





FRIENDS
WITHOUT A BORDER

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

A newborn baby is lying in a hospital bed, appearing to be asleep. The baby has a nasal cannula taped to their face and a medical sensor on their chest. A hand is gently holding the baby's head. The baby is lying on a green hospital blanket. The background is slightly blurred, showing a hospital room setting.

We believe every child has the right to a healthy and loving life.

That is the cornerstone of our mission. Friends Without A Border strives to accomplish its mission by providing free, compassionate medical care to the children of Southeast Asia, by creating community health education programs and by training local healthcare professionals.

Message From Our Founder

Dear Friends,

I recently returned from four weeks in Laos. I had to do a two-week quarantine in a hotel of Vientiane but it was worth it to be able to visit the hospital after such a difficult period.

Since my last visit in February of 2020, Laos has been locked down and stopped inbound personnel, including the medical volunteers of our hospital.

It has been extremely difficult to obtain a permit, even for us who manage the hospital, to enter the country ever since.

Not seeing the people of the hospital worries me a lot, and I desperately wanted to be with

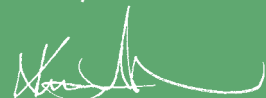
the staff to share their suffering or joy on site.

The town of Luang Prabang is quiet now and has been greatly damaged by the lack of tourists. But our hospital continues to do excellent work, now with many of our senior Lao doctors and nurses taking on the responsibilities that formerly belonged to ex-pat volunteers. We will continue on this path of promoting the Lao staff and empowering them in any way we can. The hospital now operates at nearly full capacity, and is back to its pre-pandemic pace of treating around 100+ children per day.

We had the opportunity to meet with some Ministry of Health officials who assured us that they were grateful for our presence and that they want us to do more clinical education both in and outside of the hospital.

I feel very proud of the accomplishments of the hospital during this difficult period. So grateful to everyone who has made it possible for us to continue to compassionately treat the beautiful children of Laos.

Thank you,



Kenro Izu



Message From Our Chair

Dear Friends,

At the beginning of 2020, we were optimistic about the prospects for Lao Friends Hospital for Children and the continued growth and development of the healthcare staff at the hospital. When the Covid-19 pandemic arrived and the borders of most countries closed to travel, our expatriate volunteers had to leave Laos and have not been able to return. Despite this setback, LFHC continued to provide compassionate, high quality care to the children of Lao PDR. Although we were forced to scale back our training and outreach programs, training and education at the hospital continued and our

dedicated staff maintained efforts to develop greater collaboration between LFHC and the Lao Ministry of Health and Provincial Health Department. The hospital's caseload declined while travel restrictions were imposed by the Lao government, but grew steadily during the second half of 2020.

With the social distancing and lockdowns that affected us globally, we had to cancel or defer all of our in-person fundraising events and benefits for 2020 and will likely do the same this year. Our virtual International Run for the Children last fall was well received and did enable us

to replace some of the revenues from canceled events, but it was only through the continued generosity and support of selfless donors that we were able to manage through the year and, hopefully, will be able to do so in 2021.

In these very trying times, we especially appreciate the support of all of our friends dedicated to helping Friends Without A Border continue to improve the lives of the children of Southeast Asia. Thank you for your continuing efforts to support our mission.

Steven Williamson



Message From Our Executive Director

Dear Team,

I recently heard the actor Alec Baldwin say that the experience of this past Covid year has “changed every cell in his body.” We have all had to deal with enormous changes in most areas of our lives. The Lao Friends Hospital For Children continues to deal with many “cellular” changes and challenges throughout the ongoing pandemic (though actual Covid-19 cases were not one of those. Laos reported fewer than 50 cases in 2020 and the hospital did not treat anyone for the virus). The hospital lost all of its medical volunteers, an essential part of the clinical and training programs,

practically overnight when the borders were closing. All of our domestic and global fundraising events were canceled, which heavily burdened our hospital budget. We were not able to replace expat staff members. This annual report could be telling a very different story about 2020 were it not for the heroism of dedication.

