





Dear friends,

As we move forward in 2021, I believe we should be thankful for what we have and focus on our accomplishments and successfully navigating the pandemic. We have demonstrated an unwavering commitment during a time of challenges. Although our plans were continuously impacted by the pandemic in 2020 and 2021, it also created opportunities to envision new plans and strive for ways to support one another and our communities during this difficult time.

In 2020, Headwaters continued to provide many services and supports. Our team traveled to Puerto Rico to continue long term recovery work there necessitated by Hurricane Maria. While our volunteers were there, they experienced an earthquake and a series of aftershocks. That experience resulted in the first book of the year, *When Puerto Rico Shakes*, funded by a grant from Isagenix. A team went to Jordan to continue our work with refugees. In March a team traveled to Nepal to continue our work in trafficking. Volunteers also responded to community needs following the protests in Minneapolis and St. Paul. In the early fall a team responded to hurricanes in Lake Charles, Louisiana working with clean up and rebuilding from hurricanes there.

Although hampered by external events, Headwaters' relief efforts were not to be stopped. Headwaters also had an immediate response to the Covid-19 pandemic. In April, several initiatives were launched: a Phone Pal Program, a Home School Assistance Program, and a Mask Sewing Program. In addition to these programs, a coloring book, *When We All Stayed Home*, was created. This book helped to explain the Coronavirus and assisted children and families in processing their feelings and coping with the uncertainties of this time. A second version of the coloring book was translated into Spanish and was printed and distributed nationally and internationally. A third and revised edition, *When We All Wore Masks*, was updated with current information and guidelines, and was printed and distributed.

Financial resources for non-government organizations are dependent on others. Headwaters achieved notable success that resulted in growth from grant applications for children books, this funded new and reprinted versions. We experienced impressive results from fundraising events held by board members. We received a significant donation from a past volunteer supporting our work through an estate based nonprofit donation. In addition, ISA Foundation has been tremendous support with grants and special program funding that has been a true blessing for Headwaters to continue our missions. One of the things that sets Headwaters apart is the strong flow of donated services/goods which has become an incredible source of support. Although it is difficult to adequately quantify in dollars and cents, the contributions are invaluable. The Headwaters team greatly appreciates and owes its accomplishments to its volunteers and contributors. We look forward with renewed energy and excitement to the upcoming year and hope you will participate in whatever way you can.



Regards,  
**Daniel G. Leitner**  
Board President



# Board of Directors



Board Advisory  
 Dr. Rebecca Thomley  
 Toni Thulen, Treasurer  
 Joel LeVahn  
 Cheryl Vennerstrom

Staff  
 Dr. Roshan Khatri, Executive Director  
 Ashley Emry, Program Director



# Welcome to the Year of 2021

There is no simple way to sum up last year. In the early months, we had plans laid out, trips scheduled, and were ready to respond to potential disasters. However, no one in their wildest dreams imagined a mysterious pneumonia-like illness that started emerging in early January and by the end of the month, would be a global health emergency. The world quickly started changing as we learned more about the virus, and restrictions were implemented that limited travel and social interaction. The Coronavirus was here and here to stay for awhile!



Amid the chaos there was courage, grace, and hope. Headwaters Relief Organization continued our mission to serve others. We launched very successful Covid-19 pandemic relief efforts including a Face Mask Sewing Initiative, Phone Pal Program, Home-Schooling Assistance Program, and our first coloring book, When We All Stayed Home. Through our coloring book, we were able to reach all 50 states and five countries internationally. We reprinted the book in Spanish and printed an updated edition of the book, When We All Wore Masks. In addition, our Phone Pal Program received funding from the Minnesota Department of Human Services and was continued for a few more months in 2021.

Locally, our home state was also under the eyes of the world after the death of George Floyd and the protests that followed. We continued our support to help people and communities affected by the civil unrest.

The 2020's hurricane season was one of the worst in history. Despite the pandemic, our team of volunteers responded to Hurricane Laura in Lake Charles, Louisiana. We also started tele-counseling support on St. John's US Virgin Islands and received grants and sponsorship for our children's books. We did multiple presentations of our work, at various forums nationally and internationally, and received several awards. We have endured the worst, now we are hopeful for the future.

