

# Friendship with Cambodia Activities Report - 2004

## A Great Beginning!

Friendship with Cambodia is off to a great start. In 2004 we raised \$20,000. A heartfelt thanks to our donors and volunteers! We are an all-volunteer organization; so most of our income directly helped Cambodians in need. The funds raised provided benefits in these major efforts:

- education about Cambodia (\$4000)
- funding projects in Cambodia (\$13,500)
- striving to become more caring and peaceful individuals
- setting up our new organization (\$500) (\$2000 was carried forward for 2005)

Our 25 active volunteers met monthly to plan educational events. We also worked on establishing our new organization. Friendship with Cambodia had our first board meeting in August. Volunteer CPA Judyth Hyll set up our bookkeeping system. Board President Marie Delahaye donated a computer and we researched database systems.

This report summarizes how we are helping people in Cambodia and providing educational programs.

## **PROJECTS IN CAMBODIA**

### **SADP - Our Cambodia Partner**

Friendship with Cambodia selected a partner organization in Cambodia to administer most of our programs there. It is Southeast Asia Development Program (SADP) and the director is Peter Swift. Peter is a US citizen who has been living in Cambodia for the last eleven years. He supports himself by working as an environmental consultant in Cambodia. This allows him to volunteer most of his time for SADP, keeping our administrative costs low. Thank you Peter!! SADP supports ten small Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) created and run by Cambodian women in rural areas. They work with the poorest of the poor, helping them overcome their difficulties through self-empowerment.



*Half the girls and a quarter of the boys in Cambodia never have the opportunity to go to school due to poverty. These are three of the students Friendship is sponsoring. Malen, on the right, is an orphan.*

## **Scholarships for Poor Students**

Friendship with Cambodia sponsored 31 poor students in 2004 to attend school in Cambodia. Education is the single largest expense for rural families. Students need school clothes, books, supplies and often a bicycle to get to school. Seventy-five percent of the children who start school drop out between third and sixth grade because they need to work to help their families survive. Our sponsorship allows these impoverished children to continue their education. We also support social workers that choose the students, monitor their situation and give them support. **For \$180 you can sponsor a child in school for a year. You will receive a photo and description of your student.**

### **Friendship was Founded in 2003**

Bhavia Wagner incorporated Friendship with Cambodia in the State of Oregon on September 27, 2003. That fall she set up the new organization with educational materials, a bank account, post office box, and employee id number. Attorney David Atkin helped with the organizational structure. Volunteers organized a dedication celebration event in October. Bhavia gave five educational slide talks about Cambodia in Oregon and California.

Dedicated to global understanding and kindness to others.



*With the help of a small loan this woman bought a boat and is now earning a living delivering fresh water to people who live in the estuary.*

### Self-Empowerment Loans

Friendship gave funds (\$250) to SADP start a community rice bank in a rural village. When a farm family has a crop failure, they run out of food and may be forced to sell their land in order to survive. They often end up in urban slums. The rice bank allows them to borrow rice and keep their land. Friendship also gave self-empowerment loans (\$25 - \$50) for people to start income generation projects. One family used their loan to buy a bicycle so they could travel to sell fish in rural villages.



*This women's self-help group in Kompot Province addresses the issues of poverty, homelessness, family planning and domestic violence. We also support the social worker that organizes these women.*

### Building a School and Library

Friendship gave seed money (\$700) to SADP to help build a school (we provide the roof). There is a shortage of schools in Cambodia and often students can only attend half a day due to crowded classrooms. Teachers have to instruct two groups of 40 to 50 students a day, morning and afternoon. We are also funding the establishment of a small library (\$100 to SADP), as there are very few libraries in Cambodia.



*Cambodia has four to six million landmines and everyday two or three people step on one.*

### Help for Landmine Survivors

Friendship helped support (\$1000) a vocational training program for landmine survivors. There are over 40,000 disabled people in Cambodia who lack the means to support themselves. This program teaches landmine survivors motorcycle repair, appliance repair or sewing and helps them start their own business. Kristen Leadem with Clear Path International administers the program in Cambodia.

### Forest Protection

Friendship sponsored a community forestry group in Kompong Chhnang Province to protect the trees and wildlife. Illegal logging and poaching are serious threats to the natural environment and to the villagers who depend on the forest for their livelihood. The community forestry group documents illegal activities and reports them to the authorities. Through SADP we provided funds (\$300) needed for cameras, cell phones and transportation.

## ***EDUCATION ABOUT CAMBODIA***

### **Spirit of Cambodia Tour**

The year 2004 marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the ending of Pol Pot's genocide when nearly two million people died from execution, starvation or disease. Friendship with Cambodia was part of the Spirit of Cambodia Tour that commemorated survivors of genocide, provided historical information and explained how to prevent genocide.

