

# 2013

## Lha Charitable Trust

Institute for Social Work & Education

*Lha is a sacred Tibetan word  
that means awakened state of mind  
and the fundamental nature of goodness.*

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

# [VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK]

[Lha Charitable Trust is an official 12AA & 80G non-profit organization authorized by the Income Tax Department of the Indian Government]

## **VOLUNTEER INTRODUCTION**

### **ABOUT US**

- (i) Official Name
- (ii) Slogan
- (iii) Address
- (iv) Website
- (v) Background
- (vi) Founders
- (vii) Mission
- (viii) Vision
- (ix) Purpose
- (x) Objectives
- (xi) Beneficiaries
- (xii) Programs
- (xiii) Structure
- (xix) More Resources

### **POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

Lha Office  
Publications  
Media & Public Relations  
Sponsorship  
Complaints  
Privacy

### **VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT**

Code of Conduct  
Conflict of Interest  
Volunteer Responsibilities  
Organizational Responsibilities  
Letters of Recommendation & References  
Fees & Payments

### **CULTURAL SENSITIVITY**

### **AHIMSA HOUSE**

### **HOME STAY**

### **LHA'S MUTUAL LEARNING PROGRAM**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Welcome to Lha Charitable Trust and McLeod Ganj! Thank you for joining our team to support Lha's mission of providing meaningful and multi-leveled social services for the benefit of others. Volunteers make a valuable and vital contribution to the effective operation of our organization. We recognize that when based on sound principles, volunteering benefits the organization, its projects, and the actual volunteer, as well as the community which profits from these services.

Lha has created this handbook including policies & procedures, code of conduct, volunteer agreement, and tips about McLeod Ganj to ensure you, as the volunteer, and Lha have a positive and enriching experience.

## **ABOUT US**

*Lha Charitable Trust is a grass-roots, 12AA & 80G non-profit and one of the largest Tibetan social work organizations based in Dharamsala, India. It was founded in 1997 and registered with the state government of Himachal Pradesh as a charitable trust in 2005. Lha is the first organization established with a primary focus on Tibetan social work. Lha has a monthly financial audit by the Indian government approved Chattered Accountant, and at the end of the fiscal year makes a financial statement to the income tax department government of India.*

### **(i) OFFICIAL/ LEGAL NAME**

Lha Charitable Trust (Lha)

### **(ii) SLOGAN**

Institute for Social Work & Education

### **(iii) ADDRESS**

Lha Office  
Temple Road, McLeod Ganj 176219  
Dharamsala, Distt. Kangra  
Himachal Pradesh, INDIA  
+91(0)1892-220992  
[office@lhasocialwork.org](mailto:office@lhasocialwork.org)

### **(iv) WEBSITE**

[www.lhasocialwork.org](http://www.lhasocialwork.org)

### **(v) BACKGROUND**

Since 1959, hundreds of thousands of Tibetans have chosen to leave their homeland in pursuit of the freedoms and opportunities denied under Chinese rule. Every year, new refugees arrive in India after an arduous journey, carrying only an armful of personal belongings. Countless refugees arrive with little or no education, speaking only Tibetan, and possessing no viable job skills to support themselves and their families. Furthermore, it is extremely difficult for adult and elderly refugees to receive an adequate education in India due to strict school system requirements. Lha plays a crucial role in facilitating the transition of Tibetan refugees from their homeland to the Indian community by providing long-term rehabilitation and educational resources.

#### **(vi) FOUNDERS**

Lha was founded by Neil Guidry, Jampa Tsering, and several other Tibetan community members.

#### **(vii) MISSION**

Lha is a resource of education and knowledge that provides meaningful, multi-leveled social and educational services for the benefit of others.

#### **(viii) VISION**

Lha seeks to generate an atmosphere of harmony and cooperation within the community by tending to the needs of the impoverished and underprivileged.

#### **(ix) PURPOSE**

To help the Tibetan people survive and prosper in their new home and to preserve their profoundly unique culture. In addition, Lha offers volunteers and students the opportunity to engage in meaningful community service and social work.

#### **(x) OBJECTIVES**

- 1.) To provide a meaningful variety of social services to Tibetan refugees as well as to the local Indian population and people from the Himalayan region.
- 2.) To provide Tibetan refugees with educational and health services, as well as the skills and assistance needed to build a new life in exile.
- 3.) To facilitate meaningful mutual learning and cultural exchange experiences between Tibetans, volunteers and groups of students who visit from countries around the world.
- 4.) To create awareness about the Tibetan refugee situation and preserve the endangered Tibetan culture.

#### **(xi) BENEFICIARIES**

Lha's primary beneficiaries are Tibetan refugees, Himalayan, Indian, and local people who are deprived of educational and health facilities. In addition, Lha serves the general community, through its programs and services, including language classes, vocational skills training, health and hygiene initiatives, environmental awareness activities, volunteer services, and cultural exchange programs.

