



Kids International
Development Society

NEWSLETTER

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Hello Everyone,

We hope all is well with you and yours. We have said before that one of the greatest assets that we have here are the connections and contacts which make our work much easier and definitely more effective. One such asset is our friend Kim, a high school teacher and tour guide in Siem Reap. Recently we went out to the countryside with Kim to visit three schools that he assists, with both his own money and with the help of some of his clients. The schools are located 30 kilometres from Siem Reap in a very poor rice farming area where Kim grew up. One school needed a roof to restore use of three more classrooms and another was in need of a storage room as one of the classrooms was being used for that purpose. The third school and the one we decided to focus on is called Kauk Chrey. This school has 350 children enrolled and approximately 60 of the children have little or no food security during the rainy season between rice harvests (about 4 months). For the 60 very poor children the situation between harvests is quite desperate. The teachers and students were making a very valiant attempt at growing vegetables to assist the poorer children. However because of the lack of adequate fencing around the school yard the garden was actually feeding the wandering water buffaloes, pigs, and cows. Due to the poor condition of the school yard fence the animals had their way with the veggies, knocking them down to the stump. KIDS responded to this marauding, munching menagerie with fence poles and barbed wire to keep the beasts at bay and to give future crops a better chance. The children and community came together and did all the labour for the fencing and even pooled their resources to purchase a small strip of land together to add to the school yard for expansion of the garden and possibly more classrooms in the future.

When we went to check the fencing last week, the commune chief, head of the education committee, teachers and principal were there to meet and thank us. While having a discussion they asked us if there was anyway we could work together to assist the poorest children. We were very impressed with their collaborative and caring attitude. K.I.D.S. has now provided funds to buy rice and staples for the children. Some of the villagers, who have the means, will also chip in to help tide the children through the four critical months. We look forward to working more with this dedicated group in the future. As luck would have it a local Nanaimo school, Pauline Haarer had just held a fundraiser so it was good timing that we could focus these funds on Kauk Chrey School...it is great seeing kids helping kids.

Another friend here Hak works as a social worker/education counselor in another area outside Siem Reap. We went out to the countryside to meet six kids (4 girls and 2 boys, 10 to 14 years old) their families lack the means to send their children to school and so some of them end up spending time working in brick factories instead of studying. We have now enrolled them in school and are supporting them with both Khmer and English, the children and families are very happy. Hak will keep an eye on them regarding studies, counselling and emotional support and provide them with hygiene supplies and medicine if needed.

In Siem Reap there are many land mine victims, one such man is Vanna, who lost both his hands while fighting the Khmer Rouge. We have known him for some time and Vanna has always greeted us warmly and is very pleasant as he stands all day in the heat selling books in an attempt to feed and educate his children. Ten hours a day seven days a week either Vanna or his wife Pali are working the book cart as they do not want to beg for a living. Speaking to him we asked if his two girls were in school and he said they were in Khmer school and love to study. The girls dream of studying english but they cannot afford to send them. We offered to enrol his girls in Future Bright School, kind of a private school that costs 12 dollars a month per child to learn english, totally impossible for Vanna and Pali. We collected the children and his wife and headed off to Future Bright and enrolled both girls for one year and purchased all the lesson books and uniforms required for them, learning english will help them and their family in the future. Vanna and Pali were very thankful and relieved at the stroke of good fortune for their children. To see people struggle against all odds and yet still hold their dignity and desire while working for a better life, especially for their children, is really inspiring, being able to support such people on your behalf is very moving.

With Appreciation
Rick and Adrienne