

# Supporting Silk Sisters Project Inc

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**Patron: Professor Philip Darbyshire**



## DONATIONS

ANZ Bank  
Shop 46A-47 Beenleigh Market Place,  
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## NEWSLETTER JULY 2019

Well we are back from another successful trip to Cambodia that was not without its challenges. The Land of Wonder has it's own way of reminding you "that things are done differently here!" Frequently we thought that we were playing Khmer snakes and ladders! Our July 2019 team had three newcomers who performed well under challenging circumstances. Thank you all for your contribution.

It was unusually hot during the pre- monsoon build up produced no afternoon showers that normally provide welcome relief at the end of each day. Cambodia was in drought due to climate change and El Nino. The Mekong River commonly called the Mother of Asia was reported to be at its lowest in one hundred years. Water was also held being back by China and Laos to feed their hydro power. This lack of water affects fish spawning and tens of millions of people's livelihoods. In June 2019 Dengue Fever cases were reported at fivefold usual levels with children severely affected causing deaths.



**2019 July Team at Char Pagoda, Takeo Province.** We welcomed back our Cambodian colleagues **Dr Sophea ( Doctor of Dentistry )** and dental **Nurse Toula** from Prey **Kabas Referral Hospital** who joined us in our free primary health & dental clinics at Char Pagoda.

Thanks to our three sponsors who supported these dental clinics. The Rotary Club of Beenleigh, Pickesters NSW and MDDI Queensland. Together they

provided funding for dental supplies, children's fluoride toothpaste and disposable dental items. With

their combined support we were able to successfully treat one hundred and sixty children. These free primary health care clinics save a lot of teeth!

Our adult clinics conducted at Char Pagoda and Kaukan Chab Monastery treated one hundred and forty patients. Our clinic at Kaukan Chab was held under a Pagoda in a dirty dusty storage area. Next day saw us working in a classroom at the primary school. We were supported in our clinics by business students from the National Institute of Business who acted as translators. Clinical consultations take a little while because so few people in the villages speak English and our Khmer is pretty rough! Along with his Excellency Mr Tep Oeun, Director of NIB, I had much pleasure in presenting those translators students who assisted us with a Certificate of Work Experience.



Despite no portable fold up dental chair **Dr Sophea** does not let this get in the way of her dental practice.

Her patients all have a support team! Who are always ready to give advice to both Dr Sophea and patients!

**Kiwi Osteopath Demelza** treating a patient.

Her gentle touch and education was appreciated by the people that she treated. We see many people suffering from severe Osteo Arthritis and pain as a result of hard work in rural villages and harsh treatment during the bitter civil war.

We believe all disciplines can contribute to Supporting Silk Sisters and we welcome both clinical and non clinical volunteers that meet the criteria to our Teams.



Cambodia continues to develop at a frenetic pace driven by the Chinese Belt and Road plan.

Although there has been an increase in a rising middle class, development has created a new class of impoverished people in both urban and rural areas as people lose their land and homes. Compensation does not necessarily meet market prices or permit people to replace what they have lost.

Below assistant in nursing **Marina Gleeson** registering patients for a clinic at Char Pagoda.



During our last two visits we have connected with the abbots in pagodas and requested that we assess the baby monks. Many of these children come from poor families and do not meet WHO recommended standards of child development. Families send their young boys to the pagodas in the knowledge that they will receive some education, food and find the path to enlightenment. Unfortunately these children are expected to fast which impedes their development. I have been successful in negotiating that they receive vitamins daily, dental care and hopefully less fasting.

Even though we have been going to Cambodia for some years and working at the grass roots level of primary health care we are constantly learning. Every trip we discover something new. We have a well established referral system now to Prey Kabas Referral Hospital where we refer patients who are in need of investigation.



We decided to call this “rice foot” a condition caused by the patient spending long hours over many years in paddies planting rice.

We thought it not dissimilar to trench foot, the difference being that trench foot occurred in trenches during World War 1 in cold conditions and killed many soldiers. This is in contrast to this condition that occurs in warm conditions. The patient said it was long standing and was referred to hospital.

Whenever we find children and adults that are ill we ensure that they receive medical care. When necessary SSSP will meet the cost of treatments. We consider this part of our ethical nursing practice to ensure that poor patients identified as sick receive the medical care that they require.

Like most charities/NGOs Supporting Silk Sisters relies on donations to continue with our free primary health and dental care clinics in rural Cambodia. We welcome donations, no matter how small, and are always hopeful that people might like to hold a fund raiser for us! Or an experienced fund raiser would adopt us!

A special thank you to colleagues remote area nurse/midwife Sylvia Dean and foundation member Kiwi mental health nurse practitioner Eileen Weekly whose ongoing participation and support makes SSSP what it is! Ritchard Burrowes we missed you!

R



*1Back L - R. Demelza Eileen Marcel. Front L – R Marina Mary Sylvia*

**Its not all work!  
Dinner at the iconic  
Foreign  
Correspondents  
Club inPhnom Penh.**

Well that's it until next time and thank you to all of those people who support and donate to our clinics.

We could not continue to provide our free clinics to the rural poor without your help.

Blessings to you all

Best wishes

Marcel