

# Supporting Silk Sisters Project Inc

Community development through care and compassion

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## DONATIONS

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## NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2017

This trip got off to a slow start as our colleague Rath Rott Mony from our overarching NGO CLARI was involved in translating and producing a documentary for Russian television. However, we used our time in Phnom Penh networking visiting and discussing current issues with other Cambodian NGO's. This trip our team consisted of two Australian Clinical Education Midwives Caro Bergan and Jenny Noble. Remote area nurse advisor Richard Burrowes and returning Volunteers Olivia Mason Bryant RN and new Volunteer Shade Mc Clymont RN.



Jenny and Caro spent the majority of their time at Prey Kabas referral Hospital working with Midwifery staff again and providing clinical education to enhance the care of both mother and baby. They were assisted again by Mr Keo, a high school teacher, who translates and helps presents their seminars. We are always very grateful for the enthusiasm and professionalism that he brings to his role.

Richard, Olivia, Shade, Marcel and Pholla worked mainly in the slums around Phnom Penh. The numbers of people who are living in impoverished conditions continues to grow along with the push for commercial development that destroys near city urban communities. Frequently the loss of a dwelling equates to loss of income.



**Richard Shade Marcel and the Community Leader.**

On Australia Day January 26<sup>th</sup> 2017 we conducted a free primary health care clinic at Relocation Camp 2. I always find that the trust placed in us as Australian nurses is humbling. We treated the chest ear skin infections of the babies/children and conducted adult health screening. We tend to see more adults now than children and babies. A large number of adults have chronic diseases that requires long term medication. The majority of people are unable to afford these medications and the number of people with Diabetes and stroke is increasing. The Western diet has

been embraced by Cambodians and the changes in body size and health are obvious.

During this clinic we assessed one positive TB and found clinical evidence of a strong pulmonary TB reoccurrence. These people were instructed by the Commune leader to attend for chest x ray the next day at a “free” Hospital.

There is no free care in Cambodia everything is user pay which accounts for the degree of poor health in children and the increase in chronic disease.



**Richard Burrowes instructing Olivia Mason Bryant and Shade McClymont in the equipment required in Ambulance Emergency bag. ( Bag donated to SSS by St Johns Ambulance, Alice Springs.)**

## **St John Bosco Boarding/Primary School**

Our first visit was to the Salesian School where we caught up with Soksophea and the three brothers Samnang, Sopheak and Pheak that our donors are helping support. Soksophea has come a long way since October 2016. She is growing and learning to socialise with others. Her general health is much improved and she has received dental and medical care. I took Soksophea and her mother to the Preah Aun Duong eye hospital for assessment of her vision.

Soksophea goes home to Borei Keila on some weekends to see her parents and little brother. She is always happy to return to boarding school and see her friends.



**Soksophea with her class room Teacher.**

The three brothers are doing very well and thriving under the Salesian's care. They have also received dental and medical care thanks to our donors but we need someone or a group for continued support to educate these three boys.

Shade McClymont instructed the students in the art of Hockey. The children took to it and soon demonstrated their competitive streak when they played a match.

Big thanks to Hockey South Australia who donated the hockey equipment and T shirts!



**Shade Mc Clymnont and Olivia Mason Bryant with hockey students at St John Bosco School Phnom Penh.**

## **Borei Keila**

There are a number of children that we have been following through our clinics in the Borei Keila slums. One stunted little boy in particular that has Chronic ear disease and obstructive Adenoids. On two occasions Olivia and Shade transported this boy and his Grandmother to hospital for treatment and evaluation. There remains forty five children in Borei Keila who are severely malnourished. Their parents make a living out of collecting street waste including plastic bottles and cans for recycling. Their income is perilous and requires hours and hours of walking the streets of Phnom Penh in competition with other slum dwellers who are also attempting to survive through the same activities.



**Olivia Mason Bryant conducting a physical assessment on child at Borei Keila.**

## San Sok Commune

I spent a day and overnight with fellow Australians Gaye and Roy Mc Phee from Toowoomba who are setting up a clinic free called Thomas' House. They are establishing a much needed local service despite the lack of support from local bureaucracy.

## Childrens Free Surgical Centre

This centre in Phnom Penh provides surgical care and rehabilitation for children and adults. We visited this centre as part of our networking and met the medical director Dr Jim Gollogly who opened the centre in 1998. The centre provides free complex surgical care and for patients with disabilities that are either genetic, disease or caused by accidents. It was interesting to see that there is one large operating room where six different surgical operations are happening at the same time!



**Dr Jim Gollogly Marcel Olivia Shade and Dr Phollaa.**

Our next trip to Cambodia is planned for July 2017. From little things big things grow! This aptly describes our progress over the past four years. Our main projects are still midwifery/nursing education at Prey Kebas referral Hospital, free slum primary health care clinics and educational support for Soksophea and the three brothers Samnang Sopheak and Pheakvy. We are still hopeful that one day we will have sufficient funds raised to build a new birthing room for the women who attend Prey Kebas Referral Hospital. Meanwhile we will maintain our focus on the grass roots and what we know works.

The World is not a kind place at the best of times but presently it is a lot harder for many people. We wish to thank those generous donors that continue to support Supporting Silk Sisters project.

Blessings and best wishes to you all

Marcel

