Tribute to Madhu
Celebrating Krsna’s Cow Herding Pastimes
Saved by a Cow & Calf
New Admissions
Dear Friends,

Our Govardhana Puja and Gopastami festivals brought a record crowd. Both celebrations were happy occasions which inspired many to offer well-wishes and promises of continued support.

Rupa Raghunath of Vrindavan Food for Life has offered to host forty members of our herd at their hospital/Sandipani Muni School complex in the village of Kiki Nagla only two kilometers further down the Sunrakh Road. The cows are sure to be well-protected and happy there as there is good security and several acres of organic vegetables growing.

We plan to move the twenty invalid residents to a one-acre plot just off the Vrindavan-Chatikara road. That facility is scheduled to be ready in one month.

While most are not happy about our moving from the Sundrakh facility, it is becoming more and more clear that doing so will give all the cows more room and a healthier environment as well as involve more people in their service. We pray we can always remain in their service.
The Tenth Canto of *Srimad-Bhagavatam* describes how Krsna once convinced His father Nanda Maharaja to abandon the traditional worship of Indra the rain-god and instead worship Govardhana Hill. Krsna argued that since Govardhana Hill provided all necessities to their cows, and since the cows in turn provided them with all of their requirements, it was more appropriate to worship Govardhana Hill.

Nanda Maharaja conceded to Krsna’s argument and offered all the paraphernalia meant for Indra to Govardhana Hill. This infuriated Indra who retaliated by inundating all of Vrindavan with heavy rains. As the water started to rise the Vrajabasis desperately appealed to Krsna to save them from drowning. The cows also had no
Celebrating Krishna’s Cow-herding Pastimes

Above: A replica of Govardhana Hill made from rice, halava, fresh fruits, dried fruits and nuts

Sri Gopal
The Cowherd Boy Who Lifted Govardhana Hill to Protect the Cows and Vrajabasis from Devastating Rainfall

Cow-herding Pastimes

place to sit and to appease them all Krsna lifted Govardhana Hill and balanced it on the little finger of His left hand creating a giant umbrella to shelter the distressed cowherds and cows.

Indra was thus defeated and the residents of Vrindavan reveled in loving exchanges with Krsna under the hill for seven days.

Govardhana Puja was observed this year on November 7, 2010 and more than two-hundred-fifty guests participated by performing kirtana, worship the cow and partaking in a succulent feast.

South Indian priests perform the worship
Above: Devotees perform *kirtana* in honor of the cow.
Upper left: Our bulls watch curiously as the preparations are being made.
Far left: Guests interacting with the calves. Left: An honored calf.
Below left: Guests preparing to be served the feast after the worship of Govardhana Hill and the cow has been completed.

**GOPASHTAMI**

The Day Krishna was Named Govinda

by Jagatananda Dasa

Because Krishna protects the cows, one of his dearest names is Govinda. The first week of the bright fortnight in the month of Karttik, i.e., up to the Saptami, are the days during which Krishna held up Govardhan Hill to protect the cows, cowherds and milkmaids from the wrath of Indra.

On the eighth day, when Indra’s ego had been obliterated by Krishna’s show of miraculous power, he came down to earth and fell at Krishna’s feet offering prayers and begging forgiveness for his audacity.

At the same time, the queen of the divine cows, Surabhi, rained milk on Krishna and consecrated him Govinda, meaning “Lord of the cows.”

This day is commemorated as Gopashtami. Since Krishna loves the cows, one shows one’s devotion to him by showing devotion to them.
Traditional ways of celebrating the occasion including bathing the cows in the morning and decorating them with flowers, ornaments and cloth, and offering them and the cowherds who take care of them worship.

As a part of the cow worship, the devotees feed them sweets and jaggery by hand (go-grasa) and circumambulate them several times. One should also walk with them a certain distance and play with them (go-krida).

On Gopashtami, when the cows come back from grazing in the evening (go-dhuli samaya), they are to be greeted and once again given puja with the five principal articles. This will increase one’s good fortune and lead to the realization of all desires.

Gopashtami is celebrated joyfully in almost all parts of India to a greater or lesser extent. But it is a particularly special event in goshalas, as giving in charity to them is also recommended. The whole day should thus be devoted to contemplating the sacred nature of the bovine species! Our own progress depends on protecting the cows. Protecting them is self-protection, let it be said.

_Hari-bhakti-vilasa_ (16.251-252) recommends the two following verses from the _Skanda Purana_: May the goddess Lakshmi who is situated amongst the gods in the form of the cow to provide ghee for the sacrifices free us from the bonds of death.

