

Friends of Burma, Inc. Newsletter

Fall 2019

Dear Donors and Friends,

Friends of Burma annual board meeting was held on July 20, 2019 at Fort Wayne, Indiana. Neil and Diana Sowards (Fort Wayne, IN), Anna Barbara Maung (Fort Wayne, IN), John Peterson (DeKalb, IL), May Pearl Cartee (Ann Arbor, MI), Adam and Tansy Maung (Phoenix, AZ), Phil Schock (Camas, WA), Sung Cer (Battle Creek, MI), Htaw Htoo (Indianapolis, IN) and John Gravley (Kansas) attended the meeting. Lwin Moe (Toronto, Canada) and Show Ei Ei Tun (Maryland, now based in Rangoon, Burma) also attended remotely via Facebook Messenger.

Htoo Khu (KBC Clinic, Myanmar), Mary Wood, Nay Tar Mu, Kaw Khu (Kawthoolei) also participated in the meeting as special guests. Nay Tar Mu and Kaw Khu were from Kawthoolei at the Thai-Burma border, and now studying at the Central Baptist Seminary in Kansas. The students gave a presentation and were presented with scholarship awards for their studies at Central Baptist Seminary.

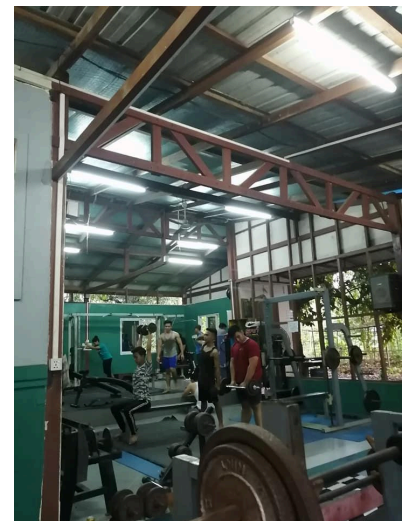
Thank you all volunteer board members who drove and flew from different states, giving your time for FOB mission.



Dr. Chit Maung Fitness Center (DCMFC)

DCMFC was founded in August, 2009 to provide low-cost and accessible fitness service to the community. It was supported by family members of the late Dr.Chit Maung and FOB, under the organization of Dr.Chit Maung learning center. The fitness center started with a small room behind the Dr. Chit Maung library with a few machines, but now expanded to a separate building with a large room, a special space for female clients to stretch, and more equipment.

It has offered various kinds of services to individuals from the community, who come to use the facility for health purposes as well as strengthening mind and body. About 40 regular members use the facility. It has multi-talented and dedicated Saw Thay Lar as an instructor. The fitness center is now celebrating its 10th anniversary.



Matthew 25 Love Clinic

Matthew 25 Love clinic in Pathein has been giving excellent medical services to the local community in the Delta area, especially those who cannot afford private and expensive care. It is managed by Dr. Bwe Khu Paw. They offer various health care services including maternity (OB/GYN) care.

They are planning to upgrade the clinic to offer more health care services. They would like to provide X-RAY services to the patients. An X-Ray machine is wished for to provide more convenient services because patients are now being referred to other clinics and hospitals for taking an X-RAY examination. Please see **Wish List** at the end.

Mosquito Nets Donation

Burma being in the tropics, mosquitoes are known to cause a lot of diseases among the people in remote villages. FOB has been involved in mosquito nets distribution in far and remote villages. Sinzwe village is thankful to FOB donors for receiving 10 mosquito nets. They said mosquito nets helped them prevent malaria and Dengue Hemorrhagic fever, caused by mosquito bites.

KKBBSC's Beneficial Shop

On August, 2019 KKBBSC, Kawthoolei Karen Bible School in Mae La Refugee camp on the border, held an opening ceremony and dedication of the Beneficial shop. The shop is organized and managed by KKBBSC to meet the needs of the community. You can get Karen traditional clothes, books, stationary, food, drinks and over-the-counter medications for a reasonable price. Profits will go to the funds for supporting teachers and staff from Kawthoolei Karen Bible School. Thank you to all the donors for your contributions which allowed this to happen.

Photos below: The opening ceremony of the shop.



New board members of FOB

Welcome to our new board members, **Cynthia Wu**, from Tacoma, WA and **James Thawngmung** from Lowell, MA. Thank you also to outgoing board members, Judy Lundy and Michele Kessler for their years of service. All board members are volunteers.

Robert and Cynthia Wu are with **Lightning for Learning for the Orphans**, a group of concerned families, who have taken an interest in education, especially for orphans and residents of childcare centers. Cynthia is running a half marathon in Yangon in January, trying to raise \$25,000 for the Matthew 25 Love Clinic's new building.

James Thawngmung was originally from Chin State in Burma, and migrated to the US with his parents in the 80s.

