



SOCKS, SERENDIPITY AND SIKKIM!



It's strange but serendipitous how things happen! A young man in the US, who travelled to India for the fashion industry, happened upon some colourful knitted Tibetan socks. He loved them so much that earlier this year he started a business importing and selling them. He then decided to donate some of the profit from the sock sales to projects helping the people of the Himalayas – and chose, amongst others, our TRAS Sikkim lunch program! The sale of one pair of socks will provide a lunch for 12 children. Adrien Field has already sent one cheque for the Sikkim project, and as the weather gets colder, we are looking forward to more sock sales to help feed the children at Lama Paljor's school in Sikkim! THANK YOU, Adrien, for a wonderful idea! Now, everyone – get onto his website and see for yourselves the vibrant and cozy socks – and order lots! Visit: tibetansocks.com or email: info@tibetansocks.com.



Photo Credit: Tibetan Socks

REBUILDING IN NEPAL

We received such a heart-warming response to our request for funds for Nepal – not for immediate relief needs (these were handled better by agencies like the Red Cross), but for helping some of the hardest hit rebuild their devastated villages. Some requests have been received and we are carefully studying how best to utilize your donations for the long term good of a community and its children. More on this later----. Meanwhile, our sincere thanks for your generosity.

TIBETAN NURSES TRAINING

This is one of our most successful training projects. For many years, TRAS supported a community health workers training for Tibetans, so that each of the settlements in India and Nepal could open little clinics. Soon there was a need for nurses and so TRAS agreed to help a number of students each year. Every year, students from all the Tibetan settlements can apply for help with their nursing fees – by now TRAS has helped train well over 100 nurses. They always get good jobs, in the Tibetan settlements, or in Indian hospitals, with a few getting employment overseas. TRAS feels it is so worthwhile to help these young people become independent and able to assist both their own families and their communities. Two of our current 8 students are graduating this year, and have been replaced by 2 more. Here are the new students' stories:

Migmar Dolma



Migmar Dolma is 18 years old and lives with her family in the Mundgod Tibetan Settlement in south India. She graduated with an excellent overall average of 81% from the Tibetan Children's Village School in Suja, north India. Migmar has been accepted to the College of Nursing at St. Martha's Hospital in Bangalore for a three year diploma course in nursing and midwifery.

Chimi Lhamo



Chimi Lhamo is 19 years old. She and her family live in Dharamsala. She attended the Tibetan Children's Village school in Gopalpur, graduating with an even better average of 83%. Chimi has been accepted to the Apollo School of Nursing in New Delhi for a three year diploma course in nursing and midwifery.

And now this project has been guaranteed for a further four years, thanks to the generosity of a founding member of TRAS. Finding that he still owned some shares which had increased in value enormously over the years, he decided to give them to TRAS to help young Tibetans with their education.

TRAS benefits from this in being able to ensure the continuation of this useful project – and the donor benefits because a gift of shares to a charity is 100% exempt from capital gains tax, rendering the gift even more valuable. If any of our members would like to follow suit and donate shares instead of cash, TRAS will be happy to help with the arrangements. Just phone the TRAS office 604-224-5133 or email TRAS at info@tras.ca. TRAS is most grateful for this wonderful gift.

KICK OFF TO FALL DINNER

After that glorious summer, TRAS invites you to warm up for fall and winter with a wonderful Nepali dinner at one of our favourite restaurants: Café Kathmandu. The new owner, Pradeep, was well trained by Abi Sharma, the founder of this first Nepali café in Vancouver, and the food is delicious! Glowing yellow walls and stunning photographs of Nepal by Daniel Henshaw add to the happy atmosphere. Do join us for an informal, friendly evening of good food and conversation. There will be door prizes and Nepali songs sung by Aastha Pandey.



Photo Credit: Daniel Henshaw

Make your reservations soon – there are only 40 seats.

To register, phone TRAS (604-224-5133) or email info@tras.ca

Tuesday, October 27, 2015. Café Kathmandu, 1190 Commercial Drive (at 12th Ave)

Doors open at 6.30pm. Appetizers served at 7pm, followed by a buffet dinner. Cash bar **Cost: \$30.00**

UBC STUDENTS HELP TRAS

A huge thank you to UBC students, Dana Chinn and Aastha Pandey, for creating the lovely video on the READI Nepal project. View it on the TRAS website at www.tras.ca/videos. Professor Catherine Douglas encourages her students to work with TRAS through her Community Based Experiential Learning program.



WE'VE MOVED!

