

Happy New Year

from all of us here at Tibet Relief Fund!

As children at Tibetan schools across India and Nepal return from their winter breaks, we thought it would be a good time to update you on some of the education projects you have been supporting over the last two years.

We hope you will enjoy reading about how your money is being put to good use by providing wheelchairs at Ngoenga School, helping to improve the quality of life for students. There is an update on our autumn appeal to provide solar panels for Tibetan Homes Foundation where you can learn what a difference hot water is making for over 200 children at the school.

We have recently funded a water purification system for Central School for Tibetans in north India; you can read how this Mussoorie project is coming along.

Take a look at our fundraising pages to see some of our 2013 fundraising stories and find out how you can put those New Year's resolutions to good use by getting involved in one of our 2014 fundraising events. It's also that time of year when we launch our 2014 raffle! Enclosed are two books of raffle tickets; turn to the back page to read about the fantastic prizes we have on offer this year.

If you would like to make a donation, please call us on 020 7272 1414 or you can visit our website at www.tibetrelieffund.co.uk.

For more information on any of the subjects covered in this issue, please email us at trf@tibetrelieffund.co.uk.

Philippa Carrick

Philippa Carrick and all at Tibet Relief Fund.

P.S. Don't forget to follow us on Twitter @tibetrelieffund or like us at [facebook.com/tibetrelieffund](https://www.facebook.com/tibetrelieffund) to keep up to date with all the latest Tibet Relief Fund news.

Photos Top: The old water tanks at CST
Bottom left: Outside CST school.
Bottom right: the CST school courtyard.



Clean Drinking Water

For the Central School for Tibetans

Earlier this year Tibet Relief Fund sent a grant to the Central School for Tibetans in Mussoorie following a request from the school to buy two water sanitation units. It is thanks to your support that we are able to respond to funding requests like this one. The units are due to be installed later this month and we are so thrilled that the children will have direct access to clean and safe drinking water.

Prior to the installation of the water sanitation units the children had no access to clean and safe water. Drinking water was held in tanks that were not only old, but sat in direct sunlight creating a breeding ground for germs. Children often suffered from diarrhoea and sickness.

Teachers at the school hope that the sanitation units will not only improve the general health of the children, but also ensure greater concentration and learning.



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Ngoenga school

Update

Since 2002 Tibet Relief Fund has been supporting Ngoenga School for Tibetan children with special needs.

One of our avenues of support has been to provide an annual grant that enables the school to employ a full-time physiotherapist. The children at the school suffer from a range of physical problems from epilepsy to cerebral palsy. By funding a physiotherapist, each child is able to have up to an hour of therapy each day. Whilst some disabilities can be aided and improved, for others the physiotherapy is simply about easing the pain.

Staff at Ngoenga have noticed a great difference in the children since a second physiotherapist was funded by Tibet Relief Fund. For example, Tsering Tolka was wheelchair bound when she came to the school but was fortunate enough to have life-changing surgery on her leg. When she returned to Ngoenga the physiotherapist was able to give her follow-up treatment and support and she is now able to walk with the aid of a walking frame.

Some of you may remember that back in December 2012 we also sent out an urgent appeal for help to replace the old, broken wheelchairs at the school. With Ngoenga nestled in the foothills of the Himalayas, the terrain is uneven and rocky and many of the old wheelchairs were badly damaged. The aim of our appeal was to provide new wheelchairs for the children, affording them greater mobility, freedom and quality of life.

We are delighted to report that, thanks to your generosity, we were able to purchase several new wheelchairs, as well as provide a grant for the school to purchase whatever resources they felt was most urgent, in this instance, medicines.



Focus on Ngoenga

Location: Near Dehra Dun, north India

Number of students: 50

Ages: 6 - 25

Main focus: School for special needs children.

Support we offer: sponsorship, equipment, emergency medical fund and physiotherapist funding.

If you would like to know more about these projects, or any of the others we support, please visit our webpage www.tibetrelieffund.co.uk.



Photos top to bottom: A classroom at Ngoenga | (left) Tenzin Ramjam, age 12, in one of the new TRF wheelchairs | (right) Tsering Tolka, age 14 | Outside a Ngoenga dormitory | Girls dormitory at Ngoenga



Hot water for children at Tibetan Homes Foundation

Tibet Relief Fund has been supporting Tibetan Homes Foundation since 1963. As the school has grown, the number of children has increased and the needs of the school have changed.

