

Friends of *inter*PART Inc.

International Partners in Action Research and Training

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Newsletter

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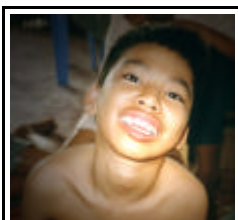
Friends of *inter* PART Inc.
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Welcome to our first Newsletter for 2006.

We extend our warmest greetings to all our members, your continued support of our projects is greatly appreciated and highly valued. We feel that it is timely, to highlight in this issue, details of recent events at the Rabbit School in Phnom Penh. As you will see, there are positive developments in the form of moves towards providing inclusive education, coupled with potential upheaval for the children and staff, with the inevitable relocation of the Nutrition Centre and Rabbit School, by the Cambodian Government. Both these events may ultimately create positive change, as well as providing many new challenges. It is for this reason that we realise the importance of maintaining our close involvement and commitment to these children's future.



A big cheery
Thank You from Pheang
on behalf of all his friends
at the Rabbit School

You may have noticed that, from our last edition, the format of our Newsletter has changed from an A3 fold-out to single A4 pages. A change in circumstances has initiated this new look and we wish to express our thanks to the Macclesfield Newsletter Committee, for allowing us to use their printing equipment and facilities.

Also in this issue *inter*PART & Associates share with us the latest developments and future plans for the Ethiopia Initiative program. We wish to express our sincere thanks for the most generous donations that certain individuals have contributed to assist with the success of this project.

You may recall that last year the Hills Folk Club dedicated their annual Charity Concert in support of our projects, which turned out to be an absolutely fabulous evening of entertainment and was a complete sell out. Imagine our delight when we recently discovered that they wish to nominate us again this year so, if you would like to share this wonderful occasion with us, please book early - **see you there!**



Hills Folk Club Charity Concert

Saturday 14th October 2006 - 7.15pm
FOLK CENTRE

Cnr. George St. & South Rd. Thebarton

Join us for a fun-filled evening featuring the very best in
local Folk Music

This year's Annual Charity Concert is being performed for the second year
in support of local Charity group

Friends of *inter*PART Inc.

with proceeds going to the **Rabbit School** for severely disabled children
in Phnom Penh Cambodia.

Table bookings available
so bring your friends!

For bookings please contact Ray on 8388 9620

Adults \$15 Children \$10

~ Food & drinks on sale ~

\$\$ Treasurers Report \$\$

Membership

Many thanks to those of you who have renewed your membership for this year – memberships add to our fundraising so they are gratefully received. A letter regarding membership renewal is included with this newsletter.

Members of Friends of *interPART* are very welcome to attend any meetings and be more involved in some way so do not hesitate to contact one of the committee.

Fundraising

So far this year, there have been no major fundraising events although still the proceeds from chocolate sales at the Meadows Barn continue to surprise and delight us.

Special thanks go to Glenn and Vicki Williams for their time in manning the Friends of *interPART* stall at the Macclesfield markets and selling Cambodian gifts and cards.

Although Friends of *interPART* came into 2006 with a healthy bank account due to fundraising activities from 2005 income for this year has been much slower. *This is of particular concern* with the events described in the Rabbit School Update in this newsletter. The Rabbit School in Phnom Penh is the major fundraising project for Friends of *interPART* with the need to dedicate \$6,740.annually to pay for the wages of two of the teachers plus some of the classroom incidentals. Although Friends of *interPART* does not have tax deductible status for donations I ask you to consider any contribution towards this project.

Donations have been made directly to the *interPART* Ethiopia project which have been a wonderful boost to enabling such initiatives as the Disability Booklet 'Disability and Development in Tigray: Taking the Initiative' to be printed and contributions towards immediate needs of disability organisations in Tigray, Ethiopia, to be made.

Jenny Biven Treasurer

The Paralympic Winter Games

I hope that many of you had a chance to watch some of the Winter Paralympics held recently in Torino, Italy. A total of 477 athletes with disabilities, from 39 countries took part and to watch them compete in Alpine skiing, ice sledge hockey, Nordic skiing and wheelchair curling was truly amazing.