## **(xii) PROGRAMS**

Lha provides a variety of programs and services including: language classes, medicine and clothing distribution, computer skills courses, vocational training, health and environmental education, cultural exchanges, free books, and various other services. Since 2003, Lha has offered as many as 19 classes daily.

- Language Classes (Tibetan, English, French, and Chinese)
- Computer Skills Classes and IT Workshops
- Massage Therapy Vocational Training
- Photography Training
- Community Soup Kitchen
- Public Health Initiatives
- Free Book Distribution
- Community Newspaper-‘Contact Magazine’
- Environmental Awareness and Aid Initiatives
- Free clothing and medicine distribution
- Cultural Exchange-Foreign and Lha Students
- Community Libraries
- Community Soup kitchen and clean water

## **(xiii) STRUCTURE**

First Rank

*Advisory Board Member*  
*Trustees*

Second Rank

*General Director*

Third Rank

*Deputy Director*  
*Program Manager*

Fourth Rank

*Office Secretary*  
*Accountant/Receptionist*  
*Volunteer Coordinator*  
*Language Class Manager*

Fifth Rank

*Language Teacher*  
*Computer Instructor*  
*Chif*

Sixth Rank

*Office Assistant*  
*Assistant Cook*

Volunteers are involved in almost all Lha's activities. They are managed by the Volunteer Coordinator and work closely with the relevant staff member.

#### **(xix) MORE RESOURCES**

For more information, refer to Lha's website, brochures, and Official Policies & Procedures. Lha is also on Facebook page. Please friend "Lha Social Work" and for teachers, join the group "Lha Volunteer" to stay in touch and share experiences.

### **POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

#### **LHA OFFICE**

**Hours of Operation:** Excluding every second Saturday, Sundays, and declared holidays, the Lha office at opens at 9am and closes at 5pm and is closed for lunch from 12 – 1pm. Volunteers are not allowed on the premises after hours.

**Holidays:** Every second Saturday, Sundays, New Year, (January 1) Republic Day of India on 26 January Losar (Tibetan New Year), Uprising Day (March 10), His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Birthday (July 6), Independence Day of India, (15 August) Democracy Day (September 2), Birthday of Mahatma Gandhi 2 October, Nobel Peace Prize Day (December 10), and the 15th day of the Fourth Tibetan month of Saka Dawa are declared holidays.

**Lha Library:** Teaching materials including books, videos, etc. can be used for Lha classes. Other books from library may be checked out from the Library after registering with and giving a deposit to the Library manager for a week's time; it can be reissued weekly.

**Office Materials & Equipment:** All organizational materials and equipment shall only be used for official Lha programs and services (including stationary, photocopiers, computers, telephone, etc.) All private or personal use is strictly prohibited.

#### **PUBLICATIONS**

Lha Charitable Trust produces a range of publications including Contact magazine, the Lha website, pamphlets, brochures, etc. A style guide must be used in collaboration with official write ups and brandings when referencing Lha in all publications (i.e.: Official Mission Statement, Background, Objectives, Trademark, Logo, etc.) Volunteers must consult the General Director before developing any material on behalf of or using any trademark, logo, or the name of Lha Charitable Trust.

**LOGO:** Centered word ‘Lha,’ surrounded by the combination of five colors, in the order of yellow, red, green, and blue, which is a lucky color according to Buddhism.

**OFFICIAL Name, Slogan, Address, Website, Background, Mission, Vision, Purpose, Objectives and Beneficiaries:** Refer to (Introduction: (i-xii))

## **MEDIA & PUBLIC RELATIONS**

Lha Charitable Trust occasionally uses the media to advocate on behalf of program beneficiaries. All requests from journalists or the media for comment by Lha must be referred to the General Director. Volunteers are **not** to act as a spokesperson, represent Lha Charitable Trust or provide information to the public, journalists, or the media without prior authorization from the General Director.

## **SPONSORSHIP & FUNDRAISING**

Lha welcomes sponsorship and fundraising for its events, or advertising in its publications, from companies and corporations, individuals, and other NGOs. Sponsorship and fundraising for Lha does not reserve any right or power over/of Lha, its operations, programs, or decision making. No additional power or entitlement shall be granted to sponsors or fundraisers.

Lha will not accept sponsorship or advertising from organizations or individuals that are engaged in business which is unlawful, unethical, or damaging to public health and/or wellbeing. Lha will not accept advertising or sponsorship from political parties or for someone’s personal gain. In addition, Lha will not accept sponsorship or advertising, or agree to any conditions of sponsorship, which may compromise its mission and objectives, or compromise the purpose of the particular publication or event.