Although we were very happy at MPS, 999 West Broadway, with such pleasant neighbours and helpful staff (and that glorious view from the boardroom!), we have moved in order to save money. Our new home, found for us by Joanne Macleod, our ever-efficient office manager, costs only half as much per month, meaning more funds can go to our projects. The office is open plan, shared by several other groups, and run by Vantage Point (formerly Volunteer Vancouver) which hosts training programs for non-profits. There are meeting rooms and a large kitchen at our disposal, so board meetings, the newsletter mail out and future AGMs can all be conducted there. Do come and visit!

Meanwhile we extend our thanks to the friendly staff at MPS for their excellent help and their support of TRAS over the years.

Look for us at **Vantage Point at 1183 Melville Street, Vancouver**, on the north side between Thurlow and Bute.

Joanne has the lovely TRAS handicrafts (colourful shoulder bags, lap top bags and coin purses; Paul Horn Tibetan music cd; cozy angora and sheep's wool gloves, toques and shawls; Tibetan chair mats; and a variety of cards) stored at the new office. **Do phone her and plan a viewing!**

PS: the phone number remains the same 604-224-5133.

Welcome!

At the recent **Annual General Meeting**, TRAS welcomed a new director, **Cynthia Bunbury**. Cynthia may be 'new' to her role as director, but TRAS has long been indebted to her for her enthusiastic and highly successful efforts in engaging North Vancouver high school students in social justice and fundraising for TRAS projects in Nepal. Cynthia grew up bilingual in eastern Canada but has made her home on the west coast for many years. With degrees in anthropology and teaching, and with a career in PR and writing for a variety of arts organizations, not to mention her inspiring teaching, Cynthia brings many talents, high energy and tons of enthusiasm to TRAS.

She says, "I have encouraged activism in student and teaching populations and helped to instill curiosity and questioning in student education. One of my proudest accomplishments has been to leave our school with a new program in global education. Having travelled to Nepal 6 times and grown to love the country and its people, my sincere hope is that this precious country will someday soon find its strengths, and will mature to manage its own government and resources in a more responsible way, allowing the marvellous people who live there to realize their potential in peace and prosperity. I would love for TRAS to find itself without purpose; in the meantime, I hope to contribute some of my expertise and energy to direct TRAS in its work in the Himalayas".



Cynthia with Karchung, the girl she has sponsored through TRAS

THE MOST IMPORTANT PEOPLE

The world suffers from more and more humanitarian crises these days, each demanding our concern and help. And as usual Canadians respond generously to each new crisis. So it is heart-warming to us that so many long-time donors to TRAS continue to help us year after year in our efforts to improve lives for the youngsters of the Himalayas. Our projects are slow and unspectacular, but when the results finally come, they are amazing, as more and more children grow to be independent, useful citizens and village life improves for thousands of families. So a big **THANK YOU to all of you who offer your ongoing support to TRAS.**

CAN YOU HELP WITH THE TRAS NEWSLETTER MAIL OUT?

We are looking for a couple of volunteers to come to the TRAS office three times a year to help stuff and mail the newsletters. The same dedicated group has done this for many years, but we have just lost two of the group. A huge THANK YOU to Kasandra Bonn and Heather O'Hagan for their wonderful help - we will miss them.

If you would like to learn more about this volunteer opportunity, phone Joanne at the TRAS office 604-224-5133 or e-mail info@tras.ca.

REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

Nice news from Munsel-ling School in the Spiti Valley, north India! After their long, harsh winter, things got going again this summer on the two TRAS projects.



The Desks

Lama Tashi had asked for funds to purchase 150 double desks for the kindergarten and lower grade classrooms and to replace worn out desks for the older students. Thanks to your response to our Christmas 2014 appeal, we were able to send him the full amount. But he's a canny soul and quickly realised that rather than buying the desks, which would be of an inferior quality, he could instead purchase good quality wood and have the desks built at a lower cost. This plan allowed him to build 200

double desks with the TRAS funds! And the bonus was employment for local carpenters in Spiti. During the winter 50 double desks were built in Dharamsala, where the older Munsel-ling School students go to study in Grades 11 and 12. Once the snow had melted, more lumber was purchased and brought up to Spiti and the local carpenters got to work building 150 double desks which will now be installed in the new classrooms. This school is so successful it is expanding annually, with small feeder schools in remote villages and a day school in Kaza, the small capital of Spiti. Lama Tashi took photos of the piles of desks – we leave it to your imagination to 'see' the happy kids no longer sitting on the floors! THANK YOU for supporting this project!



