



buddhist global relief

helping hands
newsletter

BGR Weekend General Meeting

you are invited -- save this date:

march 28th and 29th

saturday, march 28th (for all participants)

open house, presentations, and round table discussions

for the board, advisors, committee members, and active volunteers

sunday, march 29th (for board only)

board of directors meeting

The gathering will be held at Chuang Yen Monastery located at 2020 Route 301 in Carmel, NY. (<http://www.baus.org/>) We would like to invite our advisors, committee members, and active volunteers to participate in our Saturday program. It would be great for some of us who have not met each other to be introduced and to work together in developing our organization. We understand that many of you have busy schedules and live quite a distance away, but please do come if your schedule allows.

Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi will give a Dharma Talk on Saturday evening. We also hope to participate in the monastery evening liturgy and have a group meditation. All are welcome (even locals) to stay at Chuang Yen Monastery through the weekend.

For those who are not on the board of directors, you are welcome to spend Sunday at the monastery and support the program, meditate, etc.

An invitation and schedule will be sent out at a later date with specific details.

If you have any immediate questions about this meeting please contact Marcie Barth at info@buddhistglobalrelief.org.

Committee Activities

Finance Committee has been involved in setting up the bank account, online banking, and PayPal account and developing a database system for donors. The total donations made from inception through January 30th, 2009 is \$32,798. These donations have come almost entirely from members and associates of BGR. BGR has not as yet launched a public fundraising drive.

Communications Committee has developed a more dynamic and informational website www.buddhistglobalrelief.org. Chinese versions of the website in both traditional and modern characters have also been developed. At this time the Chinese versions are posted as static pages on the site but will be developed into actual websites. They are also working on an intranet site. Four brochures have been produced; Understanding Hunger, Overview, Pilot Programs, and Volunteer Recruitment brochures.

Fundraising and Advancement Committee in collaboration with the Finance Committee, developed a protocol for tracking and acknowledging donations and is developing a gift and memorial donation program. A small holiday appeal was implemented (see “holiday appeal” below). A large-scale electronic appeal including a short video is being planned and will go out now that BGR’s non-profit status has been received. Three volunteers were recruited to provide administrative and technical support and the recruitment of more volunteers is a priority (see “need for committed volunteers” below). A special fundraising event is being planned for September to increase BGR’s visibility during Hunger Awareness Month. They also developed the Volunteer Recruitment brochure. On Nov. 9th, they represented BGR at Meditate NYC and handed out brochures and introduced BGR to the participants.

Hunger Relief and Education Committee had a meeting at Bodhi Monastery on September 13 to explore initial projects. Proposals were submitted by, or on behalf of, partners in relief work, and this has culminated in a Pilot Program with projects funded in Myanmar (\$10,000), Sri Lanka (\$2,000), Thailand (\$3,000+), and Vietnam (\$2,000). So far, the hospital feeding project for Vietnam has been implemented in December 08, and the Sarvodaya Women’s Movement project of Sri Lanka is currently underway. The Myanmar Cyclone Recovery project is scheduled to be deployed in March 09, in partnership with Save the Children organization. The Thai/Myanmar Border orphan hunger relief project has been delayed due to circumstances pertaining to the delivery of RUTF (Ready To Use Therapeutic Food). Please read about these projects on our website. We feel they fulfill a well-rounded mix of needs and criteria for our first efforts at helping to combat world hunger and improve the quality of life of those in distress.

Appeals

More for the Children of Myanmar

An appeal was made to the directors to boost the original amount of \$7,000 up to \$10,000 and various members of the board came through with the \$3,000 difference. Our gift to Myanmar is programmed for the March to June quarter because Save the Children has funding for Myanmar nutrition programs through March and then it drops off. They will then use our gift to continue to support the program for families affected by the cyclone. It is typical in disaster situations for the initial outpouring of gifts to be sufficient to last many months. Then the story disappears from the news and gifts stop. Since the affected people have not yet had their livelihoods restored, their hunger persists. Our gift can help fill this gap.

Holiday Appeal

The Fundraising committee also developed a holiday appeal and BGR emailed it to our board, advisors, members, and associates for them to forward to some of their friends. It was our first external “test” appeal and it raised well over \$3,000.

Personal Appeals

Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi has made use of the brochures by passing them out at the Global Peace Initiative of Women Conference in Aspen this past fall and at retreats at Chuang Yen Monastery. On March 14th, Joan Hoeberichts Sensei will give a talk titled “Engaged Buddhism Beyond Our Shores” and include Buddhist Global Relief activities in her lecture at the upcoming Fourth Annual Buddhist Women’s Conference in Chicago. Sharon Salzberg shared the brochures at a retreat that she conducted at the Omega Center this past fall.

Need for Committed Volunteers

As many of you know who have worked for non-profit, volunteer-based organizations, the hardest aspect is to get committed volunteers to support the mission. We have managed so far, with a small nucleus of people, to begin transforming ideals into actions. However, the founding group cannot on its own sustain this level of activity. More help, committed and accomplished help, is urgently needed.

Our most important need now is to develop a broader base of volunteers, with consistently active committee members who can give time each week and a reliable pool of project-oriented volunteers who are available for special occasions. We need TALENT -- volunteers who have expertise in fundraising, publicity and marketing, etc.; and we need SKILLS -- especially in computer generated aspects and SERVICES such as offset printing. We also need volunteers who simply have helping hands to offer from time to time!

(continued)

Though it is great to have volunteers resident in the greater New York area, much of our work is done on computers and does not need to be done locally. Our monthly meetings are held on the phone and are regularly scheduled.

If you are aware of anyone who might like to discuss volunteering, please have them contact info@buddhistglobalrelief.org.

As an “extended family” of Buddhists and friends of Buddhism we can create a meaningful organization based on compassion and sustained by the refined ethics of Buddhadharma.

Thank you for your support.

helping hands

newsletter

volume 1 no. 1 : winter/spring 2009



buddhist global relief

www.buddhistglobalrelief.org

email: contactus@buddhistglobalrelief.org