Our hospital staff stepped up to the plate. They worked tirelessly around the clock to provide the same level of service despite the lack of volunteers and the shortage of ex-pat clinicians. They worked diligently and

compassionately without regard to compensation.

This dedication was also evident in our founder, Kenro Izu, our board chair, Steve Williamson, and our entire volunteer board. Importantly, we did not have to cut services, staff or salaries in 2020 and we can thank our incredible donors who, despite hardships in their own lives, once again came through. The term heroism is often associated with saving lives. We can honestly say you are true heroes and your dedication to the hospital is truly inspirational. We salute you all.

With gratitude,
Nicole Pagourgis





LFHC in 2020

The Heroism of Dedication





Lao Friends Hospital for Children (LFHC) had been prepared for an extremely busy 2020. Unfortunately, a worldwide outbreak of Covid-19 dramatically altered life at the hospital. What transpired during the pandemic, however, was quite inspiring: LFHC's Lao staff and administrators demonstrated their commitment, perseverance and even heroism in facing unprecedented challenges.

By the time the nation celebrated the Lao New Year in mid-April, the Lao government imposed a nationwide lockdown to prevent the spread of the virus. Fortunately, no Covid-19 cases were reported among the children we saw at the hospital, but our caseload decreased because travel was restricted and transportation was unavailable to many families. The national lockdown also reduced the hospital staff – all our expat clinical volunteers returned to their home countries. In their absence, our Lao staff and expat administrators diligently worked to uphold our hospital's mission to provide free,

compassionate medical care to the children whose families were able to come to LFHC. Theirs was an heroic act of dedication!

There were no staff layoffs or salary reductions during the national lockdown. However, the hospital made several adjustments in response to the travel restrictions:

- All non-essential staff was asked to stay home or work from home if possible.
- Classroom instruction for the staff was postponed, though some training activities continued.
- The Outreach Team reduced its homecare schedule, but obtained a special government permit to visit patients who needed urgent care.
- The Development Clinic was temporarily closed.
- The Thalassemia Clinic for children afflicted with the inherited blood disorder was temporarily closed, though patients dependent on blood transfusions were treated in the Outpatient Department.
- All elective surgeries were postponed.



Compassionate Care for Xiasee

Six-year-old Xiasee had strayed too close to a cooking fire at her home in Bokeo Province one day and the flames ignited her clothes. Her skirt was quickly extinguished, but she had suffered burns to her legs and lower abdomen.

Xiasee's family tried to care for her burns, but could do little to help their daughter who was experiencing a great deal of pain. They rushed her to the Bokeo Province Hospital, but eventually brought her to LFHC — about 10-12 hours away.

Our doctors and nurses immediately recognized that Xiasee needed to be hospitalized. She had suffered second- and third-degree burns to roughly 12% of her body. The staff quickly administered morphine for her pain and cleaned and dressed her burn wounds.

Xiasee required frequent dressing changes over the next several weeks. She was sedated during these painful procedures and given intravenous doses of the antibiotic cefazolin to treat infections, which likely occurred because of the delay in getting her proper medical treatment.

After spending a month at LFHC, Xiasee's burns had begun to heal, but it became clear that she needed a large skin graft – an operation beyond the capabilities of local physicians. LFHC transferred Xiasee to a hospital in Vientiane, where a specialist performed the skin graft with the help of a plastic surgery team from Interplast, an Australian nonprofit organization.

Xiasee returned to LFHC following her surgery and continued to receive care from the nurses and doctors who had been involved since her initial admission, as well as the hospital's nutritionist, physiotherapist and outreach team. She made an excellent recovery and the staff was thrilled to see her smiling again!



Happy Ending for Joy

Six-year-old Joy Thaphphalao was riding on a motorcycle with his family one day in April when they were involved in a traffic accident. Joy survived, but felt a great deal of pain in his right hip.

