



HIMALAYAN CONNECTIONS

Projects Report Western Colorado Friends of the Himalayas

PO Box 2022 Montrose, CO 81402-2022

www.himalayanfriends.com

Spring 2025

From the President...



Dear Friends,

Our WCFH organization has had a busy and rewarding year since our last report. Volunteer Board members Ang Danu and Nima Sherpa, Kelvin Kent, Carol Parker, Rev. Dr.

Arlyn Macdonald and myself, as well as Advisory Board members Terry Burnell and Sangdrol Blanchard, have been privileged to support and fund numerous humanitarian projects and programs, described in this report.

We are grateful for your support through donations, attendance at our special events and presentations, and memberships, as well as purchase of the popular handmade crafts.

We cannot accomplish what we do without your help and hope you will continue your support for making a difference in the lives of underprivileged people of the Himalayas through education, health and hygiene, culture preservation and disaster relief.

Thank you, Danyabad, — Val Burnell



Children at the Shree Saraswoti Primary School situated in the village of Kadadalli, in the remote Jajarkot District of Nepal, attended classes in a tent after an earthquake in 2023 completely demolished their school. The school offers an education for children in kindergarten through fourth grade. It was built with support from the Western Colorado Friends of the Himalayas and the Altusa International Club of Montrose, Colorado, supervised by Khenpo Kamal Bhandari, Chairman of the Nepal Buddhist Association. (See story and more photos on Page 2)

Memorial to Bill Duckworth



A loving and permanent tribute to Bill Duckworth, founder of WCFH, was installed at Kele, en route to Gokyo, at the elevation of 14,435 ft, on private property. The construction was overseen by Danu's brother in law, Kami Tshering. A portion of Bill's ashes was incorporated into the structure and a brass plaque attached by Dr. Nima Namgyal to honor Bill's compassionate commitment to the people of Nepal and Tibet, and his dedication to their wellbeing in Nepal and in the United States.

SHREE SARASWOTI SCHOOL IS REBUILT



Shree Saraswoti Primary School is situated in the village of Kadadalli in the remote Jajarkot District. It serves 60-100 students from kindergarten through 4th grade. The school was severely damaged in the devastating earthquake in October, 2023. The buildings were declared unsafe to use so the government furnished temporary tents for makeshift classrooms but had no resources or plans to renovate the school as the global damage was so far-reaching.

Khenpo Kamal Bhandari, chairman of Nepal Buddhist Association and a learned Buddhist scholar, independently toured the area with basic essential supplies for the people. He was shocked to see the devastation and suffering. His attention was caught by the dire situation of a local school and took

the initiative of appealing to friend, Ang Danu Sherpa, board member of Western Colorado Friends of the Himalayas for assistance and the project was wholeheartedly approved.



In 2024 the school was completely demolished and new construction began reusing as many of the existing materials as possible, and undertaken for a small stipend by local residents who had not yet left the village for employment abroad. Purchased materials had to be transported a long distance on dirt roads and trails but was well organized by Khenpo, whose accountability has been impeccable.



Modern methods for safety and sustainability have been utilized despite all work being performed by hand without mechanical or power tools. Progress was steady and fast, with the classrooms completed and plastered, the floors laid with tiles from the former dirt roof and the exterior plastered and painted. Pipe for a permanent water supply resource was buried during reconstruction and receptacles, etc., furnished for the future provision of two toilets in a separate structure.

We gratefully acknowledge the support and funds contributed by the Altrusa International Club of Montrose to enable this worthy project to succeed and be completed in Spring 2024.



Khenpo Kamal Bhandari helps recycle materials



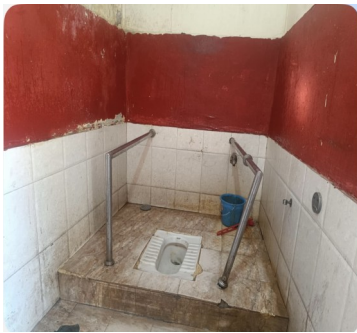
New School Building

DISABLED SERVICE CENTER HANDICAP RESTROOMS REMODEL PROJECT



WCFH continues to support the Disabled Service Center in Kathmandu which was recently granted a new ten year lease by the landlord. The 36 adult residents support their daily living requirements with their handmade crafts, which are sold locally in Montrose by Nima and Danu Sherpa, who forward monthly proceeds from the sales. Our organization has sent funds for essential items and repairs such as the roof, water tank and pipes, new clothes for their many festivals and their annual picnic outing.

In 2025, we identified a serious health and hygiene related issue in the Center where the rest room situation was substandard and impractical for handicapped residents in wheelchairs. Ang Danu Sherpa, Montrose resident and WCFH board member, has visited the facility many times during family visits to Nepal. He agreed to manage the remodeling and renovation of the toilet areas. The contractor granted us deep discounts without bargaining or hesitating to do the work, out of compassion for the residents.



