



A regular newsletter on behalf of Cambridge LifeSkills to our community

summer 2013

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Thanks to our sponsors for their continued support



## It takes a village to raise a child...



**Earlier this year I took the opportunity to be one of a community team who travelled to Cambodia for two weeks. This was my first visit to a third world country.**

I read extensively about Cambodia and watched the Killing Fields DVD all in an attempt to prepare myself for the trip. I had what seemed every immunisation ever invented. I took advice from those who had been before me and acquired the necessities recommended, anti-biotic, anti-viral, anti this anti that, malaria tablets, uppers and downers (I found out these aren't mood altering meds but rather uppers if you are vomiting and downers if you are struck with diarrhoea).

The purpose of the trip was to travel to four remote rural schools who teach English as a second language, to run a conference and the trip was also an opportunity to meet with local Khmer women and children. I did spend the first two days visiting local historical sites, Tol Sleng (prisoner camp) and the Killing Fields.

The needs are initially mind blowing to a westerner like me, the culture shock of seeing children living hand to mouth with rice, rice, rice if they are fortunate.

Cambridge  
**Lifeskills**  
*Joining hands to change our children's future*

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## Meet our Counsellors

### SUSAN GODDARD

Hi, my name is Susan Goddard and this is my first year at Cambridge Lifeskills. I am in my second year of a three year Counselling degree at Wintec. I am married, and a mother of three. I have a son aged 20, and two daughters aged 18 and 13, who all still live at home. I also have a dog and two cats. I feel very privileged to be counselling the children of Cambridge, and assisting them with the issues they face in today's world.

### TRISH O'DONNELL

Hi, my name is Trish O'Donnell, I am a qualified counsellor and have been involved with Cambridge Lifeskills since 2011. I am proud to be part of this unique service that offers itself to the Cambridge community and I appreciate the growing recognition that what we do makes a difference to kid's lives.

What a remarkable experience it is working with Cambridge's young people in their schools and alongside their parents also. I am constantly impressed with how children take up and use the emotional learning that grows out of counselling. Jointly we aim to help good change happen and bring some resolution and balance back into children's lives through supporting them in their experiences.

I enjoy dancing, drawing, I'm an animal lover and enjoy living in the country, nature and gardening, food and nutrition.

>>CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE...

# Fundraising - a double edged sword

I had preconceived ideas of how I would find this country as a result of the Khmer Rouge atrocities; I went expecting oppression and hopelessness, I left having an experience of courage and hope.

I found that Khmer children are like kiwi children, they adapt to their environment. In Cambodia society is polarised, there are the very wealthy and the very poor. For the poor being together and sharing seems to be the priority, that living hand to mouth is just how life is, this reality is the Khmer 'normal' and so they just get on with it.

I don't mean to minimise the suffering and hardship because it is everywhere, what I do want to emphasize is the dignity of the human spirit to endure and persevere and grow in such circumstances. The power of one person is a timeless mystery.

I went with an unconscious sense of superiority, and quickly realised it as I cringed at living conditions, toileting, food hygiene etc. I found myself marvelling in the paradox that I was educated and practicing mindfulness in an attempt to simplify my life. Where as Khmer people live this way out of necessity, ironically the very thing I want they have. It is true that we can have great monetary wealth and still be poor. These humble people taught me that being poor is a frame of mind. The Khmer people seem to have an awareness of valuing what they do have and not focussing on what they don't have. They seem hopeful and progressive.

Sandy Wesford, Manager



The first Tuesday of November, the day put aside to acknowledge and **celebrate the work of Cambridge Lifeskills** has been held and once again the schools and their communities raised about \$2500 for us. Schools held discos, mufti days, theme days and sausage sizzles to raise funds. We are appreciative of their efforts and applaud them for undertaking this annual challenge.

We also wish to acknowledge the following Cambridge businesses and services who readily agreed to display children's Lifeskills Day artwork in their premises: Cambridge Police, Cambridge Real Estate, Westpac Bank, House of Travel, ANZ Bank, AMI Insurance, Paterson Burn, Footloose Shoes, Van Dyks and Cambridge Community Library.

We are planning to offer a **gift wrapping service** (for a gold coin donation) for a week in December at The Warehouse, Cambridge. The team from the ANZ Bank have agreed to help out again. We have joined Volunteering Waikato and we have found some wrapping volunteers through this organisation. Want to help? We'd love you to contact us.

