



KAMPUCHEA HOUSE (AUSTRALIA) INCORPORATED

Member Newsletter — June, 2009

Volume 3, Issue 6

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Kampuchea House now has PayPal and credit card facilities for the payment of membership fees and donations (see website for details)

Donations can be sent electronically to

ANZ Royal Bank,
Phnom Penh,

Cambodia

Swift Code:
ANZBKHP

Account Number:
578593
(Kampuchea
House)

Kampuchea House Inaugural Dinner Dance

By all accounts the 120 guests attended the Kampuchea House Dinner Dance on Saturday evening 27th June thoroughly enjoyed themselves. There was plenty of wining, dining, dancing and meeting old and new friends.

Jen Connelly (Vice-President) informed the guests about the youth committee she has set up and outlined their fund-raising and social plans for the coming year. Tom Wilkins, who accompanied Les on the Big Cambodian Bike Ride last year, gave a talk on his impression of Cambodia and his experiences on the bike ride.

Les Stott, our founder and now CEO, gave the audience a review of the development of Kampuchea House to date and outlined plans for the future.

As with all fundraising functions, it was hoped that the guests brought along some spare cash for the auctions which were held. And bring the cash they did.

Some of the fantastic auction items included a BMW for the weekend; two nights at Koendidda Bed & Breakfast; a 6 litre bottle of 2006 Whistling Eagle Shiraz; a St. Kilda football jumper signed by the team, and an extreme rally car driving experience. The raffle prize was a bottle of 1979 Grange wine kindly donated by Martin Soutter. Balloons were on sale with a surprise in each one, including dining vouchers and accommodation at Jemba Rock B&B.

The evening was a fantastic success and raised approximately \$10,000 to help

ensure the on-going viability of Kampuchea House.

Another very pleasing outcome was that four people attending the dinner signed up to sponsor four of our children. (If anyone wishes to sponsor a child contact Belinda (Belinda@kampucheahouse.org) for further details). Also Les now has a fellow rider, Norm Clark, to accompany him on this year's Big Cambodian Bike Ride commencing on September 20 and going for six days.

This evening would not have been the success it was without the generous support of the following sponsors:

Bib Stillwell BMW

Koendidda Bed & Breakfast

William Dor

Graeme Hall

Maharb Group

Barbara Hermon

Wayne & Eileen Crewes

Royal South Yarra Lawn Tennis Club

Hawthorn Football Club

St. Kilda Football Club

Paul Murphy

Dirt Cheap CDs

Melrose Airport Parking

John Sands

Il Solito Posto Restaurant

Peninsula Hot Springs

Re-Creation Health Club

Marc Stafford Health & Fitness

Lord Cardigan Restaurant

ANZ Bank

Hyles & Cameron

Pebble Lane Candles

Real Hair

Dawn Fraser

Sapore Restaurant

Zariah Jewellery

Colin Stubs

Basia Mille Bed & Breakfast

Middle Park Bar & Café

Raw Hair Hampton

Jemba Rock Bed & Breakfast

Body Gallery Hampton

Martin Soutter

The Committee would also like to thank all those members and supporters who came along and so generously bid for auction items and bought raffle tickets and balloons.

Special thanks to the band, Groovemaster, who very kindly donated their services for the evening and, judging by the number of people on the dance floor, were a great hit.

We can highly recommend the band and anyone wishing to book them can contact Salty on 0419359829 or check out their web site - www.myspace.com/groovemasterband.

It was a chilly night in Melbourne but the warmth generated by the supporters of Kampuchea House matched the warmth that the children and staff were experiencing back in Cambodia. From both the staff and the children...THANK YOU SO MUCH.



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CEO Report to Members



The current economic plight of the world's countries is of great concern to all. However, it is of even greater concern to the developing nations of the planet, especially Cambodia.

The low tourist season is so low that it is not a season at all. Entries to the country by plane are 15% lower than this time last year, although, due to the completion of the road between the Thai border and Siem Reap, land entries are up on last year's low season.

The ordinary Khmer worker is battling to make ends meet with rice prices up and workers being laid off in, not only tourism but, in all sectors.

