One person CAN make a difference.

YOU can make a difference.
The mission of the Christina Noble Children’s Foundation is to give all children their childhood by providing the necessary protection, care and education for them to sleep in peace, surrounded by love. Our Foundation is committed to helping alleviate child poverty in Vietnam and Mongolia and giving all children the right to a happy and safe childhood.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

By funding our Blue Skies Ger Village you are helping provide a safe and caring environment for young boys and girls who are orphaned or from families where they were put at risk; others were living on the streets and therefore at high-risk of commercial and sexual exploitation, human trafficking, and threats of violence.

With your support these children now have the opportunity to enjoy a happy childhood in a safe and secure environment surrounded with love while also receiving psychological counselling, healthcare, education, life skills training, and vocational training.

We would also like to acknowledge all our local and government partners who make it possible for us to implement the programme successfully.

Thank you to the National Authority for Children, Authority for Family and Child Development, Songino Khairkhan District Authority, Children’s Police Precinct of Songino Khairkhan District, Social Welfare Department of Songino Khairkhan District, and the 7th Micro-district Authority of Songino Khairkhan District.
**PROGRAMME OVERVIEW**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Established</th>
<th>1997</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Songino Khairkhan, Ulaanbaatar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectives</td>
<td>To provide a safe and caring environment for boys and girls up to the age of eighteen who are orphaned, living on the streets, or are otherwise unable to stay at home due to being at high risk of neglect, abuse, or exploitation. To provide a community of healing where the children are cared for and nurtured in a safe and secure environment surrounded by friends, supportive adults, and love to enable them to successfully break the cycle of poverty and live independently as emotionally secure and fulfilled adults.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme Components</td>
<td>Residential care, healthcare, psychological rehabilitation, education; personal, vocational, and life skills development; sports, arts and music.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficiaries</td>
<td>Children up to the age of 18 years who come from disadvantaged backgrounds including orphans, children from poor families whose parents/guardians cannot support them, abandoned children, children living on the streets, and those who have faced or are at high-risk of commercial and sexual exploitation, human trafficking, and threats of violence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Partners</td>
<td>National Authority for Children, National Authority for Family and Child Development; Songino Khairkhan: District Authority, Children’s Police Precinct, Social Welfare Department, Family and Child Development Centre, and the 7th Micro-District Authority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNCF Involvement</td>
<td>Directly responsible for full funding and financial management, and the management of all aspects including healthcare, education support, and emotional development and rehabilitation. CNCF is directly responsible for the protection and development of all children resident at the ger village.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNCF Staff</td>
<td>U.Myagmarsuren, Ger Village Manager; M.Uransaikhan, Manager for Children; 21 other staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
<td>Written monthly and annual reports, with regular visits from the Director of Operations for meetings with the ger village management team, staff and children. All children meet regularly with both the Foundation psychotherapist and ger village doctor. Regular government inspections conducted by the National Authority for Children and the National Inspection Agency, as well as health and fire safety inspections by the local district authorities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015 Costs</td>
<td>$215,580 USD (pre-audit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting Period</td>
<td>January-December 2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Christina Noble Children’s Foundation (CNCF) was established in 1989 in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, by Irishwoman Christina Noble.

In 1997 Christina extended the work of her Foundation into Mongolia after an investigative visit to its capital city Ulaanbaatar, where she was shocked to discover thousands of sick and destitute street children living in horrendous conditions throughout the city sewers, many of who were struggling to survive.

The winter in Mongolia is one of the harshest imaginable, making Ulaanbaatar the coldest capital city in the world. Temperatures regularly remain at −30°C for weeks, and −40°C is not considered unusual.

For these children living on the streets, the sewers – with warm waste water flowing through the pipes – was their only refuge.

Christina, herself a former street child, understands the pain of abuse, neglect, and destitution. After spending time with the children and understanding their lives, Christina knew what was needed to help them.
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Since that time the Christina Noble Children’s Foundation Blue Skies Ger Village has helped over 500 previously forgotten, abandoned, and neglected children with shelter, rehabilitative care, education, and the opportunity to break the cycle of poverty. Without Christina and her Foundation, there is little doubt that many of these children would not have survived.

MONGOLIA OVERVIEW

Mongolia was a satellite state of the Soviet Union between the years of 1924 and 1990, governed from Moscow by the communist party. The relationship brought many benefits to Mongolia yet also many tragedies.

In the 1930s at least one third of the male population of Mongolia was executed by order of the party. Religious figures, intellectuals, and anyone who might be considered a threat to communist ideals was killed or exiled to Siberia, and much of Mongolia’s cultural heritage was destroyed; the fierce independence and self-determination of the Mongols was broken, and an entire cultural heritage was stripped within the space of a generation.

