

NAME CHANGE 18 months ago ODA was changed from Orphanage to Education NGO registration. We have been phasing in the new name Opportunities of Development thru Art to have it recognized since then. May/June this year our adjusted Logo & website changes took place. You may have noticed these with the Sok Maly mail out - but we didn't feel it appropriate to notify of the changes in our sad tribute to her. All old emails etc will still come thru to us but bank name has changed also – please see our website for details

Well little things are sent to us just at the right time. We are all getting a little more in control after our darling Sok Maly passed away. There was no autopsy here of course but the Doctor in charge of ICU, who is internationally trained, said he thought 70% it was the result of eating toxic noodles at her school. Many, many students were very sick after eating them also. She had been at ODA the longest of any of the girls so Leng & Sry On were very badly affected – visiting the monks a few times a week seeking solace to try to deal with it. The children are dealing with it quite well now, as they believe she is now in a womb preparing to be born in her next life – they are all praying that will be a long happy one for her & hopefully she can become a nurse in that life.



Anyway – out of the blue a little enchanting 1 year old girl was sent to ODA. Her parents were school students who had hidden in a village to have the baby out of wedlock, so their parents wouldn't know. An elderly lady took the baby for them, as is the Buddhist way of caring for each other, but she became sick & Somita was brought to us. She came day care

so she had milk & food until the Village & Commune Chiefs got papers together for Leng.



Well a 1 ½ & a 1 year old are certainly keeping Sry On (Lengs wife) on her toes. When they both cry there are plenty of girls & boys who will pick them up & cuddle them of course so she has help, but I burst out laughing the other day. She had them in separate hammocks pushing first one then the other to get them both to sleep! One would almost nod off then the other would cry & wake her! It was a never ending job. But funnier still is when she is chasing the two of them going in different directions, with the vege bowl with 2 spoons hanging off the side. No high chairs in Cambodia to lock them in one place! Great for baby Liza to have such a good playmate as well – they will be the terrible two in no time I fear!!

In class the other day suddenly several kids jumped up shouting 'No Atay!' We had a bowl of soapy water with bottles in for them to have water play & she had decided the bubbles looked so good she was going to drink them!! Luckily the older kids rescued her, but of course she cried – how could they be so mean to take her yummy looking drink away?

Morning song video time, sees her standing in front of the TV – dancing with her hands Khmer Disco style & really going to town! So very cute & she really cracks us all up – goodness knows where she has learnt that, but she is already gate crashing in on the kids Khmer Culture dancing classes so no doubt we will see her in action there before too long (she has only learnt to walk in the last 3 or so weeks!!) Anyway she's a gift from heaven for us all at ODA to ease the pain of losing Sok Maly!

ANGKOR HOSPITAL FOR CHILDREN - DONATION



Thanks to so many of you we were able to present the hospital with \$4800USD to thank them for the wonderful ICU care they gave trying to save Sok Maly's life. The ICU is so basic but the best in town. The hospital generally is under resourced & understaffed but they treat over 500 children daily. Many of their Doctors have trained in USA, Australia & Singapore for periods of time so their care is excellent - even with 2 kids to a bed

they perform miracles daily. In Dengue epidemics etc they take over meeting & store rooms & corridors so they never turn any child away. Our HIV children attend their program monthly & luckily are in as good health, as any of the other kids.

NO UNIFORM – NO SCHOOL!!

That's the government rule in Cambodia.



Typical needy students



Some of the 320 sets supplied last year

To those who ask for a reminder each year – it's school uniform fund time again. 320 children were funded with a uniform set so they could attend school last year – we are aiming for 400 this year if we can manage it. New school year starts November this year so we have only a little over a month to finalise our fund raising.

Uniforms: \$27 will purchase 2 uniforms, undies, sneakers and socks, also a mosquito net, big enough for 2-4 children to sleep under.

Any amounts \$2 - \$5 - \$10 etc - will enlarge the pool of funds and enable more children to attend government school and sleep safe at night.

Girls - School Uniforms save lives – for the price of a uniform, girls stay at school longer – marry later, so less chance of death at childbirth due to immature bodies. \$27 for a life!

Boys & Girls – statistics show that more education results in them having fewer children in their own families, better informed focus on nutrition, personal hygiene, implementing improved farming methods, & many go on to start small businesses which result in their children being able to attend school. It's a wonderful cycle for the future of Cambodia.

