



# KAMPUCHEA HOUSE

## (AUSTRALIA) INCORPORATED

Member Newsletter — May, 2009

Volume 3, Issue 5

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## YOUTH HEALTH PROGRAM



The three oldest children at Kampuchea House, nineteen year olds Peach, Sophary and Duong, this month attended a free Youth Health Program at the Reproductive Health Association of Cambodia (RHAC). The girls attended the three session course over four weeks, a holiday week punctuating the course.

The girls were very eager to go, probably because it involved days off school. For Sophary, it meant a trip into Siem Reap to be with her sisters.

The course was advertised as involving the study of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), HIV/AIDS, family planning, body hygiene and drugs.

However, the main content of the course according to the girls was information regarding HIV/AIDS — use of condoms, single use of needles, correct procedure for the taking of

blood when a reward for their participation in such an important part of every child's learning. subjecting themselves for every child's learning. blood tests, the passing of HIV/AIDS from mother to child, not to discriminate against those who have contracted the disease and the my t h s

surrounding the disease.

It was impressed upon the girls that they not have a boyfriend while studying and they should never be alone with a boy.

Duong and Peach commented on the lack of concentration of those present during the course, with people unable to answer the questions of the teacher.

It is a disappointment as so much was promised by RHAC and so little was produced.

Part of this may be due to the reluctance of Khmer people to discuss openly issues such as sexually transmitted diseases and family planning.

Kampuchea House will endeavour to make up for the shortcomings in the course by seeking qualified Western doctors and nurses who are willing to instruct our older girls. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) also has some excellent material dealing with family planning.

At the end of the course, CEO Les presented the girls with toiletries, including perfume, as

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:

ANZBKHPP

Account Number:

578593

( Kampuchea House )





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## From the CEO

### To know the other, you must other the known

In my past life as a teacher of Humanities, I introduced this saying to my students which, I hoped, would allow them to understand better the machinations of the various Eastern cultures.

In almost every aspect of daily life, eastern cultures must be viewed from a neutral or a new perspective to the perspectives that we have grown up with during our lives.

When I arrived here in Cambodia, I tried to stay true to the words above.

But Cambodia is an example where, trying to view things from a new perspective, is even more difficult than if, say, you were in Thailand or Vietnam.

Nothing seems to follow any plan or any logic. Where else would banks be shut for a week because of a public holiday? ATMs can do only so much.

What is logical today, is different tomorrow. What business would turn away a customer with cash money to spend? Well, in Cambodia, nothing, but nothing, interrupts the two hour lunch.

So, even if you begin your understanding from a new perspective, Murphy's Law (if anything can go wrong, it will) will always jump in to spoil everything.

And...you start all over again.

Holidays and rain seem to have dominated this month in Siem Reap.

The wet season appears to be with us much earlier this year. Rice fields which were dry in May of last year are now beginning to fill with water.

And, we have had our May public holidays for the King's Birthday and the planting of



Ki Ki stands watch as the skies blacken

the rice ceremonies.

Last Sunday we received some prime time television advertising...FREE. Any (former House Mother) and her comic partner Ni Swat appeared on TV5 during the Teen Talent Show. In both of their comic routines, Kampuchea House and myself received plugs. It might not get us any donations but it gives us a presence in the lives of the Khmer people.

This is all part of a push to see if we can attract donations from Khmer people, both here in Cambodia and abroad in places such as Melbourne, Long Beach (California) and Paris where there a large concentrations of ex-pat Khmer people.

When Sokhoeun and I are in Melbourne later this month, we will be meeting with representatives of the Khmer community to see if we can enlist their help.

Both Sokhoeun and I traveled to Phnom Penh recently to attend a monthly meeting of the Phnom Penh Rotary Club. The lunch meetings are held at the Intercontinental Hotel each month.

Along with other guests, we were made extremely welcome by the small membership group.

A highlight for both of us was meeting Prince Sisowath Phandaravong, a member of the Cambodian Royal Family. He is a delightful man and was

eager to discuss his work and find out about Kampuchea House.

For me, the meeting was the longest English language discussion I have had since arriving in Cambodia almost two years ago. Those in attendance were from a diverse range of backgrounds—education, economics, business, the law and government.

These meetings are something that Sokhoeun and I plan to attend on a regular basis, work permitting.

We have been blessed by the quality of the volunteers who have spent time with us at Kampuchea House. And none more so than our most recent volunteers, Karis and Cat from England. The children loved them both, especially with the games sessions that the two vibrant young women



Cat (top) and Karis - our two volunteers from Great Britain

conducted.

