

# Andrew Woinarski School Foundation

MAR 2010



Three students we were very fortunate to meet at Ban Na Sam Liang

*"A school is a building that has four walls with tomorrow inside." ~ Lon Watters*

**Welcome** to the first of what we hope will be regular newsletters providing you all with an update on the Foundation's progress. We are planning to begin with a bi-annual newsletter and will see what happens from there.

Some time has passed since we excitingly embarked on the building of our first school in Lao last year. After a disappointing slow start due to the prolonged rainy season we are very happy to report that the construction schedule for the Na Sam Liang Primary school is back on track and the new building is due to be completed by May 2010.

Dad and I had the opportunity to visit the school late last year (unfortunately Mum was unable to join us as she was busily organising a tree in Botanical Gardens for Andrew). Our trip to the school was an extraordinary and extremely humbling experience which left Dad and I even more inspired and committed to the Foundation's cause.

We have included some pictures and more details of the trip in the pages that follow for those that are interested.

When we started this charity we didn't have any grand expectations of what would follow. We merely wanted to help a few less fortunate children gain a very much needed education whilst doing something in honour of my brother. However, we have been completely blown away by everyone's generosity and are now in the very fortunate position of being able to chose our second and soon hopefully third site for new schools. We would love for this momentum to continue and therefore have committed to trying to build a new school with the help of Child's Dream every year. We are very close to confirming the location of our second school and will send out an update with the finalised details shortly.

In keeping with the Foundation's momentum to raise funds Antony and a very close family friend, John Bennett are about to ambitiously embark on the

legendary Marathon des Sables in April. We are exceptionally grateful to be selected as one of the charities they will be bravely running for and wish them both the very best.

Before signing off, I would like to leave you all with this quote that I saw the other day and loved:-

**"Education is not the answer to the question. Education is the means to answer all questions"** ~ William Allin.

We wish you all a prosperous, healthy and happy 2010.

*Alex Shaw*

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In partnership with Child's Dream





With the students and teachers at Na Sam Liang Primary school

## NA SAM LIANG SCHOOL

We have been desperately wanting to visit Na Sam Liang ever since construction started early last year. However the prolonged rainy season made travelling in the area virtually impossible due to the poor condition of the roads.

So in November once the rain had subsided and the roads began to dry we could pack our bags. Dad and I were so excited about going to the school and finally meeting the community and children. We flew to Vientiane for a night to explore and then on to Pakse in the South of Lao where we were warmly greeted by the Child's Dream project team - Tai, Mong and Koy.



Dad with Lao Child's Dream project team

After a very much needed coffee in Pakse we set forth to Baan Na Sam Liang. Our route took us across the impressive Mekong River, known as the 'lifeline of Southeast Asia'. Crossing the Mekong was definitely an experience in itself as the "home made" punt on our ferry broke down numerous times. However we finally made it in one piece to the other side to resume our journey.

After several hours driving, we were met by three representatives from the Lao Department of Education at the closest main village to Ban Na Sam Liang who accompanied us to the school. The condition of the road (and that's being generous calling it a road) was appalling. It was very clear why 4WD's and small trucks barely

made the trip in the dry season let alone when the rain sets in.



We eventually arrived at the village and after a quick look around we met with the village elders in the temple to discuss the new school and other community issues. Thank goodness for the translating skills of our guides!

It was coincidentally Andrew's birthday the day of our visit and Dad had brought over 2 candles with him (green and gold of course!) to light in Andrew's memory. At the conclusion of the meeting the elders very kindly allowed us to light the candles on the temple alter which was needless to say very special.



After our meeting, it was time to meet the children and give them some gifts we had brought with us (blankets, pens and paper etc). Initially, they were all understandably a little suspicious of the tall over-excited blonde woman and the 6' 7" grey haired Santa Claus look alike invading their school day.

## Quick snapshot

When should the school be finished?  
In the absence of any further delays from the weather, we expect the school to be completed by May 2010.

How many children will go to the school?  
Over 230 children aged between 6 to 10 years old will attend the school.

Who will run the school?  
Any school built by a charity in Lao must still be run by the education department within the Lao government. Child's Dream keep abreast of progress and any issues within the school by way of informal feedback from a student body established by Child's Dream and are in regular contact with the Board of Education.

If I wanted to visit the school how do I get there?

Na Sam Liang Primary School is located in Champasak Province in Southern Lao. The closest airport to the school is in Pakse which is about 3 hours drive away. Flights leave daily from Bangkok to the Lao capital Vientiane. From Vientiane you can fly to Pakse with Loa Airlines. Due to Loa being a communist run country you may only visit the school if you are accompanied by a representative of the Loa Department of Education and a member of the Child's Dream team. If you would like to visit the school we would be more than happy to arrange the trip for you. Please contact me on [alshaw03@gmail.com](mailto:alshaw03@gmail.com)

### Upcoming events

We are currently looking into donating some sporting equipment together with hats for the students.





