

## **Peninsula residents helping build school in Nepal**

### **From our village to yours ...**

**BY PAUL HERRIDGE**

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Residents of the Burin Peninsula are helping build a new school in Sindhuli, Nepal.

It's all thanks to the volunteer work of John Wrixon, a 96-year-old from St. Lawrence, and his project partners, Kim Slaney and Sonia O'Keefe.

The project is being facilitated through the not-for-profit, Clarenville-based organization 'Two Villages', which was co-founded by Troy Mitchell and Krista Percy in 2005. The duo, who were joined shortly thereafter by Kim Baker, started the group with a goal of helping impoverished areas of the world by linking them with towns in this province.

Through Two Villages, residents in the Clarenville area partnered with USC Canada to raise money to build a school in Nepal in 2006. It was the organization's first major project and a huge success.

When Kim Slaney, a social worker at the U.S. Memorial Health Care Centre in St. Lawrence, learned of the project she was inspired to contact Two Villages about starting a similar endeavor.

Mr. Mitchell set her up with USC Canada, who in turn lined up the school project. She then asked Mr. Wrixon, and Mrs. O'Keefe, her cousin from Ferryland, to partner with her.

Mr. Mitchell explained his organization was excited to help.

"When Kim Slaney called me up we were so pleased because here was this other group that wanted to take the same concept and roll with it."

So far, some \$5,000 of the total \$7,500 need to complete the building has been raised.

Construction of the school, which was established some 6-7 years ago, but has used a temporary shed to conduct classes, was officially started with a ceremony last month and is expected to be completed in March.

The school will benefit more than 200 students.

Mr. Wrixon, a native of Epworth, moved to St. Lawrence in 2005 when his wife, Mae, was placed in the Protective Care Unit at the hospital there so could visit and care for her.

While his wife, who suffered from Alzheimer's, passed away in 2006, he has continued to visit the hospital and spend time with other residents.

Mr. Wrixon acknowledged when Mrs. Slaney approached him to be her partner he wasn't sure at first.

"I said, 'my goodness, there's younger people.'"

But she insisted.

He laughed, "she said, 'you're 96-years-old, and I don't think people would turn you away.'" So Mr. Wrixon put some packages together explaining the project, and brought them to businesses and other organizations around the area asking for support. He acknowledged people have been very generous.

In addition, Mrs. Slaney has also held fundraisers at schools in Lawn and South East Bight. For Mr. Wrixon, the project has been extremely worthwhile.

"You take this school we're building over there. There could be doctors, nurses, or secretaries. There could be anything come out of it. How do we know? If they don't have a school, they playing in the dust. Just playing in the sand on the side of the road.

"I said if I don't do nothing else I hope I can live to see them all sitting around the school."

To find out more about Two Villages and the Burin Peninsula project, visit '[www.twovillages.org](http://www.twovillages.org)'.