On my way home from Italy in January this year, I had a week in Morzine, France, to have fun in the snow and have a go at skiing. It's absolutely exhilarating and great fun!! I now understand the thrill of it and am in awe of anyone who has truly mastered it. To watch men and women who have physical disabilities like paraplegia, amputation of upper and/or lower limbs and vision impairment, skiing down such huge slopes was thrilling. The strength required from one limb (and ski) and to maintain balance using stabilisers (a type of crutch with a small ski), to soar down the slope sitting on a mono-ski or to follow a guide wearing a megaphone or headset, to tell you the trajectory because you can't see it. All of this while travelling at enormous speeds!

Michael Milton, an Australian skier who is now the fastest disabled skier in the world, recently clocked over

200km per hour in the French Alps. He describes it as a similar speed of a small plane or Formula One car accelerating from 0 to 100 kms per hour, in just over 3 seconds. You may have seen Michael interviewed by Andrew Denton on *Enough Rope* last year. Michael had his leg amputated when he was nine years old because of bone cancer.

Before losing his leg, he loved to ski and was motivated to get back to what he loved doing. His motivational tool throughout his recovery, was a video of a one-legged skier in action. Michael's first Paralympics was in 1988 at just 14 years of age. He sees his travels as opportunities to raise public awareness and funds needed to support people with disabilities. He particularly talks with children, about not letting your disability disable your dreams.

The logo for the 2006 Games comprises of three diamond shaped graphics. They represent human figures creating an upward soaring movement, that conveys an impression of energy, joy and the will to aim ever higher. Pretty appropriate but I'd add three more - courage, tenacity and inspiration!

Nicole McDowell - Secretary

Rabbit School Update

- Recent News from Phnom Penh -

The Rabbit School for those of you who are new to this newsletter is a school for children with disabilities in a government orphanage, the Nutrition Centre, in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Funds raised by Friends of interPART have been providing funds towards teachers' salaries and resources for the Rabbit School since the year 2000. The Rabbit School is the only school introducing a special education curriculum into Cambodia and demonstrating that all children can flourish when appropriately assisted. Funds also go towards assisting children who can leave the Rabbit School and make the transition to mainstream schooling.

Over the past 6 months the following letters have been received from Kathy Kremer, a Special Education Advisor who has been working with the Rabbit School. These letters highlight the difficulties faced to provide basic education to these children with so little financial support and lack of infrastructure to ensure confidence in a viable future. However the move towards including the Rabbit School into a government school is a positive one demonstrating the move towards inclusiveness for people with disabilities, despite the uncertainty involved in the process.

October 21, 2005

Dear Jenny and Friends of Interpart,

Update info:

No news about the selling of the Nutrition Centre. Juana (director of CIAI) and I have talked that if it got sold and if there would be any way we could run the place in a different location then we could train the women who care for the children the way we want So your idea of special housing for the children is still in the back of my mind. Just not enough time to do everything. We basically support the place with our own individual funding anyway.

We are currently providing the women with some self esteem and confidence building training with Sally Shaw's group. We are hoping if they are feeling better about who they are and what they are doing we will be

able to talk to them about better treatment of the children. Things are slowly changing for the better there. I am trying out some more adult like underpants for the older residents at the Nutrition Center to get them out of the diapers. I have had some diapers sewn into some regular men's underwear and have asked the ladies to try them out. We are also working on self respect and dignity when changing clothes.

All of the rooms are now decorated with either mobiles or origami designs giving a much happier look about the place. And all of the rooms now have mats for the children to lie on when resting.

I am providing technical assistance to the Activity Room (Play Room) to make it more age appropriate for the residents attending and to give them more structure. It is slowly shaping up. We now have the children in three different groups with each of the teachers teaching a small group. Then they rotate the groups.

A playground will be built in November that will be more user friendly for children with disabilities.

Finally, Mr Touch (head teacher) and I are working on starting a preschool Inclusive classroom at the Nutrition Center. Since we have no model to use in Cambodia when we talk about Inclusion, we want to make this the model classroom. We are beginning interviews tomorrow for the teacher.

We are in the process of sending a letter to Pok Than about including the Rabbit School into a government school. The Ministry has gone with us to look at 2 possible locations and we also have a possible funding source to build several classrooms for the school. Of course, we don't want all the special classrooms in the same building, so we would encourage the school to integrate the classrooms into the old building as well as the new."

Thank you so much for your continued support of the Rabbit School. The start of a new classroom is exciting. Thank you again!

**Sincerely,
Kathy**

continued...