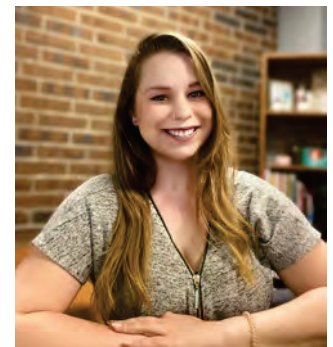
Thank you to all our volunteers, friends, donors, board members, and the Headwaters team; you all make it possible to continue our work in supporting others!

**Dr. Roshan Khatri, Executive Director**

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## A Volunteer's Story

I started volunteering with Headwaters Relief Organization in 2012 to offer support in volunteer management and administrative work. Since starting with Headwaters, I have been on many trips domestically and internationally that continue to spark a passion in me for the work we do. In 2020, I was fortunate to step into a new role with Headwaters as the Program Director. In this position, I am responsible for directing activities for our Haiti Sponsorship Programs, Relief Trips, Volunteer support, and assisting in implementing new programs.



The coronavirus pandemic brought many challenges for us; however, we used these difficulties to explore ways to engage our volunteers and donors through virtual opportunities. The coronavirus pandemic also allowed Headwaters to spread useful public health information through storytelling and coloring to children in all 50 states and five countries. We were able to translate the coloring book into Spanish to reach more children. As new precautions were added and valuable feedback was given to us, we revised the coloring book to ensure we had the most up-to-date information available. Headwaters was also able to launch our Phone Pal program in April 2020 to ease loneliness for isolated and elderly individuals. This program was provided a grant in December to support individuals through the holiday season spent away from family and friends. This year brought many challenges, but I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to assist in developing volunteer opportunities.

**Ashley Emry, Program Director**





Bringing HOPE, Building RESILIENCY



# 2020 Timeline

## January

- **Drake Hotel Volunteer Event** Headwaters responded to the need for support for those 250 people impacted by the Drake Hotel fire on Christmas day 2019. A Multi- Agency Resource Center was set up by the Red Cross for the families to receive support services and collect supplies. Headwaters was asked to manage the children's area and the children's activities while parents sought resources to help them move forward.
- **Mounds View Rotary Presentation** Headwaters provided a presentation at the Rotary to discuss our recent work with human trafficking.
- **Puerto Rico Trip** Headwaters worked with the Puerto Rico VOAD, community organizations, families and children with our children's book, *The Savage Wind*, related to the hurricanes in 2017. While we were there, our distribution of the books was cut short by earthquakes.



## February

- **Headwaters Jordan Trip** Our volunteers traveled to Jordan to work with children who are refugees.
- **MN Governors Conference** Headwaters participated in the annual Governor's Conference with other disaster relief organizations.
- **Second Annual Mardi Gras Gala** Our Gala was held on February 15th, 2020, at Watson Block in downtown Minneapolis. This Gala included a fabulous creole dinner, unique silent auction items, a live auction, street performers, fortune-telling, and live music. One of the musicians who performed for our gala was a friend and piano player from New Orleans. The Mardi Gras theme reflects our history and early work providing disaster relief as a non-profit collaboration of volunteers after Hurricane Katrina in 2005.
- **Sleigh Ride Event** Royal Gold Club in Lake Elmo and our board member, Joel LeVahn hosted a fundraising sleigh ride and brunch on Saturday, February 29th, 2020. Although the lack of snow turned the sleigh ride into a horse-drawn wagon ride, it was a beautiful day with a lovely brunch, sledding, and ice fishing.

## March

- **Making Her Story Event** Fundraising event sponsored by Dr. DelRae Messer
- **Annual Athena40 Global Conversations** Rebecca presented at this podcast.
- **Nepal Trip** Volunteers traveled to Nepal to continue work with children on trafficking education. Not all volunteers who planned to make this trip were able to travel to Nepal because of pandemic shutdowns and others had to travel home prematurely.
- **MnVOAD Virtual Annual Conference** with our disaster relief voluntary organizations active in disaster. We cooperate, communicate, coordinate and collaborate.