Lha acknowledges the contribution of its sponsors and fundraisers; this may involve:

- i) Including and/or displaying the sponsor’s logo on publications or at offices
- ii) Allowing the sponsor to set up a display at an event or program
- iii) Offering free participation to a sponsor’s representatives

## **COMPLAINTS**

Lha recognizes that complaints, grievances, and disputes may occur within an organization. It is also recognized that external bodies may need avenues to raise complaints with Lha. Complaints will be handled fairly and efficiently in order to promote high organizational standards and to maintain a positive work environment. All complaints and disputes will be addressed promptly and within the guiding principles of transparency, fairness, respect, and accountability.

All staff members and volunteers of Lha are expected to work cooperatively as a team, to acknowledge any dispute at an early stage, and to resolve any dispute in the most constructive manner possible. Any conflict of interest arising from a dispute will be declared and all steps will

be taken to ensure persons working to resolve a dispute are impartial. Staff members and volunteers are expected to maintain confidentiality in relation to complaints and disputes.

## PRIVACY

From time to time, Lha collects personal information relating to students, volunteers, and members for record keeping and data-basing purposes. Personal Information is defined by the NSW Privacy and Personal Information Protection (PPIP) Act (1998) as: “Any information or opinion about an individual or which is reasonably capable of identifying an individual.”

### Principles

The PPIP Act sets out 12 specific Information Protection Principles to guide the collection and use of personal information. Lha Charitable Trust adopts these principles:

- 1) Lawful:** When an agency collects your personal information, the information must be collected for a lawful purpose. It must also be directly related to the agency's activities and necessary for that purpose.
- 2) Direct:** Your information must be collected directly from you, unless you have given your consent otherwise. Parents and guardians can give consent for minors.
- 3) Open:** You must be informed that the information is being collected, why it is being collected, and who will be storing and using it. The agency should also tell you how you can see and correct this information.
- 4) Relevant:** The agency must ensure that the information is relevant, accurate, up-to-date, and not excessive. The collection should not unreasonably intrude into your personal affairs.
- 5) Secure:** Your information must be stored securely, not kept any longer than necessary, and disposed of appropriately. It should be protected from unauthorized access, use, or disclosure.
- 6) Transparent:** The agency must provide you with enough details about what personal information they are storing, why they are storing it, and what rights you have to access it.
- 7) Accessible:** The agency must allow you to access your personal information without unreasonable delay and expense.
- 8) Correct:** The agency must allow you to update, correct, or amend your personal information where necessary.
- 9) Accurate:** Agencies must make sure that your information is accurate before using it.
- 10) Limited:** Agencies can only use your information for the purpose for which it was collected, for a directly related purpose, or for a purpose to which you have given your consent. It can also be used without your consent in order to deal with a serious and imminent threat to any person's health or safety.
- 11) Restricted:** The agency can only disclose your information with your consent or if you were told at the time they collected it from you that they would do so. The agency can also disclose your information if it is for a related purpose and they don't think that you would object. Your information can also be used without your consent in order to deal with a serious and imminent threat to any person's health or safety.

**12) Safeguarded:** The agency cannot disclose your sensitive personal information without your consent, for example information about your ethnic or racial origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, health or sexual activities, or trade union membership. It can only disclose sensitive information without your consent in order to deal with a serious and imminent threat to any person's health or safety.

## **VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT**

To facilitate effective accountability, all volunteers assisting Lha Charitable Trust on a long-term basis (1 month or more) must agree and sign a written agreement. Volunteers assisting Lha for less than 1 month must abide by the volunteer agreement, but a signature is not required. The following agreement refers to the commitments that Lha makes to the volunteer, expectations that Lha has and specifics of the individual volunteer description.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

Volunteers are expected to conduct their duties in a cooperative and honest manner and abide by the code of conduct outlined by the Official Policies & Procedures. All volunteers are required to adhere to the following standards and behaviors:

### **Job Standards**

- Lha Charitable Trust and all volunteers will respect and adhere to international law, Indian law, laws of the Tibetan Government in Exile, and local customs.
- Volunteers are strictly prohibited from partaking in any fraudulent or corrupt behavior in regards to the organization's finances. If volunteers are found participating in these behaviors, they shall be held responsible and be required to refund all money or assets.
- Volunteers are strictly prohibited from duplicating documents by using fake letterheads, stamps, and so forth, from participating in activities that may harm the stability of the organization, engaging in any kind of illegal situations, or going against the objectives of the organization.
- Volunteers shall perform their duties unaffected by the consumption of alcohol or the use of other drugs.
- Volunteers should aim to minimize adverse environmental effects of their actions.

### **Commitment to the Organization**

- While conducting Lha activities, it is necessary to hold a common ideology; that which will benefit others. Volunteers must maintain good conduct, be mindful of the general welfare of the community, and keep honest enthusiasm.
- Volunteers shall not act against the objectives of Lha Charitable Trust, allow the activities of the organization to be superseded by their own purposes, or act in any way which is contrary to that which is laid out in the Policies & Procedures.
- Volunteers are strictly prohibited from using the organization's name without authorization by the General Director, or inappropriately.

