



humanitus
empowerment through education

Newsletter

May 2012



① **Denzil Sprague
Pichey Rangsey
Primary School**



② **Lontung School
Sumatra**



③ **Mkak Primary
School**



④ **SFODA
Orphanage
- Phnom Penh**

Dear Friends,

It has been a while since our last newsletter and we are very excited to bring you up to date on lots of news from SE Asia and the progress we have made through your continued support.

In February this year the Victorian PYP Network made its second very generous donation to Humanitus. We are extremely grateful for the on-going support of the PYP Network. Sally Cordner joined me at a recent PYP meeting where we made a power point presentation to representatives from approximately 60 Victorian primary schools. We were able to show the audience just what a difference the PYP contributions have made as well as bring them up to date on our plans at Mkak Primary School.



After lengthy discussions with Piseth Luon, Executive Director of Bright Children Organisation, (Mkak Primary School) the Humanitus board have elected to focus their current support to Mkak on funding and developing a centre for learning and community development. Initial needs for the "Humanitus Centre for Learning and Development" will be; a teacher's salary, solar power and teaching and learning resources. In addition to the centre for learning at Mkak, plans are underway to acquire land and build another centre in the main town which will incorporate accommodation for volunteers and an office for Bright Children Organisation and Humanitus. This centre will not only benefit the children of the area but the community at large. We will be seeking volunteers from a variety of professions including teaching, health care and agriculture. Due mainly to abject poverty and desperation hundreds of Cambodian children every month become victims of trafficking and babies are regularly sold to illegal orphanages. We hope that through the community centre we can offer assistance and education to parents along with micro loans to help them start sustainable businesses to help support and care for their families. Personally I am eager to investigate the possibility of incorporating a community radio station at the centre much along the lines of our project in Uganda in 2004.

The Humanitus Foundation would like to welcome the following people to our recently formed advisory board.

Operations and Fundraising Support

Philip Fox, Molly Booth, Davis Clarke and Sam Aslam

Fundraising Support

Christine Gilliland

We all greatly appreciate everyone's interest and willingness to play an active role in our foundation at this exciting stage in our journey.

Lastly, we are pleased to announce that the Humanitus Foundation has made a giant leap into the 21st century and set up a twitter account @HumanitusTweets and a Facebook page. If you are a user of either of these social media platforms we invite you to follow us. Hopefully these mediums will be another great way to promote our work in SE Asia. Our website is also constantly being updated and we hope you will visit regularly for updates on our work.

From all of us at Humanitus we thank you for being an important part of our global family and we hope you'll join us in moving our missions forward.

My sincere thanks,



Jeffrey R. Richards

Executive Director & Co-Founder

The Humanitus Foundation

① Denzil Sprague Pichey Rangsey Primary School

New Bikes Delivered to Pichey Rangsey Primary School

20 new bikes were delivered to Denzil Spragues Pichey Rangsey School on 18th November 2011. The purchase of these bikes was made possible through the extraordinary fundraising efforts of the students at Melbourne's Caulfield Grammar School, Malvern Campus.



Health Care Day

Wednesday, 30th November, was a busy day and the health care programme was an exciting distraction from lessons at Pichey Rangsey Primary School. All 710 students were given parasite control tablets and Vitamin A. This was the recommencement of the health care programme for the students.

The nurse was quite strict and each student had to open their mouth to show they had swallowed the tablets. They had a lot of fun though as you can see by the photos. Two of the poorest children also received their first ever school uniforms before the nurse waved goodbye.



Denzils report on medical treatment for Grade 4 student

Another health incident arose recently with a happy ending.

I noticed a Grade 4 boy had what appeared to be a fungal condition on his legs and elbows. His fellow students said they had collected money for him last year with no result. With his teacher, we took him to a local Doctor who, surprisingly, prescribed what I considered to be correct medicine - antifungal cream, penicillin etc. His high school sister was also infected so we had medicine for both of them - all for \$10. I looked at him one week later and the result was amazing. See the before and after photos!