On the other hand, however, Soviet administration also brought significant economic, political, and military support along with extensive improvements to Mongolia’s infrastructure. Roads, railways, running water and sewage systems, communications networks and power stations were all constructed. Industry flourished as a result, as did civil services such as state education and healthcare.

Many Mongolians were sent to Russia to receive educations in scientific, engineering, and medical professions while a large number of herders who had previously lived the traditional nomadic way of life were given new administrative jobs in settlements designed to create a more geographically fixed population.
The “Russian Years” are remembered with great fondness by those Mongolians who were fortunate enough to share in its benefits, yet by 1990 the Soviet Union was in irreversible decline. With the Russian military having been withdrawn a year earlier Mongolia underwent a peaceful revolution resulting in the nation’s first democratic election since the time of the great Mongol empire.

The collapse of the communist system brought about many changes, the two most significant of which were the end of Mongolia’s massive Soviet support including much funding for development, and the transition to a market economy.

Unprepared and ill-equipped for such significant changes, Mongolia went into a deep economic recession resulting in triple-digit inflation, large-scale unemployment, shortages of basic goods, and food rationing. The fledgling national economists struggled to adapt to the new market economy, and an over-allocation of bank credit led to a collapse of the financial system in 1995.

Mongolia was plunged into crisis and the nation suffered; many people froze to death. In the coldest capital city in the world with no food, no homes, no jobs, and no foreign aid, the future of Mongolia and its children looked increasingly hopeless and desperately bleak.

It was in the depths of this crisis that Christina first came to Mongolia.
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GER VILLAGE BEGINNINGS

Christina saw first-hand the deprivation and poverty left behind as a consequence of the Soviet withdrawal. Thousands of homeless and destitute children roamed the streets, living down the city sewers. These children were left exposed and vulnerable to both Mongolia’s unforgiving winter weather and adults – or often older children - who would seek to abuse, exploit, or otherwise take advantage of them.

Driven by her own childhood experience of living on the streets of Dublin and therefore understanding their pain and the dangers they face first-hand, Christina established the Blue Skies Ger Village as a safe haven for orphaned, homeless, abandoned, or otherwise at-risk children in Ulaanbaatar.

Ever since that time the goal of the Christina Noble Children’s Foundation has been to care for and rehabilitate these children, giving them access to education, healthcare, and most importantly a home where they can enjoy a happy childhood surrounded by the unconditional love and respect that all human beings deserve.

MONGOLIA TODAY

The first external poverty assessment of Mongolia was conducted in 1996, a year before our founder Christina Noble first arrived. It was reported by the World Bank that 36% of Mongolia’s population lived below the weighted poverty line of US$17 per month.¹

Since then Mongolia has gone through periods of incredibly fast development driven primarily by large foreign investments into the mining industry. In 2001 the world’s second largest ever deposit of copper-gold ore was discovered in the Gobi desert, fuelling what many have labelled the “Mining Boom”.² After peaking in 2007 Mongolia was then affected greatly by the global economic downturn as the price of metals fell rapidly – especially copper, which decreased by 65% between July 2008 and February 2009.³

Mongolia has been in recovery since 2010 but the economy continues to face challenges due to the low levels of global demand for minerals. Economic growth slowed to 3.0% in the first half of 2015⁴ and the trend looks set to continue throughout 2016.⁵

² BBC (2013), Mongolia’s Mining Boom, Radio 4: Crossing Continents, 1 April 2013, http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01rgm9q
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In spite of the economic slowdown in recent years, on the whole – between 2001 and the present day – there is no doubt that Mongolia has developed rapidly and the standard of living has improved for a significant percentage of the population, including the establishment of a middle class.⁶ Official figures show the poverty rate declining from 27.4% in 2012 to 21.6% in 2014.⁷

However, despite apparent progress on a national level many of the poorest families have been left behind. As is so often the case in rapidly developing countries there is a widening chasm between the rich and the poor. Due to the massive price inflation stimulated by the mining boom (inflation peaked at an incredible 31.9% in July 2008)⁸ many families are now unable to afford basic living provisions such as adequate food and heating, and there is effectively no social welfare available to support them. Despite the prices of commodities increasing rapidly over the past fourteen years, the income of these families has increased at a comparably meagre rate.

Still 61% of Ulaanbaatar’s population resides in the city’s ger districts, with many having no access to running water or a sewage system; of these 736,000 ger district residents, 60% are unemployed.⁹ This is to a large extent due to the incredibly high levels of migration from the countryside to the city over the past ten years; with the rapid nationwide increases in the prices of goods, the traditional nomadic way of life quickly became uneconomical and insufficient for many herders.

