

Supporting Silk Sisters Project Inc

Community development through care and compassion

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DONATIONS

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NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2017

Returning home to Australia always fills me with gratitude for my life and the people who are part of it. Unlike some of our Cambodian friends and people we work with very few of us live a life of daily struggle to find clean water, food and shelter. Our standard of living in Australia ensures access to clean water, sanitation, food access, medical care, stable Government and a welfare support net.

This trip proved to be extremely busy with meetings, attending a Cambodian nursing and midwifery seminar, joining the Cambodian Medical Delegation to Japan, networking with other non-governmental organisations and conducting clinics. Nothing happens quickly in Cambodia and on arrival we soon sync into



Airport welcome for Marcel by Dr Nourn Sophat Medical Director Prey Kabas referral Hospital and Rath Rott Mony from CLARI our umbrella Cambodian NGO.

Khmer speed. I learnt long ago that we must be fluid as our plans often change daily. However, in Japan, the social speed and activity expected of us was faster and compliance to a strict timetable enforced by our hosts! Following our presentation **Takahashi Rotary** have generously agreed to fund our Volunteers' accommodation, food,

training costs and internal travel from Phnom Penh to Prey Kabas Referral Hospital for a period of two years. Our Cambodian team members this trip were Dr Pholla, Rath Rott Mony from CLARI NGO, and driver/translator Dara Oum “Star”. Along with remote area nurse Richard Burrowes, mental health nurses Eileen Weekly and Maureen Hooper and remote area nurse/mental health nurse Marcel Campbell.



Breakfast planning meet. Marcel, Maureen, Eileen, translator Star and Richard.

Our translator/driver Dara Oum “Star” is an integral part of our team. His local knowledge, good humor and desire to be part of our team provides us with invaluable support.

We held three clinics at **Borei Keila slums** in Phnom Penh where we continue to see moderate malnutrition, food shortage, respiratory, ear and skin infections and children living in squalor with no sanitation. Some of the children required antibiotic treatment but there were none seen at the clinics that required hospital care. But there are two children here that we continue to monitor that require six monthly medical reviews at hospital. Most of the children seen have advanced caries from drinking sugar cane juice and no tooth cleaning. With the assistance of our driver/ interpreter Star we instructed families in the importance of cleaning teeth and distributed tooth brushes and paste for the families.

The Salesian Sisters accompanied us during one of our visits to Borei Keila. Even though they have been working with the poor and displaced in Phnom Penh for twenty years they said that were shocked by the conditions. There



Maureen and Eileen distributing clothing to the children.

are still many families in the slums awaiting compensation for loss of their land and homes.



Sr Ched visiting Soksophea at her home in Borei Keila.

Soksophea is currently on holidays from school and is not doing as well as she was previously. This has given rise to concern by both the teachers and us. Our Cambodian NGO CLARI is supporting the family to help resolve the problems.

Richard and I attended the **Cambodian Bi Annual Nurses & Midwives Education Seminar** at the National Paediatric Hospital in Phnom Penh. It was well attended by both Khmer and international nurses. It was thrilling to hear the future savvy Cambodian Nursing leaders discuss their current research and future plans.



MMESC Conference Phnom Penh August 2017

Following a request from Rath Rott Mony to visit two remote village on the Vietnamese border.

As I was unwell Richard decided to undertake this with Rath Rott Mony and assess the need for primary

health care clinics. The trip by car took five hours by car which was followed by a

further two hours by a motorbike on rough tracks. He conducted clinics for seventy children in two villages and saw children with stunting, anaemia, malnutrition and fetal alcohol syndrome.

The children's inadequate development is due to poor ante natal diet, poverty, food scarcity and malnutrition. Many of these people have lost their income due to land grabbing by international companies for rubber plantations without adequate or just compensation. Villagers are offered work in the plantations but are not always paid or forced to wait for weeks before being paid their wages. We are hoping to take two teams there in January 2018. Our focus will be both clinical and educational.

SSSP Inc with support from New Zealand donors funded the transfer of a 26-week-old baby to the National Paediatric Hospital for intensive care treatment. His prognosis is poor but he continues to survive and we look forward to hearing of his future progress. His mother's care at another hospital and she is now fully recovered.



The three brothers **Samnang, Sopheak** and **Pheakney** are settled into their new family group home under the care of the French NGO *For The Smile of a Child*. We will continue to follow their progress and support them in any way we can. Thanks again to retired nurse Russell Foster who keeps these boys so well dressed!

Also, a big thanks to **Hettie Johnson** from **Bravehearts** who donated child safety education to the **Salesian Sisters at Don Bosco High School**. It will be

used through out all the Sisters's congregations to make children safety aware.

SSSP Inc committee is due to undertake a planning meeting this to look at our activities for the next two years. We are committed to visits in **January and July 2018**.

Although we have secured some small funding from Takahashi Rotary in Japan to fund volunteers who will conduct training and education at Prey Kebas referral Hospital. That funding is tied to that activity only. We are still need of donor support to continue with our free primary health care clinics in the slums and poor villages, hospital care with follow up visits, and purchase of pharmacy and associated health care products.

I would like to express our grtatitute to all of those who have supported us and continue to do so. Without your support we can not continue to function. We are still **seeking a corporate donor** but competition is fierce despite our well established track record and meeting all audit and other Australian government guidelines.

Thank you to all our nursing colleagues who support us with supplies that can be safely recycled. We have received a good response to our recent request for more volunteers to join with us in Cambodia.

In view of recent publicity I wish to remind readers that we do not indulge in any form of paid Volunteerism because we believe that this is unethical. Our volunteers finance their own fares and living costs.

Until next time remember our philosophy “ *we cannot change the World, but together we can make a difference*”.

Best wishes and blessings to you all

Marcel