In autumn last year, we appealed to our supporters for donations to enable Tibetan Homes Foundation to install solar panels so children could have access to hot water over the harsh winter months.

We are pleased to say that, thanks to your support, Tibetan Homes Foundation have now installed the solar panels.

The solar panels provide hot water for five 'family homes' (a concept for children's living quarters, initially introduced by HH the Dalai Lama) and give approximately 200 children access to hot water.

The Homes' Caretaker, Tsering Wongchuk, who was responsible for the installation of the solar panels, discovered local monkeys were damaging the panels by clambering on them. He has consequently built metal protectors to encase the panels.

This installation has acted as a pilot for Tibetan Homes Foundation, who are looking to install more panels and are currently assessing which of the family homes would be most suitable and efficient in providing access for most children.

In late January, the Mussoorie-based school saw freezing temperatures and up to three feet of snow. Dickey Wangmo, 'House Mother' and ex-Tibetan Homes Foundation student who cares for the children at one of the homes directly benefiting from the solar panels, explains what an impact having access to hot water has had on the children:

“The hot water has boosted the hygiene practises of the children, they are both bathing and washing their hands more frequently. Coupled with having hot water with which to wash kitchen equipment – the solar panels will help prevent the spread of illness and disease.”

It is with your support that we have been helping Tibetan Homes Foundation for so many years, and with your support that we hope to do so for many years to come.

Photos top to bottom: Solar Panel at Tibetan Homes Foundation | Caretaker Tsering Wongchuk with the solar panels | View from THF | Family home at THF | House Mother, Dickey Wangmo and students at the family home.





EMPOWERING THE VISION

Five years later

It's been five years since Tibet Relief Fund first set up the Empowering the Vision Project (EVP) to help support young Tibetans find their place in the global community. This innovative project aims to encourage self-reliance, strengthen confidence and motivate young Tibetans to follow their career aspirations. The hope is this will safeguard the future of Tibetans living in exile and secure a place for Tibetans in the wider community.

Why is there a need?

Faced with limited resources and a sheer number of students, Tibetan schools in India are simply unable to provide proper career guidance to each child. Many children consequently leave school with very little knowledge on further education or career options. Information and guidance are key to giving Tibetan youth the best possible start in life and this is one of the key services EVP aims to provide.

Programmes

These days EVP delivers a wide range of programmes. One such being the Global Tibetan Professionals Network which connects professional Tibetans in India, Canada, UK and the USA. Another is the Building Bridges Project, a learning programme designed to bring young people from Indian and Tibetan communities together, to foster a relationship of respect, care and sharing. Two of EVP's other programmes are the School and University Outreach programmes.

School Outreach

Through the School Outreach programme EVP engages with young school-aged Tibetans and empowers them to make more informed choices at key times in their lives. The programme focuses on inspiring self-exploration and improving life-skills for students in their final years of full time education. Students are encouraged to set personal and career goals and plan for their future careers.

EVP supports students from grades 8-10 through a series of life skills training workshops. When students reach grade 11, EVP arranges exposure visits so students can get a taste of the education options they have open to them once they have graduated from school. When students reach grade 12 they are offered career mentoring sessions to help them finalise their choices.

University Outreach

Through three key approaches the University Outreach programme commits to assisting young Tibetans with both career choices and individual development.

The first is a two-day Career and Admission Guidance workshop held just before the opening of Delhi University's annual admissions. Current Delhi University students lead orientation sessions on admission procedures and potential students get the chance to interact with a professional career counsellor for the day. Interactive sessions are also held between Tibetan university students and Tibetan and non-Tibetan professionals in Delhi aimed at inspiring Tibetans in their career goals.

Secondly, the Global Vision for Young Tibetans Conference is a biennial conference primarily for university students. The conference seeks to inspire and motivate young Tibetans to become self-reliant and dynamic by promoting leadership and self-confidence skills. The conference facilitates a sharing of experiences and knowledge amongst youth, giving exposure to new ways of learning and growth.

