



3 Violets news

The Marist Solidarity Cambodia Newsletter
December 2010

Issue number 2

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LaValla School
School Year
2010– 2011



Yodicraft

www.yodicraft.com

Our Name

Marist Solidarity Cambodia, founded on the principles and beliefs of Saint Marcellin Champagnat, the Founder of the Marist Brothers, hold as our vision the hope for an inclusive community where concern for individual human development makes education a high priority.

Director's Greetings

Welcome to our Second Marist Solidarity Cambodia Newsletter.

Coming home from Phnom Penh last evening I was dazzled by the Christmas trees appearing to brighten up the shops, hotels and houses of Phnom Penh. On behalf of us all at Marist Solidarity Cambodia I would like to wish all our friends a Happy and Holy Christmas and that the coming New Year 2011 brings you much joy and happiness. Presently the Marist Brothers of Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific are holding a grand gathering to plan the future structures in their work for the youth of the many schools in their area. The Assembly is in Sydney in mid-December and our Br Terry is there to represent us! Br Terry is enjoying a year's holiday catching up with family and friends during the Christmas season before heading off overseas to pursue some personal interests in the UK and perhaps the US. He wrote recently and is enjoying himself and is well. This is Br Terry's first real break since 1997 when he

first commenced the LaValla School for our children. Br Terry has been tireless in developing the school first in Phnom Penh and later moving it to Takhmao.

The new school year commenced at LaValla in October with a combined staff meeting at LaValla outlining our hopes and promises for the coming year and greeting our new Principal, Ms Maroum. The new year at LaValla sees many new students coming mostly from the provinces such as Kampot, Prey Veng, Kandal and Siem Reap. We have 90 students with 75 boarders. The first activity was to introduce the new students to the old students so they could familiarize them to the ways of LaValla. Some new programmes were suggested, one of which is very exciting for the children which is to expand their experience by going out on excursions to the museum, zoo, Tonle Sap Lake to make our own video programmes.

Mr. Nimul Ouch
Executive Director
Marist Solidarity Cambodia

School Principal's Interest



First of all, I thank the 3 violet news that provides me the opportunity to express my feelings on this issue. My name is Sek Maroum, I was the primary school inspector belonging to the Kandal provincial department of Education, Youth and Sports. LaValla is the name of our school where I am now working as the school principal. I think I have made a happy choice to work here. LaValla School provides accommodation, food and primary education for children with disability.

I feel strongly with these children that the children are very capable, good morality, and humble to others even though they are disabled. I have also had my own son who is 14 years old is disabled with downs syndrome. His name is Pisit. My husband and I do our best to love and care for him. Showing close friendship, warmth and encouragement to our children is so important. We must never ignore them. My greatest wish is that we see their ability not their disability and promote and respect them. All people need to consider their good.

I thank the Marist Brothers, especially Br. Terry Heinrich who had the initiative to establish this school for Cambodians to build the future of the disadvantaged and disabled. I am very grateful to the Marist Brothers and wish them good health and success.
Ms. Sek Maroum, Principal, LaValla School





Yodicraft helps Cambodians with Disabilities to become more self sufficient.



New Website Online!

On the brand new website:
www.yodicraft.com

You can:

- Browse our Catalogue
- Pay by PayPal or credit card
- Have your own Account
- See status of your order

New Products

We have some new products added to our Yodicraft Catalogue.

These include some exciting new items made from the finest Cambodian silk.

Promoting Awareness of the Disadvantaged to the Community

On Friday December 3rd quite a few of the organizations helping the disadvantaged of Cambodia gathered at Independence Square under the auspices of FURADA to encourage these organizations and to make the public and government aware of how they can help the disadvantaged. The many stalls showed their programmes undertaken as well as their products. The whole display was most informative.

Many of our students, both present and past from both LaValla and Villa Maria attended. *Yodicraft* displayed their numerous products at the front of our stall and later in the day and evening *Yodiband* entertained the crowd. Some of the other NGO's present were:

- *Jesuit Services* from *Banteay Prieb* displaying their *Mekong wheelchair* along with a wide range of crafted articles made by their disadvantaged young people.
- *Veterans International* displayed their skillfully made aids to provide mobility for the rehabilitation of landmine victims.
- The *Komar Pikar Foundation* providing for the needs of disadvantaged children and youth.
- *National Centre of Disabled Persons* provides an outlet for Handicraft made by disadvantaged people.
- *Takeo Eye Hospital* providing improved vision and education for the disadvantaged at low cost.

There were quite a few other organizations helping the disadvantaged people of Cambodia present.

It was a delight to meet the Minister and his wife, who visited each stall and spoke with interest to those at the stall. Finally the evening concluded with a stirring performance by *Yodiband* and a drama presentation by the LaValla drama class. It was a special day for us all at *Marist Solidarity Cambodia* to see and encourage each other in our work with the disadvantaged. Every year, on the third of December, we celebrate the International Day of Persons with Disabilities with the purpose of increasing awareness and understanding of the rights of Persons with Disabilities.



