



# ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 2020 - JUNE 2021



# THE POWER OF PRESENCE

*Going Above and Beyond  
to Serve the Himalayas*





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# LETTER FROM LEADERSHIP.

**THE POWER OF PRESENCE... IF THERE'S ANYTHING THESE "YEARS OF THE PANDEMIC" HAVE RECENTLY REVEALED, IT'S THAT ISOLATION IS DETRIMENTAL TO THE HUMAN SOUL. WE ARE COMMUNAL BY NATURE, CREATED TO BE IN RELATIONSHIP, THRIVING WHEN WE ARE PROXIMATE TO ONE ANOTHER.**

Proximity is necessary for human well-being, but it is also critical when serving the vulnerable and marginalized. Long before a pandemic hit, we recognized that you must have proximity to those in need and suffering to understand the complexities of "why," to empathize more deeply, and to find solutions that are appropriate and sustainable.

Being proximate for the sake of those you serve is not easy. It requires one to overcome obstacles and forgo comforts, willing to do things that are uncomfortable. Fighting human trafficking is not easy. Witnessing children dying simply from a lack of basic healthcare or clean water devastates the heart. Proximity, or a closeness, to those we serve requires going above and beyond, and in many cases, digging deep inside the soul to engage in difficult things.

For 21 years, MountainChild has been joining hands with the beautiful people of the Himalayas in striving to overcome the barriers, the remoteness, and the roots of suffering.

In 2015, for example, it was a devastating earthquake. This year we have witnessed destructive flooding and landslides caused by an unrelenting monsoon. And we have seen a lingering ripple effect from the on-going pandemic. Through it all though, we persevere together as presence requires persistence in the face of adversity. We adapt. We remain faithful. We continue to stay proximate.

And what we have witnessed is incredible! As Bryan Stevenson, founder and executive director of the Equal Justice Initiative stated, "If you are willing to get closer to people who are suffering, you will discover a power to change the world." For us, that power is hope and that power resides in the people of the Himalayas. As our staff, driven by a deep, unflinching, unwavering love and passion to carry hope and serve those we care so deeply for have found, the true world changers are those in the Himalayas.

In the pages of this annual report, we share stories about this power of presence, how frontline work carried out amongst local villages, face-to-face with the individuals we serve, creates long-term impact through proximity. This theme exemplifies the significant, underlying posture of the staff of MountainChild and our mission to carry hope – we believe, and have seen, that there is power in presence and presence is powerful.

Presence establishes relationships and builds trust, which in turn produces longevity and generational change.

With the help of your generous support and partnership, our presence amongst some of the most vulnerable people in the world can continue. Be encouraged as you read in the subsequent pages how overcoming difficulties, persevering through crises, and rising up to challenges is possible only as we are present in one another's lives, standing side-by-side, united in our efforts.

From everyone at MountainChild, we want to express our deepest thanks for your kindred passion and heart as we link arms together in carrying hope to the mountain child through presence.