His family was very concerned, but didn't know exactly what to do. They treated him with a local medicine, but after six days of home care, they decided to take Joy to a nearby hospital. The staff there told the family that there wasn't much that could be done for the boy and sent them home with some over-the-counter pain medication.

Fourteen days after the accident, Joy arrived at LFHC where he was diagnosed with a dislocation of the right hip. Surgical pins were inserted to allow Joy's hip to heal in the correct position and he was placed in traction.

LFHC used WFPI (World Federation of Pediatric Imagers) to assist in reviewing Joy's X-rays to ensure that he would have the best possible outcome. Joy spent more than a month at LFHC in traction. During this time, the team of doctors and nurses worked to coordinate his care, while our child life therapist and physiotherapist worked to improve his mobility.

Joy is recovering and returns to LFHC for follow-up visits. He is able to walk with some difficulty but without pain and his father made special crutches to help him get around faster.

Road traffic injuries are globally the leading cause of death for children and young adults between the ages of 5 and 29, according to the World Health Organization. Joy is a survivor.

By mid-year, the Lao government had eased many restrictions. The country's borders remained closed, although there were exceptions for diplomats, business officials and authorized foreign workers. Our caseload at the hospital started to grow once again. The Neonatal Unit admitted and cared for 98 infants during August, the largest caseload of newborn babies since the unit opened in 2016. Our Thalassemia Clinic reopened and saw 297 patients during the year. The Development Clinic also became fully operational and cared for 380 children during the year. The Outpatient Department and Emergency Room were busy once again and the hospital's in-person medical education programs resumed.

The easing of travel restrictions also allowed a research team to restart their study of thiamine deficiency in children. The study, financed by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, is the first large research project conducted at LFHC. Severe thiamine deficiency, known as beriberi, is diagnosed almost daily in infants brought to LFHC.

The absence of the many doctors and nurses from other countries who have volunteered to train and mentor our Lao staff did offer a glimpse into the future sustainability of our hospital: Lao doctors and nurses and other healthcare workers proved their ability to maintain the quality of compassionate medical care for which LFHC was founded. The Lao medical team treated the vast majority of children brought to the hospital.

Despite the pandemic and national lockdown in 2020, LFHC continued to mature as a pediatric teaching hospital. Senior doctors developed and managed training sessions for their junior colleagues, while five doctors undertook the national pediatric residency program in Vientiane. The hospital also initiated a Foundation curriculum in pediatrics, which is the first stage of a new three-year pediatric training program for its Lao physicians. The program, which awards a Certificate of Pediatrics, is comparable to a pediatric residency. The long-term goal is to establish a national pediatric residency program at LFHC.





During the national lockdown, the hospital's Medical Education Director selected topics and learning activities that were appropriate for distance-learning. Doctors used Facebook's video chat option for group discussions and most doctors logged many hours of online study.

LFHC continued to provide educational opportunities during the year to its Lao nursing staff. In early 2020, a volunteer worked with two Lao nurses to develop a training course designed to prepare nurses to recognize patient emergencies and intervene appropriately. As the national lockdown eased, training sessions increased. New nursing shift leaders were trained and became qualified to administer controlled drugs. They also resumed English language lessons. Several new nurses were trained for work in the Neonatal Unit.

The hospital made several technological advances during the year. In February, the staff began using an upgraded electronic medical records

system called Bahmni. The new system integrates data from clinical, radiological, pharmacy and laboratory sources. It also allows LFHC to instantly share patient records with Luang Prabang Provincial Hospital.

The hospital's laboratory staff expanded their capabilities with the installation of a refurbished biochemistry machine, a donation from Roche Diagnostics. The machine is capable of running up to 400 test samples a day. The analyzer is often used to evaluate liver and kidney functions, as well as monitor electrolytes.

