



## Sponsor A Child!

**TRAS BELIEVES IN CHILDREN: they are our future, said the Dalai Lama.** And every child deserves to enjoy the rights enshrined in the United Nations Rights of the Child. Food, shelter and love, followed closely by education, health care and training should be the basis for every child's life. But luck plays a huge role in whether a child remains illiterate, hungry and in poverty. It all depends where and to whom the child is born. The Himalayan region is both spectacularly beautiful, and at the same time, one of the poorest regions in the world. Do we want to watch the children of the Himalaya growing up in poverty and illiterate? Do we want to see them scratching a meager living from barren soil, or seeking unskilled, poorly paid labouring jobs in the cities of south east Asia? Or do we want to help give as many as we can a chance to grow up healthy and with enough education to improve their lives and those of their families and communities?

### Do we really have a choice?

**Half of TRAS' work is supporting projects which sustain education and health care for children and youth in the Himalayan region. The other half is encouraging Canadians to sponsor children there, to make sure that they are given the same basic rights we expect for our own children.** Roughly \$100,000 a year is spent on the projects, and \$100,000 from current sponsors is administered by TRAS for individual children. But there is still a great need for more sponsors. Let us introduce you to our sponsorship program:

TRAS members currently sponsor more than 200 children at 10 institutions in northern India and Nepal, and we thank those members for their support and commitment. TRAS has worked with these institutions for years, so we know that they are well-run.

**We highlight four of them in this issue (see map below), with a brief description and some of the case histories we have been sent. There are many more in our files, waiting for sponsors.**



If you'd like to sponsor a child through TRAS, please email our office at [info@tras.ca](mailto:info@tras.ca), or call 604-224-5133, Tuesday through Thursday (on other days please leave a message and your call will be returned). **The cost to sponsor a child is \$440/year. That's \$1.22 a day – less than the proverbial cup of coffee!** We have more information about how the program works on our website, [www.tras.ca/sponsor](http://www.tras.ca/sponsor).

# Tibetan Children's Village (TCV)

## Suja/Bir Mandi, India

**TCV SUJA** is a Tibetan Children's Village school in Bir, India, in the foothills of the Himalaya, with well over 1,000 students. It was founded to provide education for the young adults who escape from Tibet each year by crossing the Himalayas on foot. Many of them are basically illiterate, having had few chances to attend school in Tibet. They are much older than typical students, but they're also very hard-working and keen. The special Opportunity Class crams several academic years into two, so that these young people can progress quickly.

TRAS members are currently sponsoring 27 students at TCV Suja, and we have 9 more on file. Here are two of the histories we have been sent. *[Please note we do not publish individual photos, for the safety of these students, but sponsors will receive a photo.]*



**Tashi**, a boy of 18, was born in the eastern region of Tibet. Tashi's parents are farmers and cultivate crops on a small area of land. Whatever income they earn from agriculture is used to meet the daily needs of the family. He had been to school for merely two months, then had to drop out for not paying the school fees. Most of his childhood was spent in helping his parents in agricultural work, therefore when he was admitted to the Tibetan Children's Village last year he knew almost nothing about education and its benefits in life. At present he is reading in the Opportunity Class, where he is learning the basics. Now after spending a few months in school he has come to realize the importance of education and wants to spread education in Tibet after completion of college studies. He is fond of playing basketball and participates in athletic games. He believes in making the most of limited resources, and reads all kinds of books which are available in the school library.

He considers himself fortunate to be in this school, but to reach there he had to pass through many difficulties. His uncle who knew about TCV convinced his parents to send him to India for a better education and life in comparison with Tibet. They hired a Nepali porter to whom they gave 46000 Chinese Yuan for the safety of both their son Tashi and his younger brother. They reached the border by vehicle, and from there they had to walk to cross the highly tense Tibetan-Nepal border, which is strictly guarded by fully equipped Chinese and Nepali border police. It took almost a week to reach the Tibetan Reception Center in Kathmandu. They always walked during the night to stay away from the sight of police and not having proper meals made it even more difficult for them to walk at night.

