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News Update

Dr Gary Hewett

AWARENESS CAMBODIA INC



2006 and the opportunity to really make a difference is passing quickly, but one person who is making sure the year doesn't get away is Dr Melanie Chang. I was recently in Cambodia and had the privilege of catching up with her. As many of you will know, Dr Mel has taken 5 months out of her busy schedule in Melbourne to oversee the inception of the Operation Nightingale (ON) project – a new medical initiative in rural Cambodia. Taking on needs that others have understandably avoided does come with its share of challenges, especially when we consider that there are currently only 3 Khmer trained doctors attempting to service 53 health centres across the whole Kompong Spoe province.

Yet it's the incredible commitment and self-sacrifice evidenced by amazing people like Dr Mel that serve as a continued inspiration and reminder of what we can achieve when working together to better the lives of people less fortunate than ourselves.

Wishing you a successful and rewarding start to the new financial year.

Gary Hewett Founder / Chief Executive Officer

NB: ON is always on the lookout for medical professions who are willing to volunteer blocks of time to assist at its clinics (preferable blocks of 2 months or more).

The Why and Who of Awareness Cambodia?

In the late 70s Cambodia was bombed, heavily land mined and saw the systematic execution of the top 25% of its population under Pol Pot. It now reels under a second disaster, AIDS, amongst the highest rates outside Africa. Still recovering from its violent and traumatic history, much of the country remains without any reliable economic or social infrastructure.

After a life-changing visit to Cambodia in 1995, Perth dentist Dr Gary Hewett founded Awareness Cambodia Inc. Awareness Cambodia Inc is a not-for-profit charity which takes in orphaned children in Cambodia who either have been orphaned by AIDS, who are themselves HIV+ or who suffer from AIDS.

Sunshine House provides a stable environment where our children are housed, fed and educated. They are also fed and equipped with agricultural skills through the means of an onsite eco-farm. Over the next 5 years, we're looking to transform Sunshine House from its current "small village" status into a larger community called: **"The Awareness Cambodia Community" - Kompong Spoe** which over time will embrace medical and dental clinics, a House of Progress for our developing young adults, a day hospital and further business development within the eco-farm.

With AIDS maintaining an alarming rate throughout the country, many children have been abandoned or orphaned and are easy prey for the drug traffickers, forced labour and prostitution. Child prostitution remains a serious problem in Cambodia. UNICEF estimates that 30 to 35% of all sex workers are aged between the ages of 12 and 17 years.

Awareness Cambodia has worked on the ground for over a decade targeting the ever changing needs of Cambodia, taking ideas such as Sunshine House and making them a reality. We invite you to partner with us in seeing these initiatives' continued development.

Pisey from SH, represented Kompong Spoe province in a competition involving 6 provinces held at Kompot.

She came in **1st place** in the 100m running race.

We're very proud of her and her achievement!



**CONGRATULATIONS
PISEY**



Invitation to "Celebrating the Children"

On behalf of the Awareness Cambodia team, we would like to invite you to join us in "Celebrating the Children". Without your support and participation, the children of Sunshine House could never enjoy the incredible life and opportunities they do.



We look forward to meeting you in person, please contact the office for more information.

Dates: 16th (Sat) & 17th (Sun) September 2006
Country: Phnom Penh, Cambodia

RSVP: cambodia@awarecam.org.au
Venue: transport provided to various locations



Above Nan (in the Afro) and Team

Report: Nan Seow
Singapore

I had always wanted to do something for Cambodia after I visited the country a few years back. Perhaps it was the spirit of determination I saw in the people's eyes, striving for a better life and future, that touched me. Even the man in the street who lost his leg to a land mine went about his daily business without any hint of self-pity. Then the opportunity arose in planning a vacation to scale Mount Kinabalu (4095.2m) in Sabah, East Malaysia. Someone suggested using this event for fund-raising and I jumped upon the idea. My 4 other travel mates gamely accepted the

challenge to scale Mount Kinabalu in a target time of 5 hours. The average time is 8 hours.

To help us complete the challenge, we trained as a group every weekend at Bukit Timah for two months, in addition to our individual running and steps training during the week. We even had friends who joined us for the training because they believed in our cause. Everyone took time off their busy schedules for the training, which was tedious and at times, boring as it was repetitive.

We raised S\$6,080 (which was donated to 2 orphanages) through family and friends. Every person who contributed gave out of their heart. We send out a simple email explaining *what* we were doing and *who* we were doing this for. People started writing in to express their support for the cause and contributed with great kindness and generosity. I was very encouraged when friends as far away as Jakarta and Perth made extra efforts to get the money transferred to Singapore. I was also touched by the kind

concern that many friends expressed about the challenge that we were undertaking.

The ascent up Mount Kinabalu was as strenuous as we had expected and each one put in their best effort to complete the climb in good time. We were first-time climbers and the highest 'mountain' I had ever climbed before this was Bukit Timah (164m)! During the climb, despite aching legs and back, every team member pushed on in quiet determination, only stopping very briefly at the resting huts to catch our breath and drink water. Strangers, who learned about our cause from the blurb on our t-shirts, encouraged us during the climb.

We completed the climb in 6 hours 9 minutes. We were happy to have done this in good timing and hope that the funds raised will help in some measure, the children in the homes to reach their dreams.

Nan



Above: Sunshine House kids putting on their new T-Shirts kindly donated by Divejunkie.



Thankyou

Giving a Helping Hand

Brochure...update

We appreciate each of you who have sent in donations to fulfil our "urgent needs". So far we have raised AUD \$8000. We still have a way to go but I want to thank those who have got involved.

To keep you updated on the progress of "Giving a Helping Hand" brochure, we plan on sending a report and photographs of each item purchased towards the end of the year.

