

## FRIENDS OF BURMA ANNUAL REPORT 2025

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Dear Friends and Supporters of Friends of Burma, Inc.

Greetings to all our valued supporters who have been so loyal all these years since 1985. Over the years, our newsletters have evolved from simple typed pages with pasted black-and-white photos to today's vibrant, full-color six-page editions, available both online and in print. However, our mission has always remained the same: to keep you informed about the needs of the amazing people of Burma/Myanmar.

Those of you who have been long term donors and subscribers know that we (Neil and Diana), have worked as volunteers for 41 years to try to help with the education, self help, humanitarian, and children's projects. This continues today, with somewhat more emphasis on humanitarian efforts since the situation has worsened in the last 5 years after the military takeover of the country.

In the beginning it was just the two of us, but it has evolved into a wonderful coalition of both American and Burmese volunteers, some of whom are young, knowledgeable in electronic ways to get the news out to you. We cherish our board members. That said, let us tell you about some of the needs and projects that FOB has worked on to help in this last year.



We have news from the Wa Orphanage Center in Shan State (photos above). "Thanking FOB for supporting the Wa Bible Schools, Wa orphanage and Wa Mission. The orphanage in Tan Yan is saving money to buy a car but they don't have enough. The children have to walk nearly an hour to get to school"

## **Message from Wado, President of Kawthoolei Hope Theological Seminary in Tak, Thailand:**

"Your generous donation of 513,550 Thai Baht (\$16,336.89) has made a tremendous difference in our efforts to serve the Lord and support our Karen community. This contribution will play a key role in expanding our educational programs, including enhancing our library resources and advancing literacy initiatives. These programs are especially vital as most of our students come from displaced families due to the ongoing conflict in Burma."



Thank you letters from recipients of the Sowards Memorial Scholarships, a project we have supported since the beginning. "Greetings from Myanmar! I am B.B.T., and assistant pastor of Agape Lisu Baptist Church in Mogok, who is studying MDiv. I am very proud to be a son of the minister. My father has been serving as a pastor before I was born. Now he is growing old and cannot support anything. When I heard I had a chance to receive some support for the Pastor's children, my joy overflowed to see such wonderful donors, who care (about) pastors' children. I feel that my father is still supporting me because I am receiving a scholarship for my father's sake. It meant a lot to me. I am a father of three children, two boys are ten and eight years old and my daughter is four. All are doing their study except my wife. I am so grateful for the scholarship you donated. It helps me a lot to buy books and other necessities. May God bless you and your ministry."

Greetings from Agape orphanage. (this center was bombed out in Loikaw and has been displaced several different places). Excerpts from his letter. "Loikaw townspeople are told to return home but most have lost their homes and can't go back yet. Many quarters are not safe due to land mines which have not been cleared yet. Some were wounded or even lost their lives as they are facing much hardship as food and supplies can't reach them." "Dee Maw Soe (another orphanage was here) is a ghost town now. All the townspeople have fled and the whole town is covered with tall grasses and bushes. It's been almost five years now." "All the orphans are well and happy, living and studying in a PaO town called Naung Mon. We're very thankful to God, you, and Friends of Burma for finding us such kind and generous sponsors who are still contributing for the welfare of the children. We just don't know how to repay you all. May God bless you all and keep you safe. Sincerely, Dr. M.H."

Message from one of the recipients of our yearly Christmas gift to the needy project which began several years ago. Daw Yin (photo below on the left), a Myanmar Buddhist woman, a widow and she

is 85 years old. She has a daughter and is working as a domestic worker and living with her daughter.



As her tent is small and when the storm comes, it goes with the current and disappears. They lost everything and they can't imagine how they can rebuild their dwelling. She looks very happy and thanks the donor.

I have the privilege of handing your Christmas gift to P.T.C. (photo on the right) who is suffering from autoimmune diseases such as chronic pain and diabetes. She cannot enjoy life like normal people. Her family lost all their property due to the civil war in Chin State. They are now residing in Yangon as internally displaced people. When I handed your gift (kyats 100,000) to her, the couple was so surprised that strangers would give this much money as a Christmas gift. I explained how much you loved the people of Myanmar, and afterward, we praised God and prayed for you and donors. Your donation is not just a gift; it is a beacon of kindness that will be remembered by all who benefit from it. We truly appreciate your selflessness and commitment to making a positive difference in the people of Myanmar." Warm regards, Rev. V.Z.

It is quite amazing to us that the people selected to give out these gifts feel that they have received a gift themselves, to be chosen to do this mission.

News from an MIT student about the situation in Taikkyi (photos on the right). "He informed me that there are eight IDP families (38 persons) there who recently fled from Mindat and arrived in Taikkyi and that they are in need of food. At present, many



houses in Mindat, Chin State, have been burnt down by the military. We are worried that it will become like Thantlang (almost totally burned out). I used donations from one of the FOB donors and the two Burmese Buddhist friends in Ft. Wayne who own a car repair garage. Thomas who is a teacher at MIT added some of his own funds and sent it there and they then bought five big bags of rice and divided them for the families. They were very happy to receive their much needed rice unexpectedly. Thank you."

Please pray for FOB that God will guide its board to act in the best possible way. Share our story with friends. Pass on our newsletters to others. Share on Social media. Talk about our mission and what we have been doing since 1985. Many of our donors will have money in their estates. Many of our donors have given from their RMDs (Required Minimum Distributions) once a year. Won't you join in this crucial work? You could help a student or students become a full time worker in Christ's mission. You could help an orphaned child become a valued member of the community. You could save a young woman from being trafficked by teaching her business techniques so she can support herself. We will list some of our wish lists so you can get an idea of how you can help.

**Matthew 25 Love Clinic:** The Matthew 25 Love Clinic is a clinic and hospital located in Pathein (see photos below) that ministers to people throughout the year. Individuals and families travel from the surrounding countryside to receive much-needed medical care, including prenatal services and assistance with childbirth. The clinic serves as a vital source of compassionate care for those who might otherwise have limited access to healthcare. The name *Matthew 25 Love Clinic* is inspired by a clinic in Fort Wayne, Indiana, which carries a similar name and mission.



**Agape Clinic in Hakha:** This is a clinic/hospital in a very active conflict zone. The workers are at risk if they treat anyone deemed to be an "enemy" by the military government. So they are working very hard to help as many people as they can without making themselves subject to govern-



ment interdiction. Hakha has just had a series of bombings and 11 people were killed. Please pray for these staff members as they try to do the mission of Christ.

**Earthquake in Mandalay and Sagaing (March 20-25):** Relief teams came from all over to help the victims of this devastating earthquake. Several churches had teams to deliver supplies and also MIT had a special relief team who went up from Yangon. The government had many rules and regulations to follow which the teams made a big effort to comply with. More than 5000 people lost their lives. Friends of Burma made donations to each of four teams to help them in their mission work. We are sharing some of the photos from our mission partners.





## Wish list for 2026

- Supporting an orphan: \$360 a year
- Supporting a student: \$500 a year
- A specialized piece of equipment or medical supplies for a clinic: \$2,000
- A car or truck for the Wa Association to help in various ways: \$20,000
- A building fund for damaged orphanage: \$10,000
- Help start a self-help group: \$300
- Christmas gift to the neediest: \$50
- Medical help for an ailing seminary student: \$300

You can donate online via PayPal (<https://friendsofburma.org/donate/>), Zelle (Zelle account: neildianasowards@gmail.com), or checks via mail. (Please make checks payable to Friends of Burma, Inc.)

This annual report for 2025 was compiled by Diana and Neil Sowards, and Lwin Moe.