One of our counsellors has **sculptured a garden statue** for Cambridge Lifeskills to raise funds through a raffle. The counsellor was inspired by the work Cambridge Lifeskills does for the community. We are indebted to Kirsti for her incredibly generous gesture.

As a group we are starting to look toward the organisation of the now **annual golf tournament on February 16th**, selling holes and asking for team registrations.

These fundraising activities are a double edged sword for us. While they give us funds and an opportunity to interact with the community and talk with the public about the work we do, it does take us away from our core business which is working with and supporting children and their families. To this end we recently contacted MP Paula Bennett alerting her to the service we provide in Cambridge. To her credit Minister Bennett has offered to send a representative to Cambridge to meet with us and learn more about Cambridge Lifeskills. We know the work we do dovetails in well with aspects of the government initiative currently being rolled out. This initiative addresses the findings of the White Paper on Vulnerable Children. We will keep you posted on the outcomes of the visit.

We continue to liaise with other Cambridge agencies and wherever possible share information and support each other in our work. We have recently been involved in the White Ribbon Ride stopover in Cambridge through the Violence Free Waipa Network. A dozen motor bikes roared through town (with a police escort) then up to Cambridge High School to share the Family Violence is Not OK (and this includes bullying) message to 600 attentive students. It was an incredibly powerful and moving experience to be part of.

We wish you well for the Christmas and New Year period, hoping you find some down time to spend with family and friends.



FUNDRAISING

GOLF

TOURNAMENT

CAMBRIDGE GOLF CLUB

SUNDAY 16TH

FEBRUARY 2014

FOR FURTHER  
DETAILS - PHONE  
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## FOUNDATION SPONSOR



The team from **Cambridge Real Estate** has been the Foundation Sponsor for Cambridge Lifeskills for 6 years and have been with us on the journey of where we are today. We'd like to publicly say Thank You and ask you to support their business as they have supported us.  
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## THIS NEWSLETTER...

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# FROM THE principals point of view



As a Principal of one of the Cambridge schools, I have observed the difference to a child's life that

a Cambridge Lifeskills counsellor, and counselling, can make. Children come to school primarily to learn, but when they are experiencing stress in their lives, they have difficulty coping with everyday life, including schooling. These stressors may be caused by events such as a death in the family or someone close to them, a marriage separation, a social issue, or a raft of other reasons. Being able to have one-on-one sessions with a Lifeskills counsellor helps children to make sense of the events that are causing stress, and their responses to it. The counselling process helps them to cope more readily by equipping them with skills and knowledge to deal positively with stressful issues and situations. When I joined the Cambridge

Lifeskills Board as a school Principal representative some 17 years ago, we had then, as we have now, a group of people who were passionate and committed to making a difference in young people's lives. Our resources then were few, but there was a determination to succeed because Cambridge Lifeskills was a unique local service, providing for a need in our local community.

A key development in the evolution of Cambridge Lifeskills has been the ability to access and utilise trained counsellors to work with referred children, and their families, in the local schools. In more recent years, the attracting of a key sponsor, as well as people with specific skills to enhance the Board's operation, has lifted the profile and sustainability of Cambridge Lifeskills. The service is a real asset in the Cambridge community, so we need the people of the Cambridge area to help provide ongoing support for the benefit of our local younger citizens.

**John Bullick**  
- Cambridge East Primary School



## Counsellors over due in "The Middle Years"

For a number of years now, NZAIMS (NZ Association of Intermediates and Middle Schooling)

has been lobbying to have counsellors/ social workers available to Intermediate School students. National NZAIMS President, Ross Tyson, Principal of Cambridge Middle School, says that students with issues are easily identified early on in their schooling, yet counsellors are not provided in schools until they reach Secondary level. "This is too late", he says,

"students fall through the cracks because currently there is not enough specialised assistance for them". This must change if schools are to have any hope of improving learning outcomes for all students. Students with social and emotional problems are not going to be able to concentrate on their learning. They can also distract the learning of others through their inappropriate behaviours. One easy solution would be to make counsellors available to a cluster of schools as a staffing component. Only last week I had a conversation with Peter Hughes; Secretary for Education; on just this issue. The discussion continues.

**Ross Tyson**  
- Cambridge Middle School