



BCH '23



Yearly News Letter

www.bcharrisburg.org



A message from BCH Executive Director and Board Chair.

BCH's mission is to support Nepali-speaking Bhutanese Americans in central Pennsylvania with health, education, and cultural resources.

As we approach the end of 2023, we are pleased to reflect on the remarkable achievements and collaborations that have defined this year for our community. It brings us great joy to present the first annual newsletter of BCH, summarizing the significant activities that have shaped our journey.

Throughout 2023, BCH has had the privilege of working alongside esteemed partners and stakeholders, including Penn State College of Medicine, Lehigh University, Dauphin County and township Law Enforcement,

legislators, Bhutanese sports organizations, faith base organizations, County and township elected officials, and community leaders from diverse backgrounds. These collaborations have not only enriched our community goals but have also played a pivotal role in identifying and addressing the needs of our members.

We successfully organized a range of community events, from sports tournaments to cultural celebrations and health fairs, creating spaces for connection, joy, and learning. These initiatives have allowed us to foster a sense of unity and understanding within our community. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the numerous individuals and leaders who generously volunteered their time and expertise to support our endeavors. Your contributions have been instrumental in the growth and prosperity of BCH.

Looking ahead to 2024, we are excited about the prospect of continuing these meaningful partnerships and exploring new avenues for community development. The year 2023 has laid a strong foundation, and together, we can build on these achievements to create a brighter future for our community.

Thank you to all our Board, Staff, partners, supporters, funders, community leaders, and volunteers for making 2023 a year of growth and collaboration. As we eagerly anticipate the opportunities that 2024 will bring, let us remain united in our commitment to the well-being and success of the Bhutanese community in Harrisburg.

Wishing you all a joyful holiday season and a prosperous New Year!

PROGRAMS



Research study on Substance Abuse in young adults.

The Bhutanese community in Harrisburg (BCH) partnered with Lehigh University to conduct research on Substance Abuse among Bhutanese youths and adults in the PA capitol region. Through this grant collaboration, we were able to hire three young members of the community and trained them in research data collection, with training and facilitation from the Research's Principle Investigator from Lehigh University. The team conducted 34 Key Informant Interviews with participants aged 14 and up from the Bhutanese community. The next phase in the study will resume in Jan 2024 where the research team will conduct focus group discussions with community members including youth themselves, leaders and other stakeholders We anticipate being able to share relevant findings by late spring-early summer of 2024. BCH is thankful to all the community members who participated in the research project for sharing their thoughts, experiences, and suggestions. We are very grateful for the training, support and cooperation of the Lehigh University team.



Other outreach efforts

A) We held a meeting with the Office of U.S. Senator Bob Casey in Aug to share the situation of the Bhutanese community in Pennsylvania and to appraise his office of the situation of the separated family members in Bhutan and the residual refugee population in Nepal.

B) We have been continually conducting outreach with schools and school districts in the area to discuss and address issues facing Bhutanese students in the area.

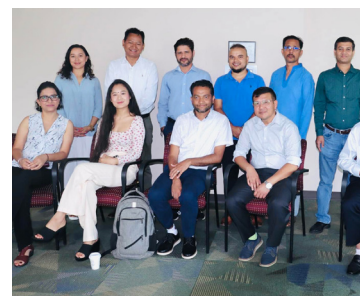
C) We have partnered informally with League of Women Voters PA to conduct voter registration drives and training volunteers who can run these drives.



Collaboration with Dauphin County

In 2023, we received the Community Matters grant from Dauphin County. This grant enabled us to work with Law Enforcement and Probation officers in identifying needs and challenges of the community as well as these agencies. We conducted insightful discussions with teams from Police Departments, Community Supervision, and community leaders. The intent of these discussions were to understand the needs and challenges these agencies face as it relates to law enforcement and community supervision respectively, and to discuss potential solutions. These discussions, conducted during August 2023, have highlighted the need of awareness and education in our community as it relates to day-to-day applicable civic awareness such as Substance use, Driving under influence, following residential codes and so on. As we continue our discussions with these communities, we plan to explore opportunities to educate our community in these matters in 2024.

As part of this work, we also had the opportunity to gather leaders and representatives from different faith based communities and community leaders in general to discuss the same matter. This discussion has helped us shape the conversations we have about our community and culture with outside communities and service providers.





Community events and updates



In August 2023 we organized inter-state volleyball tournament in partnership with Relevant Home Care. During this event, we partnered with Penn State College of Medicine to conduct a health fair at the venue.



In October 2023 we hosted a cricket tournament in partnership with Hunter Boyz to commemorate the Dashain and Diwali festivals.



Voters Registration Drive



Location: BNN Plaza
Date: Sat 10/20/2023
Time: 12 pm - 5 pm

In October, we organized and hosted a voter registration drive in partnership with League of Women Voters of PA Capital Region.



We had significant contribution in lobbying the Office of the Governor of Pennsylvania in declaring October as the Hindu Heritage month in the Commonwealth. We worked with OHRC to have governor's representative read the declaration in one of the temples in our community.



DEVELOPMENT, ORGANIZATIONAL UPDATE, LOOKING FORWARD & THANK YOU!

DEVELOPMENT

1. BCH secured two grants from new funders in 2023 to fund its activities.
2. Facilitated scholarship assistance from one Bhutanese community member for a needy student.
3. Secured funds through direct fundraising from community members and businesses to fund the community events and activities listed above.

LOOKING FORWARD

1. BCH is in close collaboration with the Lower Paxton Township and Dauphin County Commissioners to build the first regional cricket pitch in Harrisburg.
2. The findings of the substance abuse research project will be published and shared with the community and other relevant stakeholders in the second quarter of 2024.
3. Launch conversations with Social Security Administration to explore opportunities to educate the our community on many aspects of social service department's work that our community struggles with.
4. Establish relationships with refugee resettlement agencies to explore areas of cooperation.
5. Continue working with Penn State Medical College, and other health institutions to organize health-related activities and events for the Bhutanese community.
6. Strengthen BCH's fundraising capacity.
7. Strengthen BCH's board of directors and provide trainings to the board members to effectively lead the organization.

ORG UPDATE

1. For the first time, BCH filled the position of executive director, and associate Director, which has helped BCH become a more professional organization.
2. In the year 2023, BCH hired 5 staff, 2 Interns, and 14 volunteers.

THANK YOU!

1. Donors
2. Dauphin County
3. Lehigh University
4. Penn College of Medicine
5. And the Bhutanese community for their trust and support to BCH and its leadership.



To Donors:

On behalf of the Bhutanese Community in Harrisburg (BCH), we extend our deepest gratitude for your generous sponsorship and support for 2023.

Your contribution has made a significant impact on our ability to continue serving and enhancing the lives of the Bhutanese community in Harrisburg. Your commitment to our cause, as exemplified by Relevant Home Care's \$20,000 donation, Barsha Jewelers' \$10,000 contribution, Movement Mortgage's \$10,000 support, Golden Home Care's \$3,000 donation, and Our Home Care \$ 11, 000 is truly commendable.

It is through partnerships with dedicated sponsors like you that we can build a stronger and more vibrant community for the future. Your belief in our mission empowers us to pursue our goals with renewed vigor.