

## John and Tess Castledine, Cambodia

March/April '08

*Dear Friends and Family,* Life here amongst our little community is always eventful. Between helping a new mum out with some extra food to keep her and her new baby healthy, tending to a young boy's burns, rescuing a mistreated parrot and helping young people reach their full potential, the past couple of months have been full as always!

It all runs smoothly when everyone does their bit and lately everybody has been working and taking care of their areas of responsibility well.

January and February often bring visitors and we look forward to meeting new friends and having some extra hands and fresh ideas around at this time. Simon and Kamini Ives brought a team over from Brisbane, Adrianna from Sydney returned on her second visit, a YWAM team from Taiwan spent a day with us and CCI Board members David and Lynelle returned again and this time brought their son Brandon.

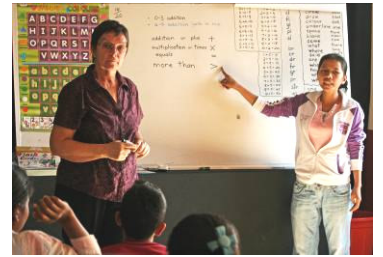


The couple of Ivan Storr and fiancé Claire spent a couple of weeks with us and helped to teach the children with some great music lessons. These guys also helped us buy a base guitar which is very much appreciated and our music team has now stepped up a notch with this addition to their musical equipment!

We've been really fortunate to have with us a lovely lady who has dedicated her time and services to teach both our student teachers and the children. Giving of her own time, funds and resources Teacher Pam has been a wonderful influence on our School.

Teacher Pam has now returned home to Brisbane for a time to be with her family. We would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank Pam for all her help. The school has come a long way under her guidance and the children have greatly

benefited from her love and patience in administering a teaching program suited to them. Pam is a very special lady who will be dearly missed by everyone here and we hope to see her back again.



We have many visitors come through to help in the work both short-term and those who commit for a longer term. Without a team of volunteers we would be really lacking and it's great to have people around with various skills to help get the job done.

If you're interested to come and do some volunteer work with us for a short term or a longer stay please contact us we'd love to hear from you!

This month we'd like to introduce Joel and Chloe Bond. This young couple hail from Perth, Western Australia and will be assisting us in teaching the children and as Chloe has nursing training we expect to make use of her medical skills as needed! We look forward to enlisting their help in the school for a couple of days a week once they settle into life in Cambodia.

*Building* On the 27<sup>th</sup> January we moved the children across to our new building. The temporary accommodation buildings were completed enough for the girls to move into their room. Now they have twice as much space as previously and a nice big tiled room with a security door and a roof that doesn't leak. The girls are very happy in their new home and now have blankets and mattresses provided through the generous donations we received for this need late last year.

The small boys have been camping in the tiled foyer area of the building for a couple of weeks and will be moving into their dormitory wing very shortly. The last few bits and pieces are being done in the room and they will be moving in soon. Now we just need to get some beds for all of the children to sleep on!

We moved the gas cooking stoves across to the new building as well. Our faithful cook Ra is now enjoying her new cooking environment and the temporary kitchen will be ready soon too!

We've almost completed stage one of the building project now and a temporary accommodation for the children, temporary kitchen, guardhouse, storage room and three extra bathrooms in stage two. These are all drawing to completion within the next two months.



Next in stage three of this project we'll be working on classrooms and bedrooms. After that as part of our vocational training aspect we envisage having a commercial kitchen installed into the building. This will be used for cooking both the children's food and for training our students in a professional environment.

The water tower project is nearing completion and the water filtration plant which is built into that is well on the way. To accommodate the water needs of the community, we've decided to build into that a third tank so that will take another month to complete. Then we'll be ready to purchase a pump and solar panels to run the pump which will be a large project of approximately US\$17,500. The initial cost of this is reasonably large but we would save that amount of money within less than four years of using diesel power.



The office is ready to fit out now. In the next few weeks we'll be installing the computers we have in there, we will need more to train the students on and will also need to buy some office furniture. What we are desperate for is power to run it. We have acquired some solar power but we want another US\$26,350 but we desperately need US\$10,000 worth. The solar power is extremely successful we

are very happy with it. We're currently spending \$500/month on diesel fuel to run a generator at the moment. The solar power outlay is reasonably high initially but the saving is astronomical we would be saving \$6,000/year plus maintenance and supply of new generators. So after just over 3years it would have paid for itself. So it's a very viable proposition and also it is environmentally friendly.

All these projects mentioned here are presently unfunded. We expect that bunk beds for the children will cost US\$8,000 to supply enough for 100 children. The water tower pump and solar panels project is US\$17,550. The solar power to run the office and basic needs of the school is US\$26,350.

For us these are big needs and large expenses that we are seeking to fundraise towards. If you or anyone you know is interested in supporting one of these projects please contact us!

**School** For some time since Teachers Pam and Debbie have been here I haven't been doing so much hands on teaching daily with the children. Lately however I've been giving an extra evening English class with the children from 6pm to 7pm. Since starting this and having the opportunity to really assess their skills, I was really impressed with the progress of the younger children's English. Pam, Debbie, Sopeak, Tonet and Sreylin have been doing a fantastic job teaching the children!

Within our Vocational Training program we try to fit each of the students into a training program that is most suited to their interests and abilities. At this stage we are not able to fulfill all of these areas inside the Centre and some of our young people go to other colleges for training.

One such young lady is Sreyneang. Sreyneang is the daughter of our cook Ra and she has been with us since she was about 7 years old.



Sreyneang has an interest in learning to be a hairdresser and a beautician. So for the past six months Sreyneang

has been learning to do manicures and pedicures at a local salon near our village. Now that she has completed her training here she has begun a course at the Phnom Penh Poly-Technic College (similar to TAFE in Australia). She now has six months ahead of her in hairdressing and beauty techniques. When Sreyneang completes this course we will help her to open her own salon. In the meantime she can often be found practicing her skills on our visitors and volunteers!

**Spotlight:** Tonet has been living with us since about 2001. He has parents who love him and his siblings. They brought him up to the best of their ability. As a teenager he came to a stage in his life where he had become rebellious and his parents were losing control of their son. So his father brought him to Sovanapoom and asked John to help him. John agreed and his father gave Tonet over to live at the Centre.



Within the first week Tonet was fitting in like he had lived there forever. Tonet has a lovely nature, very teachable and very obedient. He has a very quiet demeanor; he never speaks unless he's got something to say. Tonet is so quiet you might almost think he is rude, until you ask him to stand up and speak to a group or teach. Then he is a powerful speaker and he is an excellent teacher.

Tonet has gained skills working with us on the construction of the new building, he has undertaken an automotive mechanic course and he also teaches the younger children in the school. Tonet has an exciting future ahead as one of our key leaders.