







YEARS OF DOING GOOD, BEING KIND, AND HAVING FUN

# AT THE HEART OF AHF

"If there was anything I could do for the Sherpa people, what do you think that would be?" – Sir Edmund Hillary

hat is the question that started it all. With guidance from his Sherpa friends, Sir Ed went on to build the first school in Khumjung and start the Himalayan Trust, one of AHF's first partners. Now, 64 years later, we are honored to continue his legacy, listening to the needs of the Himalayan people and helping them in the ways they need it most.

Instead of going into communities and deciding what we think they need, we find motivated local visionaries and help them scale. Our projects start small and rely heavily on local insight and investment. From there, we offer guidance and support their growth, building the long-term, trusted partnerships that are at the heart of our work.

Filling gaps and addressing overlooked issues is core to what we do. Providing extra medicine to a clinic, hiring a local language teacher in a school, or replacing old pipes may not be glamorous, but it costs a lot less than building something entirely new and has just as much impact on

people's lives.

This is how we can be most effective, by getting community buy-in, leveraging what already exists, and always listening and evaluating how to improve. We have a long history in the Himalaya, and we are committed to helping build a better future.

Connecting with people on the ground is what drives our team.









150,000 TIBETAN REFUGEES ARE STILL LIVING IN EXILE TODAY

### COMPASSION

he first Tibetan refugees arrived in India and Nepal 65 years ago, settling in what they thought would be temporary camps. Today, there are third and fourth generation Tibetans living in those same settlements.

Without citizenship or adequate documentation, their access to education, jobs, and other opportunities is severely limited. In the settlements, we improve everyday life by repairing clean water systems and community buildings, caring for elders who have struggled for their entire lives, and making healthcare more accessible.

Our Tibetan partners stress the importance of education, because they know how vital it is for the future of their people. AHF is part of a pipeline



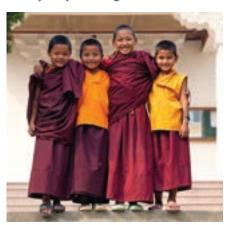
Tibetans around the world celebrated the 90th birthday of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in 2025.

stewarding Tibetan children from daycares to grade schools and on through college graduation. Those same students are now becoming leaders in their community, dedicated to giving back.

Cultural conservation is also important because it creates a sense of belonging that unites Tibetans scattered around the world. Along with schools that teach the language, monasteries and nunneries are at the heart of this, bringing communities together and keeping their traditions alive.

Through AHF's long history working with Tibetans, we have built programs rooted in trust, partnership, and long-term impact. We are committed to helping them survive — and thrive — for generations to come.

Despite the many challenges they face, the spirit of the Tibetan community stays strong.







11,000 STUDENTS ACROSS NEARLY 400 SCHOOLS

### **WISDOM**

very child deserves the chance to go to school. Education unlocks opportunity, giving them the stability and tools needed to improve their lives and break free from the cycle of poverty. AHF's projects fill gaps in the education system and combat barriers that keep children from attending school and reaching their full potential.



We support daycares to keep little ones safe while parents work, hostels that let children from remote villages continue their studies, and schools that give students with disabilities the extra care they need to thrive. STOP Girl Trafficking keeps vulnerable girls safe in school, while Osher Scholarships give Tibetan refugees the opportunity to go to college. Graduates have gone on to become leaders, advocating for their communities and forging a path for the next generation to follow.

Other programs encourage students to think beyond their textbooks. Edu-Lift helps youth build confidence, creativity, and skills that prepare them for life outside the classroom. Local language and culture teachers connect children to their heritage, strengthening their sense of identity and community. Monasteries and nunneries are home and school for young ones whose parents cannot care for them, giving them a strong foundation whether they decide to devote their lives to the dharma or pursue a secular career later in life.

Change begins the moment a child steps into a classroom and a new world opens to them. It's a cliche, but children are the future. By helping them grow, we are building a better tomorrow for all Himalayan communities.



