

FRIENDS OF BURMA NEWSLETTER – SPRING 2009

548 Home Ave., Fort Wayne, IN 46807-1606

A COMMITTEE OF AMERICAN CHRISTIANS FOR AIDING THE PEOPLE OF BURMA

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Dear Friends,

A year has passed by since Cyclone Nargis devastated and killed 10,076 Baptists and 110,000 other Burmese in the Ayarwaddy delta area. Friends Of Burma (FOB) has concentrated on bringing relief to the survivors and helping them rebuild their lives.

Medical Equipment and Supplies Delivered to the Cyclone Nargis Survivors.

In November of 2008, Philip Htoon and Nwe Nwe Win traveled to several towns and villages in areas affected by the Cyclone Nargis. Medical equipment and supplies were delivered to hospitals and healthcare clinics in Yangon, Insein, Pyapon, Bogalay, Phaya Kyaung Ywa, PaWin Ywa.



Loading of the medical equipment and supplies from Tempe warehouse (top) to the warehouse in Yangon (below).



A forty foot container loaded with medical equipment and supplies worth \$450,000, was organized by the Myanmar Burma Relief Organization (MBRO), an affiliated organization supported by FOB, with the collaboration of Project C.U.R.E. and Myanmar Geosciences Society (MGS) organization. The container was shipped from Tempe, Arizona to Yangon, Myanmar in September 2008.



Anesthetic machine, incubators, exam tables, surgery tables and crutches were some of the medical equipment included in the container.

MBRO collected over \$35,000 which was used to purchase and distribute most urgently needed relief items. This included mosquito nets, drinking water bottles, clothing, medical supplies, and consumption goods such as rice and sardines. For more details, visit www.myanmarburmarelief.org

Karen Baptist Convention (KBC) Healthcare Clinic Report – Renovation Construction Is Underway

The renovation construction project for Karen Baptist Convention (KBC) Healthcare Clinic in Insein, Yangon is well underway and progressing accordingly to plan. The building construction permit was approved at the beginning of this year. The new three story facility will be completed by the end of August 2009.



The long awaited new KBC Healthcare Clinic is now under construction and progressing very well. The final completion of the building is scheduled for the end of August 2009.



The beams for the third story of the new KBC Healthcare Clinic building are being set in place as of May 23, 2009.

As the medical treatment services at KBC will increase upon the completion of the construction of the new building, additional support focusing on medical equipment, supplies and staffing will be required. KBC healthcare clinic staff members took a retreat trip to Hpan-An in Karen state. The staff members climbed the Zwe-Ka-Bin mountain, visited Pwo Karen Theological Bible school and Mawlamyaing Christian Leprosy hospital. An incubator and other medical supplies were received from MBRO. Philip Htoon and Nwe Nwe Win delivered various medicine for diabetes and hypertension. Mr. and Mrs. Fernando came to visit the KBC healthcare clinic and delivered vitamins, baby clothing and other items. Due to the changes in plans for the KBC Healthcare Clinic construction project from a two story building to three stories, addition construction funding is required.



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Outstanding Student Support

FOB received several support request letters for students attending the Karen Baptist Theological Seminary (KBTS), Pwo Karen Seminary (Ahlone), Pwo Karen Seminary (Pathein). The families of these students attending at the seminaries lost family members, livelihoods and homes because of the devastation by Cyclone Nargis. These students are currently attending school with minimal means of support. A support request letter to rebuild and repair the buildings at the Hpu Saw Bu Bible School (YeDwinYegan) was received by FOB. Financial support request (65,000Ks or US\$65 for each student) was made for nine (9) students from Labutta attending Hpu Saw Bu Bible School.

A list of 73 students (mostly from Bogalay) affected by Cyclone Nargis, with photos, names, addresses and attending major field who are attending the Yangon Kayin Baptist Bible School (Ahlone) will be made available upon request for anyone interested in supporting these students.

Child Enrichment Center Report

Continuation to support orphans is encouraged. Annual support fee has increased from \$156 (\$13 per month) to \$168 for 2009 (\$14 per month) because of the exchange rate change of the dollar. An additional of \$5 can help purchase a new school uniform per child. Most orphans have just one uniform. Pray for all the volunteers who are working very hard and laboring under such severe circumstances and conditions.

