In 1999 a small group of dedicated former Mongolia Peace Corps Volunteers (PCV) began the process of formally incorporating Friends of Mongolia (FOM) as a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization. In the eight years since, FOM has achieved permanent 501(c)3 status and has utilized this important designation to offer opportunities to PCVs and other interested individuals and organizations to make significant tax-deductible contributions to education and cultural exchange between the United States and Mongolia.

In hindsight, the process of transforming FOM from a PCV social club into a legal corporate entity has been the easiest part of the last eight years. Managing FOM has presented several unusual challenges. It should come as no surprise that people with an interest in supporting FOM’s mission do not generally live in the same town. The organization is composed of individuals literally spread across the world. Take the current slate of officers and board members, for example, who live in Afghanistan, Mongolia, California, Texas, Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, DC. Each year the list of places changes as people move and new people join the organization. This means that often FOM officers and board members work on projects without ever meeting each other in person, a situation which demands specialized management approaches to ensure effective results.

Recognizing these difficulties FOM has been earnestly pursuing initiatives since late 2004 to restructure and strengthen operations within the organization under the leadership of Board President Ken Heldenfels, former Country Director of Peace Corps Mongolia, and Co-Coordinator Jason Stewart, former Peace Corps Volunteer. These efforts have produced several noteworthy accomplishments described in this newsletter. These activities are especially noteworthy if one considers that FOM conducted them all without a permanent central office or paid staff, requiring volunteers involved in the efforts to undertake and coordinate complex and difficult tasks during their free time without meeting their colleagues in person throughout the implementation process.

Participating in FOM requires a high degree of ingenuity and a nearly infinite amount of patience on the part of its volunteers. On the other hand, it also produces satisfaction in participating in member driven activities that provide tangible benefits for the public. It is these tangible benefits that motivate FOM’s volunteers to remain dedicated to the long term growth and vitality of the organization.

In this issue of the Friends of Mongolia Newsletter you will learn about many of these benefits, as well as plans the organization has for the near to long term future. Membership in FOM is open to anyone with an interest in supporting education in Mongolia and cultural exchange between the United States and Mongolia. Becoming a member is the first step in contributing to the organization, because membership dues provide important financial resources for conducting activities. Many members are content to contribute each year in this way, whereas others actively participate in activities and the governance of the organization. The Officers and Board of Directors of FOM hope that the information in this newsletter inspires its members to continue to be actively engaged in the organization.

To join or renew your FOM membership, please visit www.friendsofmongolia.org/join.htm.

—Brian M. White
FOM Scholarship

The Friends of Mongolia Scholarship was established in the spring of 2006 with the aim of assisting young male students from rural communities with high academic potential and financial need to attend post-secondary institutions across Mongolia. The program specifically stipulated that all applicants be male and living outside of Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia's capital city. The reason for this unique requirement was what is referred to as "Mongolia's reverse gender gap." Often rural males are left behind in education because of social and economic demands in the countryside. In fact, according to the National Statistics on Gender in Mongolia, in 2005 only 39% of students enrolled in institutions of higher education were male.

In late spring of 2006 applications were distributed throughout the country by Peace Corps Volunteers and Khan Bank to all high schools in rural towns and villages. Over 115 applications were submitted from 17 of the 21 provinces in Mongolia, and from this a group of 8 recipients and 1 alternate were selected by a committee to receive one year full tuition scholarships. The selection committee consisted of representatives from Friends of Mongolia, Peace Corps and several NGOs in Mongolia. The scholarship recipients were announced at a press conference held in late August and funds totaling over $3,500 were transferred to the recipients’ schools from August 2006 to January 2007. Funds for the Friends of Mongolia Scholarship were generously donated by Khan Bank, the U.S. Embassy in Mongolia, and the Friends of Mongolia scholarship fund.

Work for the 2007-2008 Friends of Mongolia Scholarship has already begun. It takes an average of only $400 to pay for one year of college tuition in Mongolia, so every donation has a significant impact. Our goal is to raise $5,000 per year so that we can increase the number of recipients while continuing to support previous year’s scholars who have performed well in their courses. This goal for the 2007-2008 academic year has nearly been reached due to private donations from members and FOM supporters and Khan Bank once again pledging to support 4 scholars with the possibility of 2-3 more. As a result, work for 2008-2009 and academic years ahead are now the fundraising focus.

