



## Hope

HOPE is the linchpin of TRAS's work.

It started with **the Woodcocks' hope in 1962** that setting up a small charity in Vancouver would help Tibetan refugee children in India, that money could be raised, and that the children would thrive. 350 projects and millions of donated dollars later, we know that that hope was justified. Today, we have more examples of wonderful ways **the Society's hopes to improve the lives of children and youth in the Himalayas have been realized.**

We also have **hopes for TRAS in Canada** because there are needs here to keep the Society running: We are hoping for continued financial support for the projects. We are hoping for new members stepping forward to help on the board. We are hoping for volunteers to take on tasks like updating our website and helping with events.

This newsletter is dedicated to these hopes,  
those realized and those wished for.



## Hopes Realized

### 1. Hope for Safe Deliveries in Nepal



Nepal used to have one of the worst maternal and infant mortality rates in the world, so a request from a reputable training academy in Pokhara (IDEA) to train skilled birth attendants was worthy of our consideration. TRAS trained 15 participants a year in 2022 and 2023. Now we hear the 2024 batch of 15 is doing well. Last year's 15 young women are now each working in a health post, in fifteen different villages in Gorkha district. They write that they are so grateful for this opportunity and happy to be working to save the lives of mothers and infants.

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## Hopes Realized (cont'd)

### 2. TRAS Scholarship Fund Provides Hope for Youth for the Future

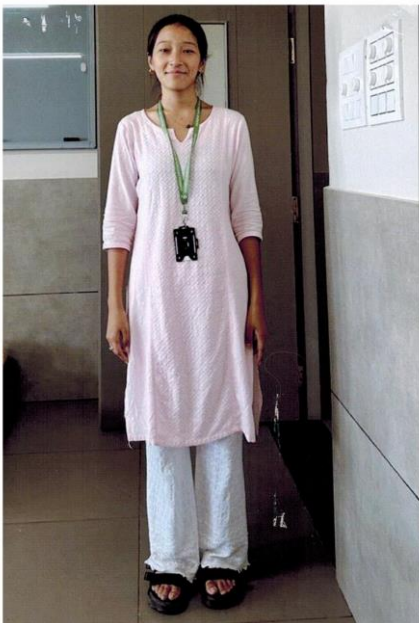
We are pleased to report that the TRAS Scholarship Program is running very successfully. We currently have 25 students being supported in post-secondary education in North India!

We would like to highlight our partner, the Dekyiling Handicraft Centre. We have worked with this reliable NGO for decades. It is based in the Tibetan Refugee Settlement near Dehradun.

The first two students from Dekyiling were selected for the Scholarship Program in 2016. We have supported 14 students since then. The current group of six students is very inspiring. Five are registered in a general nursing/midwifery program and two of them will graduate this year. One student is taking a 4-year Bachelor of Pharmacy degree.

Two of the students, Sangay Dolma and Tenzin Dasel, have been supported since childhood by dedicated TRAS members: first, through our Child Sponsorship Program for their primary and secondary schooling, and now through our Scholarship Fund, enabling them to pursue post-secondary dreams!

**Sangay Dolma** has just completed her first year of general nursing and midwifery (GNM), a 3-year program. "This course is very interesting. When I got my first patient I was very excited...I wish to be a good nurse for everybody who is suffering."



(left to right) Tenzin Dasel; Ngawang Janchub; Karma Wangmo

**Tenzin Dasel** is also studying in her first year of the GNM course. "I am doing great in my studies. I am working very hard for my upcoming exams. Thank you so much for your kind support.... It's because of your generous support I have been able to pursue my goals."

**Ngawang Janchub** is also enrolled in the GNM program and in his first year. "The reason to become a nurse came from the year of 2020 which was a year of corona virus. Thank you for all your kindness and assistance, you can be sure I'll use this opportunity correctly, studying very hard and smart and get a good job ahead. Your kind favour motivates me to help others in need."