Between thirty and forty thousand people flock to Ulaanbaatar each year with hopes and dreams of steady employment and a prosperous life.¹⁰ Unfortunately however, this is not the case for the vast majority of the new arrivals and Mongolia now faces a situation where its capital has 1.4 million people living in a city that was originally engineered to support a mere 400,000.¹¹

This immense overpopulation and its subsequent large-scale unemployment are at the root of many systemic and often incredibly complex societal dysfunctions. Alcoholism, domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, and families living in extreme destitution are just some of the saddening and desperate realities that many residents of the ger district communities face every day, as they struggle to survive with very little support and scarce opportunities.

Unfortunately, as is often the case in communities blighted by these social conditions, it is the children who suffer the most. Growing up in dire circumstances without security, guidance, or protection has meant that many Mongolian children are exposed to a significantly higher risk of exploitation from unscrupulous adults, organised gangs and, sadly, also from their own families.

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⁹ Engel, David (2015), Ulaanbaatar’s Ger District Issues: Changes and Attitudes, SIT Graduate Institute, http://digitalcollections.sit.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3109&context=isp_collection [accessed 12/01/16]
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THE GER VILLAGE TODAY

The ger village today is in many ways different to how it was originally in 1997 and yet at its essence it is still the same – a residential care facility for children who have experienced a childhood that has been shaped by poverty, abuse and extreme neglect. The village provides a safe, happy and supportive home for these children, one where they are surrounded by unconditional love and respect.

There are no longer thousands of children living on the streets in Ulaanbaatar’s sewers, yet widespread neglect and abuse are still very prevalent.

Through the support of our donors and sponsors we are able to provide the children with a safe and nurturing home, giving them the tools to achieve their goals and ultimately leading them to a better, brighter future. By nurturing our children in an environment free from fear and threats of violence and abuse, we give them the space to be children – carefree and happy. Our ger village is a loving community environment where the children receive regular nutritious meals, positive guidance from caring adults, and the opportunities to develop their characters and pursue their dreams.

The children receive healthcare, counselling, and attend the local schools; they also receive age-appropriate vocational training and life skills. In addition to their studies the children are also encouraged to develop their personal, social, and artistic skills through our Arts & Music and Sports programmes.

The ger village can support up to fifty-four children, with up to six children being able to sleep in each of our nine residential gers. Gers typically contain a mix of older and younger children who all contribute to the upkeep and maintenance of their gers, each with their own responsibilities. One of our goals at the ger village is to mirror traditional Mongolian family life wherever possible.

Each ger is assigned a key worker, which is a senior member of ger village staff who is the first point of contact for the children of that ger. The key worker ensures the necessary tasks are being done, the ger is clean and tidy, and that the children from that unit are working well together and supporting each other. The key workers act as mentors, carers, and counsellors for the children in their day-to-day lives, with any successes, challenges, or causes for concern being referred to our Ger Village Manager for Children.

The Blue Skies Ger Village has helped to support over 500 children since 1997, serving the purposes of both a temporary shelter and a permanent home.

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Blue Skies Ger Village
- Annual Report 2015

Christina Noble Children's Foundation

A view of the ger district
The *Blue Skies Ger Village* occupies 1.23 hectares of land with many traditional Mongolia gers and also several brick structures. A ger is a traditional Mongolian home made from wood, felt, and bound together with horsehair; extra layers of wool are added in the autumn in order to prepare for the cold winter. In the spring the extra layers of wool are removed, ready for the warm summer months.

All our children take an active part in preparing their homes, as well as the village’s communal gers, for the different seasons. Through this process the children learn to take care of their own homes and contribute to the functioning of the village as a whole.

**Our Ger Village Structures:**

- 9 children’s residential gers (7 metres in diameter)
- Community ger (10 metres in diameter)
- Office ger (8 meters in diameter)
- Psychologist’s ger
- 2 classrooms, one ger and one cabin
- Kitchen & dining ger complex (constructed this year)
- Bakery (fully renovated in 2014)
- *Blue Skies Day Care*
- Library / music room (fully renovated in 2014)
- Infirmary
- Bathroom block, including showers and laundry room
- 3 greenhouses, two outdoor and one indoor
- Indoor garage
- Maintenance workshop
- Outdoor toilet (constructed this year)
- Guards’ hut
- Coal sheds and storage containers
- Basketball / football surface
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**OUR YEAR**

**2015 HIGHLIGHTS**

We had many successes at the *Blue Skies Ger Village* in 2015. Here is a breakdown by numbers:

- The ger village passed the national inspection test with an A+ rating. This inspection was made by the Ulaanbaatar Children’s Development Center and the Songino-Khairkhan District Children’s Development Center.

- A total of 53 children directly benefitted from the *Blue Skies Ger Village*.