To contribute, go to our website www.odaopportunitiescambodia.org click our Donate Wish List button & use the paypal – just follow the steps, you don't need a paypal account – it's simple & very safe. It also gives us very clear records monthly for our accounts. I'll attach a flyer for those of you who fund raise amongst friends & work colleagues.

THINGS WITH A TWIST – An Australian group who conduct a yearly project with the ODA kids had 'Twist' as their theme – so of course we were all doing the twist to the karaoke version – well I should say TRYING to do the twist – never realized how difficult it was to

have your knees go in the opposite direction to your upper body. Frank our volunteer & I would hold either knees or shoulders & try to make them see how to twist - only to have them fall down on us – almost making us collapse on top of them as well. 2 or 3 finally got the hang of it but it wasn't the most successful physical exercise we've ever tried with them – certainly amused them & anyone who was watching tho – they looked like flopsy dopsy dolls gone horribly wrong! Anyway – as usual, great zeal & enthusiasm.

Then to the serious business of making Kaleidoscopes. All the components were brought with them from Australia & amazingly professional & arty Kaleidoscopes resulted. Decorator fabrics were produced for the children artists to try their skills at painting monk images on the material – not difficult as they are used to painting on canvas of course. These looked amazing & will be framed prior to sale.

Then all packaged up ready for Australia & their yearly fund raiser.



The ODA Khmer Culture Dance teacher had suggested they take the kids to see Rosanna Broadway – a new mega extravaganza Broadway style show. So, to their first stepped theatre with padded seats, huge stage curtains & glitz & glamour like you only see in Las Vegas (well almost!) How amazing for them all –Leng & Sry On as well – all quite overcome with the huge cast, dancing, sets, music & a little vaudeville thrown in with some lady boy cast members. It was such an amazing outing for everyone & as usual 33 kids of all ages sat still & behaved so respectfully. As we were departing the cast lined up outside for people to pay to have their photos taken with them but when they saw the kids they plonked themselves in the middle of them & waved aside any payments. Wow were the kids excited about that! – to be so close to the stars. They had all wanted to be pop stars before - now they want to be stage stars!! Amazing Project yet again thanks a mil to the Australians.

DENTIST TREATMENT FOR ALL ODA CHILDREN & TEACHERS

Go Philanthropic USA, funded among other needs, dentist treatment for all ODA children & teachers again this year. The teachers had never been to the dentist – pain is something to be accepted as a part of life when you have no money to do anything about it. ODA children only started treatment 5 years ago – there was much to do then, but thanks to the

toothbrushes & toothpaste that so many people bring for the children – their teeth are in very good shape now. Sorry no pics as I was away when the treatments were conducted.

HOSPITAL TUK TUK FOR OUTLYING VILLAGE HEALTH CENTRE (Mini hospital)

A commune chief had asked Leng if he could find people to donate a tuk tuk to take serious case patient villagers to hospital in Siem Reap . 50kms plus out of town means that few ambulances wish to go out of Siem Reap city surrounds – they are overstretched anyway so days can go by before one is available – if at all. Atherton Tablelands Rotary & Lions group Queensland Australia took up the challenge headed by Kevin & Glenda who have delivered many projects to ODA before. Leng & Kevin went off shopping for a suitable style tuk tuk (fellas on a mission!!!) & had it built to their specifications.



Commune Chief in beige shirt, Hospital staff, Leng, & Donor representatives Kevin & Glenda



Proud Nurse in donated Australian Ambulance uniform, tests out the ambulance tuk tuk

Hand over day arrives & we are at the District Health Centre (a mini hospital) being shown their impressive activity board – with details of patients – which village they are from, what they were treated for & drugs used – all very carefully documented. A proud Doctor (in reality a nurse) donned the ambulance uniform donated by Atherton Ambulance & received other donated goods to help fit out the tuk tuk –posing for photos when suddenly an emergency arose & the tuk tuk ambulance was immediately in service & beat the donors back to Siem Reap! Hand over was completed after it had left. It hadn't even had time to have it's siren fitted! The Commune Chief was so happy to see it already saving lives for these outlying villagers.

DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS TEAM FOR OUTLYING VILLAGE PEOPLE

Early this year ODA had a team of opticians come thru & test all the kids eyesight. Several are now wearing glasses & others were given glasses for computer work & reading. We are so lucky to have visits from kind groups like this to help us care adequately for our children. There is a team coming thru early next year 2015, from French speaking Canada – Surgeons, Dentists, Chiropractors, Opticians, Optometrists – a Doctors without Borders Team sponsored by Rotary. Leng is obtaining permission for them to treat village adults & children & to be based at the Health Centre where the tuk tuk ambulance is based.