May I always live amongst the cows: may they be before me, behind me and to my every side.
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Madhu Mangal was one of the first patients to be accepted at Care for Cows. He was sitting peacefully on the side of the street ruminating when the driver of a Tata Sumo backed-up and crushed his hind leg. Witnesses started screaming and the driver sped forward crushing the leg again and drove off. That was May 2001 when Madhu Mangal was six-months-old.

After Dr. Lavania examined him he reported that the so much of the bone had been crushed that amputation was the only solution. After the operation Madhu did not get up for about two weeks and Dr. Lavana recommended that we make a bamboo frame to support him in a standing position. We did so and gradually Madhu’s three legs got strong enough that he could stand supported by the frame for two hours at a time. After a few days he began to get up by himself and hobble around.

He was humble and friendly and seemed grateful that we were helping him. Within a month a
A cow named Vrinda arrived also with a crushed hind leg that required amputation. She adjusted faster than Madhu and while they lived in the same pen together they bonded and could be seen regularly consoling each other (See cover). It was a good marriage.

As Madhu grew his body weight began to collapse his rear ankle and in time he was not able to stand for very long. His stump became stiff and atrophied so he could not use it to stabilize himself. We devised a sling which he would use at feeding time. As he sat most of the day, soon his front legs started to get stiff and even standing in the sling became difficult for him.

When Vrinda died it was obvious that Madhu was affected and it meant that he was alone most of the time. He was stoic and never demanded any special treatment but always showed gratitude and appreciation when someone would offer attention. Many guests took a liking to him and would brush him and bring him snacks. He was expert at requesting bananas with his eyes and always managed to get his share.

He remained seated for almost three years and since we rotated him regularly and sat him on sand, he did not develop pressure sores until his last month. During his last year Madhu’s legs stiffened as he could not use them and he suffered much discomfort. He was extremely tolerant, noble and never morose. He never got to
roam in a pasture or be the bull he was meant to be yet he was kind and affectionate to all who would sit with him.

One of his friends who visited and brushed him regularly thinks that Madhu stayed with us for almost ten years so that people could benefit from having the opportunity to serve a real Vrajabasi. 
Chaitanya Simha Dasa with Pushpa, a cow he saved after she was run over by a car
If someone had predicted that one day I would be vegetarian, I would have made a wager against it and awaited a huge return.

During my mid-twenties my daily diet consisted of meat. When my mother cooked vegetarian food, I would wince and feel like it was a fast day. Meat was something that filled my belly better than any other food and the more I ate, the more I felt satisfied.

It never occurred to me that eating meat was connected to the slaughter of innocent animals.

Despite my Indian descent, I did not restrict myself from any particular type of meat. Even eating beef was not a big deal for me. Since I was brought up in the West I felt normal going to burger joints and consuming whatever was available as life during the Eighties was centered around enjoyment and selfishness.

One would expect that coming from a Hindu background would mean one automatically had faith in a Supreme Person, but most in my generation knew little or nothing about Who the Supreme Being was and what He required from us.

However, whenever I read or heard about a disaster, natural or otherwise, I silently questioned God as to why this happened. My questions gradually deepened and I began to wonder who God is, what happens at the time of death and why the world is full of suffering.

My father was a patron of a Krishna temple in England so devotees frequently visited our home to offer us sanctified food and other gifts. Once I questioned them regarding the purpose of life and later one of them took the trouble to come to our house to give me a book. I was really not much of a reader but the devotee noticed my hunger to know the Truth.

The next day I had to go to Kenya on a business trip and decided to take the book along with me. It captured my attention because it seemed to answer all the questions that were erupting in my head. I could not put it down and finished it before we landed in Kenya. As I waited for my luggage my mind echoed the mantra the book had taught me: *Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare*. I felt blissful and satisfied silently repeating this mantra.

After getting settled in Kenya my client invited me for lunch and took me to a lavish Italian restaurant. We browsed the menu and I decided to have veal flavored with various aromatic herbs and garden vegetables. Being young and pretty athletic it was not a problem for me to
digest such a meal. Throughout the day, however, the mantra I learned in the book would occasionally ring in my mind.

I returned to my five-star golf resort hotel where I had a room far away from the reception where it was very quiet. It was a special room given to privileged clientele and I felt honored as I needed a good nights rest away from the busy area at the front of the hotel.

Little did I know that would be the night that changed my life forever. In my slumber I saw a beautiful fawn-colored cow with eyes shedding sad tears. Next to her was a calf of the same shade looking at me and beckoning “Why?”