Non Government Organizations (NGOs), of course, are also feeling the pinch. In Siem Reap Province, eight of the thirty-six orphanages have closed already. I have no doubt that more closures are to come in the remaining months of the year. The local government officials charged with looking after the interests of the country's youth are spending a great deal of their time trying to place children who resided in the closed orphanages.

Sources of funds for NGOs are drying up rapidly, from the large major benefactors to the everyday person who places a few dollars in a donation box or sponsors a child.

However, as with all crises, it is an opportunity to be creative. I believe that, for too long, aid agencies have relied on government support or major benefactors to hand over money. It is now time to look for new avenues of income, income that will make organizations such as Kampuchea House self-sustaining.

In NGOs tighten belts as crisis hits (Phnom Penh Post, June 12, 2009), Yaing Sang Koma, President of the agricultural development NGO, the Cambodian Centre for Study and Development in Agriculture, is reported as saying

that the organization was trying to establish an independent base of income from agricultural products to offset donor contributions. In an agricultural country such as Cambodia, the development of agricultural projects to produce income for NGOs makes commonsense.

It is not too late to invest in cheap, degraded land in the area east of Sala Kor Koh, where the orphanage is located, turn it into productive agricultural land and grow products, such as cassava, which will return at least a small profit each year. It is these types of projects that Cambodia-based NGOs must turn to if they are to ensure long-term viability and, indeed, sustainability.

I am pleased to report that Kampuchea House, in its quest for alternative funding opportunities, has found a niche market which will assist us to raise funds to support the running of the organization. I simply refer to the project as a Special Sponsorship program which involves the use of our Siem Reap headquarters as a foster home.

Recently, a friend approached me asking if I could assist an Australian businessman (name withheld) who had formed a bond with a sixteen year old, illiterate Cambodian boy, living and working with the boy's stepfather in Bangkok. The benefactor wanted to have the boy educated and given a safe living environment but did not know how to go about it.

Sokhoeun, our Director, and I had a meeting with the Australian businessman, showed him both the Siem Reap complex and the Sala Kor Koh site and mapped out a possible plan of action. The infrastructure of our Siem Reap headquarters offered exactly what the gentleman had imagined for his protégé - a house mother to cook and tend to the boy's needs, other children for company, a safe and secure environment, English and Khmer studies and people who would oversee the program.

The boy, Ing Dara, now resides at Kampuchea House in Siem Reap and the organization receives a monthly fee plus all expenses for the young man.

The businessman was moved to tears when he was shown the plan for Ing Dara, only twenty-four hours

after our initial meeting. His dream for the boy was beginning to happen.

As an added, unexpected bonus, Kampuchea House will receive a substantial sponsorship from our Australian friend. But, it is the use of our amazing facilities which is offering another avenue for raising funds. We can accommodate the wishes of philanthropists who have their own project but do not know how to go about making it happen.

Sokhoeun and I are continuing to try to come up with new and creative ways of making Kampuchea House a leading social welfare organization here in Cambodia. We have one such idea but it is in its infancy with planning.

In January of this year, we welcomed the Vice Principal of Westbourne Grammar, Jim Mitchell, and the 2008 prefects, Samantha, Jessica, Matthew and Nicholas. It was a great pleasure to have representatives of one of our major benefactors spend time at Sala Kor Koh and, more importantly, see the benefits of their hard work.

Kampuchea House has had many other visitors to our complexes in Sala Kor Koh and Siem Reap. Some have been volunteers who have donated their services and also their money and gifts. We have benefitted from the services of a trained nurse, a computer guru, a TESL graduate, a graphic designer and photographer, a business graduate and a marketing graduate. All have added substantially to the development of Kampuchea House.

Buildings and Land

House 3

Since last year, we have completed the building of House 3 which is a slightly larger dwelling that is built in under the living quarters to contain our library and resource centre.

This building has also become a focus for the children being the coolest place for the children on a hot day and the place where the birthday parties are held. It also contains Kheng's office and the living quarters for Hom, our assistant to Kheng.

House 4

One of our benefactors (name withheld) has pledged the funds for the building of House 4 which will be identical to House 3. We plan to have this house completed by the end of the calendar year, depending on our financial status. I don't propose to build this house, or any other, without the ongoing funds to support the children who would be residing therein.