Dr. Chit Maung Library (DCML)

Since the 1st of May 2009, internet access service has been available at the Dr. Chit Maung Library. Many DCML members appreciate and are benefiting with this new service. They would love to hear from you. Please send a greeting email to dr.chitmg.library@gmail.com

Helping the Newly Arrival Refugees in the United States

Many more refugees from Burma continue to arrive daily to the U.S. Challenges abound as the refugees have to make drastic adjustments in a new country and different cultural environment. FOB executive board members are very busy and greatly involved in assisting in this process.

Fort Wayne, Indiana

There are about 1500-1800 Karens, 3500 Burmans, Mon, Chin and others who are Christians, Buddhists and Muslims. Diana Sowards is very busy helping out the refugees with their various appointments for dental and doctor's visits. Due to the publicity received because of Cyclone Nargis, a house was donated to FOB in Fort Wayne. Although the house has been handed over to FOB, FOB can only sell the house after three years. The church is not quite organized yet and is still non aligned with the American Baptist Church. Karen Newsletter, manual for Karen Christian Pastors are being worked on by Neil Sowards, Duane Binkley and Aye Aye Thaw.

Moline, Illinois

Ruth and John Peterson are sponsoring Say Ju Ni Ya and his family, a refugee family who have recently settled in Moline. Karen refugees are worshipping at the Karen Baptist Church of West Chicago, in St. Charles, Illinois where Angelene Daw and Dominique are the leaders. Ruth's friend have reached out to more Karen refugees in Kansas City, Missouri. Currently, there are about 67 Karen refugees attending the church and more are expected. A challenge is to provide transportation for those who want to attend the Sunday service.

Phoenix, Arizona

The Karen population is now close to 800 in Phoenix area. Arizona Karen Baptist Church (AKBC) is now an official American Baptist Church with two paid pastors. AKBC is working closely with Bellevue Heights Church and participated in the World Vision Conference. The AKBC youths took a trip to Tonto Rim for retreat and to Burro

Creek for one day trip. Sunday school children went to the Phoenix Zoo as a excursion trip.



Adam Maung is offering driver license and banking classes. Adam and Tansy conduct a book study "Purpose Driven Life" every Friday night for 15 youths. Tansy Kadoe translated the application forms to apply for assistance from the government and Arizona Driver's License Manual and the U.S. Citizenship exam booklet to Karen language with recorded questions and answers on CDs. The package is available for \$20 and the translated Arizona Driver's License Manual for \$15.

Philip Htoon and Nwe Nwe Win, have opened a tutoring center (for English and Math classes) at the Brairwood Apartment in Phoenix for all Burmese refugee families. There are currently 40 attendees at the tutoring center.



Tutoring time (Math and English) for the kids at Brairwood Apartment in Phoenix.

Tutoring time (English) for adults at Brairwood Apartment in Phoenix



Judy Lundy continues her support for all the refugee families by collecting donations of household goods, school items and clothes. A trip to the Arizona Science Museum located in downtown Phoenix was organized in April 2009.



Arizona Science Museum goes as a group.

Micro Credit Project Report

○ Yangon Kayin Baptist Women Association

With the grant fund received from FOB in 2008, a psychological and social support program was provided at Cyclone Nargis affected areas.



Psychological and social support session in progress for Cyclone Nargis victims.

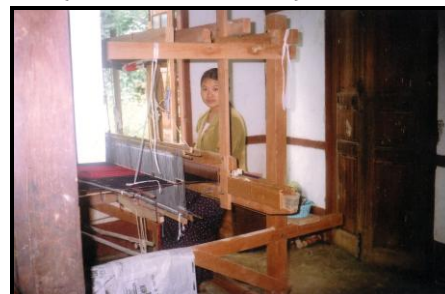
In addition, the grant was also used to support two widow head of households who agreed to raise ducks and pigs. Micro finance activities in the Ayarwaddy Division area was hard hit by Cyclone Nargis. Three beneficiaries from Thabyay Kyine village lost their lives.



As one pig grows big enough to be put on sale, another piglet is brought in for breeding.

Prior to the devastation of Cyclone Nargis, there were 40 micro credit beneficiary groups but this number dropped down to 23 surviving beneficiary groups resulting in the loss of 156,000Ks from grant loan. The organization effort was immediately put in place and micro loan program is up and running once again with a budget of 25,000,000Ks.