This picture persisted and began to gnaw at my inner self demanding that I question my actions. The vision of the cow and her calf persisted until I started to feel a burning sensation throughout my body. I felt as if my bed was transformed into red hot coals. I was shaken from sleep and went to the bathroom to splash some water on my face. My head started to spin uncontrollably as if someone held me by the feet and spun me around. The image of the calf asking “Why?” appeared again. I did not know what to answer but immediately bent over the toilet bowl and screamed. Whatever was
in my stomach forcefully gushed
out. I had never experienced such
violent vomiting. For the next half-
an-hour I spewed my guts out
until there was nothing left accept
my life itself. I thought the end
was near... that I was going to die.

In this most bizarre situation the
pieces of the puzzle started making
sense. I connected the book, the
mantra and the cow and her calf.

The thought that my life could end
with my head in a toilet in a five-star
hotel inspired me to pray deeply.
I prayed to the Lord, “If You
wish that I live through this
ordeal, I promise to never again
eat any kind of flesh.”

My mind reacted to this prayer
and asked, “Are you sure?”

I could not endure this
nightmare any longer. With my
stomach emptied out, I felt a
new life dawning on me. I felt as
though all my sins had been wiped
clean and that I was starting a
fresh new chapter in my life. I felt
fortunate to be alive.

After this I managed to rest
and awoke just before dawn. As I
watched the sun rise I felt he was
smiling on me. I looked into the
mirror and saw a new life starting.

The episode was something I
can never forget and I sat down
and contemplated the events of
my life. In a deep meditation I
realized that just to gratify my
tongue and belly I had inflicted
pain and suffering on many
innocent animals. I never again
wanted to witness the pitiable
tears of a cow being separated
from her calf for the sake of
satisfying my belly. A deep sense
of regret overcame me and I felt
ashamed for all the violence I had
inflicted on poor animals. I again
affirmed my vow to always be
merciful to the innocent creatures
of this world and I felt a sense
of acceptance from whom I had
made my vow to.

Many years have passed since
that eventful day and I now I see
the cow as my only shelter. She
saved me from the miseries of
this world and made me aware
of how prone we are to accept
without question the violent norms
of modern society. We are led to
believe that the filthy temptations
of western society are acceptable
when they are obviously not
beneficial. Today, people,
especially innocent children, have
not a clue about the violence
hidden behind the simple glass of
commercial milk.

Whenever I visit Vrindavan with
my family we feel gratitude while
sitting amongst the residents of
Care for Cows. It has become our
favorite place as there we have a
chance to connect with the sacred
creatures who saved my life. The
cow asks for very little and takes
grass and other things we do not
use and transforms them into love
in the form of milk. Since cows
want love and affection like all
living entities don’t they deserve
to be treated like human beings?
Krishna Himself cherished these
most sacred animals by personally
tending to them. I owe my life to
them. Thank you to mother cow
for saving me.
To the right is one of the most gentle, humble and noble bulls that has ever joined us. He was turned out to wander the streets and found his own way to our gate. He frequented our outside feeder and one day was invited in has had made himself at home. Both of these new admissions require sponsors. Those interested in maintaining a well-behaved son in Vrindavan may inquire from kurmarupa(at)careforcows.org.
It happened again that an unknown foreign pilgrim saw an injured calf on the streets of Vrindavan and felt impelled to do something. Not discouraged by the prevalent apathy and disempowered feelings common to most passersby, he pleaded for help only to be snickered at for his inability to speak Hindi. Finally a *ricksha-walla* feigned concern and helped the pilgrim load the young bull on the seat and brought them to Care for Cows for the correct fare times four.

After helping unload the bull and placing him on a clean sand bed the pilgrim watched with concern the cleaning of the wound and the setting of the fracture then sighed with great satisfaction for having made a selfless sacrifice to help the downtrodden knowing it would please the Protector of the Cows.

His face shone much brighter than that of the profit-oriented opportunist who peddled off to increase his fortune further.
Thank You From the Cows

The cows send their heart-felt thanks to those who assisted during November 2010

Abhirama Dasa
Adi-sakti dasi
Alexandra Kolemagina
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Anonymous
Anshul Mehra
Bhakta Vidya Sagar
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Joseph Allmon
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Rose Bauco
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Smruta Sawardekar
Suada Ajanovic
Sujana Dasi
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Venkata Venkateswaran
Vijay Sharma
Vikas Shah
Vladimir Shlepkov
Vyapaka Dasa
Vyasarada Dasa
William Yeung
Yajnavalkya Dasa

May cows stay in front of me; may cows stay behind me; may cows stay on both sides of me. May I always reside in the midst of cows. —Hari Bhakti Vilas 16.252