- Of those 53 children, 49 were permanent residents and four were temporary.

- Seven of our residents left the village and seven new residents arrived.

- Of the seven who left – four boys and three girls, two turned 18-years-old and were successfully enrolled into university; three children were successfully enrolled into college, one child transferred to another shelter in preparation for technical training college, and another went home to live with his mother.

- We had seven new arrivals at the ger village this year, three boys and four girls. They came to the village for various reasons although their stories all have the common themes of difficult family conditions and their parents’ inability to take care of them, typically because of their dependence on alcohol. Two children, aged five and three, were found wandering the streets having been abandoned.

- Four children stayed temporarily at the village on the request of the Capital City Family and Child Development Centre while they waited for admission to another children’s shelter. The children were at the village for five days and went to the other shelter once the formalities were completed.

- A new kitchen and dining facility was constructed. This has become a new communal hub at the village where the children and staff socialize at mealtimes.

- New furniture was purchased for all the residential gers including beds, wardrobes, cabinets, and tables. Many other items were also purchased for the village.
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Blue Skies Ger Village - Annual Report 2015

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Background / family status of our children</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full Orphan (both parents deceased)</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half Orphan (one parent deceased)</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents Separated / Divorced</td>
<td>42.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents Together</td>
<td>40.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For children whose parents are alive, their home conditions put them at risk of extreme neglect and / or abuse.
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**PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES**

**Education**

All children residing at our ger village are in full-time education, either in kindergarten, primary, secondary or higher education. Children study at either the CNCF *Blue Skies Day Care* or the local public schools in Songino Khairkhan district.
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Ger Village Graduates

Seven children left the ger village this year, five of who went on to further education. One child was transferred to another centre so that he could be closer to a specialist secondary school that could better prepare him for technical college, and another child went home to live with his mother.

As with all our ger village graduates, even though they are no longer living with us we will continue to be a part of their lives and support them in every way we can.

All our graduates also have 100% of their educational fees paid for by the Foundation and they will continue to be part of our child sponsorship programme until they graduate from further education.

Saikhnaa (12), Went home to live with his mother. Our social workers helped Saikhnaa settle into a new school.

Saruul (15), Enrolled in Secretarial & Clerical Studies at the Rajiv Gandhi University of Industry.

Dulguun (15), Enrolled in Mechanics Training Scheme at Shaamar Soum College in Selenge province.
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Amaraa (18), Studying Nursing at the Mongolian National University; resided at the ger village for 7 years.

Maagaa (18), Enrolled in Industry Training at Mongolian National Railway University; resided at the ger village for 5 years.

Miigaa (17), Transferred to Mongolian Youth Center to enroll in Ulaanbaatar Technical College; resided at the ger village for 8 years.

Battulga (17) (right), Studying at Technical College in Bayanchandmani province; resided at the ger village for 7 years.
Health Care

Fundamental to our Foundation’s philosophy is the belief that all children, without exception, should be entitled to good quality healthcare.

Helping our children to build strong healthy bodies is central to giving them the best possible start to life and is therefore something we take very seriously. This means lots of healthy meals, physical activity and regular checkups at our ger village infirmary.

The majority of children who come into our care have grown up in incredibly unsanitary and often squalid conditions, such as cold dilapidated sheds or sleeping rough on a garbage site. It is therefore crucial that they all receive a full health checkup upon arrival and have their details recorded for future monitoring.

Our caring and sensitive medical team – nurse Dagvaa and paediatrician Muugii – carry out these examinations, ensuring that our children feel safe and comfortable at all times. If they suspect any health issues that cannot be resolved on site, the child will be referred to a paediatric specialist for further diagnosis and treatment. Some of the most common ailments we see in our new arrivals are malnutrition, rickets, growth retardation, and severe dental issues.

In addition to the diagnoses and treatment of illnesses, our ger village healthcare programme educates our children about the importance of healthy lifestyle choices and good personal hygiene, as we believe that prevention is better than cure. Our medical team organises regular workshops and seminars to teach our ger village children how they can maintain good health. Topics covered include how to brush your teeth, keeping your body clean, benefits of exercise, and diet and nutrition. Individual sessions and group workshops are also held with pre-pubescent and pubescent girls and boys to talk about hormonal changes and how to manage some of the related challenges such as acne, body odour, and menstruation.

One of our children’s favourite workshops this year was first aid training, organised by our part-time employee and fifth year university medical student, Anuji. The children loved the hands-on learning and came away from the session feeling confident in how to tend to minor injuries like nose bleeds, cuts, and small burns. They had fun learning how to put a bandage on and practicing CPR using a dummy. As part of our continued commitment to ongoing employee training, the session was also delivered to all of our ger village staff.
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An eye check up at the ger village
Art, Music and Dance

The unique ability of a child's imagination to transcend the material world is part of the magical nature of childhood. A child needs to imagine, to pretend and to dream, particularly when the child's physical reality is that of extreme poverty.

