

NEWSLETTER: FRIENDS OF BURMA, INC.

FALL EDITION 2024

THE SITUATION IN BURMA CONTINUES TO DETERIORATE



As of March 2024, martial law has been enforced in 61 townships in the country of Burma with 8.2 million people affected. The continued armed conflict with the military junta in control of the country, along with the rising costs of basic goods due to inflation and limited civilian infrastructure due to the fighting, continues to drive displacement of the population. The UN Refugee Agency estimates that close to 2 million are now internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Burma due to widespread conflict, dire economic conditions and natural disasters such as cyclones and flooding. People with disabilities, the elderly, women-headed households, and people with medical conditions are particularly vulnerable. Many are desperate to find food, shelter and clothing after being forced to flee into the jungle to escape the military who continue to burn or destroy entire villages in their quest for control of the civilian population. (Sources for the above paragraph are the UN Refugee Agency, Irrawaddy.com and Aljazeera). Please pray for the IDPs and send funds as you are able, to help alleviate their plight.

This newsletter focuses on several of the programs FOB helps to fund to help the needy people of Burma:

Humanitarian Aid Is Ongoing in FOB efforts to help the IDPs and the vulnerable

Some photos of a trip to deliver basic food items of rice, cooking oil, dry fish, and onions to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).



An FOB donation used to build shelters for the Kachin IDPs





Distributing school supplies and food



Jungle School



Dental Care



Medical Care

Tractor Purchase for an IDP Community

This machinery is a godsend to the community as the tractor can plow and prepare the land for planting that would otherwise have to be done by hand.



Self-Help Program Update(Micro-Credit)

New Self-help groups are started with \$300 from FOB donors. Nine groups were included in the recent report about Micro-Credit groups including four that make clothing or embroidery for sale, a co-op grocery store, a mini-store, a barber shop, and two publishing groups. Pictures and reports of four of the nine groups are below.

Two brothers that are congenitally disabled and are wheel-chair bound, both have skills and experience in hair cutting, especially for men. With the help of Friends of Burma (FOB) who funded tools and materials, they opened a barbershop. Within one month, they became the owners of a barbershop, gain income everyday, and even give it to their mother who is a widow.



They are enjoying their shop. People noted that they gained more confidence in their skills, and they felt the love of God and the people in the community who cared and shared life with them.



Several of the Micro-Credit groups FOB funded make clothing. One of the groups is **Queen Bees**, and they have six members. They are from the Taungoo Paku Karen Traditional and Culture Group. Their purpose is to maintain their traditional Karen dress and promote team spirit in the community by making clothing to sell. They use their profits to help elderly people in need. Photos of **Queen Bees** activities are below:



The Snowdrops Group is comprised mostly of women but also have a few men. They decided to work at a cooperative grocery store in the basement of their women's headquarters selling basic food for making daily meals in the kitchen.



With a grant from FOB, the **Minister's Department, KBC** decided to invest in the activity of publishing marriage, baptism and ordination certificate folders. They use their profits to support retired ministers.



Agape Clinic sent photos of some of the clinic activities below and a thanks for an FOB donation. Their motto is "We Treat, God Heals".



EDUCATION ASSISTANCE

The Karen Baptist Association (UMKBA) Mission School Virtual Education Program received financial assistance from FOB:

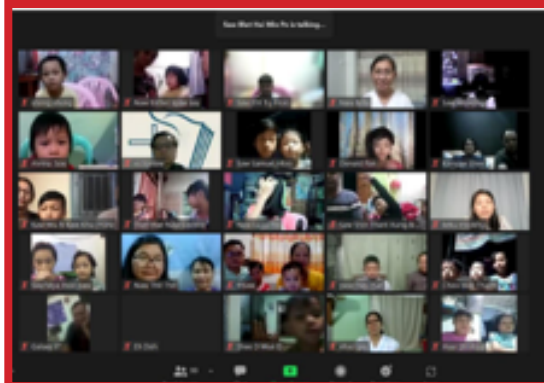
Students sitting for final examination through online supervision



Final examination at Taunggu Center (Bago)



Students Parent group meeting



Nyaung Lay Pin Karen Baptist Christian Bible School launched its first Bachelor of Theology Class with 14 Students thanks to a FOB donation:



ORPHAN SUPPORT

Chit Myit Tar Orphanage recently experienced flooding and pictures are provided below. Some of the younger children and their teacher temporarily moved to Taungoo City while some of the older children and their supervisor stayed in the orphanage to look after things. They are asking for financial assistance to help defray additional costs following the flooding.