LFHC continued its campaign against malnutrition, which still haunts the region. All children brought to the Outpatient Department are assessed for malnutrition. Nearly 15% show symptoms of moderate or severe malnutrition. The hospital has been treating malnourished children by giving their parents supplies of Ready to Use Therapeutic Food, which all but eliminates the need to hospitalize these



Our Tiniest Patient in 2020

Airnoy Vahn, arrived on March 7, weighing only 21 ounces (600 grams). Born at home, he and his parents travelled for two hours to reach LFHC. The team at LFHC immediately applied life-support measures. The infant required a lot of specialized support, but showed steady progress over the course of his stay, which lasted nearly 12 weeks. By the end of May, he was discharged, weighing 3.3 pounds (1.95 kg), and secured his place as the smallest Neonatal Unit patient ever.

This success story is a testament to the achievements of the Neonatal Unit and enhances the reputation the hospital has earned in the surrounding communities.

The first 28 days of life represent the most vulnerable time for a child's survival and account for approximately 46% of all deaths of children under the age of five, according to the World Health Organization. This is especially true for infants born prematurely, which is the leading cause of death in this age group.

The LFHC Neonatal Unit opened in 2016 with the goal of providing specialized care to our smallest patients. Given the increasing number of babies who needed specialized care, this unit was expanded in 2018. There are now nurses dedicated to the Neonatal Unit and assuming leadership roles. Nurses working in the unit have completed additional training courses and received mentorship from expat volunteers with expertise in this field to ensure that they have the skills necessary to care for premature patients. Several neonatal physicians have also volunteered in past years to help develop the unit.



Treating a Child with a Blood Disorder

Ana Phonesavath is a brave little girl afflicted with thalassemia, an inherited blood disorder. In fact, she has homozygous Beta 0 thalassemia, which is the most severe type.

When she was only five months old, she appeared to be very pale and was brought to Lao Friends Hospital for Children. Her family history revealed that her parents were carriers of the thalassemia trait and subsequent hemoglobin typing led to a diagnosis of thalassemia.

Since that time, Ana's parents have brought her to LFHC's Thalassemia Clinic every 3-4 weeks for blood transfusions. Transfusion therapy is common among patients with thalassemia. Ana's frequent blood transfusions caused an iron overload in her blood, but that is being treated with a medication called deferiprone.

Ana is a great example of how well children with thalassemia can do with the treatment and care provided by our staff.

Patients with thalassemia have less oxygen-carrying protein (hemoglobin) and fewer red blood cells in their bodies than normal. Symptoms include paleness, weakness and slow growth. The condition can lead to anemia.

patients. Additionally, the nutrition team educates families about the importance of proper diet and promotes breastfeeding among new mothers.

LFHC adopted a new "green thumb" approach to supplement meals for patients and the families from distant villages who stay with their children while they are hospitalized. A garden planted on the hospital grounds produced hundreds of pounds of vegetables for this purpose. Rows of morning glory, onions, corn, eggplant, chili peppers, cabbage, green beans and lettuce became a beautiful part of the hospital's landscape.

It should be noted that financing the operations of the hospital in 2020 had to be accomplished without revenue from planned fundraising events in New York, Tokyo, Los Angeles, Boston, San Francisco, Hong Kong, Singapore, Vientiane and Luang Prabang. All live fundraisers were cancelled because of the pandemic.

Thanks to a few generous foundations and many private donors and supporters, LFHC weathered a very difficult financial period. They too exhibited the heroism of dedication.

Outreach Team

The national lockdown imposed by the Lao government during the pandemic temporarily suspended all non-emergency care provided by the LFHC Outreach Team. Roads leading in and out of Luang Prabang were closed.

There are health centers in villages in the region, but they provide only primary medical services. Our team felt frustrated and very concerned about a few children who needed homecare.