At the Christina Noble Children’s Foundation we understand how important this time of wild and wondrous imagination is for our children to enable them to develop into happy, confident and fulfilled adults. The Arts and Music Programme at our Blue Skies Ger Village seeks to engage all of our children by offering a variety of activities mindfully arranged to appeal to both sexes and to children across all age groups.

The children always look forward to Sunday’s art lesson, which has been running most weekends since the beginning of March 2015. The sessions are offered as an extracurricular activity to all our young people, and we are always delighted see so many animated faces beaming with smiles and keen to get creating.

During the lessons our children experiment with a variety of media, colours and techniques, exploring ideas and having fun with the tactile, sensory experience of creating art. Open discussion, analyses and the sharing of ideas are always welcomed during lesson time and encouraged as an important part of the artistic process. Through communicating their work to the group and listening to other people’s feedback, our children build feelings of pride and self-esteem, and develop confidence in expressing their feelings, emotions, ideas and talents to others.

It is always fascinating to listen to our children talk about the meanings behind their work, as through their descriptions it is clear to see the value art plays in helping our children to explore their own internal landscape and address any challenges. By encouraging our children to express themselves creatively in this way we help them to learn about who they are and deal with their emotions in a healthy, positive and rewarding way.
Performing with traditional Mongolian instruments at a local talent show

Guitar performance at a birthday party at the ger village

A beautiful new studio in Ulaanbaatar

A dance class at the new studio
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Horticulture

At the ger village we work to create a healthy and sustainable community where our children can develop an understanding of and a respect for the natural world.

Growing our own produce is an important part of this process, which helps our children to cultivate their connection to the earth, build strong healthy bodies through an organic nutrient-rich diet, and allows us to save money through becoming more self-sufficient.

At the beginning of spring we expanded our horticulture project by renovating our two old outdoor greenhouses and one indoor planting area. With the increased space available we were able to grow lots of nutritious fruits and vegetables at the village over the summer.

Our staff involved the children as much as possible, and from the early stages of preparing the land right up until the crops were ready to be harvested each of our children had their daily responsibilities.

Everyone loved playing a part in this rewarding process and there was always a great sense of pride and achievement when our young gardeners finally got to eat the products of their hard work.

We grew turnips, beetroots, cabbages, spring onions, cucumbers, lettuces, peppers, chillis and cauliflowers. Sea buckthorn bushes were planted – they will begin to produce berries after three years.
We renovated our indoor and outdoor greenhouses this year. All the children and staff helped to plant vegetables, trees and bushes. Good quality vegetables are hard to find in Mongolia so it’s important that we control our own produce wherever possible.
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**Taekwondo**

Taekwondo lessons were reintroduced at the *Blue Skies Ger Village* in April this year after a two-year break. Since the lessons started again we have seen a noticeable improvement in our children’s confidence, strength, and self-discipline.

Thirty children participate in taekwondo and are divided into two groups, with each group having three lessons per week.

During the classes our young people learn important self-defence techniques as well as developing key life skills such as respect for themselves and for others, focus, punctuality, and personal hygiene.

Our professional coach Battulga is passionate about the benefits of teaching taekwondo to children and leads each class with pride, authority and great attention to the needs of each individual child. He has become a well-respected and loved member of our community whose hard work and commitment to the children, combined with their personal motivation, has resulted in many victories for our taekwondo team throughout the year.

The team entered six competitions this year and won 21 medals. We currently have two children who have been identified as future Olympic team hopefuls and are participating in additional training.
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Archery

During the summer our children enjoyed an eight-day archery course led by national and world champion archers, and long-term supporters of the Foundation, Simon and Michèle from Belgium.

It was a wonderful opportunity for our young people to learn a sport that not only benefits them physically but also helps to develop their confidence, concentration and patience, and is part of their Mongolian heritage.

Everyone had lots of fun outside in the beautiful summer sunshine, learning this valuable skill from such kind, patient and knowledgeable teachers.

Tsagaan Sar

In February our children and staff celebrated Tsagaan Sar – the Mongolian Lunar New Year, an important national holiday that brings together families and friends over traditional customs and food.

As the time for celebration approached our very excited children got dressed up in their beautiful silk deels (the tradition Mongolian costume) and then spent the evening hopping from ger to ger eating buuz (a steamed meat dumpling), drinking Mongolian milk tea, playing games and welcoming in the New Year with their loved ones.