Finally, when they reached India, his younger brother was sent to a monastery in South India to become a monk as per his decision and Tashi was sent to TCV Suja for education.

**Ngawang**, a girl of 17, was born in eastern Tibet. The family was dependent on farming for their livelihood. Most of her childhood was spent grazing the animals and working in the fields. Ngawang attended school for 2 years in Tibet, but no one in the school really cared whether a student was attending class or not.

She has an uncle who studied at TCV Suja, presently teaching in their village in Tibet. Her uncle encouraged her to go to India to gain proper education. She was very inspired by her uncle and decided to undertake this difficult and risky journey to India. She covered the distance both by vehicle and by foot. She walked for 9 days to reach safety in Nepal.

On reaching Dharamsala, she was granted admission into TCV Suja. After 2 years in the Opportunity Class, she is now reading in sixth grade. She is hardworking and a sincere student. As a person she is fun loving, frank and friendly. A beautiful smile is always on her face which adds to her personality. She loves playing badminton and reading books. She feels that it is early to set a specific goal, rather she believes in putting her best effort to realize her potential. Her dream is to become a person capable of helping the needy and poor.



# Buddha Academy Boarding School

## Kathmandu, Nepal



Built on the outskirts of Kathmandu, Nepal, this large school has grown from tiny beginnings, when it was taken over 24 years ago by Dorje Namgyal, a Tibetan who was himself sponsored by a TRAS member as a youth. TRAS members sponsor 89 of the current 635 students, and we have 11 on the waiting list. The new school year has just started, and the new admissions, as always, come from the poorest of Nepal's troubled people. 5 of the children come from the remote region of Mustang, which thrusts north like a thumb into Tibet. This lad is typical of those needing our help.

**Tashi Tsering** is a boy of 8 from a remote village called Thami in (Tashi Lhargyal and Kunsang) are seasonal farmers in the village and the family's difficult financial situation Tashi's elder brother has been Tashi has been brought to Buddha Academy. His family seeks Tashi. He seems very happy to be admitted in Buddha Academy School. sponsor.

Mustang, Nepal. His parents have two children. Due to placed in the monastery and educational support for We are now looking for a

*Dorje Namgyal sadly died last year, but his wife, Mrs. Tashi Chozom, continues to work for the Academy and writes:*

"Since 1991 we have made considerable progress in the children's education, children's health, school infrastructures and academic standards.

We now have grades from nursery to Grade 10 consisting of orphans, semi orphans and deprived children. The school is now one of the most developed secondary schools, with all the necessary facilities and large play grounds. More than 1,700 children have had the opportunity to study in Buddha Academy under the good care of our late Principal Mr. Dorje Namgyal-la. His aim was not only to run this school as an ordinary school, but to build and develop it as an educational, cultural and socially orientated center for the benefit of many destitute children of the Himalayan region of Nepal and the Tibetan border, regardless of their caste, creed, religion or cultural back ground.



At the moment we have 635 students and out of these 450 are boarders. They learn English, Math, Science, Social Studies, Nepalese, Tibetan, Health and Environment, dance, music and sports.

We also have a small school dispensary but for serious illness we always refer to them to the local hospital for further treatment.

Finally I would like to thank most gratefully and express my sincere appreciation to all the people who helped us during the last 20 years and made Buddha Academy what it is today. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all the directors of TRAS, the members and the sponsors for their kind support and help. I appreciate your continued support for the BABS.