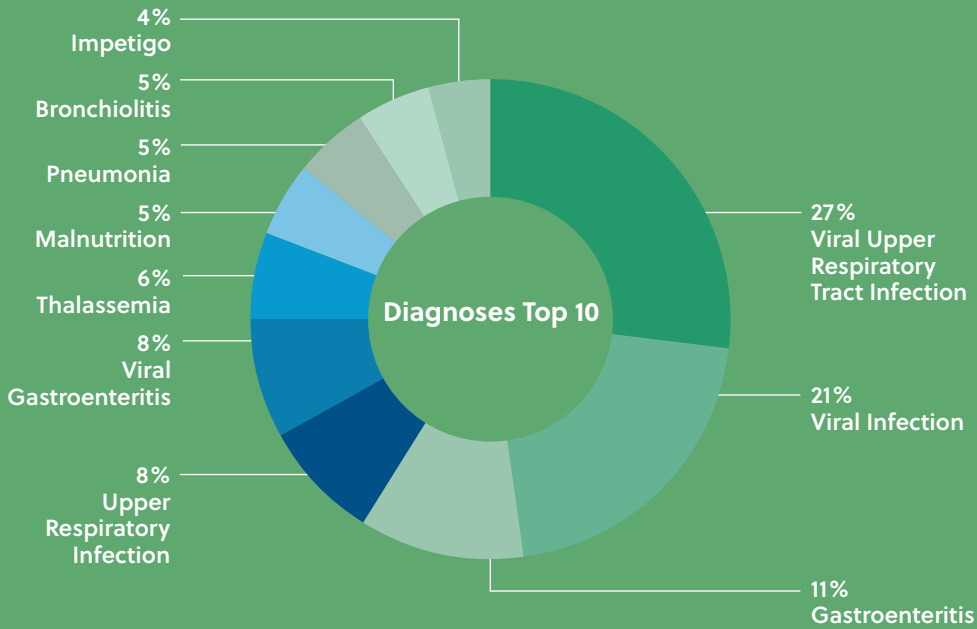
The team managed to obtain a special permit from the Luang Prabang Department of Health to travel to care for these children during the lockdown.

One such child was a 6-month-old infant named Peny, who posed a developmental challenge. The team delivered powdered milk to Peny's family because her mother wasn't generating enough breast milk. However, her parents had difficulty preparing the powdered milk, so the team mixed a supply of milk for them each week during the lockdown. The team visited the village every week to ensure that Peny grew healthy and strong.

The dedication of the Outreach Team during the lockdown was nothing short of heroic.



LFHC Patients in 2020



➔ Caseload
28,134

➔ Hospitalized Patients
2,356 patients / **2,885** visits

➔ Outpatient Visits
11,436 patients / **18,936** visits

➔ ER Visits
6,689 patients / **10,727** visits

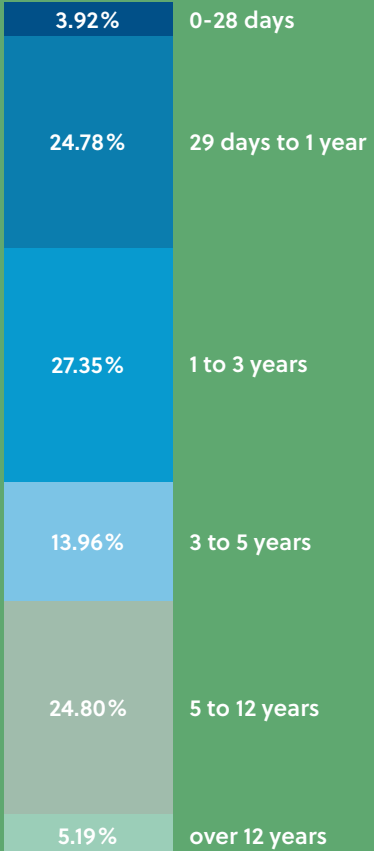
➔ Neonatal Admissions
689

➔ Operation Room Procedures
1,188

➔ Prescriptions Dispensed to Outpatients
48,596

➔ Outreach
334 visits

Age at Visit





As the first pediatric teaching hospital built and operated by Friends Without A Border, **Angkor Hospital for Children (AHC)** stands as a proud opening chapter for the organization.

The hospital quickly proved to be vitally important to Cambodia's medical environment after opening in 1999. It has grown and flourished since 2013, when Friends ended its management of the facility and transferred operation of the hospital to local administrators.

