

The Bhutanese Community Association of Pittsburgh

2024 ANNUAL REPORT





Photo credit: Brian Cohen

KHARA TIMSINA

executive director

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I know this letter is meant to reflect on what we accomplished in 2024, but as I write this a few months into 2025, my mind does not go so easily to the past. Since February, fear has entered many of our families' lives. Our office began receiving more calls than usual—calls for help.

Even in this challenging time, I hope for peace. Still, we will keep trying. We will not stop advocating for our families. I hope our community members can soon go back to living and working without fear.

What I do want to share about 2024 is that it was a year full of blessings:

Our youth program grew this year from just K-5 afterschool to also include high school students, focusing more on helping them prepare for college. Our team, led by Katie Mirt and including many young people from our own community, supported over 85 kids. We also had a strong summer program with a new Boot Camp to help incoming kindergarteners get ready for school.

Parshu Chamlagai continued helping with citizenship applications, green card renewals, and making sure new citizens registered to vote. This year we registered 200 voters, a big increase from the year before. He also kept our financial records in order and made sure all our team members were paid on time. Many of us are getting used to carrying multiple responsibilities.

Even though our community is adjusting to life in America, challenges like mental and behavioral health persist. Benu Rijal is always available to help—by phone, in her office, or through home visits—and worked closely this year with a new team of community liaisons ready to assist in different neighborhoods.

Answering calls and helping walk-ins at the front desk, Lila Adhikari handled many responsibilities while also providing immigration support after BCAP became an ISAC partner.

We were able to continue working with longtime allies and also build new relationships—with program partners, funders, and volunteers. This support made it possible for BCAP to grow and continue to serve not just Bhutanese families, but others as well. Volunteers played an important role in expanding our capacity. Donors and funders gave us the strength to keep moving forward, even when the path was uncertain. We have listed all of our partners in the later pages of this report, and we are so thankful for every one of them.

To my colleagues, board members, and mentors—thank you. Your support continues to guide me. I will keep looking to you as we carry on the mission of BCAP, no matter what lies ahead.



ABOUT BCAP

VISION

A vibrant Bhutanese Community where all are enabled to reach their fullest potential and traditional culture is celebrated and shared.

MISSION

To ensure a high quality of life for all members of the Bhutanese community in Pittsburgh and to support their integration into American society through culturally-informed services and activities.

Our history

The Bhutanese refugee community fled government persecution in Bhutan, and after a 20-year stay in refugee camps in Nepal, many found a new home in Pittsburgh. BCAP emerged out of the efforts of a few committed community volunteers and gained nonprofit status in 2014. The population is estimated to be over 7,000 in Allegheny County, many attracted here via secondary migration from their original U.S. resettlement city due to the reputation of BCAP and its programs, and probably affordable housing and employment opportunity. While the population is dispersing more broadly as we continue to integrate, the majority is spread throughout several South Hills neighborhoods, including Greentree, Castle Shannon, Baldwin, Brentwood, Whitehall, Brookline, West Mifflin, Bethel Park, South Park Township, Pleasant Hills, Jefferson Hills, Carrick, and Mount Oliver.

BCAP AT A GLANCE

Guided by our strategic plan, BCAP strives to mobilize resources to improve the quality of life for Bhutanese community members and other immigrant and refugee communities in the region, reaching out to families and individuals in a culturally appropriate way. In pursuit of our mission and vision, BCAP offers its services to vulnerable families and individuals without regard to color, faith, gender, sexual orientation, physical or mental condition, ethnic origins or nationalities.

Key focus areas

- Basic needs & service navigation
- Youth, women & family supports
- Citizenship & civic engagement
- Health & wellness
- Computer literacy
- Community & cultural preservation
- Partnerships & advocacy



I am filled with gratitude for the opportunities to learn, grow, and contribute to BCAP. Each day brings new challenges and victories, and I am excited about the journey ahead.