From top: Visit of the Minister, Yodiband Performed



Visitors

Ashgrove visit

We have become used to visits by Br. Mark bringing students to LaValla. Over the years Br Mark and his students have constructed several pleasant additions to the school and this year was no exception. Br Mark, Ms Mena McLean and nine Year 11 Ashgrove Marist boys spent a full week with us cleaning up around Koy's house across the road (which is all but finished now) gathering up old building materials while leveling the garden and lawn areas. They then built a gutter in front of the house to drain the water off the road and finally planted a garden and turfed the lawn! It was so good that several white egrets have landed in the garden and made it their home! It is now, thanks to the Ashgrove boys, the most beautiful house in the neighborhood! The Ashgrove boys enjoyed the pool to cool off in after work and were happy to play with our students and even taught a few lessons. After seeing the sights of Phnom Penh they headed off to Pailin to see the work of MSC there before going to Siem Reap to be entranced by the magnificent temples there.

Woodlawn Visit

The visit of the teachers and students from Saint John College Woodlawn was a very special visit for the students of Villa Maria. They made new very special friendship and showed warm hearted feeling with our Villa Maria boarding students. As well they undertook many tasks especially painting, and teaching. Ms Viveca Larcher and the team enjoyed their stay with us. More support to the project has been offered. We are most grateful for their visits and hard work that the team did for us during their visit.

Once again the visits of both groups have given us great joy and happiness while showing the students not only the beauty of Cambodia but also how we can all live and trust each other to make a better life for everyone.

Essential Personnel (EP) and RideAid Australia

We sincerely thank EP and RideAid Australia who have provided their funds to support our projects. Their support enables us to serve more disadvantaged Cambodians.

LaValla School, Cambodia New School Year 2011



LaValla School students in the classroom

The project of LaValla School is to aim at sustaining the educational and personal need of the children with disabilities. The school is well known in the country as the only government approved school providing a full primary education to children with physical disabilities. The children who complete their

primary education are then eligible to gain access to the supplementary program to equip them with skills for their future.

This year has seen a busy start to the school year with many new students commencing schooling for the first time in grade 1. After the graduation in August 2010, we accepted 53 new students: They have been placed into the class after the testing according to their ability.

The new students are from the poor families, have never been to school or have had to discontinue their school at their village. These new students were referred to us through our network of some of NGOs and medical rehabilitation centers.

The best result from this project would be that the new students received the education they really need. For the poor children accepting to stay and learn at LaValla School. They see LaValla as a great place for them to create a dream for their future and achieve the social integration after gradating over next three years.



A Thousand Bananas!

After receiving funding from RideAid Australia, we are now ready to grow 1000 banana trees by January 2011. The project is Sa'ang Banana Farm– Employment of Young Cambodians with Disabilities. This is a new project that we are planning to set up in order to provide skills in growing banana and other vegetable as well as providing employment to disabled. Once the Banana farm has been established, it will overcome the barriers of job employment for people with disabilities and to give them access to self employment opportunity, skills training, income generating and job-placement.

Project goal is to establish of a farm to empower young people with disabilities to access employment and achieve social integration.

Specific Objectives of the project is to provide the training in banana and vegetables planting to equip young people with disabilities so as to ensure the maximum growth of their talent towards employment.

As the result of the project for 3 years, 15 young men with disabilities will be benefit from the banana farm.

Thanks to RideAid Australia.

Our Current Needs

Currently we are in need of:

- + Wheelchairs for some of our smaller children at LaValla school,
- + A 4-Wheel Drive truck to transport our children to and from the rural villages in the remote areas,
- + An Expat volunteer Physio-therapist to work for the project for six months.

All donations and help are appreciated, however because of practical reasons, such as security and postal problems many times we find it better to receive money rather than actual items.

ABOUT US

Marist Solidarity Cambodia, a humanitarian organisation founded on the principles and beliefs of Saint Marcellin Champagnat, the Founder of the Marist Brothers, hold as our **vision** the hope for an inclusive community where concern for individual human development makes education a high priority.

In fulfilment of this vision, we see as our **mission** a need to be in solidarity with young, especially the most disadvantaged, providing them with the means of achieving their full potential through the delivery of education and life-building support.

The **Values** we hold in our approach to aid and development therefore encompass the promotion of equality, dignity and social justice for all members God's family.

The logo of Marist Solidarity Cambodia is represented by three violets. The Founder of the Marist Brothers, Saint Marcellin Champagnat, used these violets to teach of the importance of behaviour characterised by *courtesy, compassion, friendliness, joy, patience* and other values – sometimes called "*little virtues*". It is these "*little virtues*" that we aspire towards in our care for the young people we serve.

Recent Visits

Thanks for the visits to our centers of our friends recently:

Dr. Jane Wu
Grapes for Humanity US
Delegates
CDMD delegates
ADD Delegates
Ashgrove visit
Woodlawn visit
Br. Luis Sabrado
Br. Roger and his Brother Kevin
People to People Delegates
David and Maree
Dr. David Buckley

Contact us

3Violetsnews is a three– monthly newsletter published by Marist Solidarity Cambodia (MSC)

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