Thirdly, Employability Skills Training Workshops aim to enhance the job readiness skills of young Tibetans. Sessions are held in CV writing and how to effectively hone communication skills. The workshops are participatory in nature and, as a follow up, students are encouraged to send their draft CVs to EVP's nominated Program Executive for practical guidance and to help develop their future career plans and goals.

We are proud to continue developing and supporting this fantastic project. Over the last five years we have expanded the variety of programmes and grown its capacity, delivering programmes to a wider audience. We congratulate the Empowering the Vision staff on their achievements over the past five years and look forward to many successful years to come.





Do you have any skills that you think could benefit the Empowering the Vision Project?

Get involved

If you think you could help by teaching English, giving career guidance or running skills workshops, and would like the opportunity to work with Tibetans in exile, we could help arrange placements for you at the Empowering the Vision in Delhi.

Alternatively, if you would like to read more about the project, contact info@tibetrelieffund.co.uk or call the office to request a copy of the Fifth Anniversary Report.





Tibet Relief Fund holds an exhibition of photographs and artifacts



In our 2013 autumn issue of *Tibet Matters* we gave an insight into the fascinating history of Tibet Relief Fund. Looking back over early editions of this very newsletter we shared some of our history through article extracts and photographs.

The response we had from supporters was fantastic. We had so many calls and letters to the office, in particular exclaiming how much people enjoyed the photographs.

Following on from this in November 2013, we held an exhibition in London to showcase some stunning photographs and artefacts from the Tibet Relief Fund archives.

The Gallery on the Corner in Battersea kindly allowed us to use their space and over the course of two days supporters both new and longstanding came along to the gallery to enjoy the exhibition.

It was a fantastic opportunity for us to talk about our work and raise awareness of what life in exile is like for Tibetans.

With the photographs and artefacts taking on a natural theme of 'Life in exile', visitors to the exhibition were taken on a journey from the 'Early days of exile' and 'Tibetan life and survival' to the future of the Tibetan community with 'Young Tibetans'.

We sold the entire photograph collection, raising much-needed funds for Tibet Relief Fund. And, in addition to visits from our fantastic supporters, we also had a number of passers-by drop in, giving us great opportunity to talk about our work.

All in all, the weekend was a huge success and we are delighted that so many of you came along. Thank you to all those who joined us. For those who weren't able to make it, all the photographs shown at the exhibition can be seen at www.tibetreliefund.co.uk/flickr.





Tibet Relief Fund runners at the British 10K London Run

Are you up for a challenge?

Our supporters are the lifeblood of Tibet Relief Fund and it is through your dedication to take part in sponsored events, respond to our fundraising appeals and organise fundraising events of your own that we are able to continue to support projects aiding Tibetans inside Tibet and in exile.

This year will once again bring all sorts of challenges, events and opportunities to get involved and support Tibet Relief Fund. For starters we have some spaces in the British 10K London run, in July, and also the Prudential Ride London-Surrey 100 in August; if you are interested in taking part in any of these events, or you would like help in organising a fundraising event of any sort, please email georgina@tibetrelieffund.co.uk.

Sponsors in Nepal

Late last year, Tibet Relief Fund supporters Carole and Neil travelled to Nepal to visit the two Tibetan students whose education they have sponsored for the last three years.

Here, they tell the story of their trip to meet Tenzin Dhesel, now a 20-year old undergraduate and Choekyi Gyatso, a 12-year old monk.

“We settled into the Tashiling Tibetan Settlement’s guesthouse and it wasn’t long before Tenzin and her mother found us as we left our room to eat at a local restaurant. “No, no! You must come to our house for dinner!” A few minutes later after welcomes, kataks and hugs, we were cosily drinking butter tea in their kitchen with Mum busily preparing bread and thukpa. We immediately felt part of the family. Other family members joined us for a very lively and fun evening of getting to know one another.

Next day and still no public transport. Tenzin was unable to get to college so, with her friend Namgyal, was free to be our guide. After a stiff climb to the Japanese Peace Pagoda and a steep descent to Fewa Lake, a rowing boat took us to Pokhara Lakeside where we were to meet Choekyi and Wangyal, his monastic school’s Administrator.