The tour consisted of Tiara Delgado, filmmaker of *Fragile Hopes from the Killing Fields*, Prach Ly, popular rap artist who uses music to educate youth about genocide and Bhavia Wagner, author of *Soul Survivors - Stories of Women and Children in Cambodia*. In May the tour presented at the University of Washington and in Minnesota at Hamline University, the United Cambodia Association and Gustavus Adolphus College.

In February, Tiara and Bhavia made presentations in Phnom Penh, Cambodia at the Genocide Documentation Center of Cambodia, Toul Ampil School, Alliance for Conflict Transformation, Foreign Correspondence Club and Royal University of Phnom Penh.

### **Talks and Radio Interviews**

Bhavia Wagner gave nine educational slide talks about Cambodia in 2004. Her talks in Eugene, Oregon included: Oasis Senior Center, Zavada Concert, Sacred Heart Hospital, a Quaker women's group, University of Oregon, WAND peace group and Wellsprings High School. She also gave talks at University of Minnesota and in Oakland, California. Bhavia gave three radio interviews. One program was about landmines and the other two were about the situation of children in Cambodia.

**Our Mission:** To live from our hearts,  
cultivate compassion, patience and tolerance,  
embody peace, act with kindness and  
serve those in need.



*The Cambodian Dance Troupe of Oregon performed for our fundraiser in October.*

### **Special Events**

**Landmine Survivors Benefit** - Volunteers including Tiffany Mitchell and board members Linda Young and Vern Arne, organized an educational event about landmines in January. It was also a fundraiser and included a dinner by Pujita Mayeda. Kristen Leadem with Clear Path International gave the presentation. The event raised about \$2000, and half went to Clear Path for their vocational training program for landmine survivors in Kompong Cham Province, Cambodia.

**Celebrate Cambodia! Cultural Event** was held in October. It consisted of a Cambodian dinner, a slide show, performance by the Cambodian Dance Troupe of Oregon (40 youth dancers from Portland), fashion show, silent auction and crafts. About 50 volunteers helped with the event, which brought in about \$5000 for education in Cambodia (scholarships, books and building a school). Teachers Jackie Van Rysselberghe and Rosemary Miranda involved local high school students.

## Tours to Cambodia

Bhavia Wagner led two educational study tours to Cambodia for Global Exchange, in February and October. Global Exchange is a non-profit organization based in San Francisco, California.

Each tour visited the historic temples of Angkor Wat, took a boat trip through floating villages; saw traditional dance and shadow puppet performances; learned about labor issues; visited slums, families with AIDS and programs for survivors of sex trafficking and street children; toured the Royal Palace, National Art Museum and the genocide museum; went to shops with crafts made by landmine survivors; and visited a school and Buddhist temple.



*Tour participants rode in an ox cart, harvested rice, spent the night in a rural village, and met with families and community leaders.*

Tour participants saw projects that Friendship with Cambodia supports and met with some of the scholarship students, a women's group, and community forestry leaders. Touched by what they saw, some of the tour participants are now sponsoring children in school. The next tour with Bhavia is January 2006 ([www.globalexchange.org](http://www.globalexchange.org)). The tour is two weeks long and the cost is \$1900 - \$2300, depending on the number of participants, plus airfare.

*"Excellent trip! We met local people wherever we went. I'd do it over again and recommend it to others."*

Carol Pucci, Travel Writer for the Seattle Times

## Tabling and Outreach

Many volunteers including Vern Arne and Lola Erwin set up a crafts and education table at our programs and at community events in Eugene, such as the Asia Celebration, the Obon Festival and the Eugene Celebration. We also had a table at the Cambodian New Year Celebration in Portland, Oregon. We sell crafts made by landmine survivors, widows and other disadvantaged groups.

## Educational Resources

Bhavia responded to email from teachers, students and media looking for resources and information about Cambodia. Her Cambodia curriculum, designed for high school teachers and linked to her book *Soul Survivors*, is on Northern Illinois University's website ([www.niu.edu/cseas/outreach](http://www.niu.edu/cseas/outreach)). She also created a Cambodia Cultural Kit to use in schools and exhibits. It is available for purchase for \$75 plus shipping. Volunteer Courtenay Paulic is creating a website for Friendship with Cambodia ([www.friendshipwithcambodia.org](http://www.friendshipwithcambodia.org)).

### Inner Peace Retreat

In August, volunteers David Skinner and Patricia Moran led a daylong Inner Peace Retreat in Eugene with meditation, yoga and personal reflection as a benefit for our programs. We hope that by developing the qualities of peace and compassion within ourselves, we will help create a kinder world.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Become a volunteer
- Sponsor a child in school for a year (\$180)
- Make a donation
- Educate others

*May your heart be filled with the joy that comes from helping others. Thank you!*