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A Field Volunteer's Contribution



Kate (and TVP field volunteers) distribute school supplies

Kate Stange is a Canadian and graduate student currently working toward a Ph.D. in Mathematics at Brown University in the USA. She took sometime off from her studies and went to Tibet for a month in November 2005 to help with field work of the Tibetan Village Project. Prior to her departure to Tibet, Kate raised over \$2700 and worked on several projects that made remarkable differences! Below is Kate's project report that she sent to her donors. TVP would like to express its sincere appreciation to Kate, her family (especially mom) and the donors.

Hello again from Lhasa

(November 23, 2005): It's been a busy few weeks here, as I've been involved with a variety of Tibetan Village Project activities

and have been out to visit villages around Lhasa several times a week. I wanted to give you a glimpse of some of these activities and also update you on the details of where the money has gone.

First, as I hinted at earlier, there were a few surprises during the fundraising process. As you know, I set myself the goal of raising \$1500 to supply needed clothing and school materials etc. to Bamna School in rural Tibet. The first surprise was that I exceeded my goal, reaching a total of \$2713. The second surprise was a Tibetan businessman who unexpectedly donated the needed funds for Bamna school independently. Therefore, after discussing with Tamdin Wangdu, director of TVP, we've chosen a few other deserving projects that can now be implemented thanks to these extra funds. These include (1) a number of other rural schools in need of supplies; (2) an expansion of the Artisan Shop project; (3) a greenhouse project designed to provide a sustainable source of food and money for an unemployed rural family. At the end of this email I am including a detailed breakdown of how these funds were used. But first, I want to tell you a little about my experiences here helping with the implementation of these projects.



The mobile clinic car got stuck its way to a village

My first trip with TVP was to a village called Yari Ghang, where TVP was holding a monthly Mobile Clinic. Five volunteer doctors joined us on the two hour drive (which became a four hour drive when we became mired in an icy flooded river crossing). The village itself has recently had a clinic building built, using both TVP and government funding, when it was clear it was much needed (we had the opportunity to visit the dilapidated old building). The clinic went well, seeing some 270 patients and filling the resulting prescriptions

with Tibetan medicines. While we were there, we took a tour of the village and visited some of the homes of poor residents receiving TVP help.

One family had lost their home to flooding and had since built a new house further outside the village. Their daughter is now staying in Lhasa at the TVP Artisan Shop as part of a project to provide free education in traditional arts to children of rural families. She accompanied us on the trip and spent the day with her family. While she is at the TVP Artisan Shop, she is practicing sewing with the new machines purchased this month as part of the project. With these machines, she and the two other students currently there are sewing schoolbags for rural school children. These are being distributed along with school supplies to children at a number of rural villages -- the total production will be 1000 bags.

The next village trip took place a few days later. This trip was a first to a new village in Tulung, and the beginning of a new relationship for TVP. The first order of business was a meeting with the village leader, in which the specific needs of the village were discussed. Following that, we distributed school supplies at the local school as our first gesture of aid. The children were very excited and cheerfully called "Tu-jay!" or "Thank you!" as we left. Then we visited the families identified by the village leader as the poorest in the community, bringing gifts of Tibetan tea. We met the families, visited their houses and spoke with them, to see what was most needed. One woman at the age of 103 requested medical help, which TVP will be bringing out to the village soon as an addition to their Mobile Clinic program.



Happy kids with new hats, scarves, and school bags filled supplies

The third trip I've had the opportunity to make while in Tibet was to deliver school supplies and warm clothing in Gurung Primary School. The hats and scarves we distributed were donated by donors in the USA and shipped to Tibet. Winter is just beginning here, and although it has thus far been unseasonably warm around Lhasa, the temperature will soon be dropping. The kids were obviously pleased, jumping around in their

new hats and scarves and swinging their new bags full of books, pencils and ink.

Since I've been here I have been very impressed with the Tibetan Village Project's works. The Tibetan-run organization takes the time to address the specific needs of the villages with individual well-thought out projects, and operates with very little overhead. Projects often provide a double or lasting benefit, such as the bags whose production doubles as education for artisans, or building greenhouses that will provide food for many years to come. Furthermore, Nyima Dukgyal, the Lhasa director, and Tamdin, the USA director, have gone out of their way to make the details of the accounting clear to me, even taking me along on shopping expeditions and explaining prices. And as if this weren't enough, Nyima Dukgyal and everyone at TVP Lhasa have been incredibly generous in welcoming me here in Tibet. I've often spent the evening with them, laughing at our attempts to communicate with my two-weeks-young Tibetan, and I've come to feel a part of the family. I can't thank them all enough for the opportunity for such an incredible experience.

Tashi Delek,
Kate.

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**Funding Breakdown:** Total raised \$2 713



Dhonden, a trainer and Pema, one of several girls learning new skills at TVP store.

**1) \$1000 for Artisan Shop Education/Bag Project:**

For the first three months of 2005, the Tibetan Village Project trained three semi-skilled Tibetans in knitting, weaving, and sewing in Lhasa. Upon completion of the training, the artisans became the trainers and employees of our newly opened artisan store in Lhasa, where they currently make traditional handicrafts and showcase their products. The Tibetan Village Project further expanded this store in November 2005 and now

has a small training room where young girls from rural villages will be receiving skill trainings and basic education. As part of this education project, the girls are currently sewing 1000 schoolbags for rural children. Funds purchased eight sewing machines which will be used for creating products and training children in the future, as well as the materials for the schoolbags.

- 7 sewing machines at \$72.22 each = \$505.60
- 1 hemming machine at \$56 = \$56
- material for schoolbags 100m x 20 = \$250
- straps for schoolbags 190m x 8 = \$190