The result was the replacement of sewer and plumbing parts, relocation and upgrading handwashing sinks, remodeling and renovation of toilet facilities with strong, sturdy handicap-friendly grab bars, new wall and floor tiles, bright, clean paint and replacement of heavy, rusted iron doors with light aluminum ones, and finally, new concrete approach

to the areas. The contractor completed the work efficiently and immaculately with thoughtful selection of materials, fixtures and colors.

We are grateful to the Altrusa International Club of Montrose for their support and financial partnership with us in making this major endeavor possible.

REMODELED FACILITIES SHINE



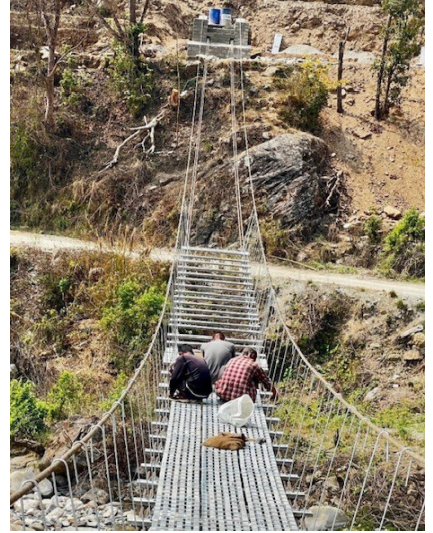
“CHILD RESCUE NEPAL” CONSTRUCTS BRIDGE FOR SAFE RIVER CROSSING



Our Friends of the Himalayas board has donated to Child Rescue Nepal (based in Britain but active in Nepal), for a number of years. The nonprofit is successful in mitigating child trafficking and providing services for rescued, vulnerable children and teens in the form of education, housing and counseling in an

effort to restore trust and happiness in their lives.

A recently completed project is the construction of a sturdy, secure bridge to enable children to get to school safely during the monsoon season and discontinue the dangerous practice of being carried through mountain-cold raging waters.



Our connections are coordinated by Kelvin Kent. We donated a substantial sum and will be included in a permanent plaque on the bridge abutments to commemorate the project. WCFH is committed to the well-being of all children.



Several whimsical additions to the Himalayan collection handcrafted by the residents of the Disabled Center in Kathamandu. (See more on Page 6.)





Thamo Stupa Renovation

Nawang Lumtok Sherpa, from Thamo village, a dedicated Buddhist monk and successful high altitude porter on Mount Everest, headed the renovation of the ancient village Stupa, an important reliquary and gathering site for the residents of Thamo. Weatherproof materials were used to rebuild the Stupa without altering the original architecture. Our WCFH board voted to contribute a substantial sum towards the restoration project.

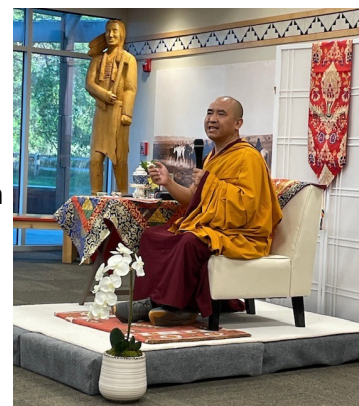
Stupas are important and sacred religious sites for villages and all Buddhists. They represent the Buddha with the top spire symbolizing his crown; the square base his throne; and, the hemispherical mound his body. Stupas are a place for meditation and devotion and house sacred relics or are built on sacred sites.



BUDDHIST GESHE KAMI RITA VISITS MONTROSE ...

In June 2024 we were honored to host an exclusive, special presentation of "Meditation for Today - the Purpose of Life, from a Buddhist Perspective," by the renowned Geshe Kami Rita Sherpa. Geshe was admitted at the age of 11 to the Kopan Monastery in Kathmandu and in 1994 received full Bhikkhu ordination from His Holiness the Dalai Lhama. He was visiting UC Irvine as a fellow in the Exchange Visiting Scholar program and was able to meet with his niece and nephew, students in the U.S., while visiting Montrose.

His superb program, sponsored by Meditation Spaces Art Gallery and Studio and Ridgway Spirit Fest, was outstanding and well received by a full house of attendees in the Ute Indian Museum venue.



FLOODING IN THAME

What a difference a day makes! The villagers of Thame suffered the destruction of homes, infrastructure, roads and fields, all necessary for



sustenance of life in the Khumbu, when a high glacial lake thawed and broke through to flood the valley below, decimating hillsides and all in its path. Compassionate humanitarians around the world donated funds for immediate relief of the residents and our board voted to send funds for the dedicated Sherpa first responders, toiling day and night to save lives and preserve or restore as much of the remaining amenities as possible.