AHC's 19 interconnected departments treated more than 135,000 children in 2020 – children from every province in the country. The hospital has developed specialty services in such areas as oncology, cardiology, neurology and pediatric surgery. AHC also operates an eye clinic and dental clinic.

Friends Without A Border has long felt a special kinship with **The Lake Clinic (TLC)** in Cambodia – the clinic's founder, Jon Morgan, served as the first executive director of Angkor Hospital for Children, which our organization built in 1998.

TLC provides free medical care to more than 13,000 people living in nine villages on the Tonle Sap, the country's largest freshwater lake. The region is home to some of the country's poorest families. TLC operates five floating clinics and six boats to serve these families.

Cambodia reported less than 375 cases of COVID-19 in 2020. No deaths were reported. During that time, TLC's two clinical teams treated more than 37,000 medical problems and its four-member Outreach Team of midwives provided 4,206 services.



Virtual Race



Social distancing requirements sparked by the Covid-19 pandemic forced Friends Without A Border to cancel its annual New York Gala and all of its other live fundraising events in 2020. As a consequence, the organization faced a serious shortfall in its budget for Lao Friends Hospital for Children.

Undaunted, management for the organization and the hospital came up with a bold idea to generate revenue: the International Virtual Run for Children.

The event, which occurred October 16-18, raised more than \$141,000.

A virtual run allowed participants to practice social distancing by running, walking or cycling in their neighborhoods (or even at home on treadmills or stationary bikes) – thus avoiding mass gatherings typical of marathons or other races.

The event modified the Luang Prabang Half Marathon, the annual fundraiser for the hospital that attracts more than a thousand runners. Travel restrictions imposed by the

Lao government to prevent the spread of the coronavirus prevented runners from other countries entering this year's half marathon. Instead, runners in Luang Prabang were joined this year (in spirit) by runners, walkers and cyclists in England, Germany, Singapore, Canada, Japan, Australia, the U.S. and a few other countries.

Friends Without A Border extends a warm thank-you to all who participated in this fundraiser and to those who supported the event with their donations.



How You Can Help

Children around the world die every day from such preventable diseases and manageable conditions as malnutrition, pneumonia and diarrhea. The reason: they don't have access to medical care. Lao Friends Hospital for Children is dedicated to the mission of providing free care to the children of Laos, and promises that they will not have to suffer the fate of so many other children who live in impoverished conditions in developing nations. The model of LFHC, which emphasizes treatment, education and prevention, guarantees that your support will benefit children who are in need today.

Give the Gift of Life

Give a gift to support our efforts to provide high-quality health care to the children of northern Laos. Make an instant, secure, and tax-deductible donation online by visiting fwab.org/donate or give us a call at (212) 691-0909, or mail a check to Friends Without A Border.

Forever Friends

Become a Forever Friend by joining our recurring gift program for as little as \$20 a month. To join, visit fwab.org/donate/foreverfriends

Honor a Loved One

Honor someone special with a tribute gift. Your gift can be in honor of, or in memory of, a family member, friend or colleague. Your honoree (or their family) will receive a personalized letter detailing the impact the gift has on the lives of children in need of medical care. To make a tribute gift, visit fwab.org/donate/tributegift or call our office.

Match Your Gift at Work

Your donation will increase its impact if your employer will match your contribution. Please ask your employer if it has a matching donation program.

Create a Lasting Legacy

Consider including Friends Without A Border in your estate plans. A gift in your will or living trust is a lasting investment in advancing our mission and ability to respond to future challenges. Visit fwab.org/donate/plannedgiving/ to create a lasting legacy and please call our office for more information.

Donate from Abroad

We have agreements with organizations in Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany and Japan to allow donors in these countries to make tax-deductible donations to support our work. Visit fwab.org/internationaldonation/ or email us at fwab@fwab.org for details.

Shop Online

We offer a variety of gifts online and proceeds benefit Lao Friends Hospital for Children. Prints of photographs taken by our founder, Kenro Izu, and unique jewelry are among the items available at fwab.org/onlineshop.