The Wall

The photos look like any construction site the world over – again you will have to use your imagination to see that this is the beginning of better health for hundreds of children!

The wall is being built around a large area of land so that more greenhouses can be constructed, with summer greens planted in between them. The land in between the greenhouses is already being ploughed ready for spring planting. The greenhouses they have built so far, through funding from TRAS and the Global Health Initiative of UBC, are well constructed and function efficiently – but the polythene roofs just ask to be slid down by little kids – with resulting rips and loss of heat. Roaming animals, cows and dogs, do not help either. So the wall will protect the current and future greenhouses and outside plantings, the results will improve the diet of the children; their overall health will improve – and so will their capacity to learn.



It is clear the wall is progressing well, so it's time to send the second half of the funding. \$7,848 will complete the wall. Can you help by sending a donation to TRAS for this project?

53rd Annual General Meeting

On September 15th at the Choices Annexe in Vancouver TRAS celebrated 53 years of working with our partners in India and Nepal to support health and education for children and youth in the Himalayan region. Cheryl Sullivan, President, welcomed 21 guests. Cheryl introduced the directors present and Joanne MacLeod, our office manager, and talked about the past year. Our two events (the summer social dinner and a talk by Professor Sara Shneiderman on the complexities of Nepal's political transformation) were sold out. Cheryl told the audience of our challenges with fundraising, and the various methods we have tried – the Christmas email campaign being very successful. We continue to have to utilize some of the Society's reserve funds in order to commit to funding development with our overseas partners. Working with like-minded groups is rewarding, as is our connection with Professor Catherine Douglas of UBC and her economics students. Cheryl offered heartfelt thanks to TRAS members and volunteers for their continued support.



Nominations: Russil Wvong read the list of nominations for the Board for the coming year: Cheryl Sullivan, President; Daphne Hales, Vice President, Kevin Yuen, Treasurer; Russil Wvong Secretary; and Directors Frank Beck, Lynn Beck, Cynthia Bunbury, Marina Guy, Videsh Kapoor, Megha Shakya. The motion was carried. Russil asked for nominations from the floor and asked those interested to speak to the President.

Treasurer's report: Kevin Yuen explained the financial statements for the year ending March 31, 2015 – these are available from the office. We have been able to honour all our commitments, the downside being that we had to use \$73,000 of reserve funds to cover them. The motion to re-appoint Tompkins, Wozny, Miller and Co. as auditors for the coming year was carried.

Projects Report: Daphne Hales reported that TRAS sent \$98,802 to overseas project partners in India and Nepal during the year. Over the year we had been supporting 21 projects.



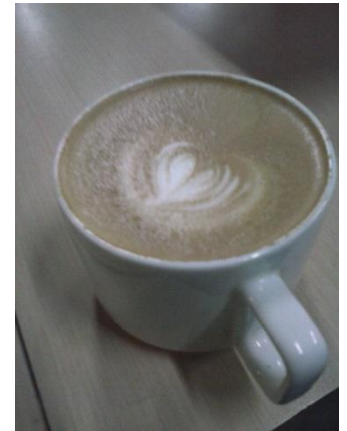
2 were completed – the maintenance of the Little Flower Creche for Tibetan children in Dharamsala and the production and distribution of the Tibetan language DVDs by Sambhota Schools. 4 projects ended for various reasons: support for the elderly in Mundgod and Mussoorie, and for the Dechen Chholing nuns in Spiti. We had to abandon the Lhasa Institute of Eye Care pediatric cataract project (though we have hopes it went ahead under Chinese doctors).

Ongoing projects were: Buddha Academy vocational training, bedding for new students and infirmary support, Kathmandu; the crèche in Dekyiling Tibetan Handicraft

Centre, Dehra Dun, north India; the Central Tibetan Administration nurses training, Dharamsala; Voice of Children educational projects in villages surrounding Almora and Nainital, north India; Voice of Children village libraries maintenance; Voice of Children disaster preparedness training after the terrible floods; READI Nepal's education project and hostel, Humla, Nepal; School lunch program, Phadamchen, Sikkim.

New Projects: five were approved during the year: 150 double desks for Munsel-ling School, Spiti, north India; wall construction for the agricultural compound at Munsel-ling School, Spiti; READI Nepal's Humla Delights Café, Simikot, Nepal; Nepal Library Foundation's women's computer literacy, Nepal; and Phadamchen greenhouse, Sikkim.

