

Friends of *inter*PART Inc.

International Partners in Action Research and Planning

Newsletter

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Friends of *inter*PART Inc.
is incorporated under the
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Registration Number
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CyCle Cambodia raises over \$10,000 for children with disabilities

Our team of three cyclists Ray, Tania and Veasna successfully completed the often challenging course around Tonle Sap Lake in central Cambodia, with their return to the capital Phnom Penh on 28th December.

Welcomed by friends and the national media, it was a jubilant conclusion to a most rewarding and productive venture. These are just some of the positive outcomes that have already been realised and the future benefits that will ensue.

With generous donations from our supporters we have so far raised over

A\$10,000, that will be used to directly benefit children living with a disability in Cambodia. As well as helping to purchase an additional vehicle for transporting the children of the Rabbit School and House of Smiles, a number of other locally based projects will be provided with a donation, to assist in the much needed development of their work.

During the event we visited ten organisations who facilitate services in various ways for disabled people living in the cities, provincial towns and rural areas. During these visits we were most fortunate in being able to interview and film a number of children with disabilities, parents and teachers in order to gain a fuller understanding of their situation.

(Cont'd next page)



The CyCleCambodia team's jubilant return to Phnom Penh.



Polio victim Kheng Pok discovers an innovative way to use the family bicycle.

Information Evening May 5
See inside for details!



The material gathered by our group mentor Helen and cameraman Rick will be used to produce reports and videos that will be instrumental in assisting in the process of education and training, both in Cambodia and overseas.

Public awareness was also raised during the event itself through media interest, both from the national television stations and the press. The impact of their coverage was enhanced by the participation of two teams of cyclists, most of whom were amputee's (*from organisation: Handicap International Belgium*), who joined us for a 200 kilometre stage of the ride. It was a privilege to ride with these determined individuals, who were for the most part, setting the pace!

Another determined participant, who actually completed the entire journey with us, was Veasna, a member of the National Volleyball League (Disabled), who became an admired and valued team member as well as a shining ambassador for the disabled community.



One of our cyclists from HIB with Veasna and Ray following a particularly gruelling 110 km

We recently received the wonderful news that due to spending time training with a team in Siem Reap during the event, Veasna has been offered his first paid job as Team Coach. He'll soon be leaving Phnom Penh, where he doesn't even have a permanent home, for a new life in the provinces.

On behalf of the children who will directly benefit from the proceeds of this event, we wish to thank all those who so generously contributed with donations and support.

We look forward to the opportunity of sharing with you some of the highlights of CycleCambodia during the Friends of interPART 'Information Evening' on Wednesday 5th May.

(Please see separate notification page 7 for details).

Ray Walker

Photo Gallery: some of the highlights



The intrepid travellers: L-R Tania, Veasna & Ray



Lunch break in the fine company of local pig

Cambodian International Day of Disabled Persons, Phnom Penh December 2003



FoIP member Helen Pitt an official guest



Helen assisting with prize-giving



Handicap International: Battambang



Wheelchair basketball for men and women

SERVANTS (Servants to Asia's Urban Poor)

Introduction to the School and Students

The Sunrise School officially opened August 4, 2003. We began with 8 students with disabilities – ViRiak, Chay, Mahara, SivFang and SukNee who have cerebral palsy, Munchen, who has a brittle bone disease, Ploy who is mentally retarded, and Thao who had polio and now walks with braces. Since then we have added one student, Sokar, who also has cerebral palsy. Miss Channee who is completing her university studies in the evenings and has experience teaching in a private school is proving an able teacher. Channee receives ongoing mentoring and training from local sources and expatriate teacher trainers.

Vision

By extending the right to receive education to children with disabilities, we want to raise their self-esteem and value in the eyes of family and community.

Background

One of the central reasons we opened this school is to be an encouragement to the families of these children and the children themselves. Many of these families did not know of what else to do for their children and some of them do not see much value in them because of their disability. Some families have tried to place their child in other schools, but most schools will not accept children with disabilities-especially if they are not able to walk or take care of themselves hygienically.



The helpers are very committed to the care of the students

Our students are not in another school for a variety of reasons: some lack confidence, some have missed so much school because of their disability that they are too far behind, and some simply because their disability is so severe that other schools will not take them. Many children with epilepsy have been kept at home by their parents for fear of injury from seizures and teasing by other children. For some children even once seizures have been controlled by medication, it takes time for parents to feel confident that the child will be safe at school and then for some they are then too old.

The Government of Cambodia has a stated policy of "Education for All" – this commenced in 2003 and is hoped to be achieved by 2115. By our close association with Disability Action Council, who partners with Ministry of Education, we hope these children will in time be able to access improved educational opportunities. We have developed this school also in close partnership with Lavella School and have taken advice from the Rabbit School; both providing education to children with special needs.



