



AWARENESS CAMBODIA

"Rebuilding the children of Cambodia"

www.awarecam.org.au

Newsletter - Issue 2 2012

Many of you would know Kim and I go back and forward between Cambodia and Australia spending approximately six months in each country.

When we returned to Australia earlier this month, our son Justin had just flown back from Beijing, having completed his Master's degree in Chinese law, and was now about to start work at a well-respected law firm. It was one of those proud moments as parents remembering the years we'd invested, recognising and celebrating his achievements and now watching him start a professional career; one that would give him opportunity to make a significant contribution to the community, while earning a decent income, laying foundation for a successful future.

As I sat reflecting, the significance of where we have invested our lives dawned.

In the other place we call home - Cambodia, one of those little girls we took in back in 2000, Sokcharn (having lost her parents to AIDS) has become the first of our students to graduate from University as an accountant.

Like Justin, given opportunity and with our support, she is now setting out on her own professional journey; one that is helping her nation fill the education vacuum left behind by the Khmer Rouge era, and giving her a professional skill set that will help her step out of the poverty enveloping that nation. It's amazing!

Every day as I walk into our office, I pass a quote on the front window by the American Scholar and Teacher, Forest E. Witcraft. It says;

A hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of car I drove... but the world may be different because I was important in the life of a child.

Never has that statement been more meaningful and appropriate than seeing it at work in the changed lives of these 'children' around me today.

Dr Gary Hewett, OAM
Founder/ CEO Awareness Cambodia

Our First University Graduate!

Congratulations Sokcharn! Sokcharn is Awareness Cambodia's first university graduate. She passed her final exams in July and has now completed her degree in Accountancy. Sokcharn, along with Vannah and Chumrarn, were our first group of students that moved from House of Progress to Graduation House. True pioneers and mentors!

Sokcharn joined Sunshine House with her brother in early 2001 as a small child, and what a delight it has been to watch her grow into an independent adult ready to help make a difference in Cambodia. We are so proud of you Sokcharn.



New Children at Sunshine House

By Trudy James, Development Officer



It has been a big year so far, with **10** new children joining the Sunshine House family.

After seeing these children wait at Graduation House in Phnom Penh to get the medical all-clear, I did wonder how these gorgeous little people would transition and integrate into their new life with 49 children at Sunshine. That same feeling came over me knowing that 24 Swan Christian College students would be joining the Sunshine House families for a few days.

But much to my delight any minor concerns I had quickly disappeared when I saw them all laughing, embracing, participating, and literally hanging off the Swan Christian College students!

I was also able to be there when our three newest children (the Chem family) moved from Graduation House to Sunshine House. I was utterly amazed at how they were instantly embraced by our existing children, being included in all the games and making friends immediately.

To join their journey, contact our Perth office or visit www.awarecam.org.au and become a child sponsor.

The Chem children having fun at Sunshine House.



Chem children's home before coming to Sunshine House.



CAN YOU HELP?

Awareness Cambodia is always looking for old mobile phones to take to Cambodia. If you have any unlocked phones with a charger - 3G-compatible phones are particularly useful. Please contact our Bayswater office -

cambodia@awarecam.org.au



To join our Facebook group Awareness Cambodia, go to our website www.awarecam.org.au Click; Find us on Facebook and "like" the page. We regularly add new photos, fun stories and keep you updated with Awareness Cambodia's latest news.

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New English program is growing

by Sopheak Pheng, Cambodian Projects Director



Awareness Cambodia has a number of active projects which benefit the Kompong Speu community in three main areas; health, education and childhood development.

Wherever possible we work alongside and support established community departments and services in the area. We believe this holistic approach will empower Cambodians to create sustainable inroads in making generations of poverty in rural Cambodian history.

In conjunction with this strategy, Awareness Cambodia is also continuing its English Second Language for Primary Schools program (ESLPS) – in partnership with The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports – which now has four schools participating after our initial six-month pilot program.

Our newest schools to join are Kirivong Sleng Primary school with 10 classes of 425 students and Sen Teav Primary School with 303 students. These schools were chosen as they are located in the poorest province in Cambodia – Kompong Speu.



Education
*is the most powerful
weapon you can use to
change the world.*



Nelson Mandela



Recently, Sopheak Pheng and Samoan (Awareness Cambodia staff) presented awards to the most outstanding students. Smiles were everywhere!

Awareness Cambodia Story

Awareness Cambodia is a not for profit, overseas aid organisation established in 1996 by Perth dentist, Dr Gary Hewett in response to the incredible suffering and poverty experienced by the Cambodian people after the execution of 25% of its most intelligent under Khmer Rouge leader Pol Pot. We work to relieve poverty and encourage development of life skills through participation in self sustaining projects.

Awareness Cambodia doesn't simply raise funds to pass onto other organisations; instead we initiated projects in response to ongoing needs. Together these projects form an environment that provides a seamless structure for orphaned Cambodian children to transition into well adjusted and self sufficient leaders, so necessary in rebuilding Cambodia's future.