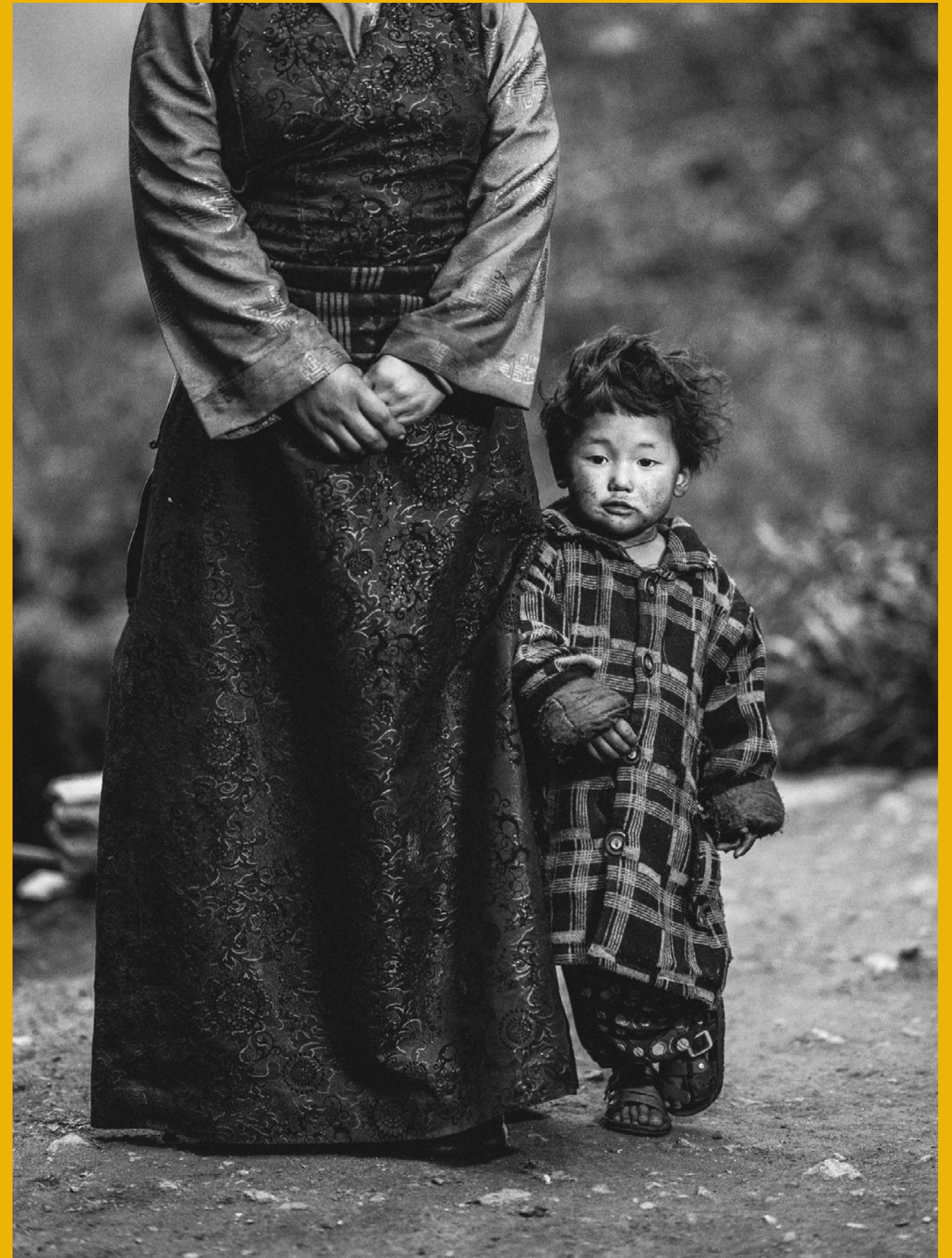
Blessings,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. R. D." followed by a horizontal line.

**Josh Duncan, P.E.**

USA Executive Director  
MountainChild







# BIG PICTURE.

OUR 5 CORES ISSUES  
INCLUDE HEALTH, CHILD  
LABOR, TRAFFICKING,  
EDUCATION & ENVIRONMENT.

## OUR MISSION

MountainChild derives its values from a biblical worldview and exists for the purpose of raising awareness, resources, and financial aid for humanitarian work carried out amongst impoverished children and their villages throughout the Himalayas.

## WHO WE ARE

MountainChild focuses its efforts towards the most remote Himalayan communities, which therefore have the least access to necessities making them extremely vulnerable to poverty and exploitation. By carrying out development work among these people, we aim to stop the cycle of suffering and enable the mountain child to become a carrier of hope to their people.