## April

- **Release of When We All Stayed Home** Headwaters volunteers created a coloring book that provides public health education about the coronavirus. There were 5,000 books in the first printing of the coloring book, *When We All Stayed Home*. These books reached all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands as well as 5 other countries internationally. In a feedback survey, more than 87% of families said they found the book helpful to discuss the complex issues of Covid-19. A second version of the coloring book was translated into Spanish, printed and distributed locally, nationally and internationally. *When We All Wore Masks*, a third and revised edition, was updated with current information and guidelines, was printed, and also distributed.
- **Press Release of When We All Stayed Home**

## May

- **Publicity Campaign** On behalf of Headwaters' contribution to public health in our community, nationally and internationally, Dr. Roshan Khatri was interviewed by local television Kare 11, Channel 12 and QCTV. He was also interviewed by the University of Washington magazine.
- **Making Herstory Online Summit**
- **Athena40 Podcast** Rebecca and Roshan presented for the podcast.



## June

- **Concept of Asha Doll** "Dolls That Look Like Me" designed to empower girls in Nepal and India
- **Mental Health Volunteers** on standby in Minneapolis/St. Paul due to community unrest after George Floyd was killed.
- **Headwaters Community Assistance** Volunteers assisted people as they came to a St Paul church for donated food.
- **Southwest Journal** Roshan interview to discuss the COVID-19 coloring book.
- **National VOAD Virtual Conference** and Members meeting

## July

- **Video Production** Roshan and DelRae filming discussion about COVID-19 Coloring books
- **Powderhorn Park** Volunteers assisted with encampments for the homeless in the park

## August

- **11th International Association of Emergency Managers Public Awareness Award (IAEM)** Headwaters was honored to receive the Public Awareness Award which recognizes outstanding programs or public education related to emergency management, homeland security, public health preparedness, and/or disaster preparedness. In November 2019, Headwaters staff and volunteers went on a relief trip to Nepal, to introduce a new book for children, Together Again, written in Nepalese and English, to heighten awareness of human trafficking and the harmful social and cultural practices that can support it. Trafficking is particularly prevalent after a disaster when people are most vulnerable. Headwaters received the award for this initiative.

## September

- **International Business Awards Bronze Stevie Award** Communications or PR Campaign of the Year - COVID-19-related Information
- **International Business Awards Bronze Stevie Award** Most Valuable Non-Profit Response for COVID-19 response
- **Headwaters Lake Charles, LA Trip** Volunteers went to Lake Charles, Louisiana to assist with the disaster after Hurricane Laura. While in Lake Charles, our team was able to clean up exterior debris for homeowners and a local church.

- **Minnesota Vikings Frontline Hero Dr. Roshan Khatri** Roshan represented Headwaters and our work during the pandemic and was recognized during a Vikings game.
- **Towards Unity for Health (TUFH)** presentation Dr. Roshan Khatri and Dr. Rebecca Thomley presented on innovative ways to continue work during the pandemic.
- **Points of Light Honor Roll** George H.W. Bush Points of Light Awards Celebration, created an Inspiration Honor Roll to celebrate both acts of kindness and service that demonstrate the light that individuals bring to their communities around the world.

## October

- **American Public Health Association (APHA) Presentation** Dr. Khatri presented on Community Resilience and Storytelling in building post disaster resilience.

## November

- **IAEM Public Awareness Award Ceremony** An award for work in Nepal with trafficking
- **Give to the Max Day** A statewide day for on-line fundraising.

## December

- **Giving Tuesday** Minnesota's on-line fundraiser

- **State of MN PhonePal Grant** Our Phone Pal Program connects volunteers to people isolated at home because



of COVID-19 or in community assisted living or nursing home settings through weekly support calls. We used our website, social media, letters, and phone calls to recruit elderly individuals and phone pals to participate in our program. In December, the Department of Human Services awarded Headwaters a grant to pay staff to be phone pals with the goal of increasing participation in the program through the holidays.

- **Mental Health Awareness Summit** Dr. Rebecca spoke on a panel at the Mental Health Awareness Summit



# Covid-19 Pandemic



*Remembering those we have lost  
In their absence our hearts grieve  
Absent from every breath, lost before their time  
It wasn't supposed to end like this  
It wasn't supposed to end so quietly and so unexpectantly  
Lost before their time  
It was not enough  
Remembering them although gone away  
Remembering them when they are no longer a part of our day to day  
Remember*



# The Covid-19 Pandemic and Headwaters' Relief Efforts

Together we faced and are still going through one of the most challenging times of our lives. No individual or country can ignore the fact that their neighbor's problem is also their problem. Covid-19 is a fresh reminder that global health issues do not adhere to the borders between countries, economic status, race, or gender. We all knew an outbreak of this magnitude could happen at any time. We should all agree that none of us were prepared.