-Lila Adhikari
Administrative & Program Assistant



SERVICE NAVIGATION STATS



Incoming Calls

1437

Outgoing Calls

1316

BY CATEGORY



Youth & Education

617



Information & Referral

368



Civic Engagement
& Immigration

377



Program Inquiries

691



Basic Needs Support

311



Health & Wellness

132



Youth & Families

OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME PROGRAMS

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM

In response to growing demand, BCAP's after-school program expanded from two to four locations during the 2023-2024 school year, surpassing initial projections. Programming continued at PPS Concord Elementary, serving 12 students in grades K-5. The Good Shepherd location also remained active, engaging 30 students in grades K-6 from the Baldwin-Whitehall School District. Two new sites were successfully launched—Brentwood High School, with 15 students from the Brentwood School District, and McClellan Elementary, serving 14 students in grades 1-6 from the West Jefferson Hills School District.

Each program day began with a snack and community-building activity, followed by personalized academic tutoring to support grade-level achievement. The latter half focused on hands-on STEAM education, tailored to student interests. Board games proved effective in strengthening problem-solving, logic, and communication skills. A highlight at the Good Shepherd site was a partnership with local nonprofit 25 Tech, where students explored music mixing and sound production. Library staff from Baldwin, Whitehall, and Brentwood also visited monthly to promote literacy and strengthen community ties.

WHAT STUDENTS SAY

100%

Agreed or strongly agreed that they felt valued & connected to the teachers & staff

90%

Agreed or strongly agreed that the program helped them feel more confident

100%

Agreed or strongly agreed that the program helped them build friendships

A key outcome was the development of leadership skills among youth mentors. With guidance from BCAP staff, 16 high school and six college students gained valuable mentorship experience and professional skills. These young leaders will continue their growth by working at BCAP's summer camp, furthering the organization's mission to empower future community leaders.