**Karma Wangmo** is following a different course of studies. "I am currently pursuing my B. Pharmacy degree at JSS College of Pharmacy in Mysore. I would like to mention how fortunate I feel to be studying in Mysore. It is an incredibly beautiful place with its rich history and enchanting landscapes. The city's vibrant culture and warm hospitality have truly made my educational journey even more memorable. Your support to me means more than words can express."

It is the support of YOU, our generous donors, that has made each of these students' educational journeys possible.

THANK YOU for giving these six nursing and pharmacy students the opportunity to pursue their goals and help others in need.

*Lynn Beck, Scholarship Director*

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## Hopes Realized (cont'd)

### 3. Hope for Children in Nepal

Here's a wonderful letter, received last month from READI Nepal, where TRAS supported the creation of a program to educate the poorest children in distant Humla and to give them lodging, education, health care, and encouragement. Here's the very first group of kids selected in 2009, then in their school uniforms, and now some of them today in Kathmandu, as READI celebrates 16 years of success.



Raj Hamal, READI Nepal founder and chairperson, writes:

*On this momentous occasion of the 16th anniversary of READI Nepal we are filled with immense gratitude for the unwavering support and guidance that has fueled our journey of empowerment in the hidden Himalayas of northwest Nepal. Your gracious support for the longer term has been the cornerstone of our mission to uplift communities in the most beautiful yet often overlooked region.*

*Today, as we celebrate this milestone, we are thrilled to share the remarkable success stories of the students who have emerged from our programs. Recently, our advisor in Kathmandu had the privilege of meeting with a few current graduates of READI Home who are studying in Kathmandu, and the outcomes were nothing short of extraordinary. These bright minds have now spread their wings even further, embarking on diverse educational paths that promise to shape the future of the Himalaya and beyond.*

*It fills our hearts with pride to learn that almost all of these students, supported for 16 years through TRAS, have secured scholarships to pursue higher education in fields ranging from engineering and hospitality management to dental technology, forestry, and agriculture.*

*On this auspicious day, we extend our deepest gratitude to all the TRAS board members and donors who have stood by us. Your belief in our vision has been the driving force behind every milestone we've achieved, and we are profoundly grateful for your continued partnership.*

### 4. Hope for Children in North India

The very name of the project, Hope for Children, epitomizes TRAS' mission. This project (see the Dec newsletter on the TRAS website [www.tras.ca](http://www.tras.ca)) grew out of the astonishing 10-year success of the Voice of Children project in 12 villages around Almora and Nainital in North India. The small team of local workers and volunteers from the implementing organizations AMAN and VIMARSH wanted to replicate this project in nine even more remote villages. We hoped for similar achievements and agreed to a two-year trial. The first 6-monthly report is just in – and wow! So much achieved in such a short time. Definitely we feel our hope was justified and we hope you will feel so too, and continue to fund this project.

Raghu Tewari, one of the founders of **Hope for Children**, writes:

**Since November 2023, the Hope for Children project has begun its active presence in nine remote villages across Almora and Nainital districts, dedicated to empowering and nurturing children of poor and disadvantaged families, aiming to provide them with holistic support encompassing education, healthcare, and vital services. The first phase concentrated on laying the groundwork for education support centers, fostering community engagement concerning children's education, and facilitating constructive dialogues with village service providers.**

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## Hopes Realized (cont'd)

AMAN and VIMARSH organized the following activities during the first six months of the Project:

### Education Support and Learning Center for Children

Nine education support and learning centers have been established in the project villages. Community spaces are provided, with most of them located in the Panchayat houses constructed by local self-governance. We have provided facilitators as well as learning and playing materials for all nine centers.

During this timeframe, 206 children -101 boys and 105 girls – regularly attended the Education Support Centers. The collective learning process not only built the children's confidence but also enhanced their communication skills.