However, gradually the children began to relax and watching them all play reminded both Dad and I that really it doesn't take much to provide entertainment for creative young minds; plenty of laughter and smiles filled the playground.



Existing water pump

Once Dad had checked the location of the current water pump to ensure the new Sky Hydrant water purification plant could be installed correctly it was sadly time to leave. We bid our

farewell and drove to a nearby village to arrange for the sand deliveries for the construction and then returned to Pakse.

We ended our very satisfying and productive trip with a delicious meal on the Mekong with the Child's Dream team and flew back to Vientiane the following day.

Our visit to Baan Na Sam Liang had a profound effect on both Dad and I and it's a tribute to the villagers that they in the main were very happy despite their impoverished circumstances. There is no doubt the school at Baan Na Sam Liang will be a godsend to this remote ethnic village.

At this stage we are uncertain of the exact date for the official opening of the

school as the rainy season is fast approaching which would make access in the area extremely difficult. Therefore we expect the opening will likely be in the later part of this year but will keep you all updated as the year progresses.



Dad trying to fit under the toilet door much to the amusement of all the children watching!

## FUTURE SCHOOLS

After our trip to Baan Na Sam Liang, Dad met with Marc, Daniel and Manuela at the Childs Dream's headquarters in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

We were very anxious there be no further delays in construction at Baan Na



Sam Liang and wanted to identify our next project. Marc suggested we may need to consider other countries such as Thailand as the Lao Government had recently indicated their need for primary schools was no longer a priority. We are considering a number of options for the next school and expect confirmation regarding the site in the next few weeks.

## MARATHON DES SABLES

Antony and a great friend, John Bennett are admirably participating in the legendary Marathon des Sables race in April this year.

For those not familiar with Marathon des Sables it is a footrace across the Sahara desert in Morocco. The race is approx 250km across some of the harshest terrain in the world. Each entrant must carry all their equipment and food for the full 6 days.

Ant and John will be very kindly running for 2 charities, the Sydney Breast Cancer Foundation and our Foundation. We wish them all the best of luck and a safe return home.

Both Ant and John will be shortly sending out an email to everyone with further information regarding the race and details of you can donate for them.





## AUSTRALIAN DONATIONS

There has recently been a change in the way donations are collected in Australia for our Foundation. Child's Dreams have now partnered with the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF). For Australian residents who wish to make a donation that is tax deductible, you may use the following link [Australian donations](#). Please note that CAF will deduct a 10% administrative fee for each donation made.

If you make a donation via CAF, could you please let me know so that we can ensure the funds are correctly allocated to the Foundation.

For any questions or other information regarding donations please let me know on [alshaw03@gmail.com](mailto:alshaw03@gmail.com)

## DONOR NEWS

When we first started this journey, we had modest expectations of our school projects being funded by donations from family and friends. However, we have been amazed and humbled by the



financial support received from around the world.

There have been several fund raising events such as the lavish 'Cocktails for A Cause' hosted by the very generous Bennett's in Hong Kong, the fabulous charity auction in Sydney organised by Matt and Ali Handley and even a small cake stall at the Pokfulam markets.

The Foundation was chosen as the official charity for International Camp Suisse very much thanks to the efforts of Richard Young and a huge thank you to Matthias & Anika Dux and Don & Jilli Chalmers for very kindly nominating the



Foundation for their special family celebrations. A dear friend of the family, Roslyn Motter also dedicated her recent fabulous



children's book 'The Blood Tree' to Andrew which was a great honour.

And of course a very special thanks to all the individual donations from across the globe. From the financial stalwarts of New York and Tokyo, London pensioners through to donations from rural Australia. Without all your support we would never have been able to get this Foundation off the ground.

In addition the upcoming fund raising events we are aiming to further broaden our donor base by approaching schools within Sydney. If anyone is interested in helping out with this avenue of fund raising, please let me know.

## WEBSITE

With the help of the talented Emma Scott at the Elk Group we are in the process of conducting a very much needed overhaul of our website. We apologise for any interruptions in the meantime and thank you in advance for your patience.

## A PLACE IN THE SUN

Whilst Dad and I were in Loas, Mum was busy organising a tree in the Sydney Botanical Gardens in memory of Andrew. A very special thanks to Paula Found for all her tremendous help in choosing the tree and to the Botanical Gardens for the very special opportunity.

For those who might like to visit the tree, we have included a picture and a map of where it is located.

There is also a plaque dedicated to Andrew on the tree that reads as follows:

### A place in the sun

In loving memory of Andrew Woinarski, a vibrant young life lived to its fullest.

Your heart was filled with love, laughter and compassion and your smile will remain eternally in our hearts.

Our deepest love and gratitude for being 'our boy'.

Forever loved, your Family

## Directions

The tree is on the forefront of Farm Cove. It is a Phillyrea Latifolia and for those like me that have absolutely no idea what type of tree that is we have included a picture of the tree to help you find it. If you are facing the water it is about 10 metres on the right of the bronzed horse statues.