Our children spent the rest of their weeklong Tsagaan Sar holiday playing with their friends, eating lots of other traditional Mongolian delicacies, and spending quality time with the CNCF staff.
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*Psychosocial Support*

All our Foundation staff play a positive role in the children’s lives and support and guide them as much as they can. We also have three dedicated members of full-time professional psychosocial staff: one senior psychologist, one social worker, and one junior psychologist who is himself a former ger village child.

All three members of the team work towards the goal of healing the emotional trauma that affects, to differing degrees, all of the children who live at the village.

Our senior psychologist Nomin-Erdene conducts one-on-one and group sessions with the children, including art therapy. This year nine children were identified as needing regular ongoing sessions with Nomin-Erdene, with five of those considered as needing close observation.

Nomin-Erdene meets with every child at the village at least once a month, with those receiving ongoing attention meeting anywhere between one and five times a week depending on their specific needs at any given time. Nomin-Erdene began working at the village in April, and conducted 225 individual sessions with the children between then and the end of the year.

Regular group work is done with all the children where they are encouraged to share their thoughts and feelings and talk about how they can be more supportive of themselves, each other, and their community; this is often done using arts, crafts, discussions, and games. Over the course of this year many of the children have become more comfortable talking openly about their lives.
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**Art Therapy**

All our children attend regular art therapy sessions, helping to improve their mental and emotional well-being and further building a therapeutic community at the Blue Skies Ger Village. Sessions are conducted by our psychologist Nomin-Erdene who uses this creative method as one of her primary tools to connect with, understand, and interpret our children’s internal worlds.

As children are naturally creative, asking them to draw a picture as opposed to answering a question directly offers a non-threatening avenue to open up and work through potentially difficult issues. Through talking to our children about their drawings and paintings, and discussing the underlying reasons that inspired their art, Nomin-Erdene has been able to gain a deeper understanding of our children and work with them closely to resolve any emotional blockages.

All children who reside permanently at the ger village have received art therapy sessions as well as the four children who came to stay on a temporary basis. After the children’s initial analyses Nomin-Erdene now predominantly focuses on fourteen of the children who she considers to be the most responsive to this method; her progress with these children has been very clear to see, and improvements are continually taking place. Through the creative process itself and by talking about their artwork, our young people have been able to work with her to explore their feelings, resolve emotional conflicts, foster self-awareness, manage their behaviour, develop social skills, reduce anxiety, and increase self-esteem.
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**Miranda Marsh, Child Psychotherapist**

In June we welcomed child psychotherapist Miranda Marsh to our Blue Skies Ger Village where she spent two months living and working with our staff and children. During her time with us Miranda conducted regular group training sessions with all of our staff at the village, helping to further their understanding of our children’s psychological needs and providing valuable advice on how to most effectively support children who have experienced trauma.

In addition to the group development workshops, Miranda worked one-on-one with our child psychologist Nomin-Erdene in sessions where they focused on individual children who had experienced particularly difficult and traumatic pasts. With psychology being a relatively new area of focus in Mongolia, having the opportunity to learn from such a knowledgeable practitioner was a deeply rewarding and worthwhile experience. Miranda’s work has been integrated into our ger village community and Nomin-Erdene continues to use the methods, models, and techniques that she has learned.

“I have been a supporter and sponsor of the Christina Noble Children's Foundation since reading Christina’s inspiring story in 2004. Last year I had the privilege of living and voluntarily working with the Foundation in Mongolia for two months in my role as a child psychotherapist and so was able to see first-hand the dedicated and effective work that this organisation does, and the transformative impact they have on so many children that they love and care for.”

– Miranda Marsh, child psychotherapist; British volunteer who spent two months at our Blue Skies Ger Village

Renovations
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To promote and cultivate a more integrated community at the village, a communal eating space was built where all the children could come together as one – to eat, laugh, share stories and news, and develop an even deeper sense of togetherness.

Since building the new dining and kitchen ger there have been noticeable improvements in the ger village community. Through eating together regularly the sense of family unity has grown even stronger and there is a greater overall feeling of mutual respect, cooperation and understanding among our children and staff.

New furniture was also purchased for our residential gers. As good quality modern furniture is not readily available in Mongolia we had new beds, wardrobes, tables, and many other items shipped to Ulaanbaatar from Beijing. The children really love and appreciate their new furniture.

The new kitchen and dining facility is two large gers linked with a corridor; this enables food and drinks to be easily moved to and from the kitchen. The children and staff enjoy eating together, and there is now a stronger feeling of community at the village.
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Inside a newly furnished ger
In November a special event was organised by our child sponsorship team to congratulate twenty-four of our young adults from the sponsorship programme and six from our ger village who had received a full scholarship from the CNCF Education Scholarship Programme.