With kind regards and best greetings,

Yours gratefully

Tashi Chozom (Director)"

# Munsel-Ling School

## Spiti Valley, India

**Munsel-Ling School** is located in the Spiti Valley, a remote and isolated valley (altitude 12,500 feet) in the Indian Himalayas, with no access in or out for seven months of the year due to snow on the high mountain passes. Access to education and basic needs is limited. Founded in 1996 by the far-sighted Buddhist Rinchen Zangpo Society for Spiti Development, Munsel-Ling School enrolls children from kindergarten to Grade 10. Plans are underway to add Grades 11 and 12. It has been very successful -- for example, a number of the children who enrolled at Munsel-Ling in 1996 have now progressed to post-graduate training, in the fields of medicine, nursing, teaching and engineering. These students are encouraged to return to the Spiti Valley to work in their communities. A recent graduate of teacher training now teaches at Munsel-Ling School. TRAS members currently sponsor 40 children at Munsel-Ling School. We have 12 waiting for sponsors.

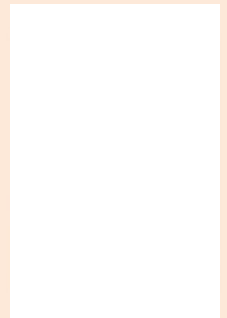


**Tanzin**, a girl of 7, is from tiny Rangrik village. Her father works as Peon in an office. She has two elder sisters, one is in class 4 attending Munsel-Ling School and the other is studying in a government-run school. Her father's income is not sufficient to meet the household expenditure, so her mother is working as a labourer. Both parents are trying hard to provide good education to their children. But their income is not enough to bear the school fees of all three children. So, please help her; it will enable her and her sisters to have a better future.



**Tenzin** is a boy of 10. His family belongs to a lower caste (a "scheduled caste"). His father has no job and runs a small tea stall. His mother is a housewife. His father's earnings are not sufficient to provide a high standard of education to his children. Tenzin really needs your kind support.

**Nawang** is a girl of 12. Her father has a part-time job and her mother is a housewife. She has one elder sister who is also studying in our school and she has one younger brother. It is difficult for her parents to pay fees for three of them. It is very kind of you if you give your helping hand to her to continue her studies.



## Do you Tweet, Facebook or know what SEO stands for?

Then we need your help! We currently are looking to fill two volunteer roles :

Social Media Specialist and SEO Specialist.

Learn more about the roles at [tras.ca/volunteer](http://tras.ca/volunteer) or contact Marina Guy ([marina.guy@tras.ca](mailto:marina.guy@tras.ca))

# Dekyiling Tibetan Handicraft Centre

## Dehradun, India



Clustered against the green hills of the lower foothills of the Himalaya are the neat white and pastel coloured houses of the Dekyiling Tibetan settlement. Founded in 1980, when thousands of Tibetans arrived in India, it was set up as a traditional handicraft centre. TRAS paid for the large weaving shed where residents weave by hand the colourful cloth that is made into the wonderful bags and place mats which TRAS imports. Recently arrived families from Tibet come here seeking work and an education for their children. TRAS pays for the crèche so that mothers may work, and TRAS members sponsor 15 schoolchildren. 4 more are on the TRAS waiting list. The children's case histories are in the TRAS office.



### In Memoriam

We were saddened to learn of **Dr. Walter Dunn's** passing in Surrey, BC. Dr. Dunn was a dedicated and regular donor for 17 years to projects supporting the health and education of children and youth in the Himalayas. We are extremely grateful for his support and for his generosity to children on the other side of the world. His contributions made such a difference.

**Mary Beth Harris** of P.E.I., who passed away in March, told us that she had a great interest in all things Tibetan, and we learned with delight about her love of Tibetan terriers. But her interest went much further than sheer enjoyment.

She was also a generous and constant supporter of TRAS for many, many years, sponsoring many Tibetan children. For the past few years she had been sponsoring no fewer than four children, to make sure they received a good education in a loving environment – giving these children of the Himalaya a decent start in life. We are so grateful for her wonderful help. She was a gracious, lovely lady – TRAS was honoured to have her support.

