

## Soft Opening of Aanandi-3

It was planned construction schedule that Aanandi-3(A3) and its construction works, painting and electricity works would be completed by the end of February 2017. Tewa's longtime friends and donors Michael Cooke his wife Juliet Huntly along with their daughter Elizabeth and her husband Ronald were bringing in a group of people for their Yoga and Cultural Retreat at Tewa Centre in the first week of March. So a soft opening of Aanandi-3 was devised to coincide with this event on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2017. So that Michael, Juliet and their family could actively participate in this event and see the fruit of their efforts in fund raising for A3.

Bookings at Tewa Center in the month of February 2017 was very encouraging and hence to use the new rooms in A3 was all the more important.

The soft opening of A3 was an important event, so entire staff members of Tewa/Tewa Centre along with Tewa Board, donors, Nagarik Aawaz staff and people involved in the constructions of A3 were invited to this event. A Nepali traditional string musical instrument "*Sarangi*" was being played by Bukun Gandharba in the back-ground added a peaceful and soothing ambience as programme unfolded.

Then a formal programme began with lighting of lamps by the Chair of Board, Nirmala KC, PhD along with Michael Cooke and Juliet Huntly. The *Mangal dhoon* rendered by Bukun added the sanctity of the inauguration.



The soft opening started with offering of "*haluwa*" lovingly prepared by Tewa Founder Rita didi at Santoshi Kitchen to all who had come for the event.

The event moved on as MC Roshani Thapa called upon Nirmala KC to give a welcome speech. Nirmala welcomed all who accepted our invitation and made their time to come to the function. She also mentioned how happy she was to be there while Tewa is trying to establish an inclusive space, where everyone can come together. Then it was time for a round of introductions of the attendees.

Thereafter was a musical break, Bukun, played number of popular Nepali numbers which invigorated the people to come out of their chairs to dance floor!

After the musical break, Deepak Dewan, Development Director, walked through the milestones in making of A3 and the land Tewa had purchased adjoining the A3 building.



Among the invitees, Rajan Singh Basnet of A.M. Constructions company was invited to share his experiences in making of A3. He said he is very pleased with timely completion of construction works and how deeply he cherishes the relationship he and his company has built with Tewa in the last 10-12 years.

Likewise, on the behalf of the Tewa Board, Riva Thapa, the General Secretary expressed her sincere gratitude towards the completion of A3 and how grateful Tewa Board towards the Founder for the time and effort she has put into making A3 another reality and Tewa's desire to be a sustainable organization.



It was another happy occasion as Pratima Thapa, Nepali philanthropist and a long time Tewa supporter hand over a gift cheque of One lakh rupees to Nirmala.

The occasion was also dedicated to two persons who had contributed tremendously to meet the deadline to complete the work. Those two persons were Prem Maharjan and Sainla Tamang, the site supervisors at construction site. They were felicitated with cash awards and *khada* for their dedications. Nirmala KC handed over the awards to Prem and Sainla.

Michael Cooke and Juliet Huntly were then requested to address the function. The couple have been a long time supporters of Tewa and they have always helped in promoting and fund raising for Tewa. And he said he has tremendous respect for Rita and the work Tewa is doing. To honour her effort he along with other likeminded people have recommended Rita for an international award called Aurora Award. He further said, if their effort to get the award for Rita was a success would be known only in September 2017, but he has made all effort he could for a person he respects so much for her work. He also said, he is always thinking of Tewa and how he can help and now he has found a mantra which are promoting Tewa Centre and fund raising for Tewa. And that he will continue to do as much as he can. Ending his speech in a lighter vein he said he likes Tewa and Nepal so much that we would like to stay in Nepal and he asked Rita to adopt him as her brother or a son and requested to offer a job of a gardener for his wife Juliet at Tewa! After the little bit of laughter Juliet handed over a gift to Nirmala that she and Michael had raised for A3.



At the end of programme, the Executive Director of Tewa, Urmila Shrestha expressed her gratitude and thanked everyone who are directly and indirectly involved in making of A3.



After this session, all were invited to a dinner at the Santoshi and dinner was followed by a musical evening presented by Michael's friend Salil Subedi and his musical ensembles at Jamghat hall. It was mix of exotic music on *didgeridoo* presented by Salil, Bhairav dance and other music representing Nepal's low land, mid hills and high snow-clad mountains..



Nirjan Shakya with Deepak Dewan