

# Fund Raising Appeal for Donations to Saldang School, Upper Dolpo, Nepal



*Dear Friends (and Friends of Friends):*

Thank you for making the 2016 fund raising campaign for Saldang School so very successful - \$13,546 raised!! Now, it is time to raise funds for the 2017 school year and I am hoping you can help once again.

Many of you know that I have traveled to Nepal for the past several years and that the people there have captured my heart, especially those living in high altitude areas only accessible on foot. In 2015 I trekked through the extremely remote Upper Dolpo region. There I met Pema Wangyal and Kusang Lhamo, husband and wife, who operate the Saldang School (3,770 meters / 12,370 ft.). Kusang is originally from Saldang and they returned to her village to help the community after she finished her education in Kathmandu.



The school operates from April 1 to October 31 and teaches children from kindergarten to Class 6. It closes in winter because it is often too cold and many villagers move to lower ground at that time. Each year, several students graduating from Class 6 are able to go to Kathmandu (Nepal's capital city) to finish their education. Approximately 80 students attend the school and it is operated by 12 staff which includes a support staff of 3; a cook, a nanny for the young children, and a maintenance worker. Most of the staff lives at the school during the school year. The annual operating cost is ~ \$25,000 US (\$33,000 CAD).

The school was desperate for funding. It receives limited funding from the government (salary for 3 of 12 staff) and was operating on donations from a registered German charity <http://saldang-school.org/en/> that started the school in 1999. This is common in remote areas— many schools rely on donations from foreigners. Unfortunately it had become impossible for the German group to raise the funds needed to both operate the school, and to address acutely needed repairs and improvements.

It was one of those moments for me to step off the sidelines and try to make a difference, and my hope is that this appeal will inspire you to join me. Why Saldang School when there are so many schools and other types of projects in need of funds, not only in Nepal but worldwide? I suppose my answer is why not Saldang School?

*Making a difference - Greenhouse built in 2016 with funds we delivered to the school!*



It provides better food security by extending the growing season and improving the quality of fresh vegetables for the student lunches and staff meals. In winter, a monk from the monastery is using it as a warm, bright classroom to teach Tibetan history and culture.

For 2017, in addition to the regular operating costs, there are several projects that are in acute need of funding; roof repair to some leaky classrooms, relocation of the compound wall to enclose all the buildings (including the new greenhouse and toilets!), and installation of a new water pipe. They had no snowfall in the winter of 2015/16 so the water situation is much more desperate than normal. They are also hoping to restore a telecommunications system that allowed them remote access to a doctor 6 days away. If this system could include even limited internet it would open a world of new education opportunities.



Two students, who graduated from class 6 in 2016, need help to continue their education in Kathmandu. There is room for four students each year at Shelter108 but in 2017 there are six graduates. These are bright kids with a strong desire to continue their studies and to return to and serve their village, with very little pay. My German counterpart, Tobias, is investigating the options for the students. It is not part of their mandate to fund students in Kathmandu, but there is no reason it can't be part of ours. [http://www.shelter108.de/Shelter108\\_e.V./Hostel\\_Kathmandu\\_englisch.html](http://www.shelter108.de/Shelter108_e.V./Hostel_Kathmandu_englisch.html)

*Please consider making a donation for the 2017 school year! The goal is \$15,000 and EVERY dollar will be sent to the school!*

Many of you will have committed charitable giving plans already but I beg you to take second look at this appeal because any amount will truly make a difference. These people are extremely resourceful and make very good use of any money they receive.

There is urgency to this request - funds are needed in Nepal by March 15. Pema will purchase supplies and arrange for transport (much of the distance by mule) before he and Kusang leave Kathmandu for Saldang near the end of March.



**An account has been set-up at CIBC in Nelson BC, Canada for donations – 00270/8458790.**



Donations can be made three ways:

- 1) Inter-bank transfer from your bank to this account number
- 2) e-transfers can be sent to either [davidswain@shaw.ca](mailto:davidswain@shaw.ca) or [janetillotson@shaw.ca](mailto:janetillotson@shaw.ca) – for the security question please use “What is this for” with the answer “SaldangSchool” (no spaces)
- 3) If these options don’t work for you, mail a cheque payable to Saldang School to David Swain, 4228 Crescent Bay Road, Nelson BC, V1L 6N1, Canada and we will deposit it in the account.

Communication changes are coming:

- MailChimp will be used going forward to send updates and this appeal message will be re-issued using that format. It will allow people to choose to subscribe, or not, and will keep better control of distribution lists.
- A website is underway, and will be hosted, gratis, by an angel friend in White Rock. It will provide many more details about this project including photo galleries, videos, messages from students as well as academic and financial reports. Although not yet complete - take a peek [www.altitudeproject.ca](http://www.altitudeproject.ca)

*A trek to the Upper Dolpo, including a visit to the school, is planned for October 2017. If you are interested in this opportunity, please contact me by email.*

And if you have any questions, comments or concerns about this appeal please feel free to contact me at your convenience at [davidswain@shaw.ca](mailto:davidswain@shaw.ca)

*And please, please, please circulate this appeal to anyone you think may be able to help!*

Tashi delek (Tibetan), Namaste (Nepali) and a sincere thank you for your consideration of this appeal.

*Best Regards, David Swain*

Ps: Registered charity status has not yet been achieved and after investigation, legal help will be needed to ensure everything is done correctly. I am investigating an option of having a law student help with this aspect.