## NO. OF DIRECT BENEFICIARIES

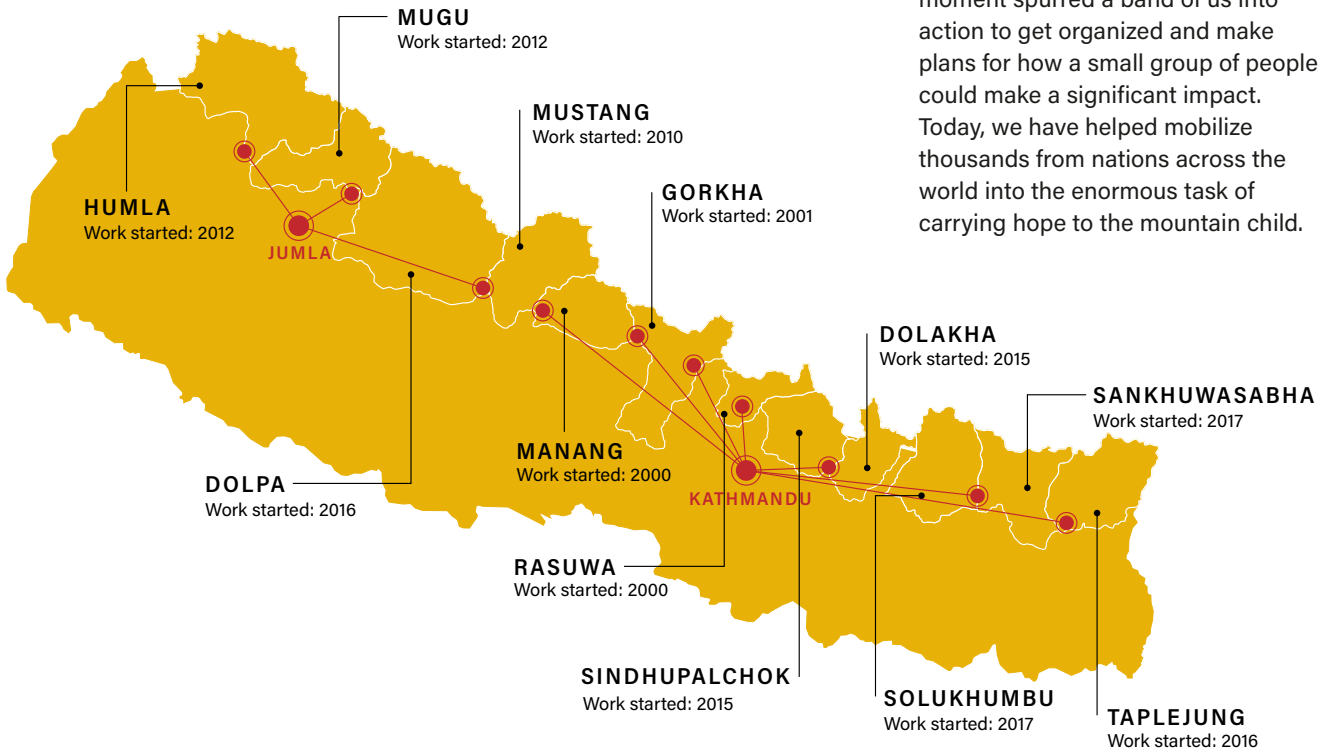
14,065

## NO. OF HOUSEHOLDS

5,392

## OUR BEGINNINGS

In 2000, a small team trekking through the Himalayas stumbled across a group of young children being escorted out of the mountains by two adult men. Their worst fears were realized when the two men openly spoke of their plans to sell the children into the booming, still-present, sex trade industry of South Asia. The shock and grief experienced in this moment spurred a band of us into action to get organized and make plans for how a small group of people could make a significant impact. Today, we have helped mobilize thousands from nations across the world into the enormous task of carrying hope to the mountain child.





