



*Humans Of
AmCham*

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I first came to Mongolia in 2001 on my own, in August, and I arrived at the airport around midnight with no one to pick me up. From day one, I learned to improvise and had a very strong but favorable impression. I've worked in different capacities in Mongolia; in finance, public investment planning, in minerals, and in different businesses. I think Mongolia continues to be a very young, dynamic country that offers tremendous opportunity in its people's capability to learn. Really, across my personal experience, I have established lifelong friends and family here. My family has established a part of its roots in the country. I have been fortunate to have had the chance to learn the language here and am still continuing to learn, experiencing and contributing to Mongolia's place in the world economy. My main interest was to attract investment here and try new things. We like to think of exploration as the research and development side of the minerals industry. It's the next generation of mines, expertise, and professionals. Anyone outside Mongolia would associate Mongolia with nomadism and remoteness. I think that's one of its unique features that can act as an advantage if properly applied. We have a highly educated population, young people willing to learn, and I think these features can do great things for the economy and, in turn, for society.

I joined Erdene in 2008. Within our community engagement work, every year, we contribute a portion of our expenses to local programs at the aimag and soum levels, and those programs are selected by community stakeholders and members of the government administration. Our programs fall into four broad categories: livelihoods, public health, basic education, and environmental stewardship.

- As part of my personal commitment to the community, since late 2017, I have volunteered with an organization called Achilles International, which has a chapter here in Mongolia. Its mission is to empower people with disabilities through physical activity, and it started through running and the participation of people with disabilities in the New York City Marathon. Achilles International is a New York-based non-profit organization, with a Mongolia chapter since at least 2015. Since connecting with them, I've worked as a mentor and guide to athletes in the marathon program. Up until the COVID pandemic restrictions, every year, they would recruit and train a group of athletes with disabilities, most of whom required some form of support and guidance for the race itself, to participate in the New York City Marathon, which is one of the world's six elite-level marathons. You compete on the same day, and on the same course, as the world's top long-distance runners.

A photograph of two men running on a paved road. The man on the left is wearing an orange jacket and black shorts, and the man on the right is wearing a bright yellow-green jacket and black pants. They are running towards the right. In the background, there are rolling hills and mountains under a clear sky. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

"A key part of my role
in supporting
Mongolian athletes
with disabilities was
mentoring and
coaching, not just in
physical fitness, but
in finding a way in
life"

In reality, the athletes I supported have been younger and much stronger than me. For example, I presented one of the athletes with an opportunity to interview for a job, his first in his area of undergraduate study, and he managed to get an offer and is still employed there, at a small mine in Tuv aimag. I think that's an important element of taking stock of the opportunities we have to help empower people with disabilities society which is all around us, in our immediate or extended families. The city itself, and the country's infrastructure and resources for people with disabilities, continue to play catch up. They aren't enough to go around.



It's an area worth sharing and encouraging others to get involved with. I know there are many athletes, both amateur and otherwise, amongst our AmCham members. I will certainly be seeking volunteers to participate in the annual Achilles International Marathon later this fall!