

Newsletter No. 4: Cambodia, Australia, India, Myanmar

Hello Everyone!

There have been complaints of a lack of information over the past few months! And here I was thinking you are all probably sick of stuff in the inbox! So anyway, here we go before the next event: India and Myanmar. This is a general report on how everything is going in the projects supported by the Douglas A. Campbell Foundation (if you can't find time to read it, then wait for the next one which should have pictures...) You can see that we are working hard trying to do some good projects and trying to find out how to do better ones.

This year has been dedicated to research (and doing). In Cambodia as many NGOs and projects as possible were visited and will do the same in India and in Myanmar. Little by little I am acquiring a good system for finding out how to do things well/better/best. Above all, everything must be documented and available for anyone to see. And so if you are interested in any details of what is going on do please send me a mail and I will send all the appropriate documentation.

The Cambodia project with Chanvoleak

While in Cambodia, I met Chanvoleak Ly (she's the beautiful young woman holding the giraffe in Newsletter No. 3). She is a young graduate who was working at the NGO who had studied computers and English (she speaks it well.) While in the south on the campaign (newsletter No.3), I had been shocked by how badly fed all the staff were and so on. It turned out that the NGO was having funding problems and that the staff had not been paid for months.

On the return journey, Chanvoleak asked me how to make a proposal for her to start her own project so I offered to help. I was astounded how well she prepared the necessary documents. She proposed to set up a program of non-formal education for the children of displaced families (Due to development the people were moved to a new location where there was nothing but an apartment which they had to pay for. As parents had lost their jobs, many of the children had to drop out of school to work as well.) In all the area targeted has 734 families and only one two-room school for young children.

Chanvoleak has started with a community information and training program (to make sure the parents understand the importance of educating their children) and the target is 200 children. The budget is US\$70 per child for the year! (One great news is that two families from Singapore have donated a lot of the funds, thank you.)

In October one of our closest friends will go to Cambodia on government business and then I will go early next year to see how Chanvoleak is getting on. It is my intention of then taking her out of her misery of wondering whether there be funds or not and pledging a three year commitment if the project seems to be really working. Next year the budget comes way down as basic necessities have been met and we will be looking to community involvement in the form of the parents buying the books (?) So next year each child will cost about US\$60.

Australian Bush Fires with Chikwang Sunim

We sent some money to an old friend who is in the middle (Kinglake) of the horrendous Victoria bush fires that destroyed so much and killed so many earlier this year. While talking on the phone, she mentioned all the different recovery projects which she was involved in and how she wished that someone would do more for the many lost people who have lost everything and who are just sitting around. The government, it appears, has provided many basics with many NGOs coming to help but there were no therapists or counselors.

So it sounded such a cry from the heart that we sent a small amount of money to cover travelling expenses for the therapists to treat 50 people over the next six months and a few items for the tent that had been erected. To date (July 2009) there is still not much help on this front from outside and our little project is swinging along. I will visit it at the end of the year

India – Ladakh with Mipam Otsal and LTO

The long term project (have been hoping to help with this for over 20 years and have known the family for over 35 years!) of building a cultural preservation center has become very quickly imperative as Ladakh is losing its culture and heritage very very fast.

The land was given by the government and so a wall had to be quickly built in order to secure it. (The plot is right next to the parliament.) The budget for the building has been made and we are able to participate about 60%. Next year we hope to help with the interior.

The center will consist of a theatre (Mipam Otsal our old friend and president of the Ladakh Theatre Organization (LTO) is currently a government servant in charge of Ladakhi culture), music rooms (for learning and practicing), a small museum and library. Don't worry there will be plenty of pictures to send to you when I return end August!

Myanmar with Nge-Nge

It is a long time since I visited my old friends in Myanmar. I really wanted to go and help out after Hurricane Nargis but had no funds at that time. As my friends are involved in various projects and the monk that I know is also doing incredible work, I thought I would take advantage of going to see them all and to see if there is something that the Douglas A Foundation can do next year. Update to follow...