***[When Mary Beth had to move into a nursing home a few years ago, she entrusted some of her Tibetan treasures to a friend and fellow fancier of Tibetan terriers in Abbotsford, BC, to sell on behalf of TRAS. Terri still has a few items to sell. If you would like to help TRAS benefit from Mary Beth's kind gift, please go to [www3.telus.net/tibetanterrier/mbcollection](http://www3.telus.net/tibetanterrier/mbcollection) to see the rugs, prints, etc]***



## And now, the success stories!

Dorje Namgyal exemplified the many TRAS-sponsored children who go on to become teachers, principals, professors, nurses, doctors, artists. Here, two recent graduates of Buddha Academy tell their own stories, to illustrate how sponsorship can help lift children out of poverty.

### Lhamu Sherpa



"I was 5 years old when I was brought to Buddha Academy. I belong to a big family who was undergoing poverty. I am from Bamti-04, Ramechhap. Getting the chance to study in this school was a great break for my life where I got the opportunity to fill myself with the best education and knowledge and got to see a good life from very close. I spent 15 years of my life in Buddha Academy. All the staffs and teachers were very kind, co-operative and helpful. This period of my life was a boon to me where I was fully moulded to be where I am today. After completing my S.L.C. (school leaving certificate) in 2005, our Principal, late sir Dorje Namgyal lama guided, directed and helped me greatly to complete my proficiency certificate level nursing(PCLN) in 2008 from the most reputed Om Health Campus, Chabahil. My nursing study was completely sponsored by Buddha Academy. Without this school helping me in each step of my life, I would have not reached the position that I hold today. After completing 3 years nursing programme, **I got selected for a post of staff nurse in one of the most respected tertiary national hospitals in Nepal**, Shahid Gangalal National Heart Centre, Bansbari. I have been working there for more than 3 years now. I am a permanent staff there and I work in Adult Surgical Intensive Care Unit (ASICU).

I feel very proud to be a part of Buddha Academy family. The kind of support that it provides to the poor and needy is very commendable. It is a dreamland for numerous poor and street children from where they become capable and competent citizens. I strongly appreciate the kind deeds of Buddha Academy and those who support it, and whole heartedly want to thank this school for everything."

### Gyanu Sunuwar

"I am an ex-student of Buddha Academy School. I belong to a very poor family. My village is in Ramechhap, a very remote place situated in the eastern part of the Nepal, where no roads go. We have to walk for three days. My parents are uneducated, as my family belongs to an ethnic cast, so there used to be many superstitious beliefs mostly for girls who also have to face many obstacles and go through a hard time.

However my father came to Kathmandu and worked in a carpet factory as a labourer. In those hard times our late principal Mr. Dorje Namgyal found me and kept me under the roof of Buddha Academy. I was in Buddha Academy School for ten years from grade 1 to grade 10. I have still a lot of golden memories of my school days in BABS. I and all the children of BABS had a very homely and caring environment through our late principal who spread all of his kindness among every corner of our school.

My grades 11 and 12 were also funded through BABS and after completing I decided to join dance academy or dance school. I love dancing and I wanted to make that my career.

**I am now also the dance teacher for Buddha Academy** and I love very much to share and teach this wonderful art to the children here.

**I am also in the Nepal Break Dance Foundation. We spread the message through dance and support youngsters on "NO TO DRUGS" and "STOP the gender based violence".**

I finally succeeded to grab the spot light in the media representing the national B- Girls in break dancing category.

Whatever happens, I will never forget the memories and the help of Buddha Academy who had fully supported me in every step of my life."



## The TRAS Scholarship Fund (TSF)

Thanks to the incredible generosity of two of TRAS' keen supporters, we now have a **TRAS Scholarship Fund**.

Believing strongly in the power of education to bring positive change to Himalayan people, the donors generously offered TRAS \$100,000 to create the Fund. The donors and the TRAS Board jointly decided to initiate the Fund with a pilot project for annual **post-secondary academic education scholarships** for students who have excelled in their studies.