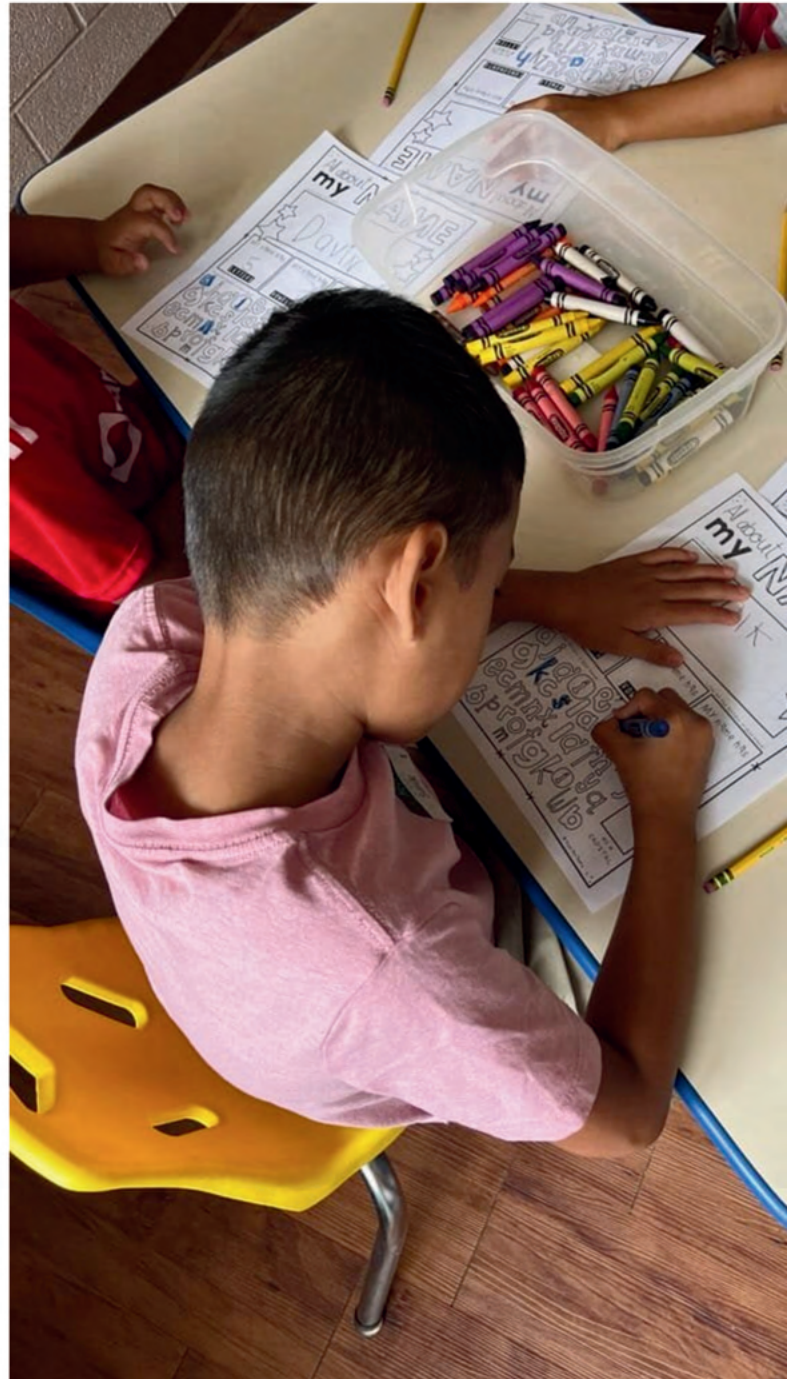
YOUTH SUMMER CAMP

BCAP's summer camp successfully served 30 children grades 1-5, across the Brentwood, Baldwin, Whitehall, and Carrick neighborhoods.

Over seven weeks of daily programming, campers engaged in hands-on activities designed to promote environmental awareness, including experiments demonstrating the effects of pollution—such as how acid rain harms plants and the challenge of removing oil from feathers.

Campers enjoyed time together as a group and in grade levels throughout the day. Mornings were reserved for the review of grade level concepts through centers, games, and other activities. Campers also rotated through daily STEAM, gym, and arts classes. Afternoons featured creative activities, from soccer and arts and crafts to music mixing with 25 Tech and Bollywood dance lessons led by University of Pittsburgh students. The camp culminated in a vibrant performance, where all campers—Bhutanese and non-Bhutanese alike—celebrated the power of music and dance to unite different cultures.

Additionally, BCAP hosted a Kindergarten Boot Camp in early August, preparing 15 young learners with foundational academic skills and school routines. Alongside learning letters, numbers, and classroom procedures, campers made friends and gained confidence, laying the groundwork for future academic success.



I was proud to keep our campers entertained and enriched for almost their entire summer. The best part was the final program where campers came together to perform a Bollywood dance. We had several students from outside of the Bhutanese-Nepali community and they participated, too!

-Katie Mirt
Youth & Families Coordinator





SUPPORTING EDUCATION & PARENT ENGAGEMENT

We continue to deepen our relationships with local schools to enhance connections, communication, and engagement with and among families in our community. In addition to an Informed Parents workshop series launched this year, BCAP staff also responded to over 600 phone calls from community members with questions related to education, hosted several events supporting families, and participated in various community events at our districts:

- * Kindergarten & New Student Registration
- * Concord Elementary's Cultural Night
- * Concord Elementary Back to School Night
- * Baldwin Whitehall School District's We Are Neighbors event
- * West Jefferson School District's Interaction & Support Services event
- * Keystone Oaks' Parent Engagement Initiative
- * International Potluck Extravaganza at Lincoln Elementary
- * 2024 Winter Futsal

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS IN YOUTH EDUCATION & OUTREACH!

- Brentwood School District, West Jefferson School District, Baldwin Whitehall School District, Pittsburgh Public School District, West Mifflin School District
- Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
- 25Tech Music Mixing Program
- Yinz Girlz Robotics Team
- STEM Seeds

Women & Girls

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

In 2024, BCAP's women's programming served over 350 women! These initiatives were designed to foster economic opportunity, leadership development, and personal well-being while removing barriers that hinder women's success. Across all programs, BCAP made significant progress toward five key outcomes: Improved health and well-being, increased access to economic opportunities, expanded social networks, greater understanding of institutions and services at the local, state, and federal levels, boosted confidence in seeking help and utilizing community resources.



LEADERSHIP & SKILL-BUILDING

Designed to inspire and empower, this program brought elected female leaders, CEOs, and facilitators to speak directly with participants. With interpretation services provided, 316 women engaged in 14 sessions covering topics such as financial literacy, parenting, yoga, and acting. The evolving curriculum reflected the interests and needs of the group while expanding participants' social networks and leadership skills.

BCAP's computer literacy training empowered 16 women to navigate email, job searches, and school communication platforms, with over 90% reporting improved confidence. Driver's license classes helped participants gain independence, increasing their mobility and access to employment opportunities.