The additional rooms underneath the living quarters will be used for volunteer accommodation and a sick bay.

Community Centre

The Community Centre has lived up to and, indeed, exceeded all expectations. It is the hub of our Sala Kor Koh complex and is only devoid of activity when the children are asleep. We are indebted to Westbourne Grammar, its students, staff and parents, and to the late Mr. Richard Pratt, for their generosity which enabled the building of the Centre.

Front Fence

Thanks to a grant from the Snowy Mountain Engineering Corporation (SMEC), we were able to build our front entrance. This now gives us a measure of security, although the side and rear fences are yet to be built. It is certainly a very impressive construction, the only thing missing being the sign above the gate. We are still debating over whether to have a metal sign or a vinyl sign, the latter being the most preferred at this stage. The wording has been agreed upon. In all signage in Cambodia, the Khmer must be on top and in larger lettering than the English. We await the new Kampuchea House corporate designs and funding before finalizing the printing of the sign.

Future Development

Our modest plans for this calendar year are still on target. We are planning to construct the laundry later in 2009 when we expect to have a group of students visit us from St. Leonards College in Brighton. However, there will need to be some funding required but, as yet, no estimate of the cost has been collated.

The land at the rear of the property at Sala Kor Koh has been deep ploughed and awaits the construction of a cow-proof fence



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around it before planning for the farm commences. The gray water from our underground tank is pumped onto this land each month. However, this water is still not clean enough for use on farm produce. Some adjustments will need to be made to the grease traps before the water can be utilized for the farm during the dry season.

Kampuchea House Siem Reap Office

The expansion of our office and residential premises at Vannary Villa in Siem Reap has been due to the desire of the landlady to have us remain at her apartment complex.

I spoke with our landlady and expressed our desire to move due to anticipated extra space being required to house Sophary and possibly several other children in the near future. She offered a discount on the monthly rent and, in addition, had our old office and classroom converted into an additional bedroom with the promise of another conversion should we require it in the future.

The provision of security, a generator for when the power is turned off, furniture and off street parking were always the attractions of the complex but the added space meant that we had room for expansion for the foreseeable future. We now have five bedrooms with the capacity for an additional bedroom should we require it.

The Children

School Progress

We battle with the school system here with many public holidays and long vacations. Monthly class rankings are often not completed or, when completed and posted in secondary schools, they are ripped down from notice boards.

On what we do know, our more gifted children continue to stay at the top of their respective classes. Chinh and Sokhon are performing well as are Kosorl, Sor and Mean albeit that these three are well behind the class that would be expected of their age.

Channy struggles at school and may be in the same situation as Peach was when she was at primary school, that is she has severe learning difficulties.

Peach is moving slowly towards

graduation from the hairdressing school which she attends. We have been told by the trainers that she takes twice as long to learn a skill as the other students.

We will know more about Duong in the next month as she will sit the exam for entry into the Paul Dubrule traineeship program.

Sophary will re-sit the entrance test for the Preparatory Program at Paul Dubrule next month. She has fallen behind in class rankings since she was promoted two classes at the end of last year's academic year which is of concern to us.

Health

I am pleased to report that all children are very healthy. Every child will have completed their Hepatitis inoculations by next month - our two most recent children, Yeth and Yim have one more injection.

All the children are either gaining weight or maintaining a healthy weight for their size, bearing in mind that almost all of the children are stunted. A good indicator of this is the comparison between Rea, aged 3, and Chan Ratt, aged 9. They are almost the same height and weight yet there is a six year age difference. We continue to give milk once a week to the children and fruit as often as we can (at least three times per week).

Staff

It is a requirement of the Cambodian Government that we have a nominated position for the person who would assume control of Kampuchea House in the absence of our Director Sokhoeun.

We have renamed the Sala Kor Koh position to Vice Director, Manager of Sal Kor Koh and the deputy's position to Assistant to the Vice Director. Since Kheng had previously held the position of Vice Director prior to relocating to Sala Kor Koh and this had not been updated, no paperwork is required.

I am pleased to say that all staff from last year have remained with us over the past twelve months, a testimony to the job and working conditions of Kampuchea House. Excluding the Chief Executive Officer, we now have eleven staff, all of whom are Cambodian nationals.