Resiliency is characteristic of humans, often displayed during disasters. We endured months of lockdown and stay-at-home orders.

The truth is we survived; we worked to flatten the curve; we trusted our health officials, and we are now able to get vaccinated. We will ultimately defeat the illness. It might still take years before the world comes back to what we regard as normal or never, but the lessons from the pandemic will be remembered.

The planet earth is our only home. The global citizens of the world must unite towards a common goal.

We want to thank you, our donors, volunteers, friends, and family who helped us launch our four volunteer opportunities during the pandemic: the PhonePal Program, Sewing Masks, the Homeschool Assistance Program, and our series of coloring books, **When We All Stayed Home, Cuando Todos Nos Quedamos En Casa, and When We All Wore Masks.**

## Our Effort

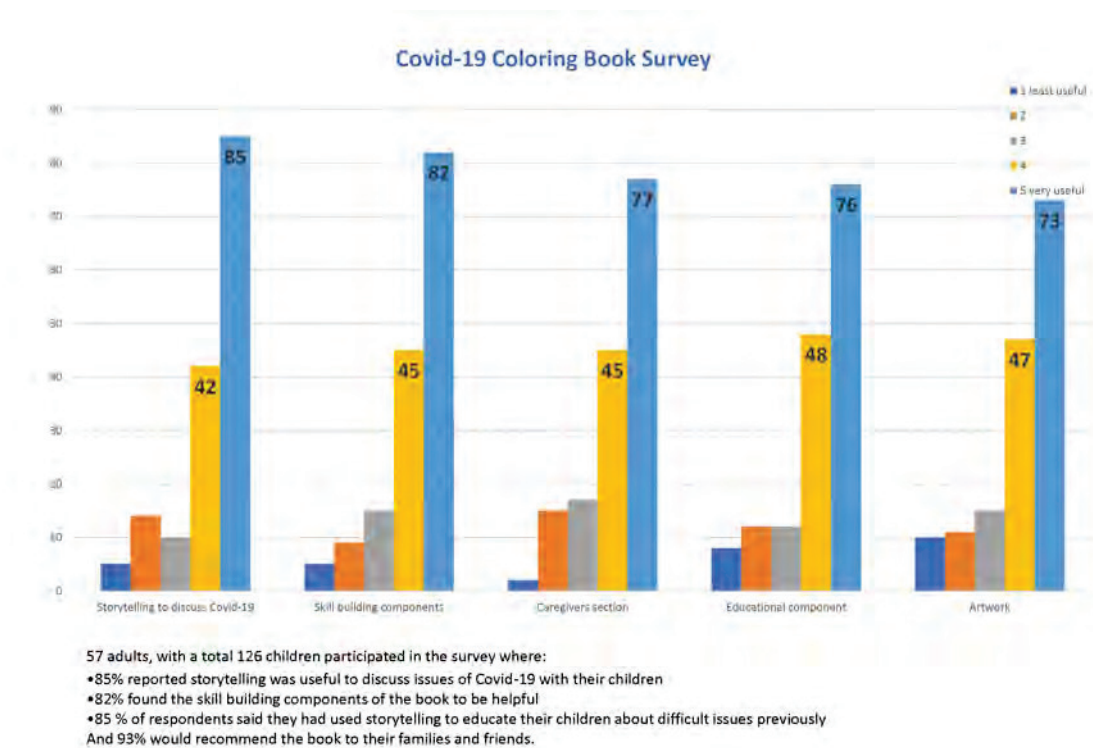
We have been working in disaster preparedness, relief, and recovery for more than 15 years locally, nationally, and internationally. We have committed ourselves to helping families and our communities.

## Covid-19 Coloring Book

Headwaters Relief Organization's volunteers have been creating children's books to help children, families, and communities in the aftermath of disasters since 2010. Our books have assisted children in response to earthquakes, typhoons, hurricanes, the refugee crisis, trafficking, and the Ebola crisis. We created a series of children's coloring books to help explain COVID-19 and to assist children and families process their feelings and cope with the uncertainty of this time. More than 7,000 copies of these books were distributed in all 50 states of America, translated in Spanish, and distributed in five continents globally.







