



HEARTWOOD
center for body mind spirit

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**EVANSTON RESIDENTS, HEALTH CENTER
HELPING TIBETAN GIRLS:
Local Connection Builds School in Tibet**

EVANSTON, IL — March 20, 2008 — As the world's attention turns once again to the situation in Tibet, local residents are providing personal accounts of the struggle and tangible ways to help. Asang, a meditation instructor at Evanston's Heartwood Center, escaped from Tibet through the Himalayas to India shortly after his sister and her baby died during childbirth. The Heartwood community, along with Asang and his wife, Heartwood's Nancy Floy, will honor his sister and all the women at risk by creating a vocational boarding school for Tibetan girls.

“We believe the hope for Tibet lies in education,” says Nancy who is Heartwood's Executive Director. “Asang's family story illustrates both the tragedy and the opportunity in this difficult situation.” In the fall of 2000, Asang and others left Tibet driven in part by their yearning for education. The treacherous journey took nearly a month. One of their fellow refugees died on the way, while Asang and others took turns carrying a small girl on their backs. Her parents sent her out of the country for a better life.

Asang made his way to Dharamsala, India, where he studied at the Dalai Lama's school for Tibetan refugees. He met Nancy, an acupuncturist, during her trips there to provide healthcare services for women who had escaped. They married in 2006 and the couple has expanded

ADD ONE: EVANSTON RESIDENTS, HEALTH CENTER HELP TIBETANS

Heartwood's mission to promote women's health to include helping women like Asang's sister from suffering a similar fate.

Tibetan women in the Nanchen region—who typically have six to 10 children—have one of the highest mortality rates (for infants and mothers) during pregnancy and childbirth. In fact, Tibetan women are 300 times more likely to die than women in developed countries from various pregnancy and delivery complications. The key to changing this tragic cycle and creating health and opportunity for these people is education.

The Heartwood Tibet Girls School will help Nomad yak herding families provide more opportunities for the next generation. Asang describes their efforts: “The girls especially have a difficult time. The school is our way to create a local response to the situation. People ask me what they can do to help. Providing an education and a safe place to live for young Tibetan women is a tangible way to contribute for anyone who has been touched by this.”

The Heartwood Tibet Girls School supplies room, food, clothing and education for ten girls ages 14 to 20 in the city of Yushu. Teachers will provide healthcare information, especially the use of birth control. They will teach sewing, weaving and other handicrafts, as well as business and computer skills. The girls will cook for themselves as they learn Chinese, English, math, reading and writing. Plans for the school have been made with permission of the Chinese government.

Tax-deductible contributions are welcome. Heartwood's goal is to raise \$6,000 per year; 100% of contributions will benefit the school. For every dollar, one girl gets one day of shelter, food and instruction. To make any size donation, contact Heartwood Executive Director Nancy Floy at 847.491.1122 x11.

ADD TWO: EVANSTON RESIDENTS, HEALTH CENTER HELP TIBETANS

Asang and Nancy offer talks or presentations to any type of group interested in learning more about this critical situation. The couple also teaches a meditation class on Friday evenings at Heartwood; all proceeds from the class go toward the Heartwood Tibet Girls School.

“With the extraordinary success of our Woman and Cancer Program—in which Heartwood practitioners have provided free holistic healthcare to low-income women living with cancer—we wanted to create an international program to address health and education issues for young women,” Nancy explains. “We are fortunate to have the local connections in eastern Tibet and the support of the Chinese government for our school. Our greatest wish is that our boarding school for Tibetan girls can help empower these young women and give them a hopeful future. At the Heartwood Center, many of our practitioners work with pregnancy and childbirth. Offering this education to young nomad women is a natural program for us.”

ABOUT HEARTWOOD CENTER

Heartwood Center for body mind spirit is a community-based organization committed to providing holistic healthcare in Evanston and the greater Chicago area. Located in downtown Evanston, Heartwood provides a beautiful uplifted space where patients, clients and students receive care and teaching from some of the best practitioners nationwide in acupuncture, psychotherapy, massage/bodywork, t'ai chi, yoga and more. At Heartwood, practitioners work together in a collaborative environment as they grow their practices. Sharing resources and supporting one another to increase business for all exemplifies Heartwood's vision of an interdependent network of health and wellness specialists. Heartwood also provides charitable services through their Women and Cancer Program, which provides free holistic healthcare treatments to low-income women with cancer, and the Tibet Girls School. For more information, visit the Heartwood web site at www.heartwoodcenter.com.

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