Start a Fundraiser

Celebrating a birthday, wedding, or other event? We can assist in organizing community events and online fundraisers to support Friends Without A Border. Visit our fwab.org/fundraise for some creative ideas and links to the crowdfunding sites we recommend.

Stock Donations

Donating stock or mutual funds to Friends Without A Border is a tax-wise approach to caring for children in need. We encourage you to consult your personal tax advisor to evaluate your best options when making a donation of securities. Please visit fwab.org/donate/planned-giving/ to make such donations. Please call our office for more information.

Supporters



\$100,000+

Ping & Amy Chao Family Foundation
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Estate of Sherman Kassof
Denis J. Martin & Anne M. Haviland
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Ptarmigan Charitable Foundation
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Child's Dream Association
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Local In-Kind Supporters

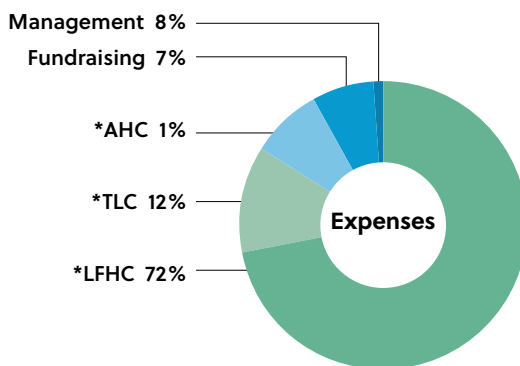
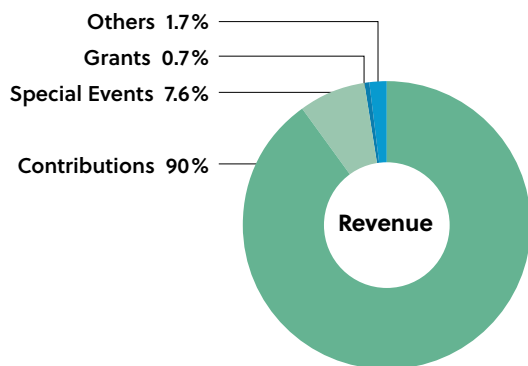
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Thansamay Group
The Apsara
Tiger Trail
Tigerhead Water
Traditional Arts &
Ethnology Centre
Wheelchairs for Kids
Xishuang Banna Hotel

Statement of Activities and Changes in Net Assets

For the Period Ended December 31, 2020 (With comparative totals for 2019)

	Unrestricted	Temporarily restricted	2020 Total	2019 Total
REVENUE				
Contributions	\$1,661,644	\$853,130	2,514,774	2,031,794
Government contract grants	20,400		20,400	–
Special events	280,110		280,110	869,386
Less: direct expenses	(67,095)		(67,095)	(250,571)
Patient income, fees etc.	9,018		9,018	9,445
Sales	2,240		2,240	11,337
Collection boxes	1,670		1,670	–
Investment income	1,190		1,190	55,787
Other income	40,539		40,539	14,034
Net assets released from restrictions	1,263,968	(1,263,968)	–	–
Total revenue	3,213,684	410,838	2,681,413	2,741,212
EXPENSES				
Program services				
Hospital support	365,678		365,678	296,467
LFHC	2,100,334		2,100,334	1,732,709
Program development	6,784		6,784	13,044
Total program services	2,472,796	–	2,472,796	2,042,220
Supporting services				
Fundraising	209,299		209,299	222,894
Management and general	229,392		229,392	218,199
Total supporting services	438,691	–	438,691	441,093
Total expenses	2,911,487	–	2,911,487	2,483,313
Change in net assets	302,196	(410,838)	(108,642)	(177,849)
Net assets at beginning of year	2,097,241	208,182	2,305,423	2,195,242
Net asset at end of year	2,399,437	(202,656)	2,196,781	2,017,393



Board / Staff

FOUNDER AND HONORARY PRESIDENT

Kenro Izu

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M. Greg Thompson, MD MPH

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