The Fund's pilot project will start with our long-time partner, the Rinchen Zangpo Society in the Spiti Valley. The Society has selected two young women who have enrolled at university to study education and who plan to return to the Spiti Valley to teach. Each woman will receive a \$1,000 scholarship per year for three years. In this pilot project TRAS has committed to accept two new students per year for two additional years.

The Rinchen Zangpo Society's Munsel-Ling School was chosen for the first round of academic scholarships because of its good record of supporting and monitoring students who have already gone to college. Additional students from other schools partnered with TRAS will be added in the future.

\$100,000 is an amazingly generous gift. However with expansion of the scholarship program it will not last forever. Now we need your help.

### Please contribute to the TRAS Scholarship Fund

If you believe in the power of education to help students become self-sufficient and benefit their families and communities, please consider making a one-time or regular donation to the Fund and help us keep it going for years to come.

TRAS is very excited to be a part of this new opportunity to broaden the possibilities for youth in the Himalayas.

It is through initiatives like this that change for the better WILL come.

## Burnaby school gets an 'A' grade!



TRAS gives an 'A' grade to the students of **Offence**, an extra-curricular social justice action group at Ecole Alpha Secondary in Burnaby, BC, who organized Star Search 2013, a talent show fundraiser. **Offence** members have donated the \$1200 raised to TRAS's READI Nepal project. Also pictured are sponsor teachers Tracy Borders and Sandra Chun, and Russil Wvong, former TRAS president.

**Our grateful thanks to these thoughtful students!**

# TRAS

**Supporting health  
and education for  
children and  
youth in the  
Himalayas**

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## The 51<sup>st</sup> Annual General Meeting of TRAS

The 51<sup>st</sup> AGM of TRAS will be held on  
Wednesday, September 4, 2013 (7pm)  
at Langara College, Vancouver

*(Room to be announced)*

Please join us for a short business meeting  
followed by a social hour with your Directors.

## Keep in touch!

Want to keep in touch with TRAS and all  
our latest news and events? If we don't already  
have your email address, send it to us at  
[info@tras.ca](mailto:info@tras.ca) and we'll add you to our list!

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visit our website [www.tras.ca](http://www.tras.ca)

## Reports from the Field

### The Ngoenga School for Tibetan Children with Special Needs

in Dehradun, India, now has purified water, thanks to TRAS. Tashi Yangzom writes: "The Reverse Osmosis water purification system has been installed in the School Block, the Boys' Hostel, the Girls' Hostel and the Dining Hall. This system is of immense help for our Ngoenga children and staff, who now have safe drinking water, protecting them from water-borne diseases. This in turn will assure a healthy and happy environment. On behalf of the School, we express our heartfelt gratitude to TRAS."



**READI Nepal**, our partner in Humla, northwestern Nepal, continues its success story. The 30 village children living together in a hostel in Simikot and going to school there, have done exceptionally well in the recent year-end exams. Once again one of 'our' children came top! More results are listed on the TRAS website [www.tras.ca](http://www.tras.ca). Dedicated teachers and the hostel cook are using the skills they learned last year to give the children extra tuition and a healthy diet. This pilot project has proven to be a good beginning and TRAS looks forward to

continuing these components of the project and the income generation schemes for the children's families.

**Buddha Academy** in Kathmandu, Nepal, has just seen the completion of Year One of the current three-year vocational training project, teaching tailoring and industrial education. Tashi Chozom writes: "We had 6 girls learning tailoring full time. One had never been to school before. These girls help stitch the school uniforms and bedding and pillow covers. 49 part-time girls in Classes 9 and 10 learnt tailoring and knitting as part of the official school curriculum. 14 part-time boys studied wood work and technical drawing, and 21 part time boys studied metal work and electrical installation. They also do practical work. I am sure these courses will help our children in their future". Two young women who graduated last year from the tailoring class are now working full time in an upmarket fashion house in Kathmandu.