### Quarterly Sessions for Parents

Both organizations arranged quarterly meetings with parents. These gatherings served as platforms to provide updates on the available educational support and learning centers, including computer education support facilities. The primary objectives were to inspire guardians to consider enrolling their children in these valuable educational programs and to introduce them to the impactful initiatives of the Hope for Children Project.



HFC Parents' Meeting



Computer classes

### Digital Skill for Children and Women

Two computer centers are equipping children and women with invaluable digital skills. Currently, 29 enthusiastic learners (nine boys and 20 girls) regularly participate in the programs. Through basic computer courses and access to the internet, these centers are paving the way for a better future.

### Education for All – Children's Fellowship Program

The Children's Fellowship Program serves as a vital support system for children teetering on the brink of poverty. AMAN has given school supplies to 50 children. VIMARSH is in the process of identifying needs.

### Village Gender Education Resource Center

Both organizations led discussions within the communities, recognizing the imperative need for empowering girls and women. Set to launch in May, this center will play a pivotal role in promoting gender equality within the community.



## Hopes Realized (cont'd)

### Community Awareness Program

The project launch commenced with community-wide meetings. The Hope for Children team also met with local officials. **Their enthusiasm was apparent, accompanied by commitments to provide all feasible support from their side.**

Three distinct community groups were formed in each village: women's group, children's group, and adolescent girls' group. Monthly meetings with these groups began, concentrating on the importance of organization building, education, child rights, child safety issues, cybercrime, domestic violence and government schemes.

So much, all in six months!



## Our Hopes for Help in Canada

**The Board of Directors:** we are a small group at present, all Vancouver based volunteers, and would love to have some enthusiastic new blood! In the past we have had board members in Victoria, Ottawa, Mississauga – even back in the day before the internet made life easier. So if you want to find out more, from anywhere in Canada, please get in touch with TRAS at [info@tras.ca](mailto:info@tras.ca). Daphne Hales recently retired as the Projects Director after 20-some years in the job (don't worry, she's not leaving the Board!), and each new project needs a project officer to nurture it. Our website needs to be brought up to date. And we need to do some serious promotion and fundraising, which takes us to our next point, the finances.

**The Finances:** In the early years, George and Inge Woodcock and their many academic and artist friends raised funds through art sales and garage sales, word of mouth, grants and personal pressure! Then came two decades of wonderful CIDA funding – matching 3:1 what TRAS raised: we were never turned down. Interest rates were sky high for a while which also helped. Around 15 years ago, CIDA stopped funding smaller charities, including TRAS. Fortunately, TRAS was in good shape for many years and also was the recipient of a few incredibly generous, large donations. Currently, the regular annual donations are not enough to cover all the worthwhile projects, and we have been topping up from the Society's savings. These are dwindling, so we have cut back the number of projects: at one point we had 30 or more on the go; now the total is 7. The Directors feel there is still work to be done that is very worthwhile. And so we request help with fundraising. If you have ideas and time to offer, please let us know.

**We are extremely grateful for your financial support.**  
**If you too have hope that TRAS projects will make a difference,**  
**please keep supporting TRAS!**

## Sponsorship Report

What could be more hopeful than the thought that one's sponsorship money might help a child achieve his or her potential! To have someone in a faraway country thinking about them and supporting them means a great deal to these children and their families. Here are two children who are hoping that TRAS members might support them.



**Tenzin**, a girl of 10, was born in Kullu, Himachal Pradesh, India. There is a small Tibetan settlement in the area. The family has no land for agriculture. Each family has a housing facility near the river Beas and there is always a fear of flooding during monsoon season. Tenzin is the eldest of three. The settlement started a nursery day school but to continue their education the children must leave their village. Tenzin is very thankful to be accepted at the Tibetan Children's Village (TCV) in Lower Chauntra and is currently in class IV.