We also see Cambodian culture as a unique national treasure meaning all efforts are taken to ensure our presence doesn't simply result in these children being westernised, relocated to other parts of the world or being reduced to the indignity of a dependency on overseas handouts.

Effective training for indigenous staff, a non adoption policy, working in cooperation with local organisations and government departments as well as the inclusion of self funded business components in projects are key components in reaching our objectives.

"Awareness Cambodia is proud to be a partner for project 'J515 Awareness Cambodia-Stage 2' with Global Development Group, an Australian AusAID approved NGO carrying out quality humanitarian aid and development projects with approved partners to relieve poverty and provide long term solutions."





Our kids are graduating!



By Trudy James, Cambodian Development Officer

It's exciting to have eight House of Progress students graduating high school this month! It is remarkably Awareness Cambodia's fourth year group to graduate, with the students to move to Phnom Penh and commence university studies in September. To help the transition from House of Progress to Graduation House we ran our first Career Advice Seminar. The three-session seminar topics included:

- How to choose the right university and course
- How to write a CV and cover letter
- Preparing for a job interview
- Moving to Phnom Penh, and the expectations of Graduation House students.

This style of seminar is very rare in Cambodia, with nothing like it in Kampong Speu. We are hoping to branch out next year and run it for high school students in the local community aswell.

Congratulations to our soon to be high school graduates: Srey Mieh Van, Srey Leac Hak, Sophi Yah, Sroh Chienchon, Penh Rasmey Keo, Naroath Heng, Tay Srey and Piseth Seng.



Above: Sophi attempting her first resume with the assistance of Vanna (HOP Manager) and Somphos (current Graduation House student acting as mentor).



AWARENESS CAMBODIA MEDICAL PROGRAM

The Operation Nightingale project continues to provide much needed services free of charge to some of the poorest people in Cambodia.

Working in close cooperation for over six years with the Provincial Health Department, Awareness Cambodia has established well-trained Cambodian doctors in four provincial health centres. Our doctors have not only helped stabilise many of the community's prevailing chronic conditions, but have been instrumental in training up nursing and auxiliary staff to provide increasing standards of service to their patients.

This progress is exceptional considering most Government rural health clinics do not have basics such as electricity or running water.



These patients received free prescription glasses at our Medical clinics. Older patients often cry as they try them on.

Coming Initiatives

MEDICAL SCHOLARSHIPS



Awareness Cambodia believes education plays a key role in helping to fight poverty. And as a result, the Operation Nightingale Project and our Graduation House Project are uniting with a number of Australian surgeons and medical professionals in 2013 to initiate a "Medical Scholarship Program".

The scholarships will target poor and academically-gifted students from Cambodia's rural community who do not have the financial means to move to Phnom Penh and study medicine. The scholarship will provide students the same support structure as Graduation House, including university fees and accommodation. They will also receive in-country mentoring through our well-trained Cambodian Health care professionals, with mentoring by Australian surgeons and doctors.

AGRICULTURAL SCHOLARSHIPS

Currently about 65% of the Cambodian population is engaged in agriculture, but sadly productivity in the sector remains low with about 35% of the rural population living below the poverty line.

To improve this vital area, Awareness Cambodia is developing agricultural scholarships for rural students in partnership with the "Tim Purcell Cambodia Scholarship Fund" (TPCSF).

The Scholarship Fund (TPCSF) will continue the legacy of Dr Timothy Purcell in supporting poverty alleviation in Cambodia, by enabling students from underprivileged backgrounds to complete agriculture-related studies. The scholarships aim to develop student capacity to effectively contribute to programs that enhance agricultural productivity and rural development.



Make giving easy

One of the easiest ways to give is setting up a monthly donation plan through our Perth office.

Monthly-giving allows you to plan your finances, and spread your donations across the year. It also makes a huge difference to Awareness Cambodia by allowing us to budget for our much-needed projects.

Please join our Monthly Partnership Program.
And remember, all donations over \$2.00 are tax deductible.



West Coast Eagles bring goodies for the kids.



WEST COAST EAGLES

A number of Swan Christian College students visited Sunshine House last month, as part of an ongoing relationship between the College and Aware Cam. Students have been visiting various projects for three years, even taking House of Progress and Sunshine House kids on excursions.



Phanith being given his new hat by Mark Lewis, Swan Christian College Principal.



On one of the excursions last year, one of our Sunshine House kids, Phanith, lost his hat while crossing the suspension bridge at Ampe Phnom. As his prized possession – given to him when the West Coast Eagles visited in 2010 – floated down the river Phanith yelled in depaire “Nic Natanoooooooooooooooooooo!”



This year, Swan Christian College made it their mission to return with a new Eagles cap for Phanith – except this time, signed by Nic Naitanui! Thanks to the Swan kids for brightening Phanith’s world!