His parents and grandmother who cared for him recently died so as an orphan he cooks for himself and his sister before his aunt comes home late from working in a garment factory.



Before



After

Visit to Pichey Rangsey Primary School by Caulfield Grammar Teacher

A recent trip to Cambodia was enhanced unimaginably by a day spent with Denzil Sprague and our visit to the Pichey Rangsey Primary School. Already impressed by the resilience, warmth and happiness of the people we were meeting, we were expecting the school to present a similar positive atmosphere. We were totally unprepared for the overwhelming joyfulness and excitement that erupted as we drove through the school gate, to be surrounded by masses of cheering students. Denzil is clearly a hero to the children, teachers and the families in this rural community.

As we toured the classrooms, witnessed proud renditions of Abba's "I Have A Dream", commended school work, enjoyed a few football lessons, chatted with teachers and exchanged smiles with many students, we could sense an immense pride in this place. That Denzil expects the rooms and grounds to be kept in excellent order is clearly evident. Not a scrap of rubbish was to be seen (in a country not too good at this!).

We heard about students who return for the sheer pleasure of "being there", the success in terms of health and learning, and the desire by so many more to attend. Plans for further improvements – paint to combat the mould and bacterial growth on cement-render walls, some technology (music had to be generated by battery), modest accommodation for visitors – all present challenges which are undoubtedly being pondered by Denzil and his sponsors. The Humanitus project is achieving awe-inspiring improvements in the lives of these wonderful people who have suffered so much so recently, yet exude so much hope for the future.

We would like to repeat our thanks to Sally Cordner for making us aware of the work being done for this community, to Denzil Sprague for his generosity of time and patience with our questions, to sponsors like Caulfield Grammar School for the funds which are making a difference, and to the school community for their enthusiastic welcome. We left humbled by what we saw and heard, and determined to spread the word wherever possible – go, help and know that you can make a difference where it is truly needed. Thanks Humanitus.

Lyndall & Malcolm Baird.



Malcolm, Lyndall, Denzil and some of the teachers



Singing "their" song - ABBA's 'I Have a Dream'



Students proudly wearing their uniforms



Box of Humanitus stationery - personally delivered



Proud students

English Class Awards Day

On Sunday January 1st 2012 a special party was held for the students of teacher Awah's English language class. Some of the children attending are now at the local high school having graduated from Pichey Rangsey Primary School last year.

The children put on a short play, some dancing, sports and a prize presentation.

Denzil was asked to speak to the children and in his talk he reiterated just how important their English tuition was when it came to seeking a job at the end of their education.



School Football Day

Denzil's cousin recently visited the Pichey Rangsey School. He arranged delivery of 35 footballs, courtesy of the AFL, to hundreds of very excited children.



② Lontung School - Sumatra

Humanitus Directors visit to Lontung School, Sumatra

During a recent visit to Lontung School on Samosir Island in Sumatra, Humanitus Directors Angus and Celine were delighted to find some very happy students and teachers. You may remember from earlier reports that through Humanitus donations we were able to refurbish the school and arrange for electricity to be installed. In addition to this much needed work we were also able to supply the head teacher with a laptop computer and consumables.

The next job on the ever growing list is guttering and resources for the children. The school now has new tiles on all the floors and windows where there used to be chicken wire. It was such a sad neglected school before and is now a very vibrant place with much happier children.



Bright Children Organisation - Mkak Primary School flooded

Cambodia's worst flooding in ten years took its toll on the grounds of the Bright Children Organisation's Mkak Primary School



Someone is staying high and dry though!

Second toilet block for Mkak Primary School almost completed

Now that the rainy season has passed work has now been completed on the second toilet block at Mkak Primary School. Water from the tank has been piped to the original toilets and there is a tap in the playground which the children find fascinating.

They have never seen water coming from a tap before - just one of those things we take for granted!