Digital DOCUMENTS
Your Print and Copy Centre

Thanks Digital Documents for kindly taking up our printing needs at Awareness Cambodia.

Your generosity really keeps admin costs down allowing funds donated to be released to where they can do the most good.

MONTHLY MARKET STALL TO RAISE FUNDS

Report: Lamberta Groves



Once a month Janice Maxwell and Liz Hird spend a Saturday afternoon at the Pittwater Markets, on the Northern Beaches of Sydney, selling items to raise funds for Sunshine House.

Janice, her 95 year old mother Liz, friends and neighbours make items for sale to raise funds for the orphanage. Items vary from folk art, to crocheted items, scarves, bags toys, swim wear and much more!



Above: Janice & Liz

Plans are underway to erect pictures of Sunshine House all around the walls of the tent so that customers become aware that all money made goes to support Sunshine House.

It is also a great "talking point", a place where all those involved "brag" about the work done by Awareness Cambodia. Janice and Liz were part of a team of four women who went to Cambodia in August 2005 and they haven't stopped talking about it since that day!

Many of those visiting Cambodia will have met Ray Toy our National Director. Unfortunately his term of employment in Cambodia came to an end late in April.

Farewell So we say a sad farewell to both Ray and Shamim and appreciating all their efforts over recent years. "There's a time and season for everything and we must start thinking about our future together with all that entails" Ray said, "which means I need to earn money again." "Serving in Cambodia has been an amazing and life changing experience. I have a three year contract in Shanghai; after that our options are open; maybe we'll return to Cambodia. I'll remain involved with ACI and Cambodia on some level for an indefinite period as well."

We at ACI want to extend our appreciation to Ray for his services to the Cambodian children and staff over the last couple of years, and wish he and Shamim the best of success.

On another note we want to take this opportunity to welcome Rob McCullough into his new role working in Cambodia.

Rob has worked as our International Director in the Perth office for many years. With Ray's departure he, along with his wonderful wife Gill, have relocated to Phnom Penh on the 4th May to oversee our operations in Cambodia.

We're all looking forward to Rob's input particularly with our two most recent initiatives; House of Progress and Operation Nightingale projects up and running.

Its great to have Rob and Gill in Cambodia for the next 6 months and we know plenty will be achieved as they become part of the team at the coalface.

"Welcome to the Cambodia Rob & Gill"

Welcome

ACI—Phnom Penh Office

We are pleased to announce that a building has been secured in Phnom Penh. Due to financial restraints over the last few years, we had been forced to work largely from home offices. Obviously with ACI's growing personnel and new projects the optimum solution was a central office to co-ordinate on the field and liaise with the Perth head office.

ACI has also employed a Khmer Administrator, Sinaroth Peth who is being trained to take up the administration working closely under the guidance of the National Director.



Above: New office undergoing fit out.

Growth is certainly not without its challenges but our Phnom Penh office is a real key in making the Awareness Cambodia Community – Kompong Spoe a reality.

House of Progress—update

The House of Progress is proceeding well. A long term lease agreement has been signed securing a brand new facility. The premises consist of 3 joining three story buildings which the owners have re-designed to suit our needs in accommodating older teenagers

They are situated in Kompong Spoe town on the main road between Phnom Penh and Kompong Som (Cambodian Port) and resort area, close to high schools, medical clinics and educational facilities, which makes it ideal for our chargers.

The ground floor will house the kitchen, office, dining as well as a proposed combined restaurant and internet café in the near future.

The second floor accommodates approximately 30 persons while the third holds the common room with a top floor for recreation, BBQ & entertaining teenage friends.

Lesley Hewett (Project Manager) along with Pete and Kath Lampard (HOP Co-coordinators) are working hard preparing for the next stage in the project—to furnish the premises ready for our first arrivals in July.

HOP UNDER CONSTRUCTION



My visit to Sunshine House



Reporter: Hong Thach

Left: Hong with children at Sunshine House

Writing about my short trip to Sunshine House brings back lot of wonderful memories, each with its own tale. Each with difference experiences that had impacted and really opened my eyes to things the arrogant me would not have bothered thinking about before. Most importance it change my value and attitude towards my life, it taught me not to value the world, spending on temporary things because I could do so much more if I spent it on some one else who really need it.

What that attitude and that little action or choice I have made. I could put a smile on some one's face, brighten up a little more of their future and really show them a little warmth and love.

Hong

Hong lives in Australia with her family. Like so many Cambodians during the Pol Pot years, Hong was forced to flee.



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How can I help?

Thank you for taking a little time to consider the huge difference we as members of affluent communities can make when we work together to change the lives of those less fortunate. Some of the initiatives outlined in this newsletter have been achieved through the generous private donations of an amazing group of people who have cared enough to partner with us in giving and going. We would love to invite you to join with us in *rebuilding the children of Cambodia*. 95% of donations go directly to our projects. Within Australia all contributions made to Awareness Cambodia Overseas Aid fund are fully tax deductible.

Yes I want to support Awareness Cambodia!

Please fill in the form below and return by
FAX/POST/EMAIL

- I would love to partner with you and commit a monthly gift of \$_____.
- I would love to contribute a special one-time gift of \$_____.
- I would like to receive more information on _____.

YOUR DETAILS: (Please Print)

I Wish To Pay By Cheque/Money Order/Credit Card

Name:
First Name Surname

Address:
.....

Country:.....Post Code.....

Email:

PAYMENT DETAILS: Please debit my (Circle)

Visa Amex MasterCard

Card Number:

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Name on Card _____

Expires:...../.....Signature:.....

Our money in the hands of someone who has already committed themselves to work at the "coalface" may just be the most effective way for us to make a difference.