When one considers the average American college student can easily spend over $400 per year on textbooks, it is amazing that for the same amount a student in Mongolia can completely alter his future economic prospects. The Friends of Mongolia Scholarship is an investment in students who without financial assistance would not have an opportunity to experience academic life and to reach their full potential. Ten, twenty, fifty, or one hundred dollars or more can be spent on an afternoon outing to the mall or it can be used to change a person's life. We invite all who are interested in this worthy project to become involved. Please read about one of our scholarship recipients B. Uuganbayar below, and consider sending in your donation today. You can donate online at www.friendsofmongolia.org/donate.html. It is fast, secure, and supported by Pay Pal.

Young Mongolian Scholar

B. Uuganbayar is a third year student at the Technical University of Darkhan (130 miles north of Ulaanbaatar), majoring in electrical engineering. He lives with his parents and two siblings in Hotol, Selenge Aimag where his mother runs a small store and his father is a guard.

His parents were struggling to pay for his education and it appeared he would have to leave school and start working until Friends of Mongolia contacted him in early January 2007. He had originally been selected as the alternate scholarship recipient, but because additional scholarship funds became available FOM was able to offer him a scholarship after all.

Due to the overwhelming response to the program the application process was highly competitive, with only 8 scholarships awarded out of more than 115 applicants.

When FOM’s in-country representatives Sarah Munson and B. Khangai contacted him about the additional funds, they learned that his family had already begun taking out loans to pay his tuition. They had only raised a third of the necessary amount. FOM was able to contribute the full amount, so his family could pay back the loans.

He is grateful to be able to finish his third year of school and hopes to find a job in electrical engineering upon graduating in 2008. He would like to extend his gratitude to the FOM staff, donors, and everybody who has a warm heart and empathy towards Mongolia. He promised to give back the assistance by becoming a better citizen and professional.
United States Ambassador Pamela Slutz joined representatives of the National Center Against Violence (NCAV), Tov Aimag government, Friends of Mongolia and the Peace Corps Mongolia country director to inaugurate the third shelter for victims of domestic violence in Mongolia on March 30th, 2006 in Zuun Mod. The shelter was a project initiated by the NCAV through collaboration with many partners, including both the Tov Aimag government as well as several organizations and individuals from the United States of America. The NCAV branch office in Zuun Mod also sought the support of two American PCVs to assist them in completing the community initiative. The volunteers, Jessica Trudeau and Brett Burkhart, who were English teachers in the Zuun Mod schools, assisted the NCAV by facilitating the development of a project proposal and helping the NCAV to identify potential donors. The Tov Aimag Government, U.S. Embassy in Ulaanbaatar, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Friends of Mongolia and three American citizens residing in Ulaanbaatar (including two RPCVs) provided the financial support to make Tov Aimag’s shelter a reality.

The largest single donor was Friends of Mongolia (FOM), providing $7,000 towards the project. For several years Peace Corps conducted training in Zuun Mod, making for a natural connection between the Zuun Mod project and Friends of Mongolia. FOM was able to lend its support due to the incredible generosity of the Rudolph E. Futemod Fund at the Community Foundation for Monterey County. FOM in-country representatives Ron Deutch and Wesley Nguyen and board member Ken Goodson participated in the inauguration and received awards in recognition of their support from the national director of NCAV on behalf of FOM and Peace Corps Mongolia.

In October 2006 Ken Goodson accompanied by the newly appointed US Ambassador, Mark C. Minton, made a follow-up visit to the shelter. Mr. Goodson and Ambassador Minton met with the current Peace Corps volunteers serving in Zuun Mod, and they had an opportunity to learn about volunteer activities at the shelter and in other parts of the town.

**Contribution to Mongolian Schools**

FOM in cooperation with the American Center for Mongolian Studies (ACMS) and Peace Corps Mongolia distributed over 50 CDs and cassette tapes of a variety of recorded history, science, and literature stories donated by Hugh Stanton “Stan” Parker, an attorney in the United States, in January 2007. These materials were provided to sixteen Peace Corps volunteers and their counterparts to be used in English language education programs at rural schools. Friends of Mongolia, ACMS, and Peace Corps Mongolia were grateful for this generous and useful donation.

