hope and opportunities, not of poverty and illiteracy.