- Volunteers having issues or concerns about their placement, or about the volunteering organization in general, should discuss this in the first instance with the Volunteer Coordinator, or their Lha staff supervisor. Volunteer placements are the responsibility of Lha staff and volunteers should not organize or change their volunteer activities without going through the Volunteer Coordinator or their Lha Staff supervisor.

**Use of Resources**

- Volunteers shall only use the organizations’ materials, facilities, funds, people, and equipment for authorized purposes and take responsible steps to prevent misuse by others.
- Volunteers should properly care for the organization’s property, assets, classroom materials, office documents, etc. and are prohibited from misusing them in any manner.
- The use of organizational materials for private purposes is strictly prohibited.

**Volunteer Guidelines**

- Although volunteers work as members of the Lha team, they do not have the status of employees, and are not entitled to any salary or financial benefit from the organization. In case the need arises for a professionally skilled volunteer, a decision about the appropriate compensation should be held by the General Director and related staff.
- Volunteers are not allowed to amend the objectives or policies and procedures, daily administration, or attend staff meetings without prior authorization by the General Director. However, if volunteers have ideas or methods for the improvement of the organization, they should consult directly with the General Director.
- The organizational structure at Lha is permanent and is appropriate for the local community, and it is important that volunteers work within this framework, particularly recognizing that their involvement is short term.
- If a volunteer requests the organization to make food or housing arrangements for them, they should pay the daily expenditures on time, and without any shortage or surplus.
- Under no circumstances are volunteers allowed to proselytize, convert, attempt to convert, or spread personal faith while working at project sites.
- Lha Charitable Trust reserves the right to dismiss any volunteer if he/she does not abide by the organization’s Policies and Procedures, or exhibits any behavior that the General Director deems inappropriate.

Lha Charitable Trust does not accept any liability for harm caused by third parties during your time volunteering with our organization.

<b>CONFLICT OF INTEREST</b>
-----------------------------

Volunteers may encounter conflicts of interest as other professional or personal roles intersect. Lha Charitable Trust expects that volunteers will be mindful of potential conflicts of interest and declare a conflict of interest before it arises. Appropriate action can then be taken in consultation with the Volunteer Coordinator and/or General Director.

## **VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES**

When working for Lha, volunteers are expected to:

- Participate in a cooperative team effort to achieve the goals of the organization
- Fulfill the individual agreement with the organization in a reliable and dependable manner
- Be willing to accept direction from the supervisor
- Accept the privacy and dignity of staff, beneficiaries and fellow volunteers, and follow the organization guidelines for privacy and confidentiality
- Advise the supervisor as soon as possible with respect to any change in availability
- Maintain a positive, optimistic, and non-judgmental attitude
- Represent the interest of the organization - not yourself
- Give feedback, communicating relevant important information
- Have a good understanding of Lha's programs
- Ask for support when it is needed
- Please DO NOT engage in unofficial conversations and make the office environment noisy during working hours. It is disturbing to classes and harms the peaceful work environment.
- The use of office computers without prior consent from a staff member is STRICTLY PROHIBITED.
- All casual discussion or gossiping MUST take place in the library, on the roof, or outside of the Lha Office.
- All properties of Lha MUST be handled with care including: books, computers, photocopier, stationery, kitchen-wares and other materials. Any damage(s) caused shall be compensated by the responsible person.
- All Lha properties and materials may ONLY be used for Lha purposes and may NOT be removed from the office premises.

Volunteers are encouraged to write a story of their experience on Lha's blog before the end of their stay: <http://blog.lhasocialwork.org/>

## **ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

Lha recognizes its responsibilities toward volunteers, and undertakes to:

- Treat volunteers with respect as co-workers
- Provide volunteers with information about the organization and its policy on volunteers
- Provide volunteers with work that is appropriate to their skills, abilities, availability, and individual interests
- Provide volunteers with the resources, information, and support they need in order to do their work
- Ensure volunteers are aware of the boundaries/limits of the service

## **LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION & REFERENCES**

If volunteers for the Lha Charitable Trust require a recommendation letter from the office, they should serve the organization for at least one month. Volunteers must request recommendations or references at least 1 week prior to their departure from the organization.

## **FEES & PAYMENTS**

If volunteers receive any services from Lha including Reception and Orientation, Home Stay Coordination, Cultural Exchange, Ahimsa House rent, Lha classes, events, etc., **payments must be made at the time of service** unless prior authorization by the General Director is obtained. If payment is not made on time - within three days after being received by Lha - Lha cannot guarantee any services or classes thereafter. Furthermore, a **late fee of Rs.100 per day will be charged**. Once payment is made and recorded in the official receipt book, **refunds are not allowed**.

In case of cancellation of any registered services before utilizing the service, if payments are not made earlier, a **25% (of the actual charge) service charge** will be levied. All the service payments should be made only to the reception office and volunteers are responsible for collecting a receipt upon payment.

