

Khasi Hills Sponsor a Student Committee Annual Report 2021-22

Submitted by Cathy Doherty and Allen Duncan

The Khasi Hills SAS Committee provides financial support for the Unitarian lower primary school in the village of Mawkisiem in the Khasi Hills (state of Meghalaya) of northeast India. This support helps to improve access to education in the region and makes possible personal connections between the students there and their sponsors in Ann Arbor by providing a conduit for written communication. Each sponsor provides support in the form of a \$50 contribution and is assigned to a particular student.

The committee also organizes occasional pilgrimages to the Khasi Hills. Such trips were made in 2006, 2011 and 2016. The trip we hoped to make in 2021 was postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. We are planning to visit again when health and travel concerns are less of an issue – possibly as early as fall of 2022.

The committee directs its work to support the following Unitarian Universalist principles:

1. The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
2. Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
3. The goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all;
4. Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are all a part.

Program Highlights - May 1, 2021 through April 30, 2022

The committee continued its work in pairing sponsors and students (104 this year) - receiving letters from the students, distributing them to the assigned sponsor, and collecting return letters from the sponsors to send to India. In May we grieved with the Mawkisiem community at the death of their head teacher, Kong Melsidora Swer. In February we held a virtual kick-off event via ZOOM for the upcoming school year (which in India begins in February) that included video greetings and news from those in Meghalaya who are associated with the school, including the teachers, students, and our long-time contact, Khlur Mukhim.

Active committee members include Cathie Breidenbach, Hal Breidenbach, Cathy Doherty, Allen Duncan, Betty Fox, Gwen Guthrie, Peter Hochgraf, Rick Johnson, Hashen Sohtun, and Robert Treadway of the Ann Arbor congregation, along with Mark and Nancy Kinney of the Petoskey Unitarian Universalist Congregation.

The committee plans to continue support of the Unitarian school at Mawkisiem through the sponsorship program during the 2022 school year.

Thank you to all the many members of the congregation who support this program and have supported it for some 20 years now!