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there are few areas of the world where one witnesses so brilliantly the transformation from little ragamuffins into schoolchildren ... for a better, more fruitful life ...
(Mr James Morris, Executive Director of the UN World Food Programme, after his visit to FCS),

PSE's 22nd New School Year

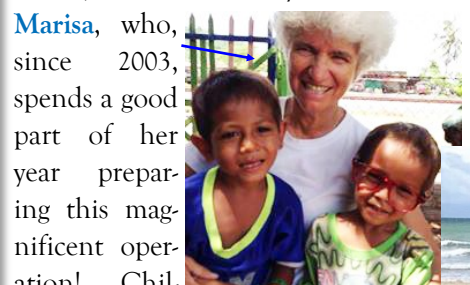
Christian left us a year ago. He could leave in peace; his will is in Les Pépites, (Little Gems) and Marie-France continues the adventure in the midst of the children and of the teams that remain driven with the same passion. Throughout last year, Elisabeth Bardon-Debats masterfully assumed the general management for the interim period following Pich's departure and also prepared the way for Borithy, our new General Director, to take up his position. We owe her a great deal. Thank you, Betty, and welcome to Borithy!

For this PSE's 22nd new school year we will concentrate on: consolidating the management standards and improving our pedagogy. Redeployment of the pedagogy department, run by Cambodians whose expertise and mission include overseeing and ensuring that our teaching offers the best opportunities for each child to achieve their potential. The new campus in OBK opened its doors, a few hundred meters from the Centre, so that many students will be able to realise their dream of studying at the Business school.

I encourage you to visit our website regularly, between newsletters, to get the news about PSE and activities in the Centre. Nothing would be possible without your loyal support. Thank you

For the children's joy

4 weeks of music, songs, games, races, dance, crazy fun ... 4 weeks of Summer Camps! With 200 European monitors & coordinators and at least as many young Cambodians from PSE and elsewhere, all overseen by the fabulous



Marisa, who, since 2003, spends a good part of her year preparing this magnificent operation! Children who don't have to return to work and who can at the end of the



week take a lot of rice back home to

fantastic moment of shared joy for the kids as well as for the monitors! If you listen to them, they'll tell you how hard it is for them to see it all come to an end and how they dream of going back next year!



their families, after a week of real vacation, what a

Emotions here

10 of our boarders, 16 - 17 years old, volunteered to be monitors in our Summer Camps. They were taken on because their fluency in English allowed them to communicate with Europeans. They were paid, as are all Khmer monitors. The next day, they came to my office, each of them with a present (kramas, little wallets, shirts...) "It's our first salary so, we wanted to get you a present to thank you for everything you do for us!" I had a hard time explaining to them why I was crying...

Emotions from there

Dear Madam

My name is Clémence, I am 12 years old and live in Tarbes. About two weeks ago I went to the see “Les Pépites” (Little Gems) the film touched me enormously! I came to understand their needs and I asked myself why not make a donation. It isn't a large sum of money, but I want to show that I was truly touched and for me it is important to demonstrate my presence and support for you!!!!



Borithy

Borithy, our new Director, whose arrival I have already announced to you, joined the PSE family 3 months ago. He comes with 33 years of experience, in both Europe and Asia, in management, project planning and project management, with a forte in technical assistance.

He returned to Cambodia 23 years ago, he worked, in the field, in several large organisations such as USAID, DFID, UNDP ... His wide management experience and expertise encompasses large-scale operations. His specialities are change management and institutional strengthening.

He is trilingual, both written and oral, in Khmer, French and English.

A beautiful and solid profile to take on the leadership here, coupled with delightful human qualities. He has already become a friend!

He has been standing on his own feet since Betty's departure, and seems to have found his place, despite the unavoidable upheavals that followed Pich's departure.

Welcome to Borithy to assure the future of many children who are waiting to embark on the journey of their lives!