# PERSONAL IMPACT STORY.

**SANGYA | NUBRI LEARNING CENTER DIRECTOR**  
**FOSTERING A PRESENCE OF HOPE IN NUBRI**

**LUNCHTIME IS HER FAVORITE TIME OF THE DAY. WHEN THE SMELLS OF DAL BHAT COOKING IN THE KITCHEN REACH HER DESK, SHE KNOWS IT'S FINALLY TIME TO TAKE A BREAK, TO TRADE HER PAPERS AND QUIET OFFICE FOR HEAPING PLATES OF RICE AND SILLY PRE-SCHOOLER'S GIGGLES ON A NOISY PLAYGROUND.**

Sangya Bhuti Lama became the director of the Nubri Learning Center in 2019. Her work ethic and leadership capabilities make her great at such a role. But what makes the NLC a vehicle of change in the Himalayas, is her heart and hope for the community it serves.

Sangya is, at heart, a mountain child and her heart beats deeply for the children of the Himalayas. Born in Nubri, she received a rare shot at an education when she connected with MountainChild and moved to the city at only 7 years old. She worked hard to complete schooling from basic education all the way to receiving a Bachelor of Arts degree in rural development. Her ambition didn't take her to faraway places to make her mark on the world, but back to her hometown. After teaching for three years at a MountainChild early learning center located higher in the Nubri Valley, in 2019, Sangya came back to her home to become the Nubri Learning Center's director. Her heart for and devotion to see lasting change among the people of the Himalayas is causing hope to spread through the most remote places in the world.

In general, schools in the Himalayas are scarce with only a handful scattered throughout bigger towns. If a village is too remote, it may make more sense for the parents not to send their children, and instead keep them home to help work. Where there is a school, it tarts only at the primary level. The NLC meets a critical need for younger children as they can start at age 3 and graduate from there, prepared to enter primary school.

In these early, formative years, the NLC students develop the building blocks to learning that will set them up for success in their future academic endeavors. Sangya's main hope is to see them develop a love for learning, as opposed to the typical systematic memorization that happens in many government schools.

**"I want to make school interesting and fun for them," Sangya says.**

The NLC staff also show up for their neighbors. Aside from functioning as a school and center for young, mountain children to run around, build friendships, and learn important life lessons, it is a center where anyone is welcome to come and learn.

**"It is not just a school, it's a learning center. We will open our doors for anyone who wants to learn," Sangya shares.**

The teachers work primarily in their classrooms throughout the day from 8:30am-3:30pm, but their day doesn't end with the students. After school they all take turns teaching adult literacy classes, helping in the on-campus greenhouse, and assisting with tutoring at the local primary school.

Sangya's ultimate hope for the learning center is that the way it runs, as well as the way they teach and reach out to the neighborhood, would have a lasting, positive effect on the community.

**"The way that we teach is different. We celebrate every small achievement, we have joy to see them learn," Sangya shares with pride. "It gives the people a different perspective of love."**

It is a powerful perspective. One that is only possible through maintaining a strong presence within the community, a presence that shows up for a community in need, that provides a space for people to learn and thrive — to feel seen and loved. And we're seeing that presence pay off as 22 children have graduated from the learning center and moved on to primary school and 17 adults from nearby communities attend literacy classes weekly.

The NLC is known as a place that is open and welcoming to everyone; and the demand for more learning centers is growing.







# PROJECT IMPACT STORIES.

## 100 HALO RESCUES

**SOMETIMES THE ENTIRE VILLAGE SHOWS UP. THEY CARRY THE SICK, THE INJURED AND THE DYING TO THE HELIPAD TO MEET THE HALO HELICOPTER. THE SICK, THE INJURED, THE DYING...THAT'S THEIR BROTHER, THEIR DAUGHTER, THEIR NEIGHBOR, THEIR FAMILY. AND THE HELICOPTER THEY'RE WAITING FOR IS THEIR LIFELINE, THEIR HOPE**

Anything can happen on that helipad. The rain can delay takeoff for days, and thus, delay the rescue. A laboring mother can have her baby before takeoff is even initiated. A life can be lost before the stretcher is lifted into the cabin. Not everyone can be saved. Many times, we make it in time. Sometimes we don't. But the people of the Himalayas know that no matter the circumstance, we are there for them. We will always answer.

