



## **TRAS President's Report** **April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021**

### **Welcome**

As always, thank you for your generous support of health and education for children and young people in Nepal, northern India, and Tibet! Earlier in the summer, with vaccines rolling out, it felt like we were getting to the end of the pandemic in Canada, but now public health restrictions are tightening again. I hope you're all doing well and staying safe.

TRAS exists because there are people here in Vancouver, and elsewhere in Canada, who want to help people in the Himalayas. Our approach is grassroots-based: instead of sending people overseas to do the work, we work with local non-profits based in the region, who know the most important needs on the ground.

Ray Yee, who worked with the Canada Tibet Committee for many years and who played a major role in the Tibetan resettlement initiative in Vancouver when Canada agreed in 2012 to resettle 1,000 Tibetans from Arunachal Pradesh, sadly passed away in March this year. Ray's family has established a fund in Ray's memory to help with the education of children in Arunachal Pradesh.

### **Activities**

The biggest issue is still Covid. India and Nepal went through a very bad second wave in the spring, far worse than their first wave, which has now receded. Schools which have been closed are now trying to determine if they can reopen. Some of our partners, including Raghu and Kanchan with Voice of Children and Lama Tashi Namgyal at Munsel-ling, got Covid themselves. Fortunately they've recovered.

As of March 31, 2021, TRAS members were sponsoring 134 individual children (82 girls and 52 boys). In June 2021, nine students graduated from Class XII. Joanne is in contact with the settlements and the schools, and their updates are that all the sponsored children are doing well and studying on-line at home. Some of our graduates who had continued onto university were actually teaching classes in their home villages as they too had to leave their schools. Please continue to check our website under Facts about Sponsorship, as updates and new case histories are posted as we receive them.

The TRAS Scholarship Fund, established through the generosity of two anonymous donors, supports post-secondary students at \$1000/year for up to three years, through Munsel-Ling School in Spiti Valley, the Dekyiling Tibetan settlement, and the Voice of Children project, both in northern India. Again, the students are all pursuing their courses online. Post-secondary education allows students to receive training so that they can become teachers, nurses, and doctors.

If you'd like to support post-secondary students, but on a one-time basis rather than as an ongoing commitment, please consider making a donation to the TRAS Scholarship Fund.

Daphne Hales, our Projects Director, will be presenting a projects report.

We had a Zoom presentation with Voice of Children, which people thought was quite successful - before Zoom, it would have been pretty difficult for our partners to give a presentation directly to TRAS members! The recording of the presentation is available on our website.

## **Organization**

Next year, 2022, will be the 60th anniversary of TRAS. For our 50th anniversary, we held a series of events. We're still planning activities for next year, so please stay tuned.

Thank you as always to Joanne MacLeod, our hard-working Office Manager!

Thank you to our volunteers, especially to Beck Lamb, who does the desktop publishing for the newsletter.

Thank you to our volunteer Board of Directors. TRAS could not exist without the directors who are willing to take on the responsibility of making it run. I'd especially like to recognize Daphne Hales, who's been on the TRAS board since the 1970s, and who is both our projects director and the newsletter editor (which means that she writes almost all of it!).

And finally, thank you to our donors - the work that TRAS supports in the Himalayas happens only because of your generosity. We really appreciate your continued support throughout the Covid pandemic. I hope that we'll be on the other side of the pandemic next year.

Best regards,  
Russil Wvong