

# Friends of Burma, Inc. Newsletter

## Fall Edition 2023

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### Fall Greetings

Dear our partners and friends, may the wisdom and blessings of the Fall Season be with you. As the brilliance of fall foliage is all around us, we are in many ways reminded to reflect on what we had sowed and relish those that have ripened and come to fruition, while also being aware of the need to let go to give way to new beginnings. Together with you, we have been able to brighten and give some hope to the people of Burma, struggling through one of the most challenging times in its history. While the troubles seem never-ending for them, we are humble to witness how they are blessed with resilience and perseverance. And for that, FOB is grateful to be part of the blessings. Your love, care and support are greatly appreciated, and we are convinced more than ever that your continuing support is increasingly essential for those in dire needs. In Romans 12:12, it reads “be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.” Let us continue to bring hope, share the pain and pray relentlessly for them.

### *Phil Schock wrote why he supports FOB*

*I support Friends of Burma because I believe in helping those in need there, who face difficulties in obtaining medical care and education and proper care for children. I support Friends of Burma because through helping schools, clinics, displaced people, and child care programs in Burma, the message of the love of Jesus is reconfirmed and spread to many, over and over.*

*I support Friends of Burma because the organization reaches many people in Burma through a variety of programs and projects, with a minimum amount of overhead costs. I know that very close to 100% of the funds that I send will actually reach the people and projects for which they are intended.*

*I believe that God wants us to use what we have been given to further His Kingdom, not simply for our own pleasure and our own ends. I believe that in years to come, no one will recall what kind of house I lived in or any of my earthly exploits - in fact in years to come, very few people will remember me at all. But by helping a few people in very simple ways, by being important in the life of even one child, maybe it will have made a difference in the world, and that I lived in it. That is why I support Friends of Burma.*

# Supports in Rakhine State

## We are thankful for rice bags

L.A.B.C., Daleh mission is now serving a mission field located in Ann township, Rakhine State. The mission group used the donation in buying rice bags and distributing them to **85 IDP families** during May 2023.



## Helping hands for cyclone victims

As we know, Rakhine State was suffering from a cyclone last May 2023 and we have a lot of people who need help. People are sick because of mosquitoes and they do not have enough blankets and mosquito nets to prevent them from mosquito bites. With the donation of FOB we went to Myianguyagar and distributed 15 blankets, 15 mosquito nets, 15 mats and 15 pillows to those who needed. They were very grateful for unexpected love gifts which can protect them from sickness.



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# Orphanage Mission

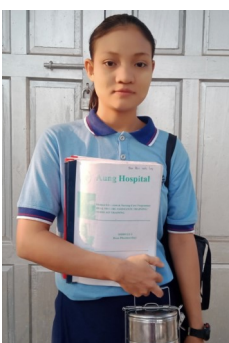
## Seeking for more help

We are thankful for having donors who support our Orphanage Mission. Since we are facing political conflicts and armed conflict in our country we need more help for our center. On the other side, Karen Baptist Convention is also planning to provide more qualified staff by arranging "teachers' training" for the orphanage center.

Our partner **Lightning for learning** for the Myanmar orphans also held a graduation ceremony for their summer English class for kids last May.



One of the students from **Paradise Orphanage**, Naw Freeda is now attending teachers' training and it is one of the fruits of our mission. Thank you for supporting our mission.



(L) Naw Her Gay from Kwe Lwe Orphanage, who became an orphan at age 7 after losing both her parents in Cyclone Nargis in 2008, is finishing her nurse aide training program. She is very keen to take care of patients and has a goal to work in healthcare services.



(R) Naw Htoo Wah Lay from a village in Myaung Mya township is enrolling in the Master of Theology program after passing matriculation in 2015 and graduating from B.Th class at Ko Tha Byu Theological Seminary in 2020. With her best academic performance, she wants to be a good minister and serve in the ministry of God.

## The Agape Orphanage Project

The Agape Orphanage is organized by Loikaw Baptist church. For the academic year of (2023-2024), the Agape Orphanage center has 8 girls and 3 boys, including 3 new children who lost their fathers during armed conflict and mothers who are not able to take care of them. They all go back to school in June and try their best for their education. Among these children Naw Elizebeth and Naw Lee Mo are talented by playing violin. Naw Elizebeth, who is going to 8th grade, earned some pocket money by teaching violin during summer holidays.