Rabbit School Update - Recent News from Phnom Penh -

February 10, 2006

Dear Jenny,

Thank you so much for the Friends of Interpart donation to the Rabbit School.

Yes, there are changes here. Our new inclusive preschool is now open since Jan. 2nd! It is going well. The teacher, Veth, and teaching aid, Sakuen, are very dedicated and hard working. There is a morning and afternoon session. We have 23 students in all, 7 with more severe physical and mental disabilities, a few with learning problems and some with HIV AIDS. WE are trying to get the caretakers from the Nutrition Centre to carry out some of the things we are working on in the school. Madam Savanna at the Nutrition Centre would not let us use the already existing preschool classroom, so we are squeezed into a small room, but it is OK. We are running despite the smallness of the room. It can get pretty intense at times however!

Da, the teacher in the Rabbit School is leaving this Wednesday. We have not been able to hire another teacher yet. We are getting applications now. It is not good timing since we are trying to do hands on training in the preschool, and will now need to be in another classroom for another new teacher. We just finished our formal training with the two new staff.

I also will be leaving the first part of May and there is no one taking my place. Sinead will be leaving in August as well. That leaves Mr Touch alone with the Rabbit School. He is very capable of running it, but finding funds for it is another thing. Touch is very concerned about this. We have funding for the preschool for another year. Chetra is still here at DAC, so hopefully he will help with this.

Rumors are still strong about the Nutrition Center being sold. No one will tell us anything however. The home next door is being torn down which is a good indicator that the land has been sold. The man who owned the property and the home said he would never sell it. It is just a matter of time before we will have to leave as well. Therefore, we are not sure what will happen to the Rabbit School then. We are trying to find funding to build the school within a government school. If we build in a rural area and the Ministry takes ownership of the program, then one organization said they would

help fund us and give us \$12000. We still need another \$12000. The school that has agreed to allowing us to build on their property is outside of Phnom Penh, which is good for funding, but could be a problem for the staff who work at the Rabbit School. If we build closer into the city, we will need to find all \$24000.

The Ministry sounds interested in including our school into a government school, but want to have the funds in hand now. The top minister of education has already given his support - which is very good. The ministry does not want to pursue this project until we have secured the money because they do not want to waste their time in trying to secure something that will fall through. However it is difficult to get funds unless we have their assurance we can do this.

I am sorry this is such a bleak letter, Jenny. We continue to move forward despite all the road blocks. The good thing is that Touch is still highly motivated. Take the parts you want and you are welcome to use the information from the last letter.

Thanks for your interest and concern in the children of Cambodia.

**Sincerely,
Kathy Kremer**

March 21, 2006
Subject: Rabbit School Budget

Dear Friends of the Rabbit School,

Here are our yearly budgets for the Rabbit School. One is for the 2 classrooms that have all children with special needs and the other one is for the inclusive classroom. The funding for the inclusive classroom for 2006 and 2007 is already taken care of. We need the funding for the 2007 budget for the other two classes. We are in the black about \$2000 - which is good. Touch is in the process of writing up the yearly report for the Rabbit School which you will get shortly.

continued...

Rabbit School Update

- Recent News from Phnom Penh -

We have had some staff changes in the Rabbit School this year. Our teacher in the special class of the Rabbit School, Ms. Da, decided she wanted to change jobs. She left in February. We have just replaced her with a male teacher, Mr. Sothy. About a month later, the new teacher from the Inclusive classroom decided he did not want to stay any longer. He started an MBA and does not have time to study.....

We have not been able to find a teacher to replace him. However, in the mean time, Ms. Da wants to come back to the Rabbit School. Although we really want a certified teacher in the classrooms in order to let people know, especially the ministry that children with disabilities have a right to these teachers as do other children, we also know that DA is a good teacher, her heart is with the children, and she could handle the work. We also would like a certified teacher in the classroom because we want the Rabbit School to be included in a government school. However, we also know that the education system works slowly, so we are thinking we might as well put a teacher in there who we know loves the children and works well with them. The ministry may make exceptions since she has taught so long.