We empower children by giving them space to learn and grow — and just be kids.





Students who graduate from our programs go on to do great things and give back to their communities. It has been incredible to see them grow to become the change-makers of tomorrow.



After getting her Bachelor's degree with the help of an AHF Osher Scholarship, **Tsewang** saw the pressing need for early childcare in her community and decided to do something about it. Her Nyugsar (or Little Sprout) Daycare now provides quality care and education to 40+ children every day and offers extra support to families in need.

"Through your support, I've reached a point where I can look up with hope and dream even bigger. Thank you from the bottom of my heart."



Tsering, who graduated from Jomsom Hostel in 2012, has become a remarkable leader in Mustang. She was first elected to local government at just 21 years old. Now, ten years later, she serves as Vice Chair and is a strong advocate for women's rights and has championed key initiatives to improve women's health and wellbeing across the region.

"I am where I am today because of the opportunities AHF provided for me. My parents are so proud, and I am eternally grateful to you and your donors."



In sixth grade, **Sushma** almost dropped out because of her family's financial struggles but, thanks to STOP Girl Trafficking, she stayed in school. After graduation, she worked as a support teacher for the program and went on to get her Bachelor's degree. She now works at a nonprofit organization dedicated to combatting violence against women.

"If not for the timely support from SGT, I wouldn't have made it this far. It motivated me to attend school and eased the substantial financial strain on my parents."





Tsewang with some of her "little spre







AHF has always been part of **Tenzin**'s life. He grew up in a Tibetan settlement, attended a primary school we support, and later received an Osher Scholarship. After college, he returned to work at another settlement, partnering with AHF on covid relief. Tenzin is dedicated to helping his people, and we are so proud of the leader he has become.

"I would like to thank AHF for always helping the settlement when we need and for giving me the opportunity to further my studies."



Krishna is the youngest of eight children whose family struggled after her father died when she was just four years old. Thanks to STOP Girl Trafficking, she was able to go to school, performed outstandingly, and changed her life. She has become a successful architect and gives back by volunteering and serving on the board of RHEST, the organization that runs SGT.

outs" at the daycare.

# 56

37,440
PEOPLE
RECIEVED
TREATMENT
THROUGH AHF
PROGRAMS
THIS YEAR

## **CARE**

he majestic landscapes of the Himalaya captivate imaginations all over the world, but that same rugged terrain makes accessing healthcare difficult for the people who live there. Even in urban centers like Kathmandu, financial barriers can put quality care out of reach. AHF's goal is to bridge these



gaps and give everyone the opportunity to live a healthy life.

In remote areas, like Upper Mustang, that means providing local health workers and extra medicine, so government health posts are staffed and stocked year-round. In Tibetan refugee settlements, we cover doctor fees and clinic supplies, set up emergency medical funds, and have purchased community ambulances. We also fund screening and treatment camps, bringing care to people who would otherwise go without.

While medical care is vital, it is only part of a larger picture. We also give people reliable sources of clean drinking water, ensure children and elders have nutritious meals, and provide solar water heaters and smokeless stoves to reduce indoor air pollution. Other programs teach children about the importance of brushing their teeth and help nuns and schoolgirls learn how to navigate menstruation. Together, these efforts prevent illness, improve long-term health, and make life more comfortable.

At the heart of AHF's healthcare programs is the belief that everyone deserves care, regardless of who they are, where they live, or what they can afford. By working with our trusted local partners, we can reach the people who need it most, when they need it most.

From state-of-the-art ORs to remote health posts, we make high quality care accessible for everyone.









he Hospital and Rehabilitation Center for Disabled Children (HRDC) provides comprehensive care, from early detection and diagnosis to surgeries, rehabilitation, and social reintegration. Their talented, compassionate team of doctors deliver state of the art treatments that give children a chance to walk, play, and thrive.