The HALO phone can ring day or night, and we always answer. The phone is always in the hands of someone capable of handling an emergency and talking a Himalayan health worker through a crisis. If we learned anything in a year of living in and navigating the reality of a pandemic, it is that HALO has built a reputation of presence as we reached a huge milestone of 100 HALO rescues. The people of the Himalayas know we are here and believe we will come for them.







## GHAP HEALTH POST

**HEALTH IS ONE OF THE MOST PRACTICAL AVENUES WHERE WE SEE CHANGE IN THE HIMALAYAS. THOUGH IT IS A CORE ISSUE THAT WE POUR INTO FROM ALL AROUND THE WORLD, THE BOOTS ON THE GROUND AND THE ONES DOING THE NITTY-GRITTY DAILY WORK OF CARRYING HOPE TO THEIR COMMUNITY THROUGH HEALTH, ARE THE STAFF AT THE GHAP HEALTH POST.**

Health



When a potential HALO patient phones, Birendra and other health post staff are the ones orchestrating, communicating, and managing logistics, as well as keeping patients stable or, in some cases, carrying them to the helipad.

When women are laboring through difficult birth, the team goes to their home, brings what they need, and cares for them in the process of bringing a new family member to the community.

When the COVID-19 crisis broke out, it was the health post staff who conducted awareness seminars and went door-to-door to check on the mental, emotional, and physical health of each household.

When the virus reached the village, it was the health post staff that took vitals, communicated with experts, and did everything they could to relieve the burden of self-isolation and fear that loomed throughout the community.

Birendra and his team show an unparalleled commitment and presence to the people of Ghap and surrounding villages.

Anti-trafficking

## CREATE HOPE ART CLASS

**BIMALA MAGAR'S TIME WITH MOUNTAINCHILD'S CREATE HOPE ART THERAPY PROGRAM HAS BEEN DEFINED BY COVID-19 OUTBREAKS, EVER-CHANGING LOCKDOWN RULES, AND A LACK OF STRUCTURE AND PLANNING. BUT THAT HASN'T STOPPED HER.**

Since she started teaching the class in February 2020, she's had to get creative with how she meets with and connects with the Create Hope students: children and women who have been rescued from vulnerable or life-threatening circumstances who are learning a way to process their stories through art.

Where many felt limited and inconvenienced by the lockdowns, Bimala saw an opportunity to show her students their worth. She kept her regular schedule of classes, teaching art projects via video chat. And whenever it was possible, she traveled—often by foot—to the homes the students live in to meet them for class or drop off art supplies for them.



Bimala shows up for her students, and together, they do more than just art projects. Because she shows up, her students feel safe with her, they know they can depend on her. One of Bimala's favorite parts of teaching is what the students teach her, what she hears them processing in the stories they share that come out of the pieces they create. In class, they share a space to be creative, to let their minds wander and their hearts heal.







# Education

## SHREE NUBRI BASIC SCHOOL

**MOUNTAINCHILD IS A PART OF THE SHREE NUBRI BASIC SCHOOL'S DNA. 6 YEARS AGO, WHEN THE 2015 EARTHQUAKE HIT AND THE SCHOOL WAS DESTROYED, WE HELPED THEM TO REBUILD WITH FUNDING AND MANPOWER.**

But we didn't just want to put together walls, doors, and windows. We wanted to help build a new foundation of hope. Since the rebuild, we have continued to pour into the locally-run school and together we work to see lasting change in the Himalayas.

The Nubri Learning Center teachers visit the Shree Nubri Basic School at least once a week to help students with their work in classes and assist with teaching. Their presence in this school, in addition to the learning centers, creates a network of teachers who are committed to changing the way Himalayan children receive an education. Such commitment is contagious, especially when a tangible change like healthy, thriving students is seen.