I will be leaving May 5th for America and Sinead will be leaving at the end of July. Mr Touch will be on his own basically. Chetra will be supporting him with getting the school into a government school. I know and believe that Touch will be able to handle the challenges that face him in the next year. He is strong in his commitment to the children and to the school. He was recently offered another job with twice the salary and did not take it. He has many skills and a good working knowledge of special education and he is passing those on to others. Touch has found a school that is willing to accept the Rabbit School onto their property and he has also found a possible funding source for the building of a new school with a Japanese organization.

I have written a proposal as well and am waiting to hear from them. We are also hoping that Handicapped International France will fund the Inclusive Classroom since they are beginning an inclusive project. They will be looking at it this week.

Touch has also secured funding from the Liliane Fonds Foundation to support 10 of the children going to school. They will receive \$185 each for food, clothes, special equipment, and transportation to school if we leave the Rabbit School. The Inclusive Classroom is

going well, despite the teacher leaving. The teaching assistant is very good and very motivated. There are lots of hands on activities and the children are learning.

There is more interaction going on between the caretakers and the physiotherapists. The physio's are teaching the caretakers exercises to help the children. Feeding procedures are also changing. Children are beginning to sit up and eat instead of lying on the floor. The older students are now sitting at a table for meals.

As for the selling of the Nutrition Centre, we still haven't heard the final word. The signs are pretty clear however. Ministry people have come to visit and the beautiful French colonial house next door was torn down. I have talked to CIAI, the organization supporting the NC, to write a letter stating the needs of the children and the caretakers for when it does get sold. At least then, they can't say they didn't know what we needed when they do transfer everyone to another place or places. We will then have evidence to give to the paper if there are injustices that result from them selling the place.

We want to thank you for your continued support of the Rabbit School. If not for your care, concern and generosity, we could never do all the things we are doing with the children. They are benefitting greatly. Their lives are so much richer because of you. We are making progress.

**Sincerely,
Touch and Kathy**

**March 29, 2006
Dear Friends of Interpart,**

.....I also wanted to let you know, that there will be no more Maryknol funding for the Rabbit School other than what is being given to the Inclusive classroom. There will also be no VSO funds coming in.

I will try to do some fund raising at home for the RS, but not sure how much that will be.

Thanks for continuing to support us.

**Thank you!
Kathy**

Rabbit School Photo Gallery

A selection of recent photographs from the Rabbit School Classroom and Therapy Room



interPART & Associates

UPDATE - March 2006

Tigray in northern Ethiopia has become the focus of much of *iP&A's* effort over the past six months or more. As the Tigray work was featured in the last edition, we shall keep this short. Highlights from recent in-country inputs include:

- Finalising the cutting edge 'Integrated Regional Disability Strategy' for Tigray and an associated cross-sectoral Operational Plan, substantial elements of which have been committed to by various government departments for inclusion in their own 5 year strategic plans.
- Increasing understanding of what all of this means among key regional and national stakeholders, and growing interest in developing the processes in other regions; together with our wonderful Tigrayan partners we are doing what international and national experts have just begun to suggest ideally needs to happen but aren't sure how!
- Development of funding proposals for ongoing development and implementation of key activities
- From Australia, a draft brochure on Partnering with DPOs for Development in Tigray.

Through the second phase of a Documentation and Communication project with REST (Relief Society of Tigray), working with staff to enhance systems and capacity for the:

- Development of Resource Notes, primarily to support field work including NRM, water and soil conservation, as well as irrigation, animal and plant crops.
- Writing and using Case Stories.
- Updating and developing formats for the Annual Report, REST Brochure, etc.
- Development of a Booklet on REST's work and experience.

Workshops, with follow-up mentoring and assistance, are facilitating story work and product development.

The enthusiasm and trust of our friends and partners in Tigray to progressing these concepts for the benefit of the many vulnerable people, including those with disability, who live in this awe-inspiring yet tough part of Africa, is perhaps the greatest highlight.

While in Tigray, follow-up activities on behalf of Friends of *interPART* have occurred with:

- the Abyssinia Disabled Homeless Cooperative, to review housing construction progress and consider options for meeting goals given the escalating cost of building;

- the newly formed Mentally Retarded Association whom FoIP is supporting in undertaking some baseline survey work and a needs assessment – the first in Tigray;
- seed funding to the Disabled Persons Cooperative at Hagare Selam to undertake some marketing assessments for some innovative enterprises, including iodising salt; goitre and similar conditions affecting animals is a major problem in the highlands which the salt imported via camel trains from the Afar region has not yet addressed.