We have been using storytelling as a socio-cultural tool to empower communities while working in disaster affected communities using our children's books since 2011. Some of our books were created in response to disasters including the earthquake in Haiti, the typhoon in the Philippines, and the Ebola epidemic in West Africa.

We performed a multinational qualitative assessment of our books, addressing the refugee crisis in Jordan, human trafficking in Nepal, and the earthquake in Puerto Rico. We interviewed children, caregivers, families, and local community members on the impact of the intervention. Children were also assessed on the story/ key message recall.

The books proved to be effective in educating children and their communities about disaster and associated social problems. Interviewees responded positively to the effectiveness of the books in helping them understand normal psychological responses to abnormal traumatic events. They indicated the books provided them with tools to proactively cope with future traumatic events, which assists in the development of personal and community resiliency.

Working with children, who have experienced a recent trauma, is a challenge in itself. Delivering books to the communities that needed support was a challenge logistically. Local partners played a key role in gaining access to the community. Interpreters were important when working with different languages and can affect the impact. Care must be taken to ensure the precise translation of the story, themes, and messages and to avoid miscommunication. Books with representative artwork and language were more relatable to the community and more effective in community engagement.



## Mask-sewing Program

During the critical shortages of face masks, our volunteers made face masks which were donated to long-term care facilities and hospitals. A call went out to people who knew how to sew as soon as the preventive nature of face masks was known. This provided another opportunity for people to contribute to the community during the crisis.



## Home-schooling Assistance Program

Parents are very overwhelmed with the demands of remote learning. Everyday we heard from parents about the additional stress and difficulties of homeschooling their children. We established a list of individuals who would like to receive assistance with homeschooling and asked our volunteers who could fill that need. Volunteers committed to making calls at agreed upon times to assist parents in the subjects they have requested.



## Phone Pal Program

We created this program to support many individuals, especially those who are elderly and have experienced a lengthy period of isolation because of COVID-19. Our program matched individuals who are elderly and may be isolated with volunteers, who want to make a difference, one person at a time.

This program later received a grant from the Minnesota Department of Human Services and we were able to recruit and pay the phone pals for the time spent making these phone calls.

This program provided many individuals an opportunity to give of ourselves and spend our time in a compassionate and caring way with people who are elderly and isolated from people and traditions.



# Awards, Media & Presentations

## **IAEM 2020 Awards**

11th International Association of Emergency Managers Public Awareness Award (IAEM) Headwaters was honored to receive the Public Awareness Award which recognizes outstanding programs or public education related to emergency management, homeland security, public health preparedness, and/or disaster preparedness. In November 2019, Headwaters staff and volunteers made a relief trip to Nepal, to introduce a new book for children, Together Again, written in Nepalese and English, to heighten awareness of human trafficking and the harmful social and cultural practices that can support it. Trafficking is particularly prevalent after a disaster when people are most vulnerable. Headwaters received the award for this initiative.

## **International Stevie Awards 2020**

- International Business Awards Bronze Stevie Award -Communications or PR Campaign of the Year - COVID-19-related Information
- International Business Awards Bronze Stevie Award-Most Valuable Non-Profit Response for COVID-19 response

## **Minnesota Vikings Frontline Hero**

Dr. Roshan Khatri represented Headwaters and our work during the pandemic and was recognized during a Vikings game.

## **Points of Light Honor Roll**

George H.W. Bush Points of Light Awards Celebration, created an Inspiration Honor Roll to celebrate both acts of kindness and service that demonstrate the light that individuals bring to their communities around the world.

## **Towards Unity for Health (TUFH) Presentation**

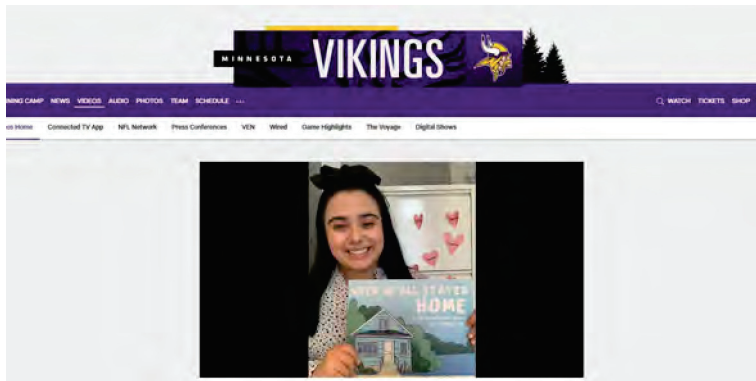
Drs Roshan Khatri and Rebecca Thomley presented on innovative ways to continue work during the pandemic on post disaster community empowerment through storytelling: challenges, and lessons learned.

