



TOP STORIES

Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter Work Project Test Build a Success!

Last week, 15 U.S. Peace Corps Cambodia volunteers worked with community members and local skilled workers to build a test house that will eventually serve as a community center for the New Life Community in Oudong- one of the site locations for Habitat for Humanity's upcoming Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter Work Project: The Mekong Build 2009.

The volunteers worked for five days straight under the hot April sun, and didn't stop until the last brick was



in place. The test house was built using stabilized soil blocks that were produced on site. One of the U.S. Peace Corps Cambodia volunteers said about the project, "Not only will the new houses provide shade from the sun and shelter from the rain, they will also give families peace of mind, safety and comfort, and a loving place to come home to and rest at the end of the day." Upon completion of the test house, the New Life Community joined Habitat for Humanity Cambodia and the U.S. Peace Corps Cambodia volunteers for a dedication that ended with an impromptu dance party out in Oudong!

Photo by Mikel Flamm: Community in front of test house

A Day in the Life of a Habitat Home Partner

While waiting for his next customer outside of the Phnom Penh Municipal Hospital, Mr. Sok Dara explained what his life is like as an ambulance tuk tuk driver. Mr. Sok Dara is a Habitat home partner who lives in the Samaki community- about 30km outside of Phnom Penh. Mr. Dara's home was built in 2006 with support from HFHC's Phnom Penh Housing and Community Development Program funded by The Charitable Foundation.

Mr. Dara must be ready at a moment's notice as the sole ambulance driver in his community. Any time, day or night, if a community member calls, Mr. Dara drops everything and drives the community member in his tuk tuk to Phnom Penh to receive medical treatment.



Barring any medical emergencies, a typical day for Mr. Dara begins about 5:30am when he wakes up to make breakfast (usually rice soup) for his wife and three children- two sons and one daughter, all under the age of eight. After he gives the kids a bath and takes them to school in his tuk tuk, Mr. Dara heads out to Phnom Penh (about a 45 minute drive) to take his customers back and forth between their homes and the Phnom Penh Municipal Hospital until his shift is over at 3pm. After 3pm, he heads back home to clean and polish his tuk tuk, care for his children and participate in community activities. Mr. Dara enjoys dinner with his family about 6pm, and is in bed by 9pm every night- unless there is a medical emergency and then, duty calls! *Pictured: Mr. Sok Dara in his ambulance tuk tuk*

Program Highlights

- Well water testing was successful in both our **Phnom Penh** and **Siem Reap** programs
- **Battambang** received financial training from the World Bank
- 60 water filters were distributed in **Siem Reap**

HFH Cambodia Crafts Business Plan for 2010



From 5 May- 8 May, Habitat for Humanity Cambodia traveled to Sihanoukville to participate in a four day, annual staff planning retreat. Mr. Christopher Lee joined Habitat to facilitate the meetings and to incorporate fun, team-building activities. During the annual planning, Habitat staff reviewed the vision and mission of Habitat for Humanity, discussed the implementation of the annual plan from fiscal year 2009, created a SWOT (strength, weakness, opportunity, threat) analysis, and then using all of this knowledge, was able to create a business plan for fiscal year 2010. The staff also had time to head out to Sihanouk's

beautiful beaches to swim and play football, as well as enjoy a night of dancing and karaoke.

Pictured: Staff working together to complete a puzzle as part of team building exercise

Royal Ploughing Ceremony and King's Birthday Celebration

From 13- 15 May, Habitat for Humanity Cambodia's offices will be closed to commemorate two royal events: the Ploughing Ceremony and the King's birthday. On 12 May, the Royal Ploughing Ceremony took place. Cambodian farmers wait anxiously for this annual event that is said to predict the weather and farming conditions for the upcoming year. Royal oxen are led in a procession to seven gold trays containing rice, corn, sesame seeds, beans, grass, water and wine. Based on the items the oxen chose to eat, predictions are made about floods, good harvests and excessive rainfall. The prediction this year? Because the oxen chose to eat only beans and corn, royal astrologers predict that the annual rice production will fall by 30%, but there will be plenty of rainwater throughout the country.

On May 14th, King Sihanmoni's birthday is a countrywide celebration where Cambodian's enjoy a few days off from work to take part in the festivities that celebrate the life of King Sihanmoni.

Calling All Facebook Users!

Check out HFH Cambodia's new Cause page on Facebook and join the cause to support Habitat for Humanity Cambodia! We encourage all of our partners, volunteers and friends to post photos, videos and stories on our Cause page- it is a great way to keep in touch and share your Cambodia experience with others.

Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter Work Project Featured Families of the Month¹

Mr. Lenghoeun lives in a simple, one room, wooden house with a dirt floor and a wooden platform for a bed with his wife Ms. Soa Houch and their children- 6 year-old Rachana and 3 year-old Jitra. Because the air quality at the dumpsite is so bad, Mr. Lenghoeun and his wife would leave about 5pm every day to wander around the city until their cart was filled with metal, bottles, cans and anything else they could find. They would sleep next to the cart until the break of day when it was safer to return home. “We had to be careful late at night as the gangs that wander the city would often try to steal from us. It was safer to go as a group than by ourselves.”