WOMEN'S GROUP

Bi-weekly support groups offered a safe space for 371 women to share experiences, foster emotional support, and collectively address challenges. Led by a community member trained in Mental Health First Aid, these sessions combined open conversation with focused discussions on topics relevant to women's well-being and empowerment.

DIRECT SUPPORT FOR SINGLE MOTHERS

BCAP provided rental assistance to seven single mothers, hosted a holiday banquet for 17 women, and supported eight mothers as panelists for International Women's Day. Additionally, BCAP offered transportation and interpretation support for essential meetings, enhancing access to education, healthcare, and government services.

New Americans

CITIZENSHIP & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT



VOTER EDUCATION & ENGAGEMENT

BCAP remained deeply engaged in civic outreach throughout 2024, continuing a proud tradition that began in 2012. Staff participated in multiple trainings to enhance voter registration and education efforts. This year, BCAP registered 201 voters, conducted over 14,500 phone calls and 5,400 text messages during the primary and presidential elections, and coordinated transportation for early voting. The team also attended cultural festivals and gave educational presentations to schools and local governments, helping raise awareness of Bhutanese civic participation and encouraging voter turnout.

CITIZENSHIP & IMMIGRATION

In 2024, BCAP supported 25 individuals with their U.S. citizenship applications and assisted two community members with Green Card renewals. These services are part of BCAP's broader mission to help Bhutanese immigrants navigate complex legal processes, build long-term security, and fully participate in civic and community life.

"I feel proud that we were able to exceed the voter registration goal from last year."

-Parshu Chamlagai
Program Specialist



25

Citizenship
applications

201

Voters
registered



Health & Wellness

MENTAL & BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SUPPORTS

BCAP's outreach efforts are grounded in a peer-led, community-based model. This year we activated a trained cohort of Community Liaisons—trusted individuals embedded in neighborhoods to provide faster, more familiar support to families in crisis through a network of culturally responsive care. This year, BCAP participated in events like Jefferson Hospital's Diversity Fair and Baldwin Borough's Resource & Wellness Event, sharing resources and building visibility.

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

This year, BCAP trained 62 individuals through Mental Health First Aid and QPR suicide prevention trainings. A virtual mental health training also expanded access to behavioral health education. These efforts helped reduce stigma, increase awareness, and build peer support capacity within the community.



62

New MHFA-trained
Bhutanese community
members!

SUPPORT GROUPS

BCAP hosted health and wellness programs and culturally responsive support groups for women and elders, serving 21 participants. These sessions provided safe spaces for connection, stress management, and shared learning.

100%

of female participants reported they are
satisfied with support group programs

**"Through the training and support groups, we
are delivering positivity. It is making changes
to the person's life, their feelings, emotions in
a positive way."**

-Benu Rijal
Health Coordinator



SENIOR SUPPORTS

BCAP remains deeply committed to supporting the well-being, dignity, and cultural identity of Bhutanese senior citizens. Through partnerships with local libraries, BCAP offers accessible programs for seniors, while health outreach efforts ensure this population remains connected to vital care and information. Seniors play a central role in BCAP's cultural preservation efforts, passing on traditions, stories, and values. Our intergenerational programs—such as our “marriage then and now” event that brought together mothers, daughters, and grandmothers—foster meaningful dialogue between elders and youth. This year, BCAP also celebrated Chitra S. Gurung's 10 years of service as a Senior Companion with the Allegheny County Area Agency on Aging, honoring his dedication to care and community.

COMMUNITY VOICES

With ongoing support for community conversations through the Jefferson Regional Foundation's Community Voice Funds, we listened to the voices of our members with speech and hearing disabilities, ethnic business owners, and youth!

ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS

Mount Oliver Community Garden

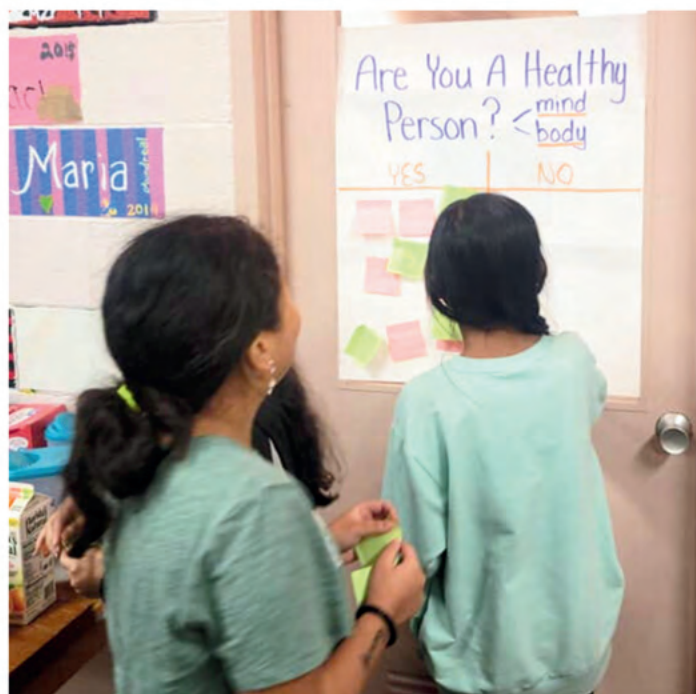
The Mount Oliver Community Garden flourished this year, providing a vibrant space for families to grow fresh produce, connect with nature, and share traditional agricultural practices.

Saturdays in the Parks

This summer, BCAP coordinated a series of weekend outings to local parks. These gatherings encouraged community connection, outdoor recreation, and access to green spaces.

Acting Class Series

In collaboration with Pittsburgh Public Theater, BCAP offered a series of acting classes that provided youth and adults the opportunity to explore self-expression, build confidence, and connect with the broader arts community.



Your Money Matters

BCAP hosted a five-week financial literacy program to help community members better understand budgeting, saving, and building financial stability. The training supported participants in gaining skills to navigate the U.S. financial system confidently.



Celebrating Community

PRESERVING & SHARING OUR CULTURE

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

We love to share and celebrate our cultural heritage in our neighborhoods and city! Here are a few events that BCAP participated in in 2024:

- * **City in the Streets | January**
BCAP participated in the City in the Streets program at Phillips Recreation Center.
- * **Mother Language Day Celebration | February**
Staff participated in a panel discussion hosted by the City
- * **International Women's Day | March**
BCAP hosted the celebration with our partners the Himalayan Foundation, Brahma Kumaris, SHIM, & OmKar Pariwar Pittsburgh
- * **Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month | May**
BCAP celebrated with the Asian American Chamber of Commerce
- * **Pittsburgh International Parade | June**
We marched in the parade alongside other cultural groups and organizations
- * **World Refugee Day & World Square | June**
BCAP served on the planning committee for these community celebrations
- * **Brentwood 4th of July Parade | July**
BCAP marched in Brentwood's annual Fourth of July Parade.
- * **South Hills Community Days | Summer**
BCAP brought cultural dances and henna in Baldwin, Brentwood, Whitehall, & Carrick
- * **Teej | August**
The Women's Group coordinated our annual festival
- * **Diwali Party | October**
BCAP celebrated Diwali at the Baldwin Borough Library
- * **Carrick Light Up Night | December**
Community members performed cultural dances

Building our future

PARTNERSHIPS & ADVOCACY



BCAP continues to advocate for our community at the local, state and federal level and is honored to work in partnership with numerous coalitions and collaborative partners in this work.

