



*Empowering families and children to effect lasting change... community by community.*



# Cambodia Update



## Greetings from Sustainable Cambodia!

The Rotarian members of our Board just returned from a volunteer trip to the SC project sites. The trip was filled with meetings, trainings and project work, as well as lots of one-on-one interaction with the families, children, Cambodian staff and volunteers.

Our all-Cambodian staff has done a tremendous job in 2008. Everyone works incredibly hard. We've all learned so much during the past few years! We are positioned to make even more progress in 2009....

But we are facing the same challenge that most nonprofit organizations are facing: Funding has dropped by 25-30% because of the world economy. And adding to the challenge is the 30% inflation Cambodia has faced (being pegged to the US dollar), making even rice unaffordable for many families.

We know everyone is affected by the economy. But if you are able, we ask that you consider giving a Village Gift this holiday season. You and the person in whose name you choose to give the gift will receive beautiful thank-you cards. And village families will receive pass-on animals, wells, fishponds and other help.

## Rotary Bicycles & Save-a-Child Grant



Thanks to Rotarian Gabor Karsai, the Rotary Club of Locust Valley, New York, and Rotary International, Sustainable Cambodia was able to partner in the enrollment of over 60 new students in the main SC school! The children were chosen from the most at-risk families in poor villages, and received bicycles to help them get to school. On their first day of attendance, the students were presented with bicycles and with school supplies (notebooks and pencils, etc.). There were many smiling faces on this day!

The families were all enrolled in the Sustainable Cambodia pass-on and training programs, receiving pass-on animals and agricultural training as well as other assistance in becoming self-sufficient. Rotary Club of Locust Valley recognized the need to help the families of these children to eliminate the pressure families sometimes feel to take their children out of school so they can work.

Sustainable Cambodia appreciates all the work that Gabor and his Rotary Club put into this project. We are all excited about the impact this will have on the lives of these children.

## School Enrollment Day

By: Torri Mumm

Students, teachers and staff recently participated in what is called "Enrollment Day." The Service Club made up of older students in Sustainable Cambodia's schools are particularly active in this project. On Enrollment Day, loudspeakers are mounted onto trucks and students and teachers use microphones as they drive through the villages near Pursat, encouraging children to enroll in and to attend the public state school.



It is every child's right, as a child in Cambodia, to attend state school, but many children do not attend as they are often needed to work on their family's farm. Also, sometimes the distance to get to school is challenging for the youngest students. The purpose of this "Enrollment Day" is to encourage participation in school, and to show the benefits of getting an education.

Links to Village Gifts and Child Sponsorship are below, and on our website.

Remember how efficient and effective we are: Sustainable Cambodia's only paid employees are native Cambodians working in rural Cambodia. The onsite staff is assisted by a group of international volunteers who typically devote from 4 to 18 months onsite. All international officers and directors are unpaid volunteers, who pay their own travel and living expenses. This ensures that 100% of funding goes directly into the rural village programs.

As always, we welcome your feedback, ideas and comments.

Love & service,

Richard Allen  
Volunteer CEO/Director

## Holiday Greetings



Many religions are active in Cambodia, but Buddhism is the most prevalent. Phchum Ben is an annual day to honor ancestors and to celebrate the gift of family and friends. This holiday, several of our International Volunteers traveled to Veal village to celebrate the holiday with village families. It was a good day for everyone.

We wish you all the very best in the upcoming holiday season, and send you best wishes for a peaceful world, loving family and friends, and good fortune.

The support that you provide through Sustainable Cambodia to empower the village families and their children makes many lives wonderful in an otherwise challenging environment.

Thank you for all that you do to make the world a better place! And best wishes to you and your loved ones in this holiday season.



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**Sustainable Cambodia** is a grass-roots, volunteer-based, Rotary-supported, 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization, working with rural Cambodian villages to help them achieve sustainability and self-sufficiency. Our model is unique in several ways:

- Only native Cambodians are employed as paid staff, and all international officers, directors and consultants are unpaid volunteers, ensuring that 100% of funding goes directly into the rural village programs.
- We are an empowerment organization rather than an "Aid" organization. We provide resources, assistance, training and education to the community, empowering families to revitalize their community and economy.
- Our approach is broad-based, including schooling for children, safe village drinking water, irrigation systems, alternative agriculture, vocational education, micro-business and healthcare.
- In return for the assistance, each family commits to helping surrounding villages: We not only "teach them how to fish," but teach them to teach others how to fish.

While we currently work in central Cambodia, our vision is for this empowerment model to spread across Cambodia, and ultimately to grow into other countries.

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