○ Papon (Karen State) Karen Women's Association (PKWA Karen State)



The weaving machine that never stops since the start of the project.

PKWA (Karen State) received the grant (270,000Ks) from FOB in 2008. Materials for a traditional manmade weaving machine (Loom) was acquired. Weaving activities started on June 1st, 2008 and by the end of the year, production of 128 longyis were woven and sold for 300,000Ks. The product is high in demand. Expansion to add another weaving machine has been proposed to meet the needs. Currently, only one person is employed with additional staffing being considered. A request has been proposed to FOB is to support this expansion project.

○ **Paan (Mawlamyine) Karen Women Association (PKWA Mawlamyine)**

With the received grant fund from FOB, PKWA (Mawlamyine) organized a cooperative mini store and purchased land for a rubber plantation. The organization divided itself into two groups to manage the plantation. A volunteer women is currently leading the plantation project for a profitable project.

○ **Asho Chin Women Association (ACWA)**

ACWA reported the progress of their project on 15th October 2008. A 300,000Ks grant from FOB was received.



Raising livestock such as pigs and ducks projects are the most common and successful projects.

Currently there are 34 members functioning with a revolving fund of 1,028,220 Kyats within past 3 years. ACWA is very active and supportive not only to their members but also to Asho Chin Bible School.

○ **Kayah Moe Bwa Women Association (KMBWA)**

The number of beneficiaries of KMBWA has remained the same for the past two years. The main income for the beneficiaries has been from agriculture and livestock and loom projects with the grants secured from FOB.



A proud and successful beneficiary from growing seasonal crops stands in front of her garden.

The loom project that is now in need of support to expand and meet the product demand in the market.



○ **Naga Women Association (NWA)**



Dry goods including onion, garlic, chili, dried tea leaves and others are available at this grocery store.

NWA was initiated at late 2007 with six beneficiary members. Low interest loans were given out for seasonal crops, groceries and refining timber oil projects.

NWA is seeking support to send local girls to Yangon for sewing vocational skill training

○ **Tontay**



Cows bred by a beneficiary are being trained to work in the paddy fields.

One of the beneficiaries is a nursery teacher from Tontay who received a loan to raise cows. Initially she was not able to support her family with her sole income. She now has two cows, which are trained and will soon be able to work in the paddy field.

○ **Flora Grocery**



Grocery store is opened by a beneficiary family with all essential items for sale to support the whole family.

A widow with two children without any regular family income was given a loan to open a grocery store in the MIT compound. She is doing well and has been able to pay back the loan what she initially received. FOB grant was used for the "Jubilee Leather Bags Project" where the

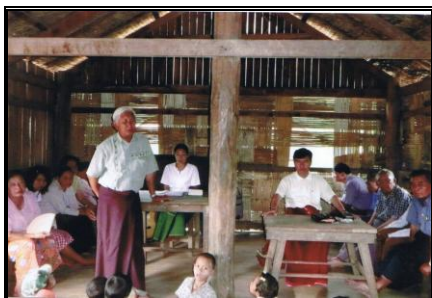
proceeds went for Jubilee building. This project generates income to support the training at ZOE center.

○ **Maubin Pig Raising Project**

Beneficiaries have been very successful in the pig raising project. One receives a loan for investment from the association to raise the pigs. The piglets are then sold to NGOs who in turn support the women head households in the Cyclone Nargis affected area. With the profits made from the piglets one is able to pay back the loan interest where the capital will later be used for a banana plantation project. The pig raising project will be used a model to support many other communities in the areas that were affected by Cyclone Nargis.

Kayin Baptist Convention, Taunggyi Youth Hostel Report

Meeting for the construction of the Kayin Baptist Convention Taunggyi Youth Hostel was held on December 7, 2008.



Speech by the construction committee chairman for the youth hostel in Taunggyi.

Many KBC Taunggyi Youth Hostel students were beneficiaries of the 2008 Eyeglasses Program.



Some of beneficiarires from the KBC Taunggyi Youth Hostel .