Choekyi, dressed in his maroon monastic robes wasn’t difficult to spot amongst all the tourists! We lunched in a fairly upmarket tourist restaurant in a beautiful lakeside garden setting, where our assorted group turned a few heads! Five of us ordered curries. Choekyi chose pizza, usually a once-a-year treat enjoyed only at Christmas in his monastery! Shy at first, he soon relaxed and described his long school day that starts at 6.30am with



Carole Mahoney and Neil Bowman with their sponsored students

chants. This is followed by standard lessons till 4pm (favourite subject Maths), then evening Buddhist text readings and music, plus table tennis, his favourite sport.

With lunch over it was time for sad goodbyes to Choekyi and an exchange of kataks and gifts. For us it had been a special delight that Tenzin and Choekyi were able to meet each other. The next morning saw yet more sad goodbyes to Tenzin and her Mum with hugs, tears and promises to meet again.

It had all been an extraordinarily rewarding experience. So, big thanks to Tsering Passang at Tibet Relief Fund and Sonam Sangpo at Tashiling for their brilliant organisation in helping to make it all happen.”

If you're a Tibet Relief Fund sponsor and would like help facilitating a visit to your sponsored individual, please do contact our Sponsorship Coordinator Tsering Passang who would be able to help with arrangements:
tsering@tibetrelieffund.co.uk

Sponsorship



We had such a great response to our last issue of *Tibet Matters* when we asked for help in finding sponsors for Ngawang, a young monk and Kalsang, a resident of the old people's home in Mussoorie. We are happy to say that both Kalsang and Ngawang are now being sponsored.

Our sponsorship programme has such an impact on individual lives. Following the success of our last issues' article, we want to take this opportunity to share with you the stories of two young students who are also desperately looking for sponsors so they can continue their education.



Tenzin Yangzom

Tenzin Yangzom is only four years old and has just started school in Dharamsala. She is described as a "very cute girl" who loves dancing and playing with dolls. Unfortunately, Tenzin Yangzom's parents are divorced and she is supported entirely by her mother, Kunsang. Kunsang cannot afford to pay for her young daughter's education so we are trying to find her a sponsor who can support her through the years of schooling ahead.



Tenzin Woser

Tenzin Woser is seven years old and lives with his mother, father and younger sister in northern India. They are a poor but cheerful family; his parents work hard but find it difficult to get permanent jobs to support their family. During the winter months Tenzin's father earns money selling sweaters but this seasonal work does not provide enough income to last the year and cover education costs. Tenzin Woser is a happy little boy who is good at his studies, especially maths. When he grows up it is his ambition to be a pilot.

If you would like to sponsor Tenzin Yangzom or Tenzin Woser please contact the office or email tsering@tibetrelieffund.co.uk.



2014 Raffle

Turn £1 into £1000

With this issue of Tibet Matters you will have received tickets for our 2014 raffle!

Last year's raffle was a great success with over £12,000 being raised to support Tibet Relief Fund projects – and we're hoping to make this year's raffle even more successful! We think the prizes this year are better than ever and there's something for everyone up for grabs.

1st prize: A whopping cash prize of £1,000!

2nd prize: A black Apple 16GB ipad

3rd prize: An Amazon Kindle touch

4th prize: A hamper of organic champagne worth £360 donated by www.rainbowwholefoods.co.uk

5th prize: A sterling silver pendant with spinning centre piece of the Tibetan Buddha, Chenrezig, donated by www.globalsoulchi.co.uk

6th prize: A £25 gift voucher for Tibet Relief Fund's shop Enlightened Gifts, www.enlightenedgifts.org

7th prize: A delicious three-course meal with a bottle of wine for two at the UK's only Tibetan restaurant, www.kailashmomo.com

8th prize: A SpeakaBoo eco-friendly acoustic speaker for use with any iPhone, donated by www.speakaboo.co.uk

Remember, to be in with a chance of winning one of these prizes you must send your completed ticket stubs and payment back to us by 27th June. This year's draw will be held on the Dalai Lama's birthday (6th July).

We would like to say thank you to all of you have bought and sold tickets over the years. We know it isn't always easy but we sincerely appreciate your efforts. Also, a big thank you to all who have been so kind to donate these wonderful prizes.



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