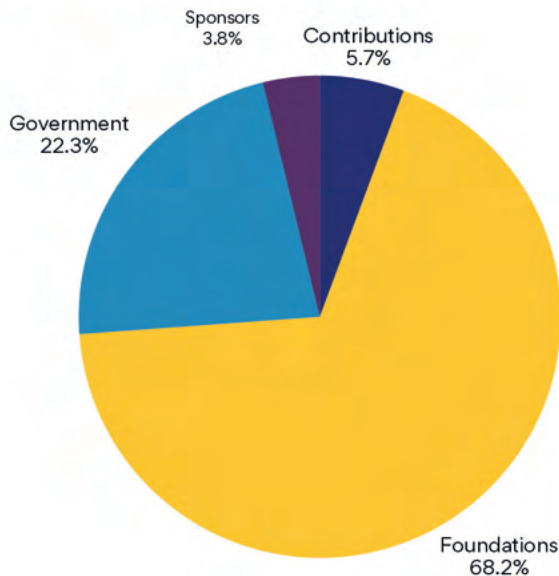
Key Memberships

- * All for All Coalition
- * Allegheny County Department of Human Services Immigrants & Internationals Advisory Council
- * Collaborative for Immigrant Impact (CII)
- * Community Vitality Collaborative for Immigrant and Refugee Committee of the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine
- * Immigrant and Refugee Health Equity Collaborative
- * Immigrant Services & Connections (ISAC), Jewish Family & Community Services
- * Jefferson Community Collaborative Vision Council
- * Mayor's Office Initiative on Welcoming Pittsburgh
- * PA Voice
- * Pennsylvania Immigration Coalition
- * Pennsylvania Asian Pacific Islander Power Caucus
- * Stand for All Pittsburgh
- * Switchboard: Karen Organization of San Diego

FINANCIALS

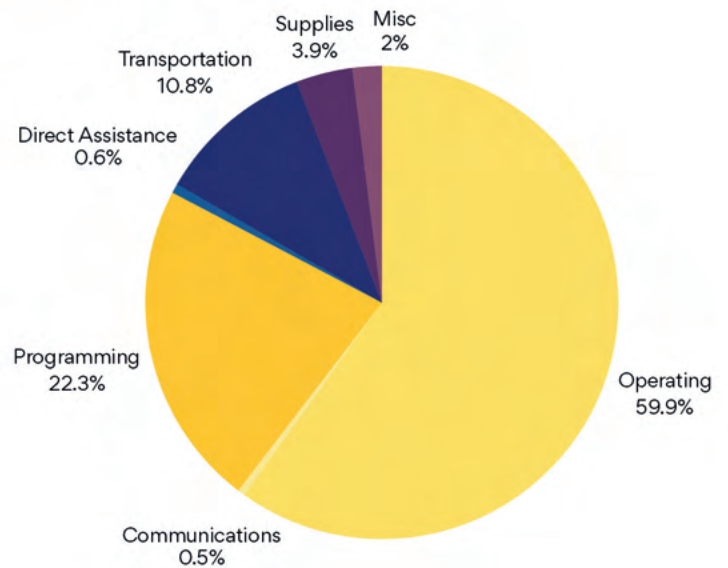
REVENUE

Total: \$678,878



EXPENSES

Total: \$611,177



OUR SUPPORTERS

PHILANTHROPIC PARTNERS

- AAPI PA Power Caucus
- Allegheny County Department of Children's Initiative
- Allegheny County Department of Human Services
- Birmingham Foundation
- City of Pittsburgh
- Dollar Bank (NAP)
- Duquesne Light Company
- Eden Hall Foundation
- FISA Foundation
- Jefferson Regional Foundation
- Jewish Women's Foundation
- Mary Hillman Jennings Foundation
- McElhattan Foundation
- Opportunity Fund
- PA Alliance Foundation
- PA Voice
- POISE/YWCA
- Posner Foundation of Pittsburgh
- S&T Bank (NAP)
- Staunton Farm Foundation
- The Grable Foundation
- The Pittsburgh Foundation
- United Way of Southwest PA

SPONSORS & SUPPORTERS:

- Lochan Real Estate Investment Group LLC
- Punya Homecare LLC
- Damauli Bazar
- Carrick Pharmacy
- Steel Town Pharmacy
- Care Zone Home Care Agency
- John F Slater Funeral Home/The Whitehall House
- APlus United Home Care
- TWFG Insurance
- Nim Nim Nepali Bazar
- US Independent Insurance Agency
- Lifestyle Fashion/Jenny Justin LLC
- Mariya Fashion Boutique
- Gorkha Department Store
- Dean Honda
- FreeStyle Beauty Salon LLC
- Taste of the Himalayas
- Ken Ganley Toyota
- Bridge City Home Care
- Smile Home Care
- Sisters Grocery LLC
- Golden Care Home Care LLC
- Center Light Home Care
- Ideal Home Health Agency LLC