**US Ambassador Praises FOM**

Ambassador Mark C. Minton and other distinguished guests participated in the inaugural event marking the 20th Anniversary of US-Mongolian diplomatic relations at the National University of Mongolia’s School of Foreign service in January 2007. Ambassador Minton reflected on the many aspects of the bilateral relationship over two decades in his key-note address, and he emphasized the role PCVs have played in fostering cross-cultural understanding between the two countries. He also made special mention of Friends of Mongolia as an example of volunteers staying active in the “worthy and important endeavor” of promoting cross-cultural exchange and understanding even after their service in Peace Corps has ended.

Later in the spring, Ambassador Minton further honored FOM by inviting Co-coordinator Sadie Munson and Communications Coordinator Brian White to attend a private reception at the ambassador’s residence for Mr. Ronald A. Tscherter, newly appointed Director of the Peace Corps, during the director’s visit to Mongolia. The invitation was a demonstration of the importance of the US Embassy and Peace Corps place upon keeping Returned PCVs active in pursuing the third goal of Peace Corps, which is to promote cross-cultural exchange and education in the United States.
FOM Contributions at Home and Abroad

In Mongolia FOM contributed $1,000 to Flagstaff International Relief Effort (F.I.R.E.) to support the distribution of winter clothing, educational materials, and medical equipment to over 8,000 people in Mongolia in the fall of 2006. FOM officers Sadie Munson and Brian White also participated in the distribution of clothing in a community about 45 miles east of Ulaanbaatar. Although neither distinguished themselves as speakers of Mongolian during their days as PCVs, the lasting effects of their language training allowed them to act as interpreters for the other American volunteers involved in the distribution effort. Sadie also helped distribute clothing at a soup kitchen in Amgalan district and at a women’s training center in Ulaanbaatar.

F.I.R.E. is an organization that slowly evolved from photojournalist Dave Edward’s experience witnessing the plight of street children in Ulaanbaatar in the early 1990s.

Nansalmaa, Girvin Scholarship recipient

In 2006 FOM began working with UNICEF and the Mongolian Youth Development Foundation (MYDF) to help facilitate the distribution of the Matthew Girvin Scholarship Fund. This fund “was created in memory of Matthew Girvin, a UNICEF program officer stationed in Mongolia who was killed in a helicopter crash in January 2001, to support highly qualified secondary school graduates from low-income families in the rural areas of Mongolia to study at some of the best state institutions of higher learning within [Mongolia].” This year there were 12 scholarship recipients. This scholarship program is in its fourth year, and FOM’s involvement provides the Girvin family a local partner to increase the size of the program through cooperation with Inland Northwest Community Foundation, a dedicated scholarship distributor.

One scholarship recipient was Ms. Nansalmaa, a third year student in Social Work at the Education Development University in Ulaanbaatar. She is originally from Gurventes Soum, Omnogobi Aimag, but now lives in Ulaanbaatar with her father and her younger brother. Nansalmaa has been receiving the Girvin Scholarship since her freshman year. She is very dedicated to her studies and the welfare of children. Nansalmaa understands the sadness that the Girvins feel over the loss of Matthew, because her mother passed away suddenly last year. The Girvin’s generosity and her mother’s memory have inspired her to use her education to help others in need.
Small Project Grant Program

The positive response from students and donors generated by the Friends of Mongolia Scholarship Fund has encouraged FOM to begin development of another program to support small development projects in rural communities. This program is inspired by the Small Project Assistance (SPA) grant familiar to all PCVs. Rural community projects generally do not demand the kind of financing on offer from large multi-lateral or bi-lateral donors, and SPA is intended to provide PCVs and their local counterparts funds to conduct modest projects such as establishing school libraries or conducting skills training seminars. SPA grants can be as little as a few hundred dollars and do not generally exceed $2,500, but surprisingly it is often difficult for Peace Corps to raise enough money to support more than a few projects per year. With the number of volunteers exceeding 100 per year in Mongolia, the resources available to PCVs through the SPA program are becoming relatively scarce.