Loikaw Baptist church is now providing shelter and food to 120 IDPs from two villages. Director from the center sent his heartfelt thanks and mentioned that "even though we are facing a hard time, we are so blessed by the grace of God and all of your support." LET US continue our helping hands to those who are in need.

# Love Gifts for Widows

Anita, who tried to get a job in a neighboring country, became a victim of human trafficking. Her husband who suffered from a mental illness had killed their two kids and he himself committed suicide. Her sister who got 7-month pregnant and fled from an armed conflict area also committed suicide. The old father who heard the bad news also passed away. All terrible things were happening within two weeks. This is a very sad story and we can imagine how Anita had faced a difficult time.



## Women's Self Help Groups

The women empowerment group now provides counseling to Anita and supports her 100,000 kyats (\$28.00) to start a small business for her living. Another widow, Naw Mya Nwe with 5 kids, also got 200,000 kyats



(\$57.00) to start a small business by selling traditional medication to the community. Both widows would like to thank all of you who donated through FOB for helping them. Please keep praying for them as well.

Another self help group works to sew traditional clothes which they sell so they can pay school fees for their children

# Alternative Christmas gift given to a poor family – \$50



You can participate in our alternative Christmas gift program where your \$50 donation will reach directly to a very poor person or family in Myanmar. The recipient of your gift is one of those who only make less than \$200 income per year so \$50 is a great gift equal to about 3 months income. Your gift money will be received as it is in local currency or in an equal amount of supplies to the intended person or family.

# Myanmar Institute of Theology (M.I.T.) Updates

## Classes are open both online and in-person!

Getting decent education services, especially higher education, has been a crisis in the current context, and MIT has been the only hope to many students. Amidst the problems of internet Wi-Fi, electricity shortage and the current political crisis, MIT has been able to reopen classes for both in-person and online.



Opening Convocation

More than 150 new students have been admitted to Theology Program for the academic year 2023-2024. **While theology students have been taking classes both online and in-person, only online classes can be arranged, at present, for students of Liberal Arts Program (LAP).** FOB scholarship has enabled MIT to financially support students with most needs from LAP, whose families could not afford to support them due to loss of jobs caused by both COVID-19 pandemic and the political crisis, totaling 284 students. In August, FOB was able to respond to the request for restrooms in the school library.



EC Members of Student Council (Theology)



Activities on World Environment Day

# Wish List

Please tell one person about Friends of Burma and what we do. The story you tell can make a big difference in many lives in Burma.

## Child Care Centers

- ⇒ Pu Saw Bu: Funds for building of additional toilet
- ⇒ Myit Tar Yeik Mon: needs support for children's education and living
- ⇒ New Eden: Medication support for sickness
- ⇒ Pu Mooler Theh: needs bicycles for children to go to school
- ⇒ Htee Moo Htaw Ber: WiFi power bank for online studying
- ⇒ Chit Myit Tar: Text book for children for online studying

## Myanmar Institute of Theology

- ⇒ 90th Anniversary Building of MIT (to accommodate more students in dire needs for education)
- ⇒ Scholarships for the needy students of MIT
- ⇒ Upgrading Higher Education Facilities of MIT (Auditorium Facilities, Classroom Facilities, Digital Facilities, Eco-friendly Facilities, Education Lab Facilities, Facilities for People with Special Needs, Health Care Facilities, Library Facilities, Musical Instruments, Office Facilities, Research Facilities, Solar System, Sporting Facilities, Studio Facilities). *Please take a moment to review a variety of facilities above and pick one or two that touch your heart to support*

Your support of full amount or any portion would be a blessing. Please write a check payable to **Friends of Burma** or donate online using PayPal (<https://friendsofburma.org/donate/>). Please note that there is a processing fee, which we have to cover, if you use PayPal. If you want to use Zelle instead, please use [neildianasowards@gmail.com](mailto:neildianasowards@gmail.com).

FOB, tax ID 20-5572384, is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, and all donations are tax-deductible.

This newsletter was written and compiled by Anna Barbara Maung and Kanyaw Paw Tha. 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@gmail.com](mailto:neildianasowards@gmail.com)

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



## Historic Photograph

Genevieve and Erville Sowards delivering books sent by the Junior Department of Garfield Trinity Baptist Church to Paul Thuam Thang, principal of Zomi Theological School, Falam, Chin Hills, Burma. Garfield Trinity was Neil Sowards' first church at Cleveland, Ohio.

*Photo taken March 1965.*

*Garfield Trinity Baptist Church no longer exists.*