## R.A.N.C.H.

**THE DOOR TO CHILD LABOR OPENS WHEN A FAMILY SEES NO OTHER OPTION, WHEN PARENTS SEE NO OTHER WAY OF SURVIVAL. THE FAMILIES LIVING IN THE REMOTE HIMALAYAS ARE PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE TO AN IMPOVERISHED LIFE AND CHILDREN START WORK YOUNG TO HELP MAKE ENDS MEET.**

For some, this means working in the fields with their families. For others, harsher circumstances are their reality and they're forced to work in factories or on construction sites in life-threatening conditions. In both cases, Himalayan children often surrender their right to an education in order to help their families or to survive on their own, having been abandoned by a family who couldn't afford to care for them.

By investing in the source—by building and preserving a presence in the lives of children from remote places and dire situations—we can see a change in the social and cultural norms of child labor in Nepal.

The Jumla R.A.N.C.H. (Remote Area Nepal Children's Home) is a children's program aimed at meeting children in a vulnerable place and providing them, and their families, with a different reality. A group of children from western Nepal are housed, cared for and nurtured in Kathmandu where they have greater access to education. By investing in them from a young age—by showing them that they are worthy and cared for—they're protected from the entry point into child labor.

Through continuing to be a presence in their lives, we can give them a second chance at childhood, and a second chance at hope.

Anti-child labor





# THE GREENHOUSE PROJECT

“WHY NOT?” THEY THOUGHT, AS THE NUBRI LEARNING CENTER DIRECTOR AND MOUNTAINCHILD’S ENVIRONMENT TEAM MET TOGETHER TO DISCUSS BUILDING AN EXPERIMENTAL GREENHOUSE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NLC’S GHAP CAMPUS.

It would be big, it would take a lot of work to build and keep up, and its success would depend on how the climate interacted with new, basic permaculture concepts our team had been researching. It was a leap of faith, but one that aligned with MountainChild’s ideals of sustainability, community impact, and community building. We don’t just want to see projects started and finished, we want to see hope flourish through lasting change. Such a goal requires more than mere projects, it requires an ongoing and persistent presence.

Through the upcoming seasons, our team will communicate with, train up, and visit the team on the ground in the Himalayas to cultivate the greenhouse project. So far, it has been a thriving success. Not only is it bursting with life, but the produce coming from the greenhouse is protected from harsh Himalayan winds, allowing it to grow much healthier than in traditional fields.

The NLC director has always desired the learning center to be more than just a school, but a place where anyone from the community can come and learn. The Greenhouse Project is serving this purpose as it is catching the eye of neighbors. We are thankful to have welcomed many curious onlookers in, and will continue to do so throughout this project!

Environment



Pandemic



# MEETING THE URGENT PHYSICAL NEEDS DURING COVID

2020-2021 WILL GO DOWN IN HISTORY AS “THE YEARS OF THE PANDEMIC.” A TIME THAT FRUSTRATED THE PLANS OF MANY, IT ALSO WAS A MOMENT THAT PAVED NEW TRAILS FOR MOUNTAINCHILD TO CONTINUE TO SERVE IN THE HIMALAYAS.

When terms like “unprecedented” and “unforeseen” were being used to describe the situation around the world, the people of the Himalayas needed more than a plan to stand firm in the pandemic. They needed a present, reliable, trustworthy friend. The communal, agrarian, Himalayan lifestyle doesn’t play nicely with quarantine protocols and social distancing efforts, so our team had to communicate on a daily basis to translate and assimilate COVID-19 safety guidelines.

We were thankful to be sought out on multiple occasions to help with relief in affected areas, assist in transporting vaccinations to remote regions, and train on virus prevention in remote schools. MountainChild’s presence in the Himalayas has encouraged a sense of camaraderie, a spirit of trust in us among the locals. MountainChild can be relied on to carry hope, even in the most unprecedented times.





