

Our Cambodia Projects

In 2011, Patti Lee, Barbara Seagram and a group of 50, docked in Phnom Penh. We were armed with clothing, pens, notebooks, rulers, sharpeners, toys, pencils, stickers, and other school supplies. We had heard about an Ontario resident, Lisa McCoy, who had dedicated the last few years to working in Cambodia for several months per year. Working alongside Lisa was a fabulous lady, Australian Pauline Johns. Currently, Pauline is living in Cambodia for 6 - 8 months per year and heads up the Cambodian organization 'Banyan Tree Organization', which manages all of our projects in Cambodia. Pauline volunteers all of her time and pays for all of her travel and living.

In 2011, our group and other friends from the Toronto area donated 40 bicycles to a school outside of Phnom Penh. We went there in a small tuk-tuk along the dusty roads through Phnom Penh and out into the countryside to find that the school was a one-room shack with a cement floor and no desks or chairs. The bikes were given to children, mainly children of landmine victims. It was all very uplifting but Patti and Barbara looked at each other and wondered how long this shack would remain standing.

We inquired how much it would cost to build a permanent school and found that it would cost \$24,000.00 We returned to Toronto determined to build a school. We raised \$40,000.00 that year, so we also furnished two other schools and built a library at one of the schools. Since then, a fourth school has been added; we now have over 500 students in our schools—and we remain committed to sustaining all FOUR schools at a cost of \$25,000 CDN per year. This pays for the salaries of the teachers and librarians, all of the supplies for the teachers and students, lease payments, electricity, maintenance etc. You can see that money goes a long way in this country.

Over the years, many outreach programs have been undertaken to help these landmine affected families to become self-sufficient: a bike repair business, chicken farmer training, sewing lessons with a sewing machine, crafts, a technology centre, and a weaving centre.

There is also a huge need in the remote villages for medical help. Many never see a doctor: they do not have a doctor and cannot afford to travel to one. Malaria and tuberculosis continue to plague the remote villages. We need to educate throughout rural areas regarding the need for sanitation, aiding in the prevention and transmission of diseases. We need to work to ensure the health of mothers during pregnancy and childbirth.

Our focus is to make sure that our students and villagers have:

- Access to safe water. This is a fundamental human need and a basic human right. In some cases, this may be as simple as teaching them the necessity of boiling water.
- Access to health care and education regarding health / sanitation matters.
- Transportation, as appropriate, to clinics in cities for dental, eye, and other medical needs.

There are many that do not have a safe, private toilet. The absence of a safe, private toilet leads to serious health issues, as well as sexual abuse of women and girls. Our schools all have toilets, thus ensuring that the girls can attend school even during their menstrual period. Without toilets at the schools, the girls would miss many days a month of school and often do not return once this has happened a few times.

Patti and Barbara are excited and optimistic about all of these projects and the fundraisers that we do every year. If you are unable to attend one of our fundraisers, but still wish to ***make a donation, we would be so grateful***. Barbara and Patti are an Agency of a charity in Canada; as well, they have formed an alliance with a charity in the USA. As a result, all Canadian and USA donors can receive tax receipts, valid for their own country.

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To make a donation, please send a cheque made payable to:

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or to

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You will receive a tax deductible receipt for any donation of \$25 or more.

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