FINANCIALS

OUR DONORS

- Aakriti & Arushi Khatiwada
- Alex and Nana
- Alex Walsh
- Alexandra Taylor
- Allegra Elson
- Ambika Giri
- Amy Pardo
- Andi & Baruch Fischhoff
- Andrea London
- Andy Bartholomew & Siena Aguayo
- Arpan Pradhan
- Asmi Rizal
- Barbara Rosenberger & Judy Cohen
- Beda M Pokhrel
- Benu Rijal
- Betty Yee
- Bhagi Adhikari
- Bhagi Man & Mon M Gurung
- Bhim Dahal
- Bhutanese Community Trust Fund
- Bidhaya Kalikotey
- Bishal Rai
- Bishnu Sharma
- Biswaz Gurung (Balaram)
- BNY Mellon Community Impact
- Brooke E Stebler & Jesse L. Stebler
- Brooke Kissler
- Carl Fertman & Barbara Murock
- Cassandra Masters
- Chali M Khanal
- Chhali Subba (Lilly)
- Damber Ghatani
- Dana Gold
- Dave Siwa
- Debra L. Schneider & Ronald M Schneider
- Denise Maiden
- Devika & Deepak Kharel
- Dhan M Phuyel
- Dhari Dhital
- Dhirendra Subedi
- Dilli R Kafley & Khina M Acharya
- Dilu Bhandari
- Eh Ta Mwe Paw
- Elaine Beck
- Ganga Pradhan
- Goma D Khanal
- Goma Khanal
- Gyem Raj Adhikari
- Harka Rai
- Hem Bista
- James Kingsley
- Janice Harrison
- Joan Cleary
- Julia Baraily
- Kabita Yonjan
- Kamal Timsina
- Kedar Upreti
- Khagendra Baral
- Khara Timsina & Bishnu Timsina
- Kharka B Chhetri
- Khina Gurung
- Kjung Bhandari
- Krishna & Januka Regmi
- Krishna Subedi
- Kul Subba & Kamala Rai
- Kula Dhaurali
- Kumari Koirala
- Kumari Rai Subba
- Laxmi Dhungana
- Linda Theophilus
- Madhav Mishra
- Man Biswa
- Manorath Rimal
- Linda Theophilus
- Madhav Mishra
- Man Biswa
- Manorath Rimal
- Michele Feingold
- Mon Tamang
- Narayan Katel
- Netra Acharya
- Norma Bronder
- Om Darjee
- Pabitra Gurung
- Pabitra Khatiwada Sharma
- Padma Rai
- Laxmi P. Rimal
- Leslie Aizenman
- Lila U. Adhikari
- Linda Roth
- Parbati Lamichhane
- Parma Rijal
- Parshu Chamlagai
- Paula Kelly
- Peter Spynda
- Phul Maya Rai
- Prakash Kami
- Puspa Khadka
- Raghu Ghimirey
- Ram Maji
- Ram Rai
- Rani Gurung
- Rani Rai
- Ray & Mie Lipowcan
- Renee Piechocki
- Rita Mongar
- Rup Pokhrel
- Sabina Gurung (Santi Gurung)
- Sabitra Kadariya
- Sally Rafson
- Sancha Rai
- Sano Tamang
- Santa B & Anjana Gurung
- Saraswati Gurung
- Shanka Sunar
- Shetu Ram Moktan
- Sue N Martin
- Suella Pipal
- Suk Gurung & Tara Lapcha
- Suk M. Biswa
- Sunita Pradhan
- Susan Chase
- Susan Rai
- Susan Weston
- Teeka Bista
- Tek Nath Timsina
- Tek Nepal
- Thay Way Oo
- Tika Darjee
- Tika Ram Darjee
- Tika Ram & Chandra Chapagai
- Tika Sapkota
- Uma Gautam
- Upendra Dahal
- Xia Chao
- Yagya Kadariya

IN THE NEWS

Our community was highlighted in several news media outlets in 2024-- including the New York Times! The following are some examples:

Until I can walk a pedestrian-friendly Route 51, I fear for my life

Public Source

Momos offer cultural exchange for Bhutanese Refugees
Pittsburgh Post Gazette

Lok Darjee: Will they deport me if I vote?
Pittsburgh Post Gazette

They're Asian. They're American. But, They Wonder, Are They Asian American?
New York Times