Humanitus Foundation Projects Director visits Mkak Primary School

In January this year (2012) I had the privilege of travelling to Cambodia to visit Mkak Primary School, a 70 kilometre journey from Siem Reap.

After a very scenic, albeit bumpy, drive through villages and rice fields we arrived at our destination in Mkak Village. The morning classes had just finished and the children and teachers were all eagerly waiting to greet me.



Despite the fact that no one had met me before, and English language was limited to a only couple of people, I was overwhelmed with the warm and happy reception I received. I toured the school and met with all of the teachers and students before distributing some much appreciated stationery that had been donated from Australian supporters.

It was wonderful to see first hand the completed Humanitus Foundation projects, all of which were made possible through generous donations to the foundation. The projects I was thrilled to view included two toilet blocks housing five toilets, a 2000 litre water tank and pump, a tank tower and some very impressive plumbing installed to pump water to the toilets and playground.

The needs of Mkak Primary School remain many and varied. The children are clearly in need of a health and nutrition program as well as educational



resources. Humanitus remains committed to continuing its work with Mkak Primary School to help it achieve both its short and long term goals.



Our search continues for an Australian school to form an alliance with Mkak Primary School to help these children and the Mkak community have the opportunity of a brighter future.

"I will never forget their faces which displayed sadness, yet an eagerness to learn".

Sally Cordner

Projects Director, Humanitus Foundation

④ SFODA Orphanage – Phnom Penh

SFODA Orphanage Impacted by Cambodia Floods

Last September SFODA Orphanage faced yet another challenge in their day to day struggle to provide accommodation for 52 Cambodian orphans. Advice was received yesterday that the Tonle Sap (tributary of Mekong River in Phnom Penh) had risen dramatically. As a consequence of this SFODA Orphanage was flooded. Fortunately there is a mezzanine floor where the children were safe. The main sleeping area, classroom, library, toilets, showers, cooking and eating area were all under water. They were unable to travel to school, go to the markets or the hospital.

The long term health impact on the children was likely going to be an issue of great concern in those coming weeks. Humanitus used operating funds and a board member donation to make a significant contribution to assist them through this most difficult and challenging time.

We were told the flooding may get worse before the river starts to recede. It was looking possible that alternative accommodation may have had to be found.



Emmy's First Birthday

When a team of Directors and volunteers last visited SFODA in July 2011 Emmy had just arrived at the orphanage.

Emmy had been left at a local hospital as her mother was no longer able to care for her. We are thrilled to hear she is doing well and settling in with her new family at SFODA.

On the 27th of September a birthday celebration was held in honour of Emmy's 1st birthday. You can view the photographs below.



Emmy when we first met her on
17 July 2011



Humanitus Flood Relief Funds Reach SFODA

To everyone's relief, and with the very kind assistance of Denzil Sprague, Humanitus flood relief funds for SFODA Orphanage arrived in Cambodia. As you can see in the photographs below the Tonle Sap River was still overflowing and causing flooding at SFODA. The children were having to travel to school by boat each day at a cost of US\$42 per day which was quickly eating away at the relief funds. Access to fresh produce and markets was a problem and instant food products such as noodles, rice etc were needed. Essential medicines needed to be in stock and accessible especially for treating dysentery, colds and skin conditions. Anti snake venom serum also needed to be at hand. Humanitus were fortunate to be in a position to offer this help through emergency funds and the generosity of our supporters. SFODA operates on a limited budget and relies heavily on the generosity of others.



Flooding continues to disrupt life at SFODA

Three and a half weeks after SFODA Orphanage was flooded the waters had still not receded. Fortunately through the generosity of Humanitus supporters we were able to assist with much needed medicines, food and transport.

Transport alone was costing \$42 per day to ferry the children to and from school. \$42 is almost their average food bill for two days. The funding Humanitus sent over was stretched to cover as many expenses as possible.

If the flood waters had not receded we would have had to look at what options we had available to provide additional funding. Fortunately for all concerned the floods passed.