JOYFUL WEDDING CEREMONY

A heart warming moment in time took place at the Disabled Service Center in Kathmandu in March when this lovely couple shared their memorable wedding ceremony with their friends and fellow residents. They are skilled handicraft makers who contribute to their little handicapped community with the sale of their crafts. We wish them a long and happy future.

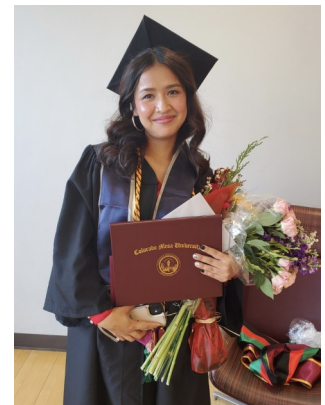


CONGRATULATIONS..

Hearty congratulations to **Suraj Pun** who became a U.S. citizen in March 2025. He attended his naturalization/oath ceremony in Grand Junction, Colorado, accompanied by his parents, Gam and Nanda Pun, owners of Pun Hill Himalayan Kitchen Restaurant, in Montrose, Colorado, and friend Danika Gilbert.

CONGRATULATIONS AND GOOD LUCK...

Halima Behroz, a young Afghan woman, with the assistance of Danika Gilbert from Ridgway, fled her homeland to escape the turmoil of Taliban rule, attended CMU and recently graduated with a degree in political science which she hopes will give her the opportunity to support her fellow countrymen. (Danika has mentored and guided many young girls in Afghanistan and encouraged them to become successful individuals.) Our organization helped Halima with donations and grants and gifted her a monetary award for her endeavors.



THANK YOU...



Nima and Danu Sherpa, members of the Board of the Western Colorado Friends of the Himalayas, attend local craft shows and events offering the beautiful and colorful handmade crafts created by the residents of the Disabled Service Center. The sale of the crafts allows the residents to be self-sufficient, especially as the Nepal government no longer allows street vendors in the capital.



The WCFH board members were honored to host three dignitaries from Nepal, in the meeting room at the Montrose Police Station with state Representative Marc Catlin and his wife Kerri. Mr Sonam Gyalzen Sherpa, member of the Upper House of the Nepalese Parliament (equivalent of the U.S. Senate), Mr Mingma Tshering Sherpa, Mayor, and Mrs Tashi Lhamu Sherpa, Deputy Mayor of Khumbu Pasang Lhamu Municipality are lifelong friends of Nima and Ang Danu Sherpa, Montrose residents and WCFH board members. They were accompanied by Pemba Gyalzen Sherpa, proprietor of Sherpa Cafe in Gunnison, who kindly acted as their driver on the Western Slope portion of their tour of Sherpa communities in cities across the U.S.

Our members presented each of our distinguished visitors with our Peace and Community Service medal of which they were very appreciative.



COMMUNITY AWARDS PRESENTED...

The WCFH board was honored to present awards to local individuals who have made a difference in our community. An engraved box was presented to Mr. Garey Martinez, a Captain in the U.S. Marine Corps veteran, who founded The Shepherd's Hand, a local non-profit to aid the homeless and those in need by providing hot meals, clothing, and basic human essentials. A Peace and Humanitarian medal was presented to Representative Marc Catlin for his contribution to the agricultural community, "Our people are the best stewards of the land and environment."

Lu Anne Tyrrell was honored for her service as manager of the Main in Motion program, working with the Ute Indian Museum and her dedication to animal protection services, as well as sharing the beauty of the Colorado landscapes through her art and photography.

Sarah Fishing (not pictured) was recognized for supporting excellence in education in Montrose and serving as president of the Montrose County School Board. Thank you to these outstanding citizens,



SPECIAL COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD



Most recently it was a pleasure to present a joint Community Service Award to **Bill and Judy Patterson**, who, along with their family, have built a successful international business and given back to our community with their funding, support and encouragement for numerous projects and organizations. Thank you for your compassion for others and please accept our deepest condolences for your recent loss of Judy, a beautiful soul.



Ang Danu Sherpa, U.S. citizen and resident of Montrose, pictured center with some of the handicapped residents while visiting his Nepal homeland, monitored our recent project at the Disabled Service Center for adults in Kathmandu. Their extensive communal restroom area renovation was recently completed thanks to WCFH and generous donors and the Altrusa Club of Montrose.

Parents and children pictured in front of their new school, destroyed by an earthquake, rebuilt by local labor, under the guidance of Khenpo Kamal Bhandari (pictured in yellow), funded by Western Colorado Friends of the Himalayas and supporters and Altrusa International of Montrose. Happy faces express their joy and gratitude.



The Friends of the Himalayas board members are grateful to Bishnu, Juntara, Prem and Chandra of Guru's Restaurant, Montrose, for their generous hospitality in hosting our monthly meetings.