Family Day

On 8th June, we held the annual family day. 1,190 people came to the event in our covered courtyard which was extended with a tent for the occasion. But driving rain forced everyone to settle in the courtyard because the tent did not provide adequate protection. There was a packed agenda for the day: our Social Team detailed new areas of intervention with presentations by the manager of each zone; a presentation of the FLIP programme, which provides short voca-



tional training courses for adults; reminders of what PSE can offer children, in particular the different options for vocational training; we announced a new criteria management system, that depends on the category of the family (their family quotient, in fact) and which offers access to as little as 9 programmes (only educational programmes) to between 35

and 40 programmes for the poorest; then an opportunity for questions and answers before ending the day by distributing a snack and providing compensation for half-a-day's work lost. The attention of the parents, was sometimes distracted by a social worker with a small, worried, child in their arms who could not find their parents.



I confess that I am still always moved to find myself amongst all these families who trust us to help them give their children a future. We are not allowed to disappoint them! For them, as well as for their children, PSE provides them the opportunity to get by one day...

Volunteer needed: * 1 assistant treasurer a few hours a week in Versailles.

A strong appeal by Elizabeth, in the secretariat, to be notified of any changes of address (email addresses in particular)

What has become of them ? (by Michel et Pascale Sebban)

Michel and Pascale , former members of PSE Centre, moved to Phnom Penh 6 years ago. Michel, a doctor, opened a practice after annual visits during several years.

Vantha came across PSE in 2002. The eldest of 3 children, he has a sister and a brother and was then 15 years old. His father had abandoned the family when he was 6. His mother had a few hours of cleaning jobs and the children scavenged on the dumpsite. But Vantha had always wanted to study and succeeded, more or less, in following lessons in the State school next to PSE.

From 2002, the 3 children were taken on by PSE in remedial classes at the Centre. At last, they could attend school regularly! Their mother rented a small stand in the market to sell a few plates of rice and caramelised pork... But after they had paid all their bills, they only had \$25 left a month ...

Vantha was always very close to his mother. He got up very early, before school, to help her and to look after his brother and sister. His ambition: to become a doctor.

14 years later not only has he become a doctor, but a neurosurgeon, the most highly qualified PSE student (Baccalaureate plus 12 years). He completed his 4th year of internship in neurosurgery and, in September, goes to Tours to follow his speciality for a year. He has also succeeded in getting a scholarship to go to Canada. Having already undertaken courses for a few weeks in Japan, Malaysia and Indonesia, not only is he fluent in French (the teaching language at the University of Phnom Penh), but also in English. We, as well as friends in France who have known him well



since 2002, can bear witness to his unfailing courage. He always had a book in hand, was always asking questions so as to better understand... He has always

accompanied us, voluntarily, on our visits, to translate, to learn still more. He was the most attentive at the conferences to prepare for "Internat", set up by Michel.

With an incredible humility and kindness, he can be proud of the difficult path he has travelled. Now married, he has a magnificent 4-month-old baby, whom he already finds very clever!!! The last page of his thesis is a photograph of Papy and Mamie amidst the children of PSE. He always says, *"without PSE, I would not have been able"*. But without his courage and his abilities, PSE would not have been able to take him so far...

All this happened thanks to a beautiful encounter which took place 15 years ago.

Michel and Pascale

Congratulations !!!

94% pass rate at the Brevet, with 100% for our boarders.
Well done to our students, to their teachers, to those looking after the boarders!

Our scouts

1 year ago, we started a project for 24 scouts and guides. And by the last weekend of July, there were ... 110! All this, thanks to a marvellous young couple, Thibaud and Clara who wanted to take a break of 1 year during their studies. We suggested this project to them, which they immediately accepted enthusiastically. During the past months, discretely behind the scenes, they have motivated more and more children and young adults, each week, in the values of scouting, despite the problem of a language they did not understand at all at the beginning. Meetings, activities for fun or in a spirit of solidarity, outings and camping weekends followed



one after another. It has been hugely emotional to be able on two occasions to sit around large camp fires together with all the

other scouts, and take part in the promises of 10, and then 15 of our young, of all ages. Youngsters who have learned to respect and listen to others, to take initiatives and responsibilities, to set up projects, to help the weakest, to protect the environment, etc... Youngsters who have grown up and gained confidence in themselves.