For the children living under our direct care at the ger village, many of who have no family of their own, CNCF provides full funding throughout their higher education. We believe that this is a fundamental part of fulfilling our life-long commitment to our young people and ensuring that they have a solid structure around them for when they leave our direct care.

Over one hundred and fifty students from our sponsorship programme and ger village attended the event, which not only celebrated this exciting next step in our children’s lives but also provided some inspirational guidance from one of our former ger village boys.

Dulguun, who is now in his third year of university and has won many awards for his public speaking skills, spoke to his fellow students with tremendous strength and emotion about his life experiences and how to achieve happiness and success in the face of adversity. It was a proud moment for all of our team who had known Dulguun since he was a small child.

The event was a beautiful celebration of the ambitious young people we support, full of optimism and energy for their futures, who as a result of the Foundation’s ger village, sponsorship, and education assistance programmes are able to pursue their dreams and embark upon the journey of fulfilling their potential.
Our children took part in a series of twelve workshops on personal development. The workshops focused on developing self-confidence, leadership, choosing a career, interpersonal communication, contributing to society, social etiquette, and various other topics.

In November a group of our children participated in the TEDxYouth event for high school students. They invested their time discussing innovation and development in Mongolia and the world, and networking with like-minded peers.
2015 saw our very first Easter celebrations at the ger village. Our children were grouped into teams to hunt for eggs, with the winners being the team who found the most. The children had a great time running around, searching for the hidden eggs!

We celebrate the birthdays of all our children with gifts, cake and a party. Our children bake their own cakes with the help of our ger village baker, Deegi.

Our New Year's celebrations were attended by the well-known Mongolian actress Sarantuya, CNCF workers, and other guests who came to share their holiday cheer. As per tradition, we presented awards for the most organized ger, the friendliest ger, the most academic student, and most helpful students.
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OUR STORIES

Munkhsukh’s Story

Munkhsukh came to our Blue Skies Ger Village at the age of six. Before then his background is unclear and nothing more than a faded memory of confusion, fear and loneliness.

The Center for Lost Children referred Munkhsukh to us after he was found unsupervised on the streets. Munkhsukh explained to the authorities that two years previously his father had taken him into the city to go to the market. While they were there his father had to leave and told Munkhsukh to wait by a statue until he returned; he never came back and four-year-old little Munkhsukh was left on his own, exposed, vulnerable and with no idea where his father had gone.

Not knowing what to do, Munkhsukh tried to find his way back to his mother in the countryside. Sadly, however, he never found his way home and spent the following two years looking for his family. To this day, he still doesn’t know what happened to his father.

Since being brought to our Foundation at six-years-old, Munkhsukh’s family has been the staff and children at the ger village. It has been his home and the place where most of his childhood memories have been created. Over the years we have watched Munkhsukh grow into a confident, kind and determined young man, deeply loved and respected by our CNCF community.

In 2013 Munkhsukh decided to leave his childhood home and embark on a new and more independent chapter of his life. Munkhsukh continued to make us all proud by working hard to achieve a bachelor’s degree in Behavioural Research and Psychology. He found learning about the psychology of human behaviour fascinating and said that he gained a great deal of knowledge and skills to help him become an effective communicator and problem solver.

Once Munkhsukh had completed his course he contacted CNCF to see if we had any work opportunities available. He had always wanted to be able to give something back

We are all very proud of the young professional Munkhsukh has become
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to the Foundation and be able to help other children who are facing similar challenges to what he did growing up.

When we heard about Munkhsukh’s interest in coming back to the Foundation as a young professional we were over the moon and instantly arranged an interview to see how he could best support our work as well as gain valuable experience for his personal career development.

After speaking to Munkhsukh in depth we were happy to offer him a position as Junior Psychologist at our ger village. Munkhsukh started work within our psychosocial team immediately, supporting our Psychologist and Social Worker while learning how to apply his studies in day-to-day situations.

Munkhsukh has now been with us for just over a year and has once again quickly become an integral part of our ger village community. He has been getting the children out of bed for early morning exercises, organizing lots of fun interactive activities and helping the children with their daily tasks, while all the time providing positive guidance and emotional support.

When asked about his new job with CNCF Munkhsukh said “I’m happy to be back at the ger village. I grew up here and it has always been a very special place for me. I am now working hard using both my academic training and own personal experience to help my brothers and sisters.”

With the support of the Foundation Munkhsukh has been able to break the cycle of poverty and is now a happy, secure, and independent adult with a young family of his own. There is little doubt that without the dedicated work of the Christina Noble Children’s Foundation his life would have been very different.
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Munkhsukh playing football with the boys at the ger village
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Battulga’s Story

When Battulga was a little boy life for him and his four siblings was extremely tough. Their mother, Munkhtuya, and father struggled to provide for their large family and experienced a huge amount of stress, depression and feelings of hopelessness as a result. Unable to keep up with the demands of daily life, Battulga’s father sank into a cycle of alcoholism and violence and would often be physically and emotionally abusive to his wife and five children.

