



Tibetan Healing Fund

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December 2008

Dear Friend of Tibetan Healing Fund,



Even though much of world's news is disheartening, at the Tibetan Healing Fund we are feeling optimistic! Thanks to remarkable support from our friends in the U.S. and also to the expertise of those who implement our projects in Tibet, 2008 has been an exceptional year. We want to be sure we share the good news with you, the key people who made it all happen.

The new Tibetan Natural Birth and Health Training Center has been completed.

The Center will open for daily care services in January 2009, and the birthing suites will open next summer. The Center will provide safe, affordable, linguistically and culturally appropriate birth and education services. We *know* that it will help save the lives of rural Tibetan women and children and decrease the risk of disability as a result of unassisted childbirths. It will also provide a training space for community women, midwives, and other community health workers.



Tibetan Healing Fund (THF) conducted the 2nd Maternal and Child Health Education Project for 3,000 women.

Tibetan women are eager to learn how to increase the chances that their babies will survive and thrive, but they lack information to achieve better outcomes. Last winter, 3,000 women from fifty Tibetan villages received health education about topics including prenatal and postnatal care; infant and child nutrition; and prevention care, including infectious diseases (TB, STI, and HIV/AIDS). The educators were fifty medical students from the Tso-Ngon (Qinghai) University Tibetan Medical College. THF plans to repeat this project annually.

The two THF-sponsored obstetrics textbooks are complete and edited.

Collaborating with both Kumbum Tibetan Medical Hospital and Tso-Ngon (Qinghai) University Tibetan College Medical College, Tibetan doctors have completed two texts: 1) *Technical Manual for Pregnancy, Delivery, and Post-Partum Care* and 2) *Public Health Perspectives on Maternal and Child Health in the Tibetan Context*. In addition to their use in training Tibetan midwives, these textbooks will be available to Tibetan medical students specializing in pediatric and gynecologic, and obstetric care. We expect to publish the books next summer.

In 2009, of course, there will be still more to do!

We need to add to the trained community midwives who are already practicing in rural villages.

Historically, 95% of Tibetan women give birth alone, and as many as 1 birth in 33 ends in the death of the mother.

International studies conclude that the availability of skilled community-based birth assistants improve pregnancy outcomes in the developing world.



Also, we want to add to the 300 primary students we have supported to complete their primary school education.

In particular, we want to support children who are from very low income families and have good motivation for studying. Also, we will monitor the children's nutritional needs and provide food aid as needed.

It is urgent to continue to train Tibetan primary teachers.

So far, THF has provided additional education to over 550 primary teachers to improve their teaching and knowledge of child development. But we must expand this work; supplemental teacher training is needed in all Tibetan regions.

Finally, THF wants to build on the success of the Tibetan Heritage Primers that provide rural elementary school children textbooks in their native language which teach about the history and culture of their region.

Children in Rebkong County are already successfully using the primers developed for them, and in 2009, we plan to complete similar primers for Tri-ka County and Ba County.

After seven years, we know two things for sure: We absolutely know that all of this effort is making a difference in the quality of life for Tibetan women and children. We also know that we can do even more with your help.

We hope that you will continue to help us empower healthier, more knowledgeable Tibetan women to nurture strong and educated children. Please know that we are enormously grateful!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be in the Tibetan script, followed by a stylized Western-style signature.

Dr. Kunchok Gyaltsen
Founder and President
UCLA School of Public Health, PhD Student

819 North 49th Street, #105
Seattle, Washington 98103
info@tibetanhealingfund.org
www.info@tibetanhealingfund.org