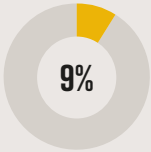
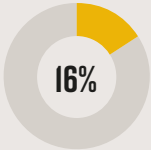
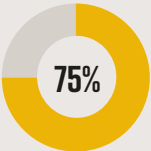
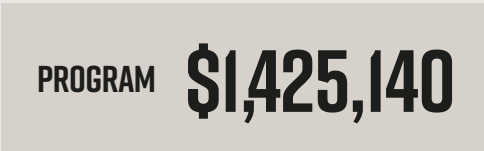
# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW.

JULY 1, 2020 - JUNE 30, 2021

## FINANCIAL DETAILS



## EXPENSE BREAKDOWN



# VOLUNTEER IMPACT.



RUN4  
HOPE

BIGGEST EVENT:  
RUN4HOPE

NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS  
**70**

NUMBER OF HOURS SERVED  
**437.5**

TOTAL MONETARY VALUE GIVEN  
**\$12,486**

WE WANT TO EXPRESS OUR DEEPEST THANKS FOR ALL YOU DO BEHIND THE SCENES TO MAKE OUR ORGANIZATION SUCCESSFUL. THE COUNTLESS HOURS AND ENERGY YOU SO WILLINGLY GAVE HELPS MOUNTAINCHILD TO CONTINUE TO MOVE FORWARD WITH IMPACTFUL PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS. WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR AN AMAZING VOLUNTEER TEAM AND ARE EXCITED TO SEE WHERE THE NEW YEAR TAKES US AS WE CONTINUE TO CARRY HOPE TO THE CHILDREN OF THE HIMALAYAS.



Audrey Baller  
Volunteer Program Director



# THE YEAR AHEAD.

## JAGAT HEALTH POST

Health posts are essential to life in the village. But often they are too spread out to be of use to remote villages. By establishing the Jagat Health Post, we will create another point of hope for people in surrounding villages.



## NUBRI LEARNING CENTER EXPANSION

The NLC has proven to be successful in unifying communities, creating opportunities for children, and empowering the next generation. A new learning center, in addition to the three existing campuses, will be established in Namrung, offering preschool and kindergarten classes to another community of young children.



## CREATE HOPE ART PROGRAM

How our past affects our future depends on the lens we are looking through. By continuing to offer healing art therapy courses to at-risk youth, we are creating a lens of hope for at-risk Nepali/Tibetan nationals through art.

## READING ZONES

Reading zones near brick factories where children are employed puts opportunity within reach of the most unreachable. These small libraries will be a symbol of hope and an open door for those who have been forced to believe there is no other option than the circumstances they're faced with.



## ENVIRONMENTAL + RESEARCH PROJECTS

Generations of farmers in the Himalayas have learned to grapple with the tough terrain and climate of the Himalayas. By introducing innovative and contextualized environmental projects and workshops, we will join with locals in creating simple, sustainable solutions to combat obstacles these remote communities have endured for centuries.

## JOIN US.



### EMAIL UPDATES

Frontline is MC's field report bringing you the latest news of hope from the field.

[mountainchild.org](https://mountainchild.org)



### JOIN ELEVATE

Elevate is a community of people who are passionate about doing something big in the Himalayas from right where they are! For \$29 a month, these monthly supporters empower ongoing work to provide education, clean water, health care, and programs that protect the most vulnerable to trafficking and child labor.

[mountainchild.org/elevate](https://mountainchild.org/elevate)

### VOLUNTEER

When you volunteer, you are helping empower our mission as your time and skills make a tangible impact on the children of the Himalayas from here in the U.S. Join us!

[mountainchild.org/volunteer](https://mountainchild.org/volunteer)

### FOLLOW ALONG



Follow us on our social media channels to stay up-to-date on all things MountainChild.





## CONTACT

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