Another workshop with representatives from regional Disabled People's Organisations was conducted with FoIP support, this time on Needs Assessment. [see photo] As with the Leadership and Project Proposal workshop held in November last year, this event was warmly received and learning is already being applied! Further workshops are proposed as part of this ongoing capacity building process.



Gebrekidane (with dark glasses and Braille paper), facilitating the workshop with Kerry. Participants included DPO leaders from Associations representing the Blind, Deaf, Physically Disabled, Ex-Leprosy, Mentally Retarded (their name), Disabled Women and Disabled Veterans.

On other fronts, and closer to home:

- In collaboration with our EarthTech partners, *iP&A* completed Phase 1 of the South East Queensland Traditional Owners Natural Resource Management planning process;
- We continue input into the University of South Australia's Enabling Occupation program for Occupational Therapists.

Finally, in Asia, our post-tsunami initiatives with the World Federation of Occupational Therapists also continue on, with the project expanding into a series of Regional and National Disaster Preparedness and Response action planning and capacity building workshops and support activities.

Capacity development – of systems and skills – and collaborative learning and action are strong themes that continue to bind the different streams of *iP&A* work – *it's great!* - **Kerry Thomas**

Fundraising Items

Wine offer

Friends of *interPART* are pleased to announce that due to popular demand, we are continuing this selection to warm you during these chilly evenings.

The wines are McLaren Vale:



Verdelho 2005

Chardonnay 2004

Cabernet Rose 2005



Pinot Noir 2004

Meritage Blend 2001

Cabernet 2002

All wines \$100.00 a dozen, with Friends of *interPART* distinctive labeling.

Please order through your friends of *interPART* contact
or contact Wayne on **0422 150 627** or waynea@arcom.com.au for further details.

Friends of *interPART* have launched a **TRI NATURE** membership, to develop another opportunity for supporters to assist us in our fundraising activities.



The **TRI NATURE** organisation aligns with our philosophy, and offers a range of high quality products that are:

- Made from natural materials which pose no threat to the ecology (no petrochemicals phosphates and nitrates);
- Use no animal by-products and are accredited on the Preferred Products List of Choice;
- Cruelty Free: no testing on animals;
- Use recyclable plastics.

The products include:

Laundry	High Powered cleaning	General household
Dishwashing	Personal care	Hair & Skin care
Baby care	Car care	

We would love to have the opportunity to supply you, & your friends and family with these products.

You will then have the benefit of:

- Taking these items off your shopping list;
- Doing something positive for the environment;
- Allowing your consumer needs to contribute to assisting those most disadvantaged in our world.

How good is that!

For more information, please contact Wayne on: **email: waynea@arcom.com.au** **tel: 0422 150 627**
or through your Friends of *interPART* contact

For more information about **TRI NATURE**, go to their website at: **www.trinature.com**

Friends of *inter*PART Inc.

VISION

*inter*PART has a vision of an equitable, just and sustainable world, where people who are most vulnerable are treated with respect and understanding, as a basis for enabling self-determination in ways that enhance individual lives and contribute to the wellbeing of communities, now and in the future.

THE SPIRIT OF *inter*PART

- ❖ *inter*PART believes that if we want a better world, it must start with ourselves.
- ❖ *inter*PART believes that any learning or training must be a two-way process.
- ❖ *inter*PART does this by joining in partnership with the local organisations that these people control.
- ❖ *inter*PART wishes to embrace change positively and flexibly.
- ❖ *inter*PART is committed to exploring innovative options for positive action.
- ❖ *inter*PART seeks to work directly with the so called 'little people' who struggle day by day to secure the basics of life to survive.
- ❖ *inter*PART values the wealth of knowledge, understanding and experience of its members, its partners and supporters and seeks a continual sharing in all its activities and decision making.
- ❖ *inter*PART recognises the interdependence of the whole of the created world and will always consider the impact of any initiative upon the environment and social realm.
- ❖ *inter*PART respects the dignity of all humanity, the relationship which exists between us all as human beings and the environment.
- ❖ *inter*PART practices a process of action/reflection to evaluate the effectiveness and implications of any activity to learn lessons for the future.

Friends of *inter*PART

wishes to thank those who have decided to renew their membership this year and in doing so, will help us to maintain our ongoing commitment to the worlds most vulnerable people.