This was their livelihood until last year, when Mr. Lenghoeun took part in a vocational training program organized by World Vision where he studied culinary arts. He was then able to find a job working for Lucky Supermarket as a baker. He said, “I was always concerned about the future, and when I had the chance to learn this trade, I jumped at the chance.” His wife also no longer walks the city streets at night searching for recycling. Ms. Houch now works in a sewing factory where she cuts, irons and sews clothing that is sold to various countries. They are very happy with their upcoming move to Oudong. Mr. Lenghoeun said, “We are all happy knowing

that we will be moving to a new community where our children will have a better future, and where we can have our own home.” *Photo by Mikel Flamm: Mr. Lenghoeun and family*

When Mr. Chea Marandy was a baby, he developed a high fever that became the early stages of Polio. Because his family was very poor, Mr. Marandy did not receive medical care and learned to live with his poor health. He said, “I would crawl around and move on my bottom to get where I wanted to go. I did not let anything stop me, and to this day, I am determined to be independent.” In 1994, Mr. Marandy attended a disability center where he learned how to work with his disability. He said, “I am determined to work and do not wish for people to feel sorry for me. My disability is on the outside, but in my heart, I know what I can do when I set my mind to it.”



For many years, Mr. Marandy would take a cart out every afternoon and search the city for anything he could sell- bottles, cardboard, paper and metal. He said, “People used to come up to me and give me money...I was shy to take it. I am willing to work and don’t want others to take pity on me. There was one man who would give me money- he would hide it in a bottle and place it in my cart when I wasn’t looking. Later, when I went through the cart, I would find it. He was very generous to me.”

Recently, Mr. Marandy attended a 3 year training course at Pour un Sourire d’Enfant (PSE) vocational school where he learned how to repair appliances, TVs, stereos and radios. He had trouble finding a shop that would hire him because of his disability, so he decided to repair shoes for the time being. He said, “Once we move from this area to the new houses, I would like to set up my own business from what I learned at PSE. My dream is to be able to be the village repairman once we make the move to the new community.” *Photo by Mikel Flamm: Mr. Chea Marandy and family*

¹ Photographs and excerpts of interviews by Mikel Flamm in Dec 2009

VOLUNTEER HAPPENINGS

A TIME TO BUILD

By Adrian Stover

During the last week of April this year, fourteen Peace Corps Cambodia volunteers and I helped test-build a house for the New Life Community in Oudong. While most of our volunteers are currently involved in English instruction assignments throughout the country, nearly half of our group was able to help with the project. Although most of us did not know anything about masonry or building houses, both the Habitat staff and Khmer skilled workers were diligent in their instructions to us. After the first couple of days, we seemed to fall into different professions that we liked best. These included all kinds of brick work- brick fetcher, mover, soaker and washer, chopper and mender, filler of the spaces between the bricks, as well as other assorted jobs around the site.

We arrived at the building site on Monday to find only a bathroom and a cement foundation there. Our team worked fairly fast on the walls despite the heat and a few interruptions from the beginning of the rainy season, and by Thursday, we had put up the doors, windows, and were almost finished with the roof. The days were hot, but most of us were able to cope with that having lived in this country for almost a



year. Two coolers of iced bottled water, a tarp that provided shade and a couple of nice afternoon breezes just before the rains helped as well. At the end of the week, our group was exhausted but happy with the work we accomplished. When the New Life Community came and visited the site, we were overjoyed that they liked the house. It was also good to see that a lively dance was held after the dedication ceremony! We hope that the rest of the build in November goes as well, and that the families of the community enjoy their new homes.

Photo by Mikel Flamm: US Peace Corps Cambodia volunteers at build site

If you are interested in becoming a member of a Global Village team in Cambodia, please visit www.habitat.org/gv for more details.

UPCOMING EVENTS

| | |
|----------------|--|
| May 13- 15 | King's Birthday Celebration |
| May 18- 22 | Disaster Mitigation Training, Indonesia |
| May 29 | World Bank Supervision Visit to Battambang |
| May 22- June 1 | Global Village Team from Australia in Phnom Penh |
| June | Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter Work Project Launch |

NEW FACES

Please join HFH Cambodia as we welcome Mr. Phim Sopheap as our new Senior Program Coordinator based in our Phnom Penh office. Mr. Sopheap joins HFH Cambodia from Heifer International- Cambodia where he was the Senior Program Manager for Support. Mr. Sopheap also brings with him years of experience in working with the United Nations Development Fund and other international organizations. Mr. Sopheap can be reached at phim_sopheap@hfhc.org or at +855 (0) 11 72 412.

Also joining HFH Cambodia is Mr. Malvin Pagdanganan as the JRCWP Construction Manager. Mr. Pangdanganan has worked on three other Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter Work Projects- in India, Korea and the Philippines. He also brings with him ten years of experience in working with Habitat for Humanity in the Asia Pacific region. Mr. Pagdanganan can be reached at malvinp@yahoo.com or at +855 (0) 929 457 10.

OR KUHN!

**Habitat for Humanity Cambodia says thank you
to our affiliate tithe donors.**

Together, we will continue improving lives and building communities in Cambodia.

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