FOM’s program is not intended to replace the SPA program, but rather to supplement some of the increasing demand for small projects across Mongolia. As with the scholarship fund, modest contributions can have a significant impact on a community. FOM’s current communications coordinator, for example, collaborated on a SPA grant with Khotont Secondary School in Arkhangai Aimag, about 210 miles west of Ulaanbaatar, to reconstruct the dormitory kitchen which had been in disrepair and unused for twenty years. The project cost approximately $1,800 in grant money plus 25 percent in local in-kind contributions of labor and materials. Upon completion, the kitchen served over 400 students, which worked out to $4.50 per student to provide warm and nutritious meals for the entire school year. Four years later the kitchen is still serving the students in the dormitory.

The current plan for developing the FOM small project grant program is to work closely with Peace Corps to establish an equitable process in which volunteers and their counterparts can apply for assistance. Of course, much of this administrative structure is already in place in the form of the SPA program. Therefore, a larger issue to address is the fundraising aspect of the program. How does FOM get its members and other stakeholders involved in raising the necessary funds to support 5-10 projects per year? Moreover, what kinds of projects should FOM concentrate its resources on? These are questions we hope to receive answers to as the development process continues.

The board of directors and officers would like to encourage anyone interested in getting involved in the development of this program, either in terms of design or fundraising, to please contact Sadie Munson (smunson@friendsofmongolia.org) or Ariel Wyckoff (awyckoff@friendsofmongolia.org). You may also be one of the first people to contribute to this project by visiting www.friendsofmongolia.org/donate.html. Select the general donation and be sure to contact Jason Stewart (jstewart@friendsofmongolia.org) to let him know you would like your donation to be applied towards the small project grant program.

FOM Website New and Improved

The FOM website has been completely redesigned and contains significant amounts of new content. The website is one of the primary ways that FOM informs members and stakeholders about events and opportunities to participate in cultural-exchange activities. RPCVs, PCVs, and others are encouraged to submit announcements, articles, and other information for inclusion on the FOM website.

The FOM website also has two new features to allow you to contribute to the organization while purchasing books and searching the Internet. FOM has compiled a few dozen books about Mongolia that are available through Amazon.com. If you purchase items from Amazon.com through the FOM website 4 percent of the purchase price is donated to FOM. This applies to all items—not just books about Mongolia. Visit this online bookstore at www.friendsofmongolia.org/bookstore.htm. You may search for other items offered by Amazon.com by using the search field on the page.

FOM has also been accepted by the GoodSearch search engine initiative, which is powered by Yahoo! and provides non-profit organizations 50 percent of online advertising revenues each time individuals use the GoodSearch engine. The FOM website has a link to the GoodSearch search engine at the bottom of its main menu bar. Be sure to type “Friends of Mongolia” into the “Who do you GoodSearch for?” field before beginning your search.

FOM hopes to see you in the virtual world.
FOM Elects New Officers for 2007-2008

Friends of Mongolia members elected a new slate of officers in February to serve from March 1, 2007 to February 28, 2008. The new co-coordinators and the acting treasurer have served previously in other officer positions. FOM welcomes the new membership and communications coordinators who have not served previously and extends its thanks to all the officers who served in 2006-2007. Thank you George Economides, Melody Westmeyer, and B. Khangai for your service. Also, special thanks are extended to Ken Goodman, the Country Director of Peace Corps Mongolia, who has offered a tremendous amount of support for FOM as a Board Member during his tenure in Mongolia. Good luck in Romania!

The following are short biographies of all the current officers. FOM is run entirely by the volunteer efforts of its officers, board, and other supporters. If you have a desire to assist in any area of FOM’s operations, please do not hesitate to contact one of the officers below to offer your assistance. Help is always welcome.

Co-coordinator - Ariel Wyckoff
Ariel Wyckoff currently works at the IRS (facilities management) in Washington, DC. Ariel has had experience working in a variety of positions, including as an environmental advocate and manager of fund-raising for programs at the CalPIRG and USPIRG, and as a volunteer fund-raiser and organizer with the Traditional Support Caravan material aid group for the Dineh/Navajo. Ariel was also a teacher with Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) program and served as a Peace Corps TEFL Volunteer in Mongolia from 2000-2002. Ariel received a BA in English from UCLA and an MA in International Development from George Washington University. Ariel can be contacted at: awyckoff@friendsofmongolia.org.

Co-coordinator - Sarah (Sadie) Munson
Sadie Munson currently lives in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia with her husband Brian. Sadie was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Kyrgyzstan in 2001 and in Mongolia from 2002-2004, where she worked as an English teacher in a small village in the Gobi desert. She currently is the FOM representative in Mongolia coordinating the application process for the 2007-2008 FOM scholarship competition. She is also the lead fundraiser for the program. Sadie holds a B.A. from the University of Montana. Sadie can be contacted at: smunson@friendsofmongolia.org.

