

Newsletter May 2012

Construction of the house

By the time that you read this newsletter, the ground-breaking ceremony for the new building for the day care centre should be close to taking place. The children and the staff in Mongolia are looking forward to a warm 300m² house where the kitchen and school rooms will be inside and no longer in gers. None of the board members in Switzerland know much about building so they were looking for professional support. We are very thankful for the helpful member, who drew the initial plans during Christmas time, suggestion giving us an idea how this building could look like. Based on this an architect's office in Ulaanbaatar has drawn the final plans. Moreover we are very fortunate and are very grateful to have John Rathmill, building engineer, as a volunteer for 3 month in Ulaanbaatar. He is there to supervise the drawing of the plans and the construction of the house and to ensure that Bayasgalant gets the best quality of construction. Big thank you, John!



The construction of the building is a big financial strain on our project therefore we are very grateful for all donations. Please tell your friends, relatives and business partners about Bayasgalant . Maybe they would like to support it as well. Also if you know a foundation, a community, a church or a company who might be interested in making a donation to the project, please let us know. We are happy to present the project in person if so desired.

Computers and violins

Last year the British company Outdoor Expeditions (www.outdoorexpeditions.com) sent four groups of volunteers to the day care centre. The young people worked hard during their 4-5 days there. They painted the boundary wall with colourful murals, carried out repairs at the existing small house and one group took the children to camp in the countryside. What a surprise they got when they returned home: Outlook Expeditions also donated eight (used or second hand) laptops! Now the children and the staff are learning how to work with the computers. Thank you Anna Burn of Outlook Expeditions.



We want to support the children in every way we can, therefore we consider it important that the children learn how to play an instrument. Every Mongolian household has a "morin chuur", the horsehead violin at home. This instrument is very meaningful to the Mongolian people and their culture and since March the children get taught once a week by a musician, how to play it.

Identifications cards and land ownership

While working with the families, our social worker Bogi is often faced with the problem of missing governmental documents. Depending on which document is missing, it could mean that; the family isn't entitled to free medical help, the children aren't allowed to attend school, they don't receive benefits or even that they cannot apply for the free piece of land property every Mongolian has a right to own.

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) plans to simplify the visits to the authorities. Therefore they want a study about the experiences that the poor families have with the authorities. The SDC financed the documents the families needed and the application for the land rights. All Bayasgalant staff felt very honoured that SDC asked Bayasgalant to do the studies. We took it as a compliment for the work that we've been doing for the last nine years. Also we are very pleased that Felix Fellmann, Swiss Consul and Matthias Meier, Deputy Country Director have visited the day care centre and spoke in high terms about the Bayasgalant project.

Change of personnel

Alex Locher who worked for Bayasgalant as Co-Project-leader since 2008 decided quit his job and return to Switzerland. When he started with Bayasgalant, his main task was to find the former Asral-And children. After he successfully found them, he supported them and their families. This support was so successful that some of the families now live in better circumstances. Some families still need help so Bogi, who used to be Alex's translator and now knows the families as well as he did, is now looking after them. We wish Alex all the best for his future.

At the moment we are not replacing Alex by a Swiss person. Currently a trained social worker is working as a volunteer for three months. We also currently have an English building engineer in Ulaanbaatar as well. By the end of the year we will assess the situation and decide if we should employ an expat again.

Sponsorship trip from Switzerland to Mongolia

Nicole Schreiter and Roy Flynn left Switzerland in their pick-up at the end of March and are driving to Mongolia now. During their journey they want to raise money for Bayasgalant. Before they left they organized a few events to raise money by selling kilometres to interested people. If you want to follow the trip of Nicole and Roy go to the website www.globexplorer.ch. We thank Nicole and Roy for their commitment and wish them a wonderful trip with lots of interesting experiences. We are looking forward to seeing you in Ulaanbaatar at the day care centre.

Membership meeting

On 21 March 2012 members gathered together at the annual membership meeting. The board members informed them about what had happened at the project in the last year and what is planned for this year. Martina Zürcher showed her slides and talked about her experiences during her six weeks stay in Ulaanbaatar.

Outlook

On 20th October Bayasgalant will organise a benefit concert in KUFA, Lyss. Singer-Songwriter Micha Sportelli and Luk von Bergen are playing to raise money for the children in Mongolia.