SFODA Christmas Party

Whilst the majority of Khmers follow the Buddhist faith children do love a party! More often these days in SE Asian countries people look at Christmas as a great excuse to throw a party and really get into the swing of the season.

Humanitus were very pleased to be able to help SFODA hold this party for the children on December 17th. As you can see by the photos everyone had a fun time. The Khmer version of 'Mr Whippy' even made an appearance which was an absolute treat in itself!



Flood Waters Recede at SFODA

With floodwaters having receded in Phnom Penh life returned to normal for the children at SFODA. Further supplies purchased with Humanitus funds including new bedding, toiletries and baby food.

Through the generosity of our supporters we were pleased to have been in a position to help the children through this difficult time.



Gold Decoration for National Construction

You may remember mention in our last newsletter of the gold medal that was awarded to Jeffrey Richards last year by the Cambodian Government? Unfortunately we ran out of room to show you the medal in the last newsletter. Jeffrey accepted the medal on behalf of Humanitus at the opening ceremony for the Mkak Primary School. There are three categories of medals (Gold, Silver and Bronze) these were the first medals to be created by the revived Royal Cambodian Government in 1994.



We were honoured to receive the 'Gold Decoration for National Construction' which is 40 mm in diameter and consists of the Royal Coat of Arms and in Khmer the inscription 'Decoration of National Construction' inside a stylized wreath. The Decoration is awarded to individual persons or associations who have contributed financially or materially to national construction. The Gold Decoration is awarded for contributions valued between US\$10,000 and US\$100,000.

Cambodia Bike Ride Fundraiser

Davis Clarke and Sam Aslam visited Mkak Primary School on a World Challenge trip in 2010. Their time spent at Mkak had such an impact on Davis and Sam that on their return to Melbourne they agreed to commit to continuing to help the children of Mkak.

Davis and Sam approached Humanitus last year and upon realizing just how passionate they were to get involved we eagerly invited them to join the advisory board of Humanitus. We are now a truly intergenerational charity in the fortunate position of having input and ideas from a vast pool of knowledge, age and experience. We look forward to the invaluable, and greatly appreciated, contributions we know Davis and Sam will bring to Humanitus.

Whilst settling into their first year at University Davis and Sam are also busily planning a fundraising bike ride through Cambodia. At this stage we envisage the ride will take place at the end of this year. Routes and logistics have to be carefully planned, budgets need to be worked on and sponsors must be found – no easy task.



We look forward to keeping you up to date on the progress and plans for this big event through our website. Any feedback would be greatly appreciated especially in the area of corporate sponsorship. It is our plan to have a film

maker document the bike ride to ensure we get maximum media coverage not only for our sponsors and Humanitus but for Mkak Village.

Kids Run Fundraiser

Humanitus received some very inspiring news recently. The initiative of an 8 year old Melbourne student to help SE Asian children less fortunate than her has impressed us beyond words.

Sabine's parents had been trying to find a way to help her understand about, and perhaps develop a way, to help others less privileged. They had been researching the plethora of options available when they happened upon the Humanitus website. Sabine was eager to contribute in some way to the children that Humanitus work with and came up with the concept of holding a solo run with sponsorship from family and friends.

Her trial run was held recently and she covered 2.2 km in about 20 mins. Quite a feat for anyone! Sabine's goal for July 14th is to run 3 km in 30 minutes and she is apparently doing some serious training. Sabine has already raised an admirable



amount of money from her first run and is now busy finding sponsors for her big run.

Please stay tuned to our website as we upload information on this young ladies commitment to help. We believe Sabine will achieve more from her two fundraising events than many adults will in a lifetime and we congratulate her on her great work!

With the help of these inspirational young people we intend putting Mkak Village on the map!!!

Last Minute News

We are pleased to advise that through the initiatives of two University students, Davis and Sam, and Grade 3 student, Sabine, two independent fundraising events are being planned this year to assist Humanitus affiliate Mkak Primary School (Bright Children Organisation).