## **CULTURAL SENSITIVITY**

Volunteering brings with it amazing opportunities to become intimately involved with the local community. With this come great responsibilities and the need to develop cultural awareness. Here are a few tips for making your volunteer time in McLeod Ganj as positive as possible.

### **Be Responsible:**

Please be clear and up front about the time you have available. Don't make commitments that cannot be met. Unfortunately, all too often organizations are left short-handed because of unmet volunteer commitments.

### **Be Communicative:**

In cross-cultural communications, misunderstandings happen often and easily. Take more care to communicate and understand than you normally would. People may be inclined to say "yes" or agree with you even if they don't understand you completely. This is particularly true in the Tibetan culture, where it is considered polite to immediately try and accommodate people's requests.

### **Respect Religious Customs:**

Sacred objects or books should not be placed on the floor. Similarly, if you are taking notes at a Dharma talk, you should not place them on the floor. In India, feet are considered unclean, so it is rude to point the soles of your feet at people. Also, you shouldn't step over sacred books or people. You should walk clockwise around anything sacred.

### **Dress Appropriately:**

Dressing conservatively and respectfully can go a long way in garnering respect with local people. Tank tops and shorts can be distracting and suggestive in the Tibetan and Indian communities, thus such dress and other inappropriate dress are not encouraged.

**Be Aware of Repercussions:**

While you as a traveler might see a relationship as a very light affair, there may be serious ramifications for members of the local community. Tibetan dating culture is very new and different from our own. In large, people are very private with any display of affection. Besides heavy emotional tolls, this kind of relationship can create lasting negative reputations and seriously disrupt someone's social support system. It also can affect the organization you are working with. STD's are also a serious problem in McLeod Ganj.

**Respect the Environment:**

You should be aware that any non-biodegradable waste you create will most likely be dumped into dry riverbeds and down hillsides. Tourists create most of the rubbish you see, and the young local people often copy our behavior. Please respect the environment by saying "no" to plastics (plastic bags), use of which is illegal in Dharamsala, and refill water bottles when possible. Watch your desires and be conscious of what you consume.

**Walk, Don't Ride:**

McLeod Ganj has a growing traffic problem. The noise pollution is disturbing and the fumes produced are bad for the environment and the health of locals and tourists alike. Rickshaws have 3-stroke engines with no pollution control; the damage they create is even worse than the taxis. Please walk whenever possible.

**Emergency:**

Please try to follow these rules and guidelines as that will ensure your safety and avoid any unnecessary problems to both the volunteers and the organization. In case one fails to go by these given rules and any emergency situation should arise it is solely your responsibility.

**TEACHING GUIDELINES**

Thank you for volunteering with Lha. You are one of our most valuable resources. By providing consistent and quality language instruction, you are helping the refugee community immensely. Below are some guidelines and rules we have developed to make both the learning environment, and your experience, as positive as possible.

If on any given day you are unable to make it to class, call Lha or come by in person as soon as you know you will not be coming. **Phone: 01892-220992 Email: [office@lhasocialwork.org](mailto:office@lhasocialwork.org)**

Lha's classes are voluntary for the students, and flexible. Attendance is optional, and often irregular. Despite changes in attendance, please try to maintain a standard of discipline and structure in each class session.

*Teachers and volunteers are invited to attend a volunteer meeting in the library at Lha on Thursdays at 4-547pm, for discussion and exchange of ideas.*

### **Teaching Classes:**

- Most students take a placement test to determine their class level. Lha issues a card to every student, and he or she must have it in order to get permission to be admitted in their respective class. We try to ensure that all students have gone through this process. If a new student enters your class without a card, please ask him/her to come to the office.
- Lha offers five different languages classes. Our English curriculum consists of five different levels as follows: Elementary, Beginner, Pre-Intermediate, Intermediate, and Advanced. We have various levels for other languages as well. We offer Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced levels of Chinese, and both Spanish and French have Beginner and Intermediate Levels. Based on how many students want to study Tibetan, we decide whether there will be a Tibetan class or not. We ask English teachers to administer a test on every third month (**March, June, September, and December**), and give Lha the names of students who have passed the test, so that some may be moved on to a more advanced class. Two of these successful students from each of the four higher English classes will receive computer training scholarship for one month. We are asking other language teachers to give a monthly test and give Lha the names of students who have passed the test. Then we can promote them onto more advanced class. Please note that many Tibetans are test-shy and will not come to class on test day if told in advance. It might therefore be best to give your tests unannounced.
- Volunteers are **NOT** allowed to use the computer except for modeling test papers and printing them (a teacher can do printings three times a month for test or teaching purposes at no more than two pages each time). We are unable to offer these services at other times as we have computer class everyday because we have a limited number of computers and a much larger number of volunteers.
- A teacher can do **ONE** classroom set of photocopies a week for class purposes for free. Beyond that, she/he must pay 1 Rupee per page for class-related material. We ask volunteer teachers to please try to make fewer photocopies and printings so as to be more environmentally friendly.
- It would be appreciated if there were more use of marker pens and white boards for teaching. Teachers can keep marker pens with themselves after finishing the lesson so that they are not misused by the students. Lha staff will provide new marker pens when old ones become useless.