A huge thank you to Thibaud and Clara who, with beautiful humility, have put in place great things and realised one of Papy's dreams!

To follow. Those who are going to take over from them will arrive for the new school year.

Know your children

Among our families, there are scavengers and broken and abusive families. But we also have good families, with parents who work. However, as they have never received an education, these parents often have small, irregular, underpaid jobs and cannot survive on their own means. These families also are still in category 1, the one of the poorest of the poor, in spite of the country's development

Ro is a 2-year-old boy. He and his 4-month-old sister **Lisa** have divorced parents, who have gone each in their separate directions. Their grandmother took them in, but as she brought them with her to beg on the streets, she was arrested by the police and sent to prison. The two children have been entrusted to one of our foster families.

Sopheaktra, Sopheara and **Seav Fong** are 3 boys, aged 12, 9 and 6 years. Their father is a scavenger and their mother looks after the 2 youngest children at home. They live in a tiny decrepit house, in a difficult community characterized by gambling and school dropout. All 3 boys, however, go to school, although the 2 oldest scavenge after class, because their dad's earnings are insufficient. Despite this, they survive on only \$0.47 / person per day. How can you live with that? Therefore, PSE provides a larger quantity of rice to this family compared to what is offered generally

Kimchheang and **Udom** are 2 boys, aged 12 and 7. **Srey Oun** is a 9-year-old girl, with a younger sibling who is 1. Both parents are potato sellers but with an income of \$1.6 / person / day, it is not enough for their family to survive on. PSE takes responsibility for the children's education (State school for the 2 youngest children, remedial schooling for the eldest) + 1 meal a day + rice. They are a good family, where both parents are working, but without a proper training, they don't have access to jobs which could allow them to support their family.

Ley, Kimlang and **Hambaly**, 3 boys of 23, 17 and 6. They live close to Sihanoukville. The father is a hairdresser in the village and the mother is a cleaning lady, but they only earn \$1.37 / person / day. Kimlang is doing a training course in a State school, Hambaly attends a PSE day care, and Ley, who studied until the end of middle school, recently enrolled in preparatory classes at PSE, and in the boarding school because his family lives too far away. Another family without problems, who cannot survive alone and needs the support of PSE despite both parents having a job.

Chan and **Srei**, 2 girls with 19 and 5 years old. Their father has mental issues and drinks, and their mother, sick, stays at home to look after Srei. Another daughter, who is 23, used to help the family to survive, by working in a factory, but has now deserted them without leaving any news. Chan is doing vocational training at PSE. There is therefore no more income... PSE's solution, in such a case, is to offer rice and evening meals to the family.

Manith and **Yiun**, 2 girls, 13 and 12, and a 5-year-old. The parents sell cane sugar and, to help them, their daughters scavenge the streets after school. In total the family earns \$1.5 / person / day. Not enough to live on, of course... So, PSE needs to intervene. For the 2 girls, PSE covers their education + one meal a day + a rice donation. Enough to allow the family to live a little better, and for the girls to study in better conditions.

The boarders' outings

Once a month, our boarders enjoy a big day out, to places such as a water park.

Along with these outings, the most important days of the year are the Khmer New Year, in mid-April, and the Day of the Dead, in September. At these times, everyone goes back to their hometown pagoda and Phnom Penh empties. The PSE Centre also closes its doors for 9-10 days. Officially, the celebrations last 3 days, but at those times, prices double, starting with the cost of



transportations, which causes absences before and after the celebrations. That is why we take liberties with the calendar of public holidays, and move them around to complete the missing days before and after the 3-day celebrations, without ever impacting



Cambodian religious days. For New Year's, our boarders left Phnom Penh to go on vacation to the Mondolkiri. They were delighted with their holiday, which was also an occasion to bring school supplies to a small school out there. But they were a little cold, especially in the morning because the Mondolkiri is in the mountains. Therefore, they started their days with a revitalizing morning gym class.