Providing physiotherapy as a regular part of the program

The Sunrise School

We aim to be responsive to the particular abilities and special needs of each child:

- a. For some of our students our goal is to be a stepping-stone for the child to be able to be integrated into a nearby school for children with disabilities called Lavella. This is only possible for children who are able to walk alone, and perform personal tasks such as using the toilet alone.
- b. For others, this school is a place to give them a basic education, teach them personal life skills, and help them gain confidence in themselves. We want them to realise that they are of great value despite physical limitations.
- c. For some we intend to academically bring the students to a level where they can be put into mainstream school.
- d. To provide teenagers and young adults who have epilepsy, and who have never attended school with a basic literacy level and education.



Pre-school activities are now well-established as part of the Sunrise School program



Family Participation

Each child that is in this school was asked if he or she wants to study with us before they came into the school, and each child that is here is here because they want to be. Also each of their parents want them to be in the school as well. We intend for the Sunrise School to be a place where they can socially gain confidence, and overcome their fear of school. One of the ways to encourage the families is to regularly visit their homes. We talk with the mother a lot and encourage her about her child, listen to her stories and troubles, and build a relationship with the family as well as the child.

Progress so far!

Socially, the children are becoming very comfortable with each other, and are all enjoying coming to school (we ask them this). With bringing the academic levels up, currently Chanee is focusing on teaching the Khmer alphabet, writing the date, numbers, and soon simple mathematics. We have assessed each child and written monthly goals for them academically as well as personal and hygienic goals. Chanee also keeps weekly accounts of their progress in all these areas.



Soon, we will be adding a second class to our school in the afternoons which is for teenagers and young adults who have epilepsy. The purpose of this class will be to give them basic literacy level and basic education. Most of these students have missed all their schooling due to their condition. We will structure it similarly, but adapt what we need to the age level and academic levels of the students.

(cont'd next page)

Irish Albert Floorshow

**MAY FUNDRAISING
SPECIAL**
see below for details

(SERVANTS Sunrise School – continued from page 5)

Challenges

But one problem we have thought of is the difference of being in a small class with other children with disabilities, and being in a large class with “normal” children. What kind of obstacles or teasing will they run into? Will the teacher be willing to give the extra help a special needs child may need? Some of the children probably won’t need any special help, but if we are able to integrate a child like Via Riak or Chay, perhaps some special help will be needed. One thing we plan to do soon with our children is role play. Perhaps in acting out being bullied, and learning a proper response, they will be able to integrate better.

There are several different academic levels in our class. Mumchen, Siuphang, Makara. And Thao are in the highest level. They know more than we are covering now. Via Riak, and Sokar are also in this level, but they have little fine motor skills in their hands, so it is difficult for them in the area of expressing in written form what they have learned. Chay is at a slightly lower level. SukNee is at a much lower level although she is the oldest in the class. Then we have Ploy who is mentally retarded. He no longer attends our school but Chanee visits him two times a week to tutor him one on one for an hour each of these days.

Conclusion

This is an exciting extension of the Little Conquerors program, active since 1994 in Mean Chey District – providing rehabilitation encouragement and community care to children and their families with special needs. We value your support of the SUNRISE SCHOOL.

Compiled by Sarah Golden and Janet Cornwall

14th October 2003



Irish Albert

Saturday May 22nd
Macclesfield Institute Hall

Group Bookings (table of 10)
\$18/person

Individual Tickets \$20

BYO & Licensed Bar
Real Coffee!

For Bookings & Details:
contact Susan
0403 857 600

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— INVITATION —
ALL WELCOME

Friends of *inter*PART Information Evening

When: Wednesday 5th May 7.00pm

Where: Auchendarroch House Ball Room
Dumas Street, Mount Barker

Bring a friend to hear about the successful history of this locally inspired humanitarian and community development organisation.

Ray & Tania, our CyCleCambodia fundraising duo, will present their adventures.

Live musical entertainment provided for your enjoyment.



REFRESHMENTS AVAILABLE AT AUCHENDARROCH TAVERN

RSVP & for further details - phone Vicki or Glenn 8388 9141

Friends of *inter*PART Inc.

Friends of *inter*PART Membership Application/Renewal

Thank you to everyone who has joined Friends of *inter*PART over the last year. Your membership enables us to become more effective in our fundraising activities which in turn means more support for projects! We hope that you will consider remaining or becoming a member of Friends of *inter*PART. Please complete the tear off slip below and forward to:

Friends of *inter*PART PO Box 1775 Macclesfield SA 5153.

Thank you for your support.



Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel: _____

Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

- Yes I would like to become a member of Friends of *inter*PART and enclose a cheque/money order of \$10.00 payable to Friends of *inter*PART Inc.
- Yes I would like to renew my annual membership and enclose a cheque/ money order of \$10.00 payable to Friends of *inter*PART Inc.

***inter* PART website now online @**

www.interpart.org.au