### **Classroom Rules:**

- Cell phone use, chewing-gum, and snack foods are not allowed in class. Ask any student who breaks these rules to leave the classroom.
- Please assign homework every week. This is a critical aspect of learning a foreign language. You can either collect the homework to correct outside of class, or review it in class.

- Please make sure that class begins on time, and tell the students that they must come on time as well. If anyone happens to come after the first 10 minutes of class, please don't allow the student in.
- We can't allow any teacher or volunteer to use the Library and other non-classroom areas of the Lha building for teaching class, or tutoring.
- All teachers and tutors are strongly advised **not** to share personal contact details (mobile phone, facebook, etc) with students who are not of the same gender.

### **Class Content:**

- We have designed a syllabus as a guideline for each English class level. If you are an experienced teacher and feel that you have materials/ideas that are better than those suggested on the syllabus, please feel free to teach those. We value diversity of teaching methods and philosophy, creativity, and inspiration.
- For all class levels except for Elementary, we have text books to be referred to. We would really appreciate your teaching something general and useful for students' day to day life at least one day per week.
- **Create a Lesson:** It's important to include elements of conversation, grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary regularly in your lessons. Some other teaching suggestions:
  1. Begin class with informal questions: How are you? How was your weekend/day yesterday? What did you do? (This challenges students to practice working in different tenses, as well as learning commonly used conversational phrases.)
  2. Try to alternate between speaking/practice and grammar explanations. This keeps the classroom dynamic and engaging, and prevents the students from losing attention and interest.
  3. Try to make sure that every student speaks at least once each class, because some students will always want to speak, and others will never participate.
  4. Students can be invited to give presentations in front of the class. This strengthens their confidence and public speaking skills, and makes the class interesting.
  5. There are grammar books and teaching resources for inspiration in the library, including books of games and activities. (If you borrow these books for class, please bring them back to the library afterwards. If you want to take them home, please check them out in the reception office.)
- **Reading Practice:** Oral reading practice is very important. In larger classes, it is impossible for each student to read out loud in front of the class, but working in pairs or small groups is a good way for each student to be able to practice reading in class. Try to pair strong readers with weaker readers. This is important to strive for whenever you are pairing students to work together.
- Often, there is confusion about the meaning of an English word. Because you are a native speaker you will likely know the meaning, but you may have trouble explaining it even with the help of a dictionary. Past teachers have found it helpful to use a Tibetan-English dictionary in these cases, to clarify the meaning. You can have a student write

the Tibetan word on the board. Lha has dictionaries in the library if you would like to use them.

- **Speak Slowly:** Hearing classes in a foreign language is unfamiliar to the Tibetan students. Speaking slowly while teaching and conversing with your student will not only encourage learning, but also will maintain their attention during class.
- **Special Guests:** If you have friends from different countries or with special areas of expertise, please feel free to invite them to give presentations to your class. This is a great way for students to learn about various subjects and different countries. Make sure to leave time for questions, and to encourage participation from the students.
- Lha occasionally receives volunteer lecturers on special topics such as health, human rights, environment, etc. Sometimes these speakers will be invited to give presentations during regular class times, with only a day or two advance notice, in which case the class will be cancelled. Also, classes may be cancelled to enable staff and students to go to prayers at the Temple. Please be advised that such sudden scheduling changes are possible.
- Lha organizes occasional outside social activities/events, such as environmental cleanups and other initiatives. We may ask for your help in organizing these events.

### Who Are Your Students?

- Classes are free for Tibetans and Indians. However, we charge Rs 300 per year as to pay for their cards and other necessary class related photocopies in a year. For foreign students, fees are 50 Rupees/class. There is a diversity of educational, social, and cultural backgrounds in the classrooms, including monks, nuns, and laypeople from many different Asian countries.
- The students are overwhelmingly Tibetans who have completed or cannot continue their education under the auspices of the Tibetan government in exile, the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA). Some have had Chinese or Indian schooling; others come from nomadic or pastoral families in Tibet, and have never been to school in their lives.
- Those students who have never been to school before may feel insecure in a classroom setting, and it is important for teachers to encourage their participation and involvement.

#### Some ways of dealing with shy students:

- Create a classroom culture of mutual support and friendship.
- Encourage those who sit in the back of the room to move up front.
- Give extra responsibility to the best students, to encourage student leadership, and to develop teaching skills.
- **Buddhism:** Among the students there are many monks and nuns who wish to learn English in order to translate Buddhist teachings. Teaching Buddhist vocabulary helps them toward their goals, and enables them to transmit this precious cultural material to the English-speaking world.
  - *Sangha Talk* conversation textbooks are available in the library, in Beginner/Intermediate and Advanced levels.
  - There are DVDs about Buddhism and Tibetan culture available in the office, and a TV/DVD player is available in the big classroom. Showing

films once a week is a good way to generate culturally relevant content and vocabulary.

