

# Braille Without Borders

## Quarterly newsletter 2 -2016



Dear friends and supporters,

July has come and therefore it is time for the second quarterly newsletter. Gyendsen, Nyima, Adrun and Mike have shared an overview of the highlights of the Braille Without Borders projects in Lhasa and Shigatse. On behalf of all our students and colleagues, we say thank you to everyone for your continuous support!

### Lhasa medical support

The BWB team helped Pema, a 10 year old girl from Gantse, to get eye surgery. Her family is very poor and they were not able to pay the medical fee. The girl is fully blind and her eyelids grew together which caused a lot of pain. She was successfully operated and is now recovering. When she is better she will join the BWB preparatory school in Lhasa.

The Tibet hospital supported the school by providing a medical check for all students and staff free of costs. Also the dentist from their hospital checked the teeth of everyone. Whenever one of our students have some medical matters to be taken care of, Lobsang, the housefather, is taking them to see a doctor or to visit the hospital.

### International Children's day

On June first, the international children's day was celebrated with a picnic. The food, snacks and drinks for the picnic were donated by the Java Café. Some local people made traditional Tibetan dresses for all the students. Additionally all of them received new clothing and also a new school uniform.

### Farm, Shigatse

Wangla who is completely blind, was born in Girgey village, a mile down the road from our Farm. He received his first schooling at Braille Without Borders' preparatory school in Lhasa before coming to us here at the BWB Vocational centre near Shigatse where he was admitted to the local primary school. In his class he belonged to the top three students and continued to study at the Junior High School in Shigatse. He graduated from Junior High and qualified for the local Senior High School. A change in management there however felt the challenge of a blind student was beyond them. He then applied at a Senior High School in the neighbouring district of Gyantse and was admitted. Wangla completed his senior high school and recently sat for the national college admissions test. The day before he wrote it, he was interviewed on national TV. He was the only blind student appearing for the tests. Apparently this wasn't a distraction. He passed the exams with flying colours and is now eligible to apply to a national college of his choice.

Nyima, Puchung, Pema, Yangzom and Tensing Tsam Chu hope to follow in his footsteps. They are our five Junior High School finalists and have just written their admission exams for Senior High School. They now



await their results, with fingers crossed. And we do too!

Our Lhakpa and Tenchu were chosen by the government to emcee the International Handicap Day show. Lhakpa is currently a Senior High School student in town, and Tenchu, is doing her studies in Junior High School.

Dechen Drogar, our student in Junior High, recently underwent a hip operation - successfully. The local hospital arranged for this to be done in Shanghai. A local company paid travel and accommodation for her and her mother. We say thank you to all who helped to get this operation done.

#### On the vocational front

Our food production trainees in the animal husbandry, kitchen, greenhouses, dairy and bakery, continue to provide for ourselves and friends. The challenge and goal is eventually to be licensed to sell foods outside. A preliminary success has been official approval by the Food and Public Hygiene departments who continue to inspect regularly. The major hurdle remains licensing from the business bureau.

That problem is partially solved, at this point, for our trainees in non-foodstuffs: ie., handicrafts, sewing, knitting and tailoring etc. We have recently been invited to join in a new state undertaking that assists all handicapped projects in the prefecture. It provides assistance in marketing in the form of a sales emporium dealing exclusively in products produced by the handicapped, throughout the prefecture. It also provides subsidized training in accounting and various courses. Five of our trainees in our handicraft section have just completed a one month course in sewing and tailoring. The undertaking provides a logo, registration as a business and tax exemptions. All income from sales goes to the producer.

Our trainees in handicraft production have already participated in two public Expos with their products, attended a three day course in business for 80 young entrepreneurs and completed a one month course in sewing and tailoring.

#### Paying back pays off

Our musicians say 'thank you' in their own way. They performed for our neighbourhood school on Children's Day, for the public on Handicap Day, for two groups of government officials on their Home Return Day and for our local friends who visit with hot meals and/or just to be with us. Needless to say, with all this mutual love going around, they have been able to pay, in cash or kind, for their instruments, travel AND put some savings in the piggy bank, a.k.a, their account with our government counterpart.

#### This quarterly challenge came from

...the WEATHER. Up here on the Tibetan plateau our roofs bake in the sun for 10 months. The traditional flat adobe roofs or the flat cement roofs covered with tar-paper, crack. Then the monsoon hits. Year after year. This year the weather won. It was possible to take a shower in the kitchen or while sleeping in one of the upper floor bedrooms. We have fixed the problem and hope that for the years to come, the roof will win.

But through all the ups and downs, this quarters' gratitude go especially to;

- the local company who pays for our students' serious medical expenses, like operations, travel and accommodation.
- our local clinic who provides free medicines for the 'usual seasonal complaints and stuff'.
- the local donors who provided two sewing machines to our handicrafts room.
- the local company who paid a documentary team to film our life on the Farm and BWB's school in Lhasa.
- all of you (and you know who you are) who have offered to help put Wangla through college.
- and last but not least to all of you who support BWB!