**Tenzin D**, a boy of 13, was born in Ambala, Haryana, India. Some Tibetan people are staying in rental houses and are doing petty roadside business. Tenzin's mother is doing a petty business which is only for 4 months a year. There is no Tibetan school in the district. Tenzin's younger sister is in TCV, Suja. Tenzin has been accepted at the TCV in Lower Chauntra and is currently in class VI and learning English, Tibetan, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies and Computer. His best subject is Mathematics.



If you would like to sponsor either (or both) Tenzin for as little as \$40 each/month, please e-mail us at [info@tras.ca](mailto:info@tras.ca) with your contact information.

## A TRAS DINNER DATE!

Thursday, June 27, 2024

6pm doors open | 6.30pm momo demonstration followed by dinner

The TRAS lunch at the Tibetan Kitchen in Victoria on May 4 was delicious and the conversation lively! Now we invite our friends in and near Metro Vancouver to join the TRAS directors on Thursday, June 27 at the Momo Hut. Enjoy a momo, three veggie dishes and chicken curry. \$36 per person.

**Momo Hut**

6372 Fraser Street (at 48th Avenue)

We look forward to seeing you there!



(photo credit: doliska.com)

## In Memoriam

The TRAS Board was sad to learn of former TRAS director **Beth Whittaker's** passing recently. Some of us old timers had the pleasure of working with her for several years, and very much appreciated her practical, down-to-earth opinions at our sometimes-fiery board meetings! Her personal knowledge of Nepal and the state of education in that country back in the 70s and 80s led to sensible solutions.

Beth was brought up loving nature, adventure and physical challenges, and her love of hiking and adventure led to a trip around the world and many subsequent hikes in Nepal. Beth was also passionate about education, earning a BSc in Public Health. She volunteered with Mike Rojik for several years, helping him with his aim to set up village schools in Nepal. The two of them came to a TRAS board meeting to present Mike's ideas of setting up a Canadian charity to fund such schools. In those heady days in the late 70s and 80s CIDA was giving generous matching grants to Canadian charities. Mike's idea hadn't yet grown big enough for him to start his own charity, so they came cap in hand to TRAS to see if we would take them under our wing.

*“Their vision so matched TRAS's that we said yes, and in 1976 applied successfully for CIDA funding for the Nepal Schools Project (NSP). Mike joined the TRAS board in 1978 and Beth did in 1982.”*

That same year Beth travelled to Nepal to help set things up for the NSP and to visit village schools. By 1986, the Nepal Schools Project, run by Mike in Toronto, but still with a presence at TRAS, was well enough established to stand on its own, and Mike resigned from the TRAS Board to run the NSP. Luckily Beth decided to stay with TRAS.



Her next big adventure for TRAS was a 10-day trek in 1996 with our Patron, Dorothea Leach, to the rarely visited area of Mustang, a northern part of Nepal that sticks like a thumb into Tibet. They had an amazing time in this remote, harsh, high-altitude region, travelling with local members of the Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) with the hope of duplicating TRAS's success with ACAP villages. The upshot was an excellent project providing scholarships to Mustang girls so that they could complete their education. 90 girls, a quarter of the girls in Mustang, had graduated from this project by 2004 when sadly the project had to close because of the civil unrest in Nepal. While on that trip with Dorothea, they also visited TRAS projects in India, meeting the redoubtable Sister Victorine who ran many vocational training programs for TRAS.

In 1998 Beth retired from the TRAS Board, but still came to many events. It was a boon to have had her knowledge and enthusiasm on our Board for 16 years.

### Another date to remember!

The TRAS **Annual General Meeting** will be held on Wednesday, September 4, 2024 (7pm to 8.30pm) via Zoom.

More details by email in August.





# TRAS

Supporting health and education for children and youth in the Himalayas

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Let's support the kids!

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

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

- Please send event information and newsletters by e-mail
- Please send me information on Planned Giving

attached is my cheque # \_\_\_\_\_ for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (all cheques payable to TRAS)

charge my VISA/MasterCard No. \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry Date \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

### Please allocate to:

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

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Thank you for your generous support to TRAS!