Acting Treasurer - Jason Stewart
Jason Stewart was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Mongolia from 2002 to 2004, focusing on small business development and basic business skill instruction. He currently works as an accountant for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Washington, DC. Jason lives in Baltimore with his wife, Christine. She is a doctoral student at Johns Hopkins University and also served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Mongolia. Prior to the Peace Corps, Jason spent 5 years in the private sector working for small businesses in Memphis, Tennessee. He earned a degree in accounting from the University of Memphis, and currently is working on a masters degree at the University of Maryland. Jason can be contacted at: jstewart@friendsofmongolia.org.

Membership Coordinator - Shawn Kairis
Shawn Kairis was a Peace Corps volunteer in Mongolia from 2001-2003 in Altai city, Gobi-Altaim, working on education development, life skills and health. He also contributed to the project design of the USAID funded Gobi Initiative NGO. He received a BA in religious studies from Michigan State University and an MA in international development from Clark University. After a study abroad in Nepal he co-founded the Michigan chapter of the Empower Nepal Foundation, funding small-scale projects in the country. Upon graduation, he worked as a teacher in metro Detroit. During graduate school he served as a program officer at the Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy. Shawn is currently at Search for Common Ground, developing new project initiatives for conflict transformation programs. Shawn can be contacted at: skairis@friendsofmongolia.org.

Communications Coordinator - Brian White
Brian White served as a teacher trainer in Khotont Soum, Arkhangai Aimag from 2002 to 2004. He currently lives in Ulaanbaatar with his wife Sadie and is the Resident Director of the American Center for Mongolian Studies. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics from the University of Washington and a Master of Public Administration degree with a concentration in international development from Cornell University. Over the last several years he as acquired a growing interest in communications in the information age, especially in terms of managing non-profit organizations. This interest has motivated him to contribute to FOM by assisting in the organization’s development of effective internal and external communication methods. Brian can be contacted at: bwhite@friendsofmongolia.org.
Friends of Mongolia Membership and Donation Form

Contact Information
Name: 
Address: 
Phone: 
E-mail: 

Why Membership?
Membership Dues are an important source of funds. Your membership dues are what make FOM possible. In addition, membership allows you to stay directly connected to Mongolia and PCVs.

Membership Options

☐ $25 FOM Individual  ☐ $50 FOM/NPCA Joint Individual

Donation Options

General Support Donation
☐ $10  ☐ $20
☐ $50  ☐ $100
☐ $250  ☐ $_______

Scholarship Fund Donation
☐ $10  ☐ $20
☐ $50  ☐ $100
☐ $250  ☐ $_______

Total Amount Enclosed $_______

Please make checks out to Friends of Mongolia.

US Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 44132,
Washington, DC 20026

Email Contacts:
members@friendsofmongolia.org
admin@friendsofmongolia.org

You can also join FOM and donate online at www.friendsofmongolia.org

Thank you for your contribution to Friends of Mongolia!

Friends of Mongolia is a US Registered 501(c)3 not-for-profit, education organization. Donations may be tax deductible.
Friends of Mongolia (FOM) is an incorporated 501(c)3 not-for-profit, education organization operating in both Mongolia and the United States. It is an affiliate of the National Peace Corps Association and its membership includes both Americans and Mongolians. It is organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational and developmental purposes. Friends of Mongolia exists to develop partnerships with the people of Mongolia in furtherance of cultural exchange and human development.

Special Contributors to the FOM Mission

Institutional:
US Embassy in Mongolia
US Department of State
Peace Corps Mongolia
Khan Bank
Community Foundation for Monterey County
Rudolph E. Futer Fund
Matthew Girvin Scholarship Fund
Inland Northwest Community Foundation
American Center for Mongolian Studies
North American Mongolian Business Council
Chinggis Khan Foundation
Ching Yi Pan Foundation

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Enghe Chimood
Sadie Munson and Brian White
John Tsai
Jason and Christine Stewart
Ronald & Betty Stewart
Keith and Leigh Stewart

And, of course, all of Friends of Mongolia’s Members,
Thank You!