While they were here, Karis and Cat used their recently acquired skills in marketing and business to complete a report on possible directions for Kampuchea House. They also wrote the script for our promotional video and started filming segments for the video using my new HD Camcorder.

The two young ladies have moved on with the next leg of

their world travels. They will return to London three days before Christmas where they will spread the Kampuchea House word for us and try to arrange some speaking engagements for me.

I continue to train hard for the



Up early and training hard

upcoming Big Cambodian Bike Ride, due to start on September 20, with longer training rides now happening every second day.

When I start my rides at 6.30 in the morning, it is around 28 degrees but it quickly heats up with 35 or 36 degrees being the norm by 9AM. Please make the perspiration worthwhile by sponsoring the Ride. Page 4 of this newsletter contains a form and our web site [www.kampucheahouse.org](http://www.kampucheahouse.org) now has PayPal which makes donating a great deal easier than before.

I trust all our members and supporters are well and many thanks for your continued support of the work we do here in Cambodia.

Les Stott





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## On site

Luckily, some of the paths between buildings had been completed when the rains set in. Kheng and Hom, together with our security guard, do their work laying the paving blocks early in the morning to avoid the hot sun and the afternoon rains.

Currently, the guys are digging out by hand the roadway from the front gate to the toilet/shower block in preparation for the screenings to arrive. There are plenty of eager workers as the children love to be involved in site works such as digging the road. The reward of a coconut ice-cream from the traveling ice-cream man is ever present.

The road and paths will make a

huge difference during the wet season, preventing the orange mud from being carted into the buildings.

The extra classes in Khmer and English are now being conducted in the library to escape the noise of the meal preparation and, of course, the rain as it is blown into the Community Centre by the strong winds.

Our newest children on site, Yet and Yim, in particular Yet, have settled into the Kampuchea House routine. Yet is our star student being in Grade Nine at the local high school in Dom Dek. She has extra lessons in Mathematics and Science at the school.

It is very pleasing to let members know that Sor, our boy who has experienced so much violence in his life, has

learnt to control himself when angry. He was prone to lash out but now, through the guidance of Kheng and the team, he has learnt to control his aggression in almost all instances. This is a big achievement as it was expected that it would take a year or more to modify his behavior, if at all.

Our vegetable garden continues to produce plenty of papayas, chillies and beans. Once the wet season is over, the farm at the rear of the property will be developed.



Torrential rain is almost a daily occurrence now



## Kampuchea House Inaugural Dinner Dance

Invitations, including a ticket booking slip, to The Dinner Dance on 27<sup>th</sup> June at Royal South Yarra Lawn Tennis Club were mailed this week to our Melbourne members and supporters. (If you have not received an invitation please contact Belinda on 0412970709 for booking details). Your committee has put a lot of work into organising this night - however we need you to be there to ensure it is a success! We have great items for auction such as a luxury car for the weekend, accommodation at B&Bs, restaurant vouchers, signed football jumpers, massages etc. etc. Royal South Yarra is a lovely venue with excellent food and wine, and the band is guaranteed to have you dancing (and singing along!) to lots of great music. Les and Sokhoeun (our Cambodian Director) will be there and hope to meet as many of you as possible. Please join us for a great night and help to ensure the continuing viability of Kampuchea House.

## Annual General Meeting

The AGM will be held on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> June, commencing at 6.30pm. The venue is the Waugh Room, Wesley College (St. Kilda Road Campus). All financial members are invited to attend. We are looking for new members to join our committee. If you are interested come along or contact Belinda on 0412970709 for further information.

## Special Announcement

We have another wedding at Kampuchea House. Director's Assistant, Sour Sokleng (Leng) will marry her fiance, Ly Rattanak, on July 4 and 5 in Siem Reap.

Kampuchea House CEO Les will attend the wedding upon his return from Australia. However, Sokhoeun will still be in Australia...tough luck Sokhoeun. Les will eat and drink your share. The three oldest girls, Sophary, Duong and Peach will represent the children.



## Beyond Classrooms

CEO Les has now formalized his speaking arrangements and philanthropic work by establishing Beyond Classrooms. Les has specialized previously in speaking to schools and school students. It is hoped that, through Beyond Classrooms, Les will be able to raise more funds for Kampuchea House by broadening the audience for his talks. However, schools and school groups will always remain as Les' main focus. A new web site, [www.lesstott.org](http://www.lesstott.org) has been created and all details can be found there.

