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VISIT OF UWC STUDENTS

Every year since we began this work we have enjoyed to support of students at United World College Singapore and most years a group of them have spent about a week with us, helping wherever they can. This year we welcomed Samay, Leila, Olivia, Michael and Demario, all of them from different countries but all Grade 11 students at UWC. Quite apart from their helpfulness once here we learned something of their efforts to raise funds for us back at school where, every Saturday morning they staffed a coffee shop, promoted our cause and generally charmed support out of many patrons! The UWC groups have always been welcome but we want to acknowledge this group especially. They have been wholehearted in their commitment to us: we are deeply appreciative of their efforts and we wish them many blessings.

FIELD TRIP

In June 2015 Marist Solidarity Cambodia organized the student field trip to Kep. All students and staff of Lavalla School and visitors from abroad joined in this trip. Our students enjoyed travelling to the seaside, swimming with friends, playing on the sand. The sea and fresh air were invigorating for them and they had a wonderful day.

PHYSICAL THERAPIST

At our physical therapy department we have assembled equipment with which to repair orthotics and prosthetics. We can provide this service to Marist Solidarity Cambodia students who use braces and prostheses. Most of the time the repairs require new belts, rivets, elastic cotton stocking net and other soft parts and connections broken on the devices.



Our photo shown Yin Puthera, our Medical Services Manager at work, repairing.

OUTREACH

Earlier this year we provided writing books, financed by CBM funds, to two primary schools in Kandal Province:



Takhmao Primary School and Prek Samrong Primary School. To each we gave 600 books. This gesture intends to further the cause of people with disabilities in Cambodia by reaching out to government schools and reminding staff and pupils there that children with disabilities are also members of the community who want good schooling, friends and opportunities.

NEW DORMITORY FOR BOYS AT LAVALLA

On Friday June 5, in the company of the U.S. Ambassador and members of the Board of Grapes for Humanity Global Fund, we inaugurated the new dormitory for boys. It was a pleasant event and a welcome development at LaValla. At a key moment in the



ceremony all present prayed a blessing over the building while Year 6 sang an invocation to the Holy Spirit.

Accommodating more than 30 boys there has allowed us to end crowding in other sleeping areas and to begin to use facilities for what they were originally intended and not as bedrooms.

The bulk of the funds for the new dormitory came from the Australian organization, The Little King Movement, a Catholic agency working for the best part of 50 years for people with disabilities. The Marist Brothers had strong connections with LKM throughout that time. Most of the governors of LKM are elderly people who have worked with LKM for most of its history so we do not anticipate their coming to Cambodia. We have yet to arrange an appropriate ceremony in which we will recognize the generosity of those good people.



August 5, Graduation Day. Delight and satisfaction that elementary schooling has been completed; sadness that LaValla days are over! We wish all 22 of them well.

Changes at MSC

You've read here of the departure of Ouch Nimul. At the end of June Br Terry Heinrich replaced Nimul as MSC's Director. As from then Sister Luise Ahrens, a Maryknoll Sister, replaced Br Terry as Chair of the MSC governing Board.

VISIT OF Mrs VIOLA WHEELER AND MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF GFH GLOBAL FUND

Elsewhere is mentioned the GfH group's visit on June 5. We are always deeply appreciative of their efforts to visit and they do so, annually if they can.

This visit was special for the fact that Mrs Viola Wheeler came too. Mrs Wheeler is the patron of our music program. She has supported it since its beginnings and we were delighted to be able to entertain her and her companions during their visit. Happy too that Mrs Wheeler had a lovely day and wants to come back again. Mrs Wheeler is 94 and lives in Colorado Springs, USA.



FAREWELL OUCH NIMUL

On June 30 our staff and students gathered at LaValla to say goodbye to Ouch Nimul and his wife Kanchana. On that date Nimul had completed five years as Director of Marist Solidarity Cambodia and seventeen years working with the Marist Brothers and Marist Fathers of Australia for young Cambodians with physical disabilities.



Mr. OUCH NIMUL and Kanchana

Nimul's appointment as Director of MSC in 2010 coincided with the amalgamation of Marist Mission Australia and Yodiffee. He in fact, with the help of Marists in Australia, shaped the foundations for MSC. He proved to be a very competent and far-sighted leader and earned the high regard of staff and colleagues in the NGO community. MSC developed rapidly. The focus on post school youth particularly gave rise to a range of training activities and venues and MSC welcomed into its ranks young handicapped who had not attended LaValla or lived at Villa Maria. Perhaps we were all too venturesome in that our hopes and dreams for young people with disabilities here rapidly outstripped our resources. Subsequently we had to scale back our operations and focus again on our core purpose. That process was especially difficult for Nimul. He and Kanchana, who was a member of Yodiffee then MSC's staff for most of our history, know, we trust, of our affection, regard and deep appreciation. The Marist Brothers especially want to record our gratitude, for Nimul, for his friendship and collaboration. The Brothers and all at MSC wish him well as he moves on to different challenges.

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AUSTRALIAN VOLUNTEERS INTERNATIONAL (AVI)

Kym Hall

In April Kym Hall completed his two year assignment with MSC. A horticulturalist, Kym has done much for us at LaValla. Together with improvements in the cultivation and care of gardens and grounds Kym's contribution to our development has to make mention of the change in attitude he has effected among our community. Composting, for example, is now a given. His understudies, Phol Sophea and Kiev Sameth, now manage our site with commendable confidence. They have been well-trained. For these outcomes and more we are grateful to Kym and we wish him well.

Dennis Mussig, David Henshall and Sam Lolicato, all in Cambodia under the same program, are currently with us. Happily, Dennis and David will share their time between MSC and the Deaf Development Program with whom MSC hopes to have on-going collaboration. Dennis works in Human Resources, David in Employability of People with Disabilities and Sam in agriculture.

VISITORS

In recent months our visitors have included **Mr Bill Todd**, Ambassador for the USA who was present for the inauguration of the new dormitory. **Brothers Andrew Chan and Allen Sherry**, members of the Board of MSC were here for the June meeting. **Fr Kevin Stewart**, Director of the Marist Father's Mission centre spent a weekend with us and **Mr Paul Brooks**, Director of Teaching and Learning at a large Marist school in Australia spent a week with us. **Br Michael Schmalze** from Germany also stayed a week. We were happy to have a meeting with **Mr Lawrence Gigliotti** of Australian Catholic Missions and four Queensland University of Technology students lived-in for a week and made a video of LaValla which we look forward to seeing.

SCHOOL GROUPS

Mid year is the time for school groups from Australia to visit. In succession we welcomed 14 girls and 3 staff from **St Rita's College** in Brisbane; 9 boys and 3 staff from **Marist College North Shore** in Sydney and 6 students and 3 staff from **St Francis Xavier's College** in Newcastle, Australia. Each group was with us for a week and each did good work, often painting, repairing, gardening and



even teaching. Our students always benefit from the interaction with such fine young Australians and the young visitors are invariably affected by our children.

Appreciation

We recall and thank Organizations and Individuals who have continued to fund the work of Marist Solidarity Cambodia. Thank you to all.