Eventually Munkhtuya could no longer cope with her husband’s violent drunken outbursts and made the decision to leave with her three youngest children. With no job and nowhere to go this choice was not easy, but the alternative of living in such abusive and unhappy conditions posed an even greater threat.

It was during this time, in 2008, that Munkhtuya heard about our Foundation’s Blue Skies Ger Village - a home where she and her children would be safe and could start to rebuild their lives. Upon meeting the family and hearing about their vulnerable circumstances we immediately took the necessary steps to support their move, and welcomed them into the Christina Noble Children’s Foundation family.

From that point on life for Battulga has been very different. In the seven years that he has been with us we have watched him blossom from a once shy and nervous little boy into a confident, kind and determined young man. Battulga has enjoyed a childhood rich with love and security, and as a result he has grown into a deeply loved, respected and admired leader of our ger village community.

In 2012 Battulga’s mother chose to leave the ger village in search of a more independent life. She requested that her three children remain under the Foundation’s care and has stayed in close contact with them. Sadly, the life that greeted Munkhtuya outside the village has posed similar challenges to the one that she was once so desperately trying to escape. With limited work opportunities available to her Munkhtuya found a job cleaning an apartment block in exchange for accommodation under one of the stairwells. The living conditions were dark, cramped and unhealthy, and she regularly experienced violent and abusive behavior from residents who came home drunk late at night.

The unstable, abusive and sad living conditions of Munkhtuya have unsurprisingly caused...
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Battulga a huge amount of distress. Now a proud and responsible young man, Battulga naturally feels an incredible amount of responsibility to help protect his mother and keep her safe.

At the Foundation we know that the only way we can truly support a child is through working to improve the living conditions of their family, and as such we decided to enroll Battulga on our *Give-a-Ger* programme so that he and his family would have a safe and secure base outside of the ger village.

We made it very clear to Battulga that this was a privilege he himself had earned and that this ger was a result of his own hard work at school, his contribution to village life, and for what a beautiful young man he has become. We wanted Battulga to leave our *Blue Skies Ger Village* feeling proud of what he has achieved for his family, with his head held high, full of confidence and self-belief that he was able to help his mother out of her current situation.

On the day we arrived to erect the ger Battulga, his mother and two of his brothers were eagerly waiting at their new plot of land, bursting with excitement and enthusiasm to embark on this new period of their lives, filled with possibility and hope.

The gers given by our Foundation are of the highest quality. Battulga’s new ger is a four-section ger and came complete with two sofas with expandable beds, cushions, a table, four chairs, kitchen unit with sink, large wardrobe, chest of drawers, mirror, and the all-important ger stove which is used for both cooking nourishing meals and keeping the family warm in the harsh winter months.

To see Battulga and his family together in a safe and beautiful home of their own where they could enjoy being a family without the fear of violence, exploitation and abuse, was a truly moving experience. It is heartfelt experiences such as these that is the essence of the Christina Noble Children’s Foundation.
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Blue Skies Ger Village - Annual Report 2015

Christina Noble Children's Foundation

Battulga and his family inside their new home
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FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

In 2015 the direct cost of the Blue Skies Ger Village was $215,580 USD*.

This includes all expenditure that is specific and dedicated to the running and operations of the ger village such as food, education, clothing, vocational and life skills training, recreational activities, repairs and maintenance, and ger village staff.

The indirect cost of supporting the ger village was $47,686. This includes the salaries of CNCF Mongolia management and administration staff, office rent and utilities, stationery and supplies, communications, staff training, professional consultancy, and travel. This expenditure was paid for by the Foundation’s administration budget.

The Blue Skies Ger Village is funded by individual, corporate and institutional donors. Our 2015 accounts will be available on request upon audit.

* Pre-audit

From all of us at the Christina Noble Children’s Foundation Mongolia, especially our beautiful children, thank you for your love and support, and for believing that all children have the right to a happy, safe and enriching childhood. It is only through the kindness and generosity of people like yourself that the Foundation can continue in its incredibly important work.
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YOU can make a difference.

Blue Skies Ger Village - Annual Report 2015

Christina Noble Children’s Foundation

"Childhood is the foundation of life. Help us make it a good one." - Christina Noble

Each of us is only one person. But by joining all the ones together, we can accomplish greatness.

If you or your organisation are interested in supporting us in 2016/2017 please contact our Foundation. It is only through the kind generosity of others that we are able to continue our work with some of the world’s most vulnerable children.

Christina Noble Children’s Foundation - Mongolia

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