Left: Robert and Cynthia Wu with the orphans in Burma. Right: James Thawngmung



Karen Baptist Convention (USA)

KBC-USA General Secretary Rev. Ler Htoo met with Neil Sowards in July (photo below). They discussed how FOB could relate to KBC-USA. There are 102 churches under KBC-USA.



Women Empowerment Program

Women Empowerment Program gives loans to women to start small businesses, and to invest more in their small business. There are eleven women's groups participating in this program.

Report from Naw Paw Gaw:

These groups are running small businesses such as making dresses and other fabric items, opening small grocery stores, buying dried chilli, pounding and powdering them and making packages for the market, buying cooking oil from whole-sale market and reselling it to neighbors, and providing suitable training for different women targeted groups. Activities of these self help groups come up with different ideas, and meet regularly to share their performance.

Women Empowerment Program would like to express heartfelt thanks to FOB for giving them opportunities to gain trust building and strong networking among women groups.

Fundraising for Orphanages and Childcare Centers

FOB would like to thank Gawad Kalinga (GK) club from Liberty High School, Las Vegas for raising funds for orphanage programs in Myanmar.

Gawad Kalinga means "give care", a Philippine-based movement that aims to end poverty by first restoring the dignity of the poor. Currently 50 members from 9th to 12th grade participate in GK club to help out the community around the world. Zipporah Maung, high school teacher from Liberty HS and younger sister of two board members, is advisor in GK club.

Lightning for Learning

Friends of Burma has facilitated interested organizations to help the people of Burma. **Lightning For Learning** is a group of concerned families, who have taken an interest in education, especially for orphans and residents of childcare centers. The Wu family has been active in fund-raising for scholarships.

From the Wu family:

Thank you to our 60+ donors from the Lightning for Learning team! This 2019/2020 school year, 7 university students from the Kwe Lwe and Phu Saw Bu orphanages are sponsored, and many are graduating! They are so diligent, dedicated and devoted to serve and give back to their communities. God bless them every day for their resilience and grit!

*Thank you to our sponsors for running this Race of Life to Love!
With love and gratitude, the Wu family.
Keep watch for news of Cynthia's half marathon in Yangon in January, 2020.
Photo on the right: Naw Pho Thandar And Naw Juisi, graduates of Lightning for Learning.*



Mawlamyine Christian Leprosy Hospital

Another organization we have facilitated is the Christian Leprosy Hospital in Mawlamyine. A concerned friend in the US has been raising funds for the hospital. We have facilitated the transfer of funds to buy a much-needed ultrasound machine. Photo on the right shows staff and doctors from the hospital praying for the dedication of the ultrasound.



From Saw Kaw Khu:

Saw Kaw Khu from the Thai-Burma border, who is now studying at Central Baptist Seminary in Kansas, sent this:

I am writing this letter to show my appreciation to you for generously donating \$1,500 to the nine students in Mae La Refugee Camp. The nine students (photo on the right) were originally born in Karen State, Burma. Some of them are from Buddhist background and some are Christians. That was such an abundant blessing for them. This donation helps and encourages them to stay focused on their studies without having to worry about their physical needs. Your generous support is a hope that motivates them as they keep following their passionate dreams.



Our purpose for this ministry is to reach out to the children who are in need of education, and be a light that shines in a corner where we are with the ability God has given us. We are filled with hope in God as we saw friends willingly offer help.

It is almost two years we are providing the opportunity for these students. We try our best seeking financial support for the students. Gracefully, because of the love and support from friends, we are able to continue this ministry. I would like to thank Friends of Burma from the bottom of my heart for your love and generous support. Your love and support means more than anything for the students who enjoy the blessing you share.

From Russ in his own words:

Russ, has taken four village children into his own home.

Yesterday I bought some bread and coffee as the kids want me to buy. We still have some butter at home. After studying until 9 o'clock, we ate together. The kids are like Americans. They like bread and butter very much. They put some sugar on the bread too. Before we ate, we pray for Friends of Burma. It was a beautiful night. It was fun.



We were talking about the food in their village while eating happily. They ate more than we can. After that, they went to sleep.

Thank you so much for caring.

Sincerely, Russ

Below Left: A student enjoying her bread. Below Right: Russ and the children giving thanks for food.



Wish List.

1. \$31,000 X-RAY machine for Matthew 25 Love clinic
2. \$50.00 Christmas gift to a needy family
3. \$50.00 for a Christmas party for a childcare center (there are nine of them)
4. Prayers and support for flood victims in Mon and Karen states during last month monsoon season

This newsletter was written and compiled by Anna Barbara Maung and Lwin Moe. Please notify us if you wish to be on the email list, as this saves us money.

Friends of Burma, Inc. 548 Home Ave. Ft. Wayne, IN 46807

Tel. 260-745-3658, Website: <http://friendsofburma.org>, Email: neildianasowards@juno.com

E-Newsletter: <http://news.friendsofburma.org/>