Our first English teacher, appointed after the 2008 AGM, did leave us unexpectedly due to family problems but he was quickly replaced by the Director of the local secondary school who works on weekday nights only.

Funding and Accounting in Cambodia

The 2008 Big Cambodian Bike Ride was a huge success with Tom Wilkins and me covering over 600 kilometres in blistering heat and dry conditions, except for the final seven kilometres when the heavens opened.

The rewards came in the form of AUD\$33,000 for Kampuchea House and an amazing sense of accomplishment. This amount of money far surpassed our wildest expectations and I am proud to have ridden with Tom, my former student and a remarkable young person who acts rather than speaks.

Our T-shirt sales at Angelina's Café produced a very good result, with many extra items being purchased from the proceeds. Our donation boxes were moderately successful. However, it is a battle to be able to collect the funds at the end of each month as the boxes have the contents removed by ingenious methods. As a result, we now have only two boxes in operation, one at Angelina's Café which produces excellent returns and one at Jasmine Angkor Restaurant, where we continue to try and outwit the staff and security.

Sales and donations at Angelina's Café will cease at the end of the financial year when the café closes and, so, an alternative money-raising program will need to be found.

A number of donations were received from visitors to Sala Kor Koh and this money, likewise, was able to be utilized to purchase extra items such as road gravel, bricks and pavers for our paths, extra bedding and extra kitchen equipment.

In summary, I can report to the members that Kampuchea House is progressing steadily but we are keeping an eye on the current economic situation and how it impacts upon us. We must not take the attitude of riding through this crisis but of pushing it aside with new, inspirational ideas. We must consider the possibility that

the previous economic climate may never return nor might the new climate resemble anything like its predecessor. Having said this, we must not over extend ourselves to the point where the viability of the organization is at risk and the future of the current children and staff is uncertain.

I would like to thank the Committee for their continued work and dedication in making Kampuchea House the wonderful home that it is.

I would also like to congratulate our Cambodian staff who hold the children and the organization close to their hearts and who, through their dedication to their jobs, have made a home in which the children are safe, healthy and happy.

And, a special thank you to our major benefactors - Westbourne Grammar and the late Mr. Richard Pratt for our Community Centre, Bev and Geoff Edwards for House 3, the Snowy Mountains Engineering Corporation (SMEC) for the front fence, the Smorgon Foundation for their generous support with the 2008 Bike Ride, Pauline Van Driel in Italy for her ongoing financial support and friendship via email and Pauline Jones in New South Wales for her continued support of our organization.

I wish to include a personal thank you to friends who have given me support whenever I have needed it - Bill Lyon and his partner Michelle who always empty their pockets when I visit them, Rita at the South Melbourne Market who loves our children like her own, Rocky at Penny Farthing Cycles in Middle Park who always assists me with my bike rides and Marty at Via Volare Café in Fitzroy for the ongoing caffeine fix.

I wish the members well in the coming twelve months - good health and best wishes to you from all at Kampuchea House and thank you for your support.

Les Stott, Siem Reap, June 2009



Big Cambodian Bike Ride 2009

The route for this year's ride is:

Day 1 - Sunday, September 20
Siem Reap to Battambang - 185 kms

Day 2 - Monday, September 21
Battambang to Pursat - 105 kms

Day 3 - Tuesday, September 22
Pursat to Kampong Chhnang - 89 kms

Day 4 - Wednesday, September 23
Kampong Chhnang to Phnom Penh
- 91 kms

Day 5 - Thursday, September 24
Phnom Penh to Kampot - 139 kms

Day 6 - Friday, September 25
Kampot to Sihanoukville - 105 kms

TOTAL = 700+ KMS

Les Stott has completed three previous rides for charities in Cambodia – Bangkok to Phnom Penh in 2005, the Phnom Penh to

Les during the 2008 ride.



Each year, Les Stott, the founder and now CEO of Kampuchea House, completes a long distance bike ride for his orphanage in Sala Kor Koh, near Siem Reap and for the Cambodian community.

The money raised assists with the provision of food and clothing, together with the schooling and medical expenses of the children.

As with last year, a donation will be made from the proceeds to the Angkor

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At this stage of our development, monies donated to Kampuchea House (Australia) Inc. are not tax deductible.

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