- If you are interested in learning more about Tibetan culture and Buddhism, there are many books available in the library on these subjects. And don't hesitate to ask the staff!

### **When You Finish Teaching:**

- Please give a week's notice before you have to leave, to give Lha enough time to arrange a replacement. Also, if you know someone in town who would be interested in taking over your class, it would be helpful to connect them with Lha.
- Before you leave, please set aside some time to hand over your class to the new teacher, including:
  - Bringing the new teacher to one or more of your final classes
  - Describing the guidelines for the class level they will be taking over
  - Describing your preferred teaching methods and rules, and how they have worked for your class. (With teachers constantly changing, the students benefit tremendously from a degree of consistency, and therefore in the transition between teachers, it is important to maintain as many of the same rules and practices as possible.)
- **Lha arranges tutoring** for outdoor teaching by introducing good students to the volunteers for further improvement and the benefit of the student. This, however, will be done so that both the tutor and the student shall be of same gender. If any volunteer is tutoring any unknown student, an outsider not introduced by Lha, in case there arise any problems or issue, Lha shall not take any responsibility of such matter(s).

We are always looking for ways to improve our classes, so please write suggestions in the suggestion book in the library. Feel free to give us any feedback along the way. Adding descriptions of particularly successful teaching strategies to the curriculum file for your level would be especially helpful. Lha staff will make that file available upon request.

## **AHIMSA HOUSE**

Ahimsa House belongs to Lha and its main purpose is for charity and community social work. Ahimsa House is not a hotel and we are able to provide accommodation only for Lha's volunteers and related people. Please be aware and respect the following rules if you stay in Ahimsa house.

### **Lha Ahimsa House Rules**

- Smoking, alcohol or drugs are strictly prohibited.
- The gate will close at **10PM**; all residents must be in before that time. These rules are not only for the safety of those who staying at Ahimsa House but also safety of the organization. Should there be an accident or any issue with authorities, the entire social service origination could be jeopardized.
- Do not invite any strangers into your room or common room. The common room is just for volunteers who are staying in the building. We don't allow inviting your guest (s)

from outside to stay and cook at common room and Kitchen. Also please keep your room, common room, and kitchen and building area clean.

- Be gentle with plates and cups and switch off lights when you leave the room.
- Take utmost care while using gas stove and candles to avoid fire and damages.
- Be careful with water use, as water shortage is a common problem that we face in our community
- Wash your own dishes (plates ,utensils, cups) (Dish wash liquid and Sponge in the Kitchen)
- Don't put any paper in toilet and keep toilet clean. When your trash can is full, dump it in the big trash can under the stairwell near the main gate. Please don't mix wet and dry trash (compost and non-compost)
- Common kitchen and common room area is available 24 hours. You can fill up 100% filtered water from the kitchen, and also unlimited Wi-fi is available. Lock the door and close the window when you leave the room, because monkeys might come in the room! Be careful not to lock anyone inside!
- Do not misuse and take anything outside that belongs to Lha without asking the manager (pillows, pillow covers, cushions, sheets, blankets and kitchen ware). It would be very much appreciated, if you purchase any kind of kitchenware and furniture to donate to Lha.
- If any property of Ahimsa House is broken, lost and damaged you will be charged accordingly.
- Be responsible with your personal items and keep track of all valuables, passports, wallets, etc.
- Massage treatment, Tibetan Language, Tibetan cooking classes, and Tibetan art classes are available at Lha; if you are interested please ask for an appointment at Lha reception.
- If you have spare time, please come and participate in Conversation Class at Lha from 4-5 pm, Monday to Friday
- For any emergency or if you plan to go trekking or short travel to other places you must inform the Manager at the contact provided below.
- If your schedule prevents you from being in by 10PM, we would request that you reside elsewhere.
- If you have any questions or problems with your rooms, you can look for me in the Manager's room on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, or call me at Lha (+91(0)1892-220992) or on my mobile (9816689222) website: [www.lhasocialwork.org](http://www.lhasocialwork.org)
- If you will not and can't respect these rules, it would be best to move to another place or else the manager has the right to dismiss you from the room. Thank you very much for your cooperation.
- Please note that accommodation at Ahimsa House is not available all the year round.

## **HOME STAY**

Lha arranges a week to one month home stay with Tibetan refugee families which include accommodation, breakfast and dinner.

The home stay program is provided by Lha to directly benefit the daily life of Tibetan refugee families and the profits from the home-stay are received by the host families. This monetary

assistance is a part of the wider educational, cultural, and social services we offer for Tibetan refugees at Lha.

The main objective of the home stay program is to inform visitors from around the world about daily life of Tibetan refugees – providing a valuable opportunity for cultural and knowledge exchange.