## **American Public Health Association (APHA) Presentation**

Dr. Khatri presented on Community Resilience and Storytelling in building post disaster resilience.



## Minnesota Vikings Frontline Hero



## IAEM 2020 Awards



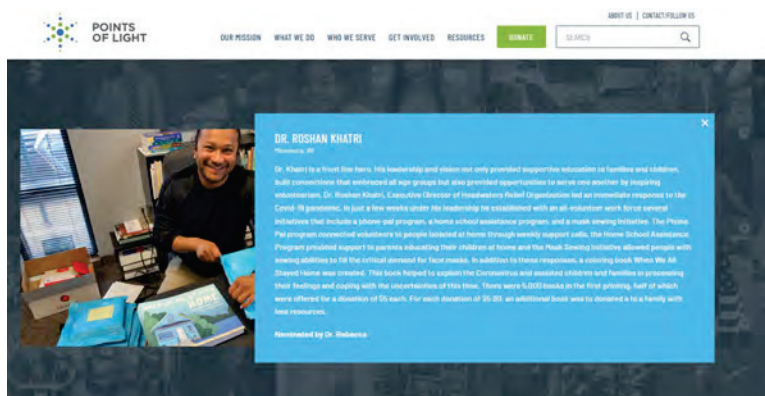
## QC TV Coverage



## Towards Unity for Health (TUFH)



## Points of Light Honor Roll



## KARE 11 Coverage





# Local & National Relief Efforts

## Drake Hotel Fire: Minneapolis

On December 25, 2019, more than 250 people were displaced by a fire that destroyed the Francis Drake Hotel in downtown Minneapolis. A huge thank you to all of our volunteers who assisted in helping the survivors of the fire. Our volunteers helped with childcare at a community resource event in January so parents could focus on connecting with support and resources.

## Continuing our support: Puerto Rico

Headwaters worked with MRC Puerto Rico, The University of Puerto Rico, community organizations, families and children with our children's book, *The Savage Wind*, related to the hurricanes in 2017. While we were there, our distribution of the books was cut short by earthquakes.



## Local Community Assistance: Minneapolis/ St. Paul

Headwaters responded to help with efforts that would rebuild and restore our community. Our organization was founded on the principle of giving back to the community through acts of service. In response to the tragic events related to the death of George Floyd, our community volunteers helped with food and supply distribution in the Midway area of St. Paul.



## Hurricane Laura cleanup: Lake Charles, Louisiana

Volunteers went to Lake Charles, Louisiana to assist with disaster clean-up after Hurricane Laura. While in Lake Charles, our team was able to assist with the disaster clean-up for homeowners and a local church. This work was incredibly important because Tropical Storm Beta was on the heels of Hurricane Laura, and could have created a secondary disaster for some of the home owners.





# International Relief Effort



## Working with refugee families: Jordan Trip

In February 2020, a group of volunteers went to Jordan to continue our work with refugees and to deliver our book *Home Is Where The Honey Is*. We focused on the emotional needs of children adjusting to life and finding belonging in a new place. Our team used our books to normalize for children talking to adults about their feelings and that it is ok to feel sad, angry, frustrated, and scared due to being uprooted from their homes. We incorporated fine and gross motor skills and tools to assist children in coping, such as relaxation techniques to calm the body, mindfulness, and grounding skills to focus attention during times of stress. We worked with women that were widowed due to the conflict in Syria. In guiding them through the book, we were able to discuss concerns about changes in their children's behaviors and ways to assist them in building resiliency.



## Human Trafficking: Nepal

Volunteers traveled to Nepal to continue work with children on trafficking education. Not all volunteers who planned to make this trip were able to travel to Nepal because of pandemic shutdowns and others had to travel home prematurely.