Award Presented to FOB Executive Board Members

During the homecoming festival event and the 125th Anniversary celebration of the University of Sioux Falls, John and Ruth Peterson were presented with the Firman A. Early Distinguished Ministry Award for their distinguished service in ministry. John and Ruth graduated from the University of Sioux Falls in 1957 and 1958. They both have earned their Doctor of Ministry degrees from Northern Seminary. John and Ruth have held various official board of director positions for various organizations and have also served many years of devoted service for various organizations.

Karen Baptist Convention Memorial Scholarship Program Report

Minister's Students	Needy Students	Support Per Student	Amount in Kyats
354	30	25,000	9,600,000

○ **Bangada Church Miracle**

The newly built Bangada Church was yet to be dedicated when Cyclone Nargis hit. Despite knowing that the main doors were locked, villagers came to the church in the dark at midnight because of the strong and high tidal waves. The church doors opened and villages were able to come into the church. Three strong men tried to shut the door but without success. The doors stayed opened to allow and save more villages to come to the church. It is a miracle that the villagers are talking about today.



The Bangada Church where a miracle happened during Cyclone Nargis.

○ **Pathein Myaungmya Sgaw Kayin Baptist Association (PMSKBA) Report**

Funding from FOB was received to purchase (81) single/double wheel power tillers, (450) boats, various types of fishing nets, paddy seed, pea and bean seeds, vegetable seeds, fertilizers, (42) engine boats, rice mill engines, crab boats, livestock, food, kitchen utensils, water and school facilities for the survivors of Cyclone Nargis.

○ **Retired Christian Workers Program**

Letters of thanks were received for the financial grants supported by FOB to cover health treatment expenses for several Retired Christian Workers Program members.

Life In Burma Publication by Neil Sowards

Neil Sowards has published a book entitled "Life in Burma". Now available for purchase at www.lulu.com.

2009 Friends Of Burma Annual Meeting



Attendees: (from left to right)
 Dr. Ardeth Thawngmung, Dr. Neil Sowards, Tansy Kadoe, Dr. John Peterson, Dr. Ruth Peterson, Nwe Nwe Win, Jim Tompkins, Judy Lundy, Dr. Adam Maung, Diana Sowards, Dr. David Horton, Dr. Naw May Pearl, Phil Schock.
 Absent from Picture: Philip Htoon
 Absentee: Sue Dolbow, Lew Murdick

The 2009 Friends Of Burma Annual Meeting was held on February 28th, 2009 at the Monte Vista Baptist Church in Phoenix, Arizona. Forteen out of the sixteen FOB board members attended the meeting. The meeting agenda included the following topics information sharing, financial reports, voting on budget proposals and committee up-dates.

: Re-election of Dr. John Peterson, Dr. Ruth Peterson and Dr. David Horton as FOB executive board members for the next five years.

: The election of new executive board member, Dr. Naw May Pearl to the FOB board.

: The agreement between Friends Of Burma (FOB) and Baptist International Ministries (BIM) was revised and discussed by the executive members.

: FOB financial report by Jim Tompkins

: Budget Proposal/Approval

- Child Enrichment Centers, Dr. David Horton - \$800

- Report from Pathein-MyaungMya, Dr. Naw M. Pearl.

- Increased Funding to FOMGB due to Cyclone Nargis, Dr. Neil Sowards - \$2000

- Multi-purpose Building in Bogalay, Tansy Kadoe and Dr. Ardeth T. - \$10,000

- Library Internet Service Center and Scholarship Requests, Dr. Ardeth T. - \$5650

- Purchase Request for a Truck From Sharon Porterfield, Tansy Kadoe - \$1000

- Support proposal From Outstanding Students, Diana Sowards - \$5500

- Livestock support for MBRO, Philip Htoon - \$500

Wish List and Support Opportunities

- Financial support for students at Hpu Saw Bu Bible School.

- Financial support for students attending Yangon Kayin Baptist Bible School (Ahlone)

- Orphanage support and school uniform.

- Support to expand Loom project by PKWA

- Support to send trainees from NWA to attend sewing vocational skill training in Yangon.

- Support for KBC Healthcare Mobile Clinic in Bogalay.

- KBC Healthcare Clinic new building construction.

All work in the U.S. is done by volunteers.

Administration and promotion less than 1%

Friends of Burma (FOB) is a 501(c)(3) organization.

"All donations are tax deductible"

Did you know that you could always have FOB in your Will?