Wah Orphanage Center used FOB donations to buy rice and school supplies for the children.



PRAYER REQUESTS

- Pray for the IDPs of Burma as they struggle to survive in the jungle or in camps near the border areas.
- Pray for the people in the Delta region of Burma as they deal with all the problems that severe flooding brings.
- Pray for the Karen and Chin Churches which play a pivotal role in their immediate vicinity along the border areas of Thailand and Myanmar.

*May He grant you according to your hearts desire, And fulfill all your purpose.
Psalm 20:4 (NKJV)*

WISH LIST

The greatest need in Burma currently is for financial support to assist Internally Displaced Persons. Money for food, medicine, shelter or educational support for the IDPS in any amount would be welcome. (Please designate this need as "For IDPs")

Other Needs:

Chit Myit Tar Orphanage flooded recently and needs assistance-Any amount is welcome.

Healthcare:

- KBC Hospital-Any amount
- Matthew 25 Love Hospital-Any amount
- Hearing Aid Program- \$50
- Eye Glasses Program-\$17 each for prescription glasses
- Book "Where there is No Dentist"- \$4.00 each copy
- Book "Where there is No Doctor" - \$4.00 each copy

Self-Help (Microcredit) Group: \$300 (We welcome lesser amounts and will combine to support one group).

Sponsor an Orphan: \$360 for one year (We welcome lesser amounts and will combine funds for support).

Christmas Gift for Poor Family Program: \$50

Education:

- Middle or High School Student Support: \$50
- Scholarship aid for Myanmar Institute of Theology Student- \$500

Construction Needs:

- KKBBS (Kawthoolei Karen Baptist Bible School and College) Wish List:
 1. New Dorm Housing for female students housing for 40-45. (Estimated budget is approximately \$4100.)
 2. New building for 200 student classes (Estimated budget is \$9,600.)
 3. Chairs/tables for students in the new building (Estimated budget is about \$820.)
- KHTS (Kawthoolei Hope Theological Seminary), Tak Thailand, needs new Faculty Quarters for housing faculty. (Cost-\$29,411). Note that 56% of the goal has been reached so far. International Ministries will be matching funds for this project in the near future. (The website for donations is https://internationalministries.org/faculty-housing-for-kawthoolei-hope-theological-seminary/_).

Please designate what you would like your donated funds to be used for.
If you do not specify, your donation will go to meet the greatest need.

WAYS TO DONATE

Donate by snail mail:

Please make checks payable to Friends of Burma, Inc. a 501 (c)(3) non profit organization. All donations are tax-deductible.

Friends of Burma, Inc.

548 Home Avenue
Fort Wayne, IN 46807
(260) 745-3658

Donate online via PayPal by visiting our website (www.friendsofburma.org):

If you want to donate to a specific cause, please make sure you write down instructions in the notes.

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 contact Neil and Diana at neildianasowards@gmail.com for more information.

All work in the U.S. is done by volunteers. Our overhead and administrative costs are 0.5% or 50 cents on each \$100 we receive and that is covered by one donor so 100% of each donation goes to help the people of Burma.

Please notify us if you wish to be on the e-mailing list and feel free to pass along the printed copy or e-mail version of this newsletter.

Please visit our website (www.friendsofburma.org) to view all other information that could not be included in this newsletter.

We do not share our donors' names with anyone, and we do only 3 mailings a year to keep our overhead below 1 1/2 % (1.5%).

Note: This Fall 2024 Edition of the FOB Newsletter was compiled and written by Pat Cordier and designed by Eh Moo Hmun.

Thank you all for reading and please continue to pray for Burma.

NEIL SOWARDS, 548 HOME AVE., FT. WAYNE, IN 46807 © PHONE: 260-745-3658

EMAIL: NEILDIANASOWARDS@GMAIL.COM

WEBSITE: WWW.FRIENDSOFBURMA.ORG