# Volunteer Spotlight

Headwaters Relief Organization has long-term partners who have substantially contributed to the mission, vision and work of the organization. TDB Builders has been a partner organization since 2007. Truly a collaboration of its volunteers, Headwaters provides re-building to those affected by disaster because of our partnership with TDB Builders. We are truly grateful for the contribution of TDB. The following is a summary of a conversation with Tony Vanelli, CEO of TDB Builders.

Tony Vanelli and Billy Jeans are the owners of TDB Builders. They have been in the construction business as TDB since 2003.

TDB Builders were the contractors for the Orion Associates Building addition at 9400 Golden Valley Road. At the time TDB was engaged to do the construction work for Orion Associates, Tony and Billy also committed to assist with Headwaters' volunteer work in New Orleans.



Tony, Billy and 17 of their employees and business partners first volunteered with Headwaters in September 2007. As Tony recalls that first trip, it was shocking and so much of the experience was unexpected. We had to pack everything up and leave the Ninth Ward before dark because there were only 1 or 2 houses in the area that had electricity.

As time went on, TDB continued to bring groups of 8-10 people on the trips to New Orleans; many of their employees made repeat trips. Tony says that although everyone takes different things from their volunteer experience, for him it was the feeling of helping people who truly needed help as well as the sense of accomplishment when you completed a task and achieved a goal. Tony, Billy and their employees volunteered in the Ninth Ward for over 3 years and re-built numerous homes. There was a lot of hard work, a sense of cohesiveness with his team and the opportunity to enjoy the culture of New Orleans.

Tony remembers helping an older gentleman who was provided with a cart by FEMA to use for mobility. This man had endured the unimaginable loss of his granddaughter during the flooding literally when she was torn from his arms by the water. Now he was not able to leave his home because he didn't have a ramp for the cart. Tony and Doug Jeans built a ramp on the back of his home. He cried about the kindness of this.

Closer to home, Tony and his team also spent a long weekend in Winona, Minnesota following flooding in the Spring of 2009. Tony thinks it is important that you show others, including your employees, that you care about people as an organization and that you give back.



Tony, Billy and TBD were there when Headwaters began working in Haiti after the devastating earthquake of 2010. Tony says that working in Haiti was not comfortable at first, and it was so different from our experiences in the United States. But it was also apparent with so many people in the street, that people truly needed the help. One of the memorable projects in Haiti was a roof that Tony, Billy and the TBD volunteers put on the New Grace School in 3 days. It was a difficult project to plan for because the construction materials and tools, including generators to provide the electricity, had to be obtained through others generosity. It took a lot of planning and coordination both here and in Haiti to make it happen. Another local construction company, that also worked in Haiti, assisted with supplies and provided contacts for several local guys for labor in Haiti. Tony says it felt good to work with other organizations to get this done. He and the team can be seen standing on the roof, cheering upon completion of the task. Tony says that this project, in terms of volume and scale, was probably the most impactful thing they have done.

The TBD volunteers continue to make important contributions to Headwaters. They have worked on many projects in many places, including New Orleans, Iowa, Minnesota, Haiti, Puerto Rico and Liberia. Tony feels that we do a lot of good things together and that it is a unique partnership. He says it is honest and the fact that 100% of the money we raise goes to the people we serve is important.

Tony says his employees are connected to Headwaters and look forward to the annual Golf Tournament. They have a plaque on their wall in the office from the roof project in Haiti.

Tony is on the Headwaters Board of Directors. TBD owners and construction staff have provided thousands of volunteer hours as well as fundraising and other financial support to Headwaters' operations as partners with Headwaters Relief Organization. Headwaters would not be the organization it is today without their contributions.





# Global Goals

**Headwaters Relief Organization continues  
its commitment to achieve global goals.**

**WE ARE DIRECTLY INVOLVED WITH THESE 9 GOALS.**





A photograph of a young girl named Asha with dark hair in pigtails tied with yellow ribbons, wearing a red sweater over a striped shirt. She is smiling and holding a younger child in a pink jacket. The background is a blurred outdoor setting.

# Asha “आशा”

Give Asha (**hope**) to a little girl in Nepal  
and India through the gift of a doll.

## A Doll That Looks Like Me

A child's self-esteem has a big impact on how they navigate their world, and our goal is to affirm to every girl that she is beautiful exactly the way she is.

With a donation of **\$25.00**  
you can send a doll to a young girl  
halfway across the world.

*Scan to support and for more information.*