OUR TEAM

STAFF



Khara Timsina
Executive Director



Parshu Chamlagai
Program Specialist



Katie Mirt
Youth & Families
Coordinator



Lila Adhikari
Administrative & Program
Assistant



Benu Rijal
Health Coordinator

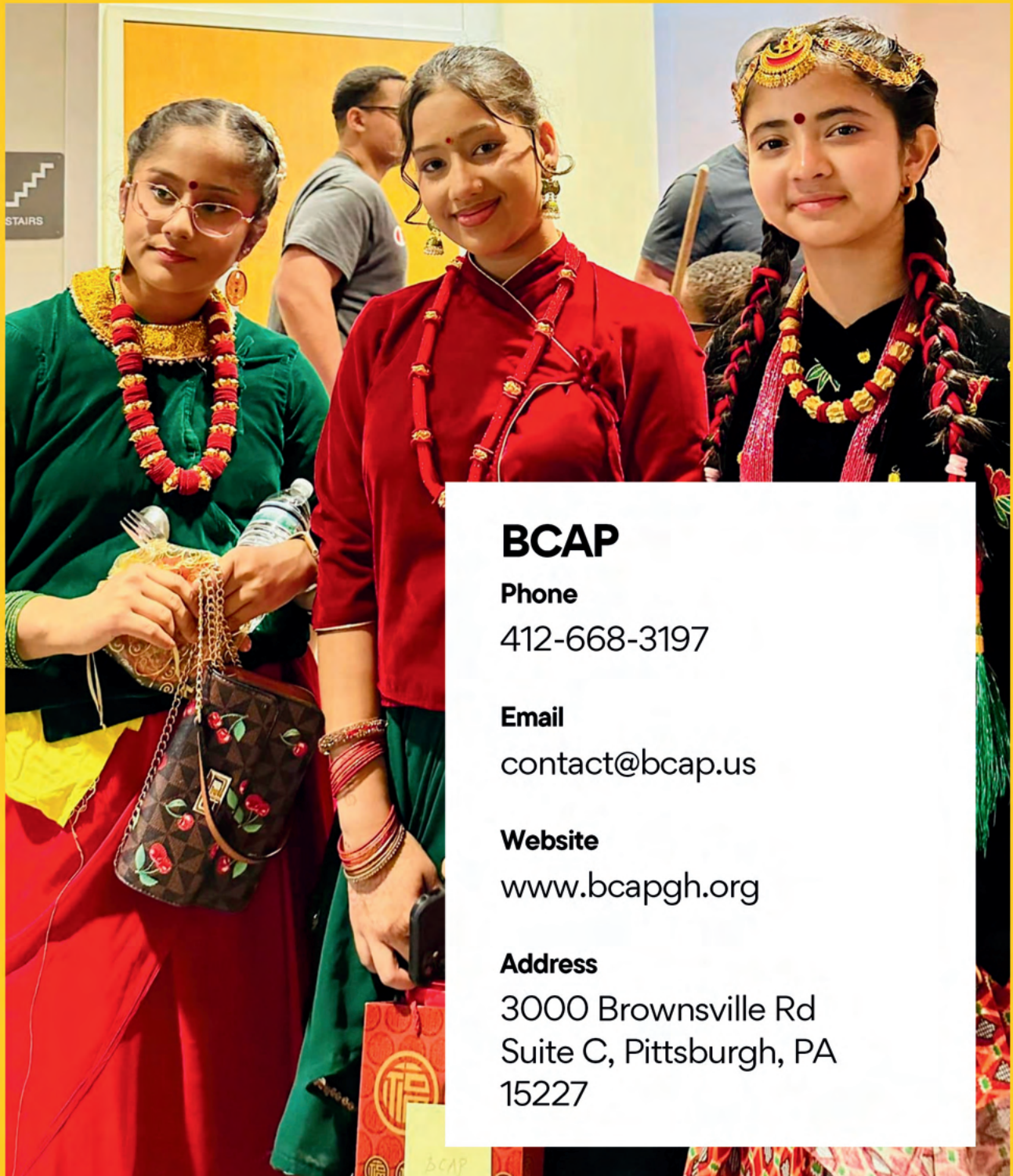
BOARD MEMBERS

- Julia Baraily, Chair
- Uma Gauttam, Vice-Chair
- Dhiren Subedi, Secretary
- Gyem Adhikari, Treasurer
- Bhagi Adhikari
- Leslie Aizenman
- Barsha Bhattarai
- Dr. Xia Chao
- Todd Fine
- Brooke Kissler
- Denise Maiden
- Madhav Mishra
- Kabita Yonjan

THANK YOU
to all of our
community
volunteers!



STAY IN TOUCH



BCAP

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