Daphne reported that it is gratifying to see things gradually change for the better, as graduates return to their villages as professionals and role models, and as more young people go to university or vocational training courses. SHARE, the NGO in Manali with whom TRAS worked on health projects for many years reported recently that nowadays every village household builds a toilet and all babies are vaccinated as a matter of course. Daphne thanked all donors, with special thanks going to North Vancouver Sutherland Secondary School's Student Council and Social Justice Class for their terrific support for TRAS projects in Nepal.



A parting of the ways: Daphne reported that a major change for TRAS is that as of April 1, 2015 we are no longer supporting Buddha Academy in Kathmandu. We have



supported this institution since its beginning over 25 years ago, when a Tibetan sponsored by TRAS as a youngster took over a tiny failing school and turned it into a noble institution helping Tibetan children, orphans and the poorest of the poor. The school is doing well and the children are thriving. After reading the financial statements for last year and hearing the results of a recent TRAS monitoring trip, we have reached the conclusion that we no longer need to support it.

The Scholarship Fund report: Daphne reported for Lynn Beck that the program is running extremely well and we have now completed the second year. Exam results have been received for the first four candidates, who have now completed two years of university. These students are all from the remote community of Spiti in the

Himalayan region of northern India.

In the coming year (2015-16) two new candidates will be selected from Spiti. Now that the pilot project has been so successful, we intend to ask two more TRAS partners to submit applications to the Scholarship Fund. They are Voice of Children and Dekyiling Tibetan Settlement. Kesang Wangdu, manager of the Dekyiling Handicraft Centre, wrote to say "I therefore have no words to thank TRAS for supporting this genuine problem faced by many students after class X"

Sponsorship Report: Cheryl reported for Russil Wvong that TRAS sponsors are supporting 158 children in a variety of Tibetan and Indian schools, down from 174 the year before. 10 young people are being supported for post-secondary education – this number has decreased from 19 the year before, but TRAS does support more students now through the Scholarship Fund.



Following the business meeting, Megha Shakya gave a clear, concise picture of the political situation in Nepal with an update on the proposed constitution and the ramifications arising from this less-than-perfect process. This was followed by a wonderful slide show by Cynthia Bunbury of the educational trip she led last spring to Nepal, with the culture, history and people seen through the eyes of the Canadian students. She ended her presentation with heart-breaking 'before and after' photographs showing the devastation caused by the earthquake to places she had visited.

TRAS

Supporting health and education for children and youth in the Himalayas

****we've moved****
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 Treasurer - Kevin Yuen
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Directors
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 Marina Guy, Videsh Kapoor, Megha Shakya

Office Manager
 Joanne MacLeod

Newsletter Design
 Marina Guy

How you can help us:

Give to your favourite project!
 Sponsor a child!
 Donate to the Scholarship Fund!
 Like us on Facebook and share our stories
 (facebook.com/trascanada)
 Like our webpage (tras.ca)
 Tell your friends about TRAS and encourage them to get involved!
 Sign up for our email updates by sending your e-mail to info@tras.ca

ANY OLD SHEETS OR TV STANDS?

The Tibetan Resettlement Project in Vancouver is going extremely well. The house rented by the Tibetan Cultural Society of BC houses 12 newly arrived Tibetans - and whereas the first group took about 10 months to find themselves jobs and accommodation, the next group only took 6 months - and last month the third group moved on after only FOUR months! They are so keen to become independent, and they know the next batch can't arrive until the previous one moves out, so this gives them an extra impetus to get settled on their own. Each group helps the next to learn about Canada and how to manage in this very different setting from Tibet and north eastern India. It's been a heart-warming experience for the Canadians involved. They currently are in need of second hand queen sized bedding (they have been given some queen sized beds for couples) and small TV stands or corner cabinets which they would use as little altars for their precious photos of the Dalai Lama, butter lamps and Buddha statues. If you are downsizing and have either of these items or, in fact, any household goods, they would be much appreciated. Contact the TRAS office.



YES! I want to help children and youth living in the Himalayas

Name: _____ Address: _____
 Phone: _____ Email: _____

Please send event information and newsletters by email Please send me information on Planned Giving

Attached is my cheque # _____ for \$ _____ payable to TRAS

OR charge my VISA/MasterCard No. _____ Expiry Date _____

Please allocate to:

- Sponsorship \$ _____ for (name of child/youth) _____
- Project Donation \$ _____ for (name of project) _____
- General Donation \$ _____ for wherever it is needed most

Mail to: TRAS 1183 Melville Street, Vancouver, BC V6E 2X5
 Tel: 604-224-5133 Fax: 604-738-4080 Email: info@tras.ca Web: tras.ca

Thank you for your generous support!

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