VILLAGE ENGLISH SCHOOL ASSESSMENTS

These 'unqualified' ODA English teachers are delivering amazing results with their classes. Helped by native speaking volunteers & visitors at the AMA USA funded school – students are really becoming confident – the 2nd classes are particularly shining. Many teachers have them reading from their text books then having another student translate it immediately to Khmer. Really makes sure they are understanding the lessons & an amazing skill to learn translation at their stage of English & their ages.



Teacher with 52 students can be up to 60



Reader & translator in action in class



52 kindy children singing Khmer & English songs

Some classes have up to 60 students in our small classrooms with 21 desks but they are happy to squash up for the opportunity to gain good English skills for their future employment.

One kindy had 52 little tackers the day we assessed – 1 teacher & they were all singing Khmer & English songs with the TV / computer link videos of the songs playing for them – singing perfectly – it was inspiring!

One little boy was so enthusiastic he jumped up on the desk & started dancing really disco style much to the mirth of the other kids but undaunted he was in his own little world grooving away! Leng, Sophan (Schools Manager) & I were so very impressed at this young teachers skills with managing & teaching so many children. The children will be so far ahead when they hit this next school year in November!

He's blurred because he didn't stop grooving!



MOUNTAIN GIRLS ATTEND SECONDARY SCHOOL

Commune chiefs approached Leng about paying accommodation & food so these 5 girls could attend secondary school. They live up in the mountains where there is only primary school. They are currently living with a widowed mother in Wat Village, close to the school & also close to the ODA free English school there, so they are very happy to be able to continue their education & have a free English school as a neighbour.



Clean Up The World ODA style! Siem Reap District (Temple Town)

8 ODA Outlying village schools – 396 students & teachers, 163 bulging black garbage bags plus several Village Chiefs lending encouragement & support. They were all buoyed by the fact that students all over the world were cleaning up - just like them! What a great start to learning that environmental issues are just as important here in Siem Reap Province, Cambodia, as anywhere else in the world.

As all visitors to Cambodia have seen rubbish is a serious problem – it appears it isn't taught in schools as yet so exercises like this are even more important to begin awareness. Of course it's all a western introduced problem. They used to use banana & lotus leaves to wrap things & carry goods – now everything comes in plastic bags – even drinks with a straw out the top & a rubber band around the bag! All of which gets dropped like a banana leaf used to be! Food is given in styrene containers & colourful snack packets glisten in the sun on the sides of the roads. I forgot my bag full of rubbish when I was heading out to the village schools to teach the teachers so they could conduct lessons for their students, prior to clean up day. No problem – I could have stopped anywhere along the roads – which I did & in 2 seconds collected a huge amount of rubbish to add colour to my lesson!

The 'teachers' were very interested in plastic bags taking between 500-1000 years to break down & even more so styrene NEVER breaking down - completely & suddenly grasping the concept of just how we had to solve the problem of where all this rubbish was going to be stored for 500-1000 years & finding ways to minimize it!

So they motivated their students & off they all went in their villages on Sunday 14th September. Most Village Chiefs joined in for part of the time smiling broadly as the bags piled up. Leng has now to solve the problem of getting all this to the dump in Siem Reap – he hadn't quite banked on so much - but he's so pleased & was encouraging village people to join us next year as we passed by their palm thatch houses.





Hunters & gatherers all working industriously – enjoying the morning together. We borrowed the hospital tuk tuk to take all the full bags back to the nearest school.



So amazing to see the ODA programs growth in just a few short years. In one way or another, well over 700 children have education opportunities thanks to Leng & Sry On's dedication to them all. 8 students are currently at university with part sponsorship & supplemented thru savings from their art sales, or teachers wages, & kind ODA supporters plus several more due to start this coming school year when they have completed year 12.

ODA are well on their way to their goal of self funding thru their painting sales in overseas exhibitions & on site gallery sales however until there, are still topped up by supporters donations.

Village schools operate due to the kind donors & supplemented by donations, stationery & educational supplies from very generous visitors. Unlike ODA art – village schools have no way of generation their own funding so everyone at ODA thanks you for your kindness here.

So much more to write about & pics to show you - but hopefully I will have time to write newsletters more often in the next couple of months.