HRDC is one of our longest partnerships, and we are honored to be part of their life-changing work. Dr. Bibek Banskota, Executive and Medical Director, recently shared his reflections on the last year:



"We faced some obstacles, including the cancellation of approved USAID funding, a landslide at the hospital, and national protests that caused logistical challenges and diverted government funds that were marked for HRDC. Fortunately, we could turn to our enduring friendship with AHF for support to cover the USAID shortfall and build a massive retention wall to protect the HRDC infrastructure. If this wall had not been put in place, the current monsoon would have washed away the main ward building at HRDC!!

Despite these challenges, HRDC continues to thrive and reach needy children throughout Nepal. This year so far, we have seen 21,236 children, conducted over 100

mobile clinics across
40 districts, performed
1,670 reconstructive
surgeries, and
manufactured 5,277
assistive devices —
restoring hope for
countless lives.

We are eternally grateful for AHF's continued support. Whenever we have a problem, you are the first ones we call, and you always answer."

-Dr. Bibek Banskota



Dr. Bibek Banskota in the hospital ward with one of his many happy patients.

1.6 BILLION
PEOPLE IN 16
COUNTRIES
DEPEND ON
WATER FROM
GLACIERS IN
THE HIMALAYA

## RESILIENCE

he Himalaya is home to some of the most beautiful, yet most extreme, environments in the world. As weather patterns change, the indigenous people who rely on these fragile ecosystems are suffering the consequences of something they had no part in creating.

The flood in Thame in 2024 exposed the danger posed by rapidly growing glacial lakes. In partnership with local experts, we have launched an early warning and emergency response initiative to keep villages safe when (not if) it happens again. Our hope is that it will

be a model that can be replicated in other at-risk areas.



Up to 80% of remaining glaciers in the Himalaya will be gone by 2100.

In the high desert of Upper Mustang, where AHF has worked for the past three decades, the Loba people are struggling with water scarcity, new diseases in crops, and increased predator attacks on livestock, among other challenges. Led by our local partner, we are piloting programs to see how we can best help them cope with this new reality.

These are small but vital steps in the journey to preserve biodiversity, protect livelihoods, and sustain the delicate balance between people, wildlife, and the high mountain environment they share. Responding to local priorities has always been at the heart of AHF's mission, and we are proud to stand with our partners as they courageously face this crisis.



Our work with the Snow Leopard Conservancy promotes harmony between humans and wildlife.





# **LETTER FROM** THE CHAIR

Dear AHF friend.

2025 has been a year of transitions and challenges that have only deepened our commitment to our mission.

In May, Erica Stone stepped back from AHF and Norbu Tenzing took on the role of President. We are grateful for Erica's 34 years of leadership and are confident that Norbu and his team will continue to add to the organization's legacy. Also, after almost four decades, the AHF office has moved several blocks away.

Along with changes came unexpected challenges. The abrupt shutdown of USAID early in the year left a massive aid vacuum that hit Nepal hard. AHF stepped in to fill critical gaps for our partners and help avoid further hardship during an already difficult time.

The glacial flood in Thame and other climate disasters threatened the safety and livelihoods of people throughout the Himalaya. Led by local experts, AHF is starting new initiatives to help these communities adapt, mitigate risk, and build resilience for future generations.

As we look forward to the new year, I am deeply grateful for your steadfast support, without which our work would not be possible.

Thank you,

Jon Krakauer

**Board Chair** 

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Waler

PRESIDENT Norbu Tenzing Norgay

#### **PHOTOS**

COVER: FROM THE SUMMIT TO THE GANGETIC PLAINS BY WILLIAM THOMPSON

SARAH BAKKER, MANUEL BAUER, JOSEPH BLACKBURN, GILLIAN CHANDLER, LUIGI FIENI, AMY FOWLER, TASHI GHALE, JAMPA PHUNTSOK GURUNG, CHIME TASHI LAMA, CHAUTARA BAL MANDIR, SCOTT MCDERMOTT, BRUCE MOORE, MATTHIEU RICARD, RABI SHRESTHA, THE TIBET FUND, AND COURTESY OF OUR PARTNERS

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