Breaking News!

The West Coast Eagles will be returning to Sunshine House this November. Our little people are eagerly awaiting the big day – especially Phanith who will be proudly wearing his hat!



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A Case 4 Change

...delivering results!

In June our Cambodian staff travelled to three remote primary schools in the province of Kompong Speu and delivered 1,110 backpacks filled with school supplies.

The journey to the local government schools of Kirivong Sleng Primary School, Sen Teav Primary School and Kamnob Primary School comes as part of our Case 4 Change program – which delivers vital educational support to the poorest regions of Cambodia.

These primary schools were chosen to receive the backpacks having taken part in our English Second Language for Primary Schools pilot program (ESLPS), as part of a multi-layering strategy.

A warm thank you to those who helped fund June's distribution. Our appreciation goes to Hampton Senior High School, Guildford Grammar School, Pymble Ladies College Junior School, Lake Joondalup Baptist College, Eden Hill Primary School, Robbie Guy, CRS, Lions Club Ellenbrook, Matt & Meagan Lozzi, Jess and Simon Hull, and Crown Finance.



How you can help

We will be distributing school supplies again this October. If you or your school, business, organisation or church would like to get involved, please contact our Perth office. The modest amount of just \$15 can change a child's life forever.

Together we can make a difference!



Have a new email?

If you'd like to stay up to date with Awareness Cambodia's latest news, make sure you pass along your latest email and postal addresses. All new contact details can be emailed through to Raelene at cambodia@awarecam.org.au

Crown Lends a Hand

This year, keen volunteer and Case 4 Change coordinator, Jessica Hull, had the opportunity to present the Case 4 Change program to the Crown Lending team.

Jess received an extremely warm welcome, and was thrilled to find out their Director, Scott Parry, shared the passion in seeing Cambodia re-established, having travelled there himself.

Crown Lending East Perth has continued to support our education program by giving monthly donations, and in this case gave us a generous one-off donation as well! This generosity has provided 220 students with essential school supplies including a backpack.

From all of us at Awareness Cambodia, thank you so much for your continued support.

Crown Lending Services is one of Australia's fastest growing home loan lenders and is situated in beautiful East Perth.



Education gets a boost

Thanks to Freshwater Bay Interact Club, 110 new backpacks filled with school supplies will be distributed in Cambodia this October.

The greatly appreciated donation comes after Interact Club held a fundraiser in May, raising over \$1,700 for our Case for Change Program.



CRS makes a case for change

CRS Northbridge office has been enjoying a year of delicious lunches and other fundraising fun, which has raised \$800 for Awareness Cambodia!

Our Awareness Cambodia representative, Jessica Hull, was even invited to the CRS office to accept a donation towards our Case for Change program – providing backpacks and schools supplies to the poorest provinces in Cambodia.



Congratulations to all the CRS staff involved. You've made a tremendous difference.

Time Flies!

16 years of achievements



THEN



(2000) Completion of our first building, Sunshine House.

(2012) More than 25 buildings now make up our village at Sunshine House.



(2000) A scared orphan named Chumrarn arrived at Sunshine House.

(2012) Chumrarn is now a fourth-year civil engineering student at Norton University.



(2011) A baby named Makara arrived at Sunshine House malnourished and deathly ill.

(2012) Makara now enjoys piggy-back riding at Sunshine House in his happy and healthy body.



(2000) A group photo of the first 11 orphans at Sunshine House.

(2012) Over 82 children are a part of our Child Development Programs, with children arriving at Sunshine House regularly. We even have our first university graduate!



(2008) The launch of A Case 4 Change program, supplying two classrooms of 60 students with much-needed school supplies.

(2012) This year alone, we have helped over 1,110 students throughout three primary schools.



(1996 onwards) Six office staff forced to work within one small room at our Awareness Cambodia central office.

(COMING 2013) Our three-storey, central office equipped with training facilities.





Donation Form

(Please return by Fax/Post/Email)

Name

Street

Suburb

State

Post Code

Daytime Phone

Mobile

Fax

Email

One-off Donation

☐ \$1000 ☐ \$500 ☐ \$250 ☐ \$100 other \$

Monthly Donation

☐ \$250 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$60 ☐ \$40 other \$

(please note that all amounts are in \$AUD)

☐ I would like to become a child sponsor

☐ \$55 per month (general & health) ☐ \$60 per month (tertiary)

☐ I would like to become a Monthly Partnership Program (MPP) sponsor

☐ I would like to receive the Awareness Cambodia newsletter

Payment Options

☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa ☐ Amex

Card Number

Cardholder Expiry Date /

Signature

☐ Cheque (please make cheques payable to 'Awareness Cambodia Overseas Aid Fund')

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Thank you for your generous support

If the funds raised exceed project requirements then funds may be directed to a similar project. Donations made within Australia are tax deductible.
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