### **HOME STAY RULES**

1. Participants must adhere to the rules of the host family.
2. Follow the host family's schedule for meals and be back to the host family no later than 10PM each night.
3. In the case of emergencies, appointments, or other plans such as trekking and travelling, participants must seek permission or inform their host family.
4. If participants do not follow the home stay rules or have problems with their host family, Lha reserves the right to dismiss that individual without refunding the home stay fee.

## **LHA'S MUTUAL LEARNING PROGRAM**

### **PROGRAM PURPOSE**

Thank you for your participation in Lha Charitable Trust's Mutual Learning Program! Your service to the Tibetan community is greatly appreciated and invaluable. Without generous volunteers like you, we would not be able to offer language education and job skills programs to Tibetan refugees in Dharamsala

Lha offers multiple English and other language classes daily focusing on grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. All classes are taught by international volunteers. Unfortunately, students rarely have the opportunity to practice and improve their conversational fluency. Through the Mutual Learning Program, Lha seeks to pair students with volunteers, one-on-one for two to three hours per morning to work on English conversational ability and pronunciation.

The Mutual Learning Program provides Tibetan students with the opportunity to learn English conversational skills while giving international volunteers a meaningful experience connecting with local refugees. By taking part in Lha's Learning Program, you learn more about the Dharamsala and the Tibetan way of life in a mutually beneficial relationship that fosters a deeper cultural understanding.

### **GUIDELINES**

- Spend 2-3 hours per morning together with your mutual learning partner, depending on your arrangement.
- Students are taking their time from other classes or work, so make every effort to make the use of meetings.

- If you are spending 3 hours together, 2 should be spent conducting more formal language learning (using a book of the student's choosing or working on assignments for their class). Locate a quiet place to sit together for this purpose.
- Students need assistance primarily with pronunciation, vocabulary usage, and conversational confidence. However, every student is at a different level and ability with the English language. Some students are able to read and write well but not able to say much with confidence; others may have a large spoken vocabulary but are not able to spell well. It is up to you to determine what you think will be most beneficial for the student.

#### **DO:**

- Use your first sessions to assess what your partner needs to improve. This may not be what they initially tell you they want to work on.
- Speak slowly, enunciate, and have your partner write and repeat back new words.
- If you are having trouble finding a place to begin, tell your partner about yourself and ask about them.

#### **DON'T:**

- Use this as an opportunity to go shopping or run errands.
- Use the Tibetan student as a personal tour guide. He/she will show you around some of the McLeod Ganj area as you get to know them and the place, but the majority of your time together should be used studying or practicing English language
- Study in the Lha Library, although you may borrow books from the Lha Library for the purpose of language learning.
- If you are staying at Ahimsa House, do not use your room as a place to study together. Please refer to the Volunteer Handbook for Ahimsa House rules.
- Combine partners into groups. Experience has shown that when partners pair up in groups, the Tibetan speakers speak to each other in Tibetan and the English speakers speak together in English. Your partner should speak only in English during your sessions.

#### **SUGGESTIONS**

Tibetan culture places great emphasis on being gracious hosts, so your partner will want to do whatever they can to please you and keep you happy. They consider you a guest in Dharamsala and therefore, their guest. They will often suggest activities which may not be the best use of your time together. Your primary purposes together are to improve your partners' English and learn about Tibetan culture. Even though your partner may suggest doing something else that sounds like more fun than studying, what they really want to do is to learn English from you. The greatest service you can provide is studying.

Gaining conversational ability requires confidence. You and your partner might be shy at first, which is completely normal. The process of improving their English and improving your ear for understanding the way they speak English takes time and patience. It can be awkward, frustrating, or even upsetting. Let the process unfold naturally as time progresses. If you are sick, upset, or just really don't feel like working with your partner, you can call the coordinator or your partner and take a day off. Be aware of your own internal experience and treat yourself with compassion.

When working with your partner, if they make a mistake or express something that is not perfect English, don't say, "That is wrong" or "You are wrong." Using words like "mistake", "wrong", "incorrect", and so forth can hurt your partner's fragile confidence using English. Remember to congratulate your partner on their accomplishments; be enthusiastic! If there is a mistake in their pronunciation, expression or syntax, say something like, "That was a good try, but a better way of saying that sentence is..." This way you can correct their mistake and maintain their level of confidence.

If you are volunteering as part of a group, your leaders should schedule regular time for you to process your experience working with your mutual learning partner. You may have a number of questions that come up during your time volunteering. Note these questions and be sure to bring up your issues when meeting with your leaders, other volunteers, or the Mutual Learning Program coordinator. These questions and comments are the best way we can evaluate our program and improve it for you and future volunteers. Thank you again for your invaluable contributions and time.

**Enjoy Yourself:**

Don't forget to have fun!! Volunteering and exchange are a great way to learn more about the community and culture, and there are many fascinating people who will greet your efforts with great enthusiasm and gratitude. Thank you for your interest and your effort.