

# The Douglas Mendel Cambodian Relief Fund

The Douglas Mendel Cambodian Relief Fund, P.O. Box B Moab, Utah 84532, (435) 259-0321 • Email: wndrlst49@hotmail.com **May 2007**

It is amazing how time flies! It seem like it was just yesterday that I brought the first few boxes to Cambodia to donate to a fire station in Sihanoukville. Never would have dreamed that what started with an idea to help one station on the coast of Cambodia would grow into assisting up to 8 stations around the country as well as 2 organizations that help disadvantaged street children and disabled Cambodians.



12 boxes of stuff 2/28/07  
at Phnom Penh International Airport.

Since my last newsletter in June 2006, I have made 2 more trips, one in November 2006 and one in March 2007. Cumulatively, both trips have seen 24 boxes (1409 lbs) make the trans-pacific journey from Colorado to Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Because I fly United continuously, the excess counter at Denver International Airport has been generous to my endeavors and has waived \$2,000 in excess baggage fees just this year alone! Thank you United for your support!! ■



Vitamins, dental supplies, stuffed animals and gloves for M'lop Tapang.

## MINI NEWSLETTER FOR MARCH 2007

This 3 week adventure was filled with travel to Sihanoukville, Bokor National Park, Kampot, Phnom Penh, Battambang, Siem Reap, Angkor Protected Landscape and Ban Lung, Ratanakiri Province. As I had brought 12 boxes, the fire Captain in Phnom Penh met me at the airport to receive 8 boxes filled with bunker gear for his station. Later on in the trip, there would be a small ceremony for the gifts I had brought. The 4 other boxes were for M'lop Tapang and Starfish Café, filled with clothing, stuffed animals, toothbrushes, toothpaste, dental floss, vitamins and toys.

The highlight of the trip was letting the station in Ratanakiri Province know that they would be receiving a fire truck that would be built in Phnom Penh and ready for pickup by the firefighters in Ratanakiri by July 2007. It was a matter of asking lots of questions, getting details worked out in Ratanakiri Province as well as Phnom Penh and opening a bank account for a Cambodian friend of mine in the capital so he could receive the wired money so the project of building a fire truck could commence. The fire truck will consist of a used Korean 2 ½ ton truck with a 2000 Liter metal tank (about 500 gallons), a pump for drafting water as well as pumping water, 5 sections of 2 inch hose, a storage area for gear and lights and siren. I gave cameras to the fire captain and his assistant in Phnom Penh to take pictures of the construction of the fire truck. I also gave cameras to the fire captain and my translator friend in Ban Lung, Ratanakiri to take pictures once the fire truck arrives. Quite the exiting project!!! ■



Happy kids at M'lop Tapang, with Maggie Eno, the director in the Black shirt.

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## THE BEST CURRY IN CAMBODIA

In the North East of Cambodia there is a province named Ratanakiri. It is an area that borders Vietnam to the West, Lao to the South and is abundant with large spaces of untouched ecological and natural wonders. A volcanic lake and several waterfalls are attractions that should not be missed and are easy to get to from the provincial town of Ban Lung .

A very relaxing, inexpensive and incredibly soul-reviving place to stay is Yaklom Hill Lodge. It is set in a lush, vegetative area with lots of trees, bushes and foliage. The 13 or so cottages blend in very naturally with the landscape. It is easy for one to feel relaxed, in touch with nature and for all stresses and worries to melt away.

The restaurant on premises is the Sawasdee Food Terrace that serves breakfast, lunch and dinner. After a long day of exploring the area, whether it is the waterfalls, Yaklom Volcanic Lake (which is an easy 30 minute walk from the lodge), hill-tribe villages, or even a trek in Virachey National Park , a great way to enjoy the evening is to take a seat at the restaurant and order a fabulous dish from the menu. Whatever is ordered, be assured that great care, attention and a little bit of love will be put forth into the meal.

As I'm a vegetarian, my favorite dishes are the vegetarian green curry and the vegetarian red curry. It will take about a ½ hour for the dishes to be made as the ingredients are freshly prepared, with the herbs and spices minced ever-so perfectly for the right blend of curry for the dish of vegetables. A bowl of rice will be served with the curry and my favorite pastime is to 'spoon' some of the curry onto the rice and eat it slowly. A side-order of Garlic Bread is a great compliment to any lunch or dinner item.

I have enjoyed quite a few days hiking, exploring and enjoying the surroundings of Ban Lung, knowing that a piping-hot dish of either the green or red curry with vegetables and a bowl of rice is a great way to enjoy the cool evening at Yaklom Hill Lodge. One of the fresh fruit smoothies is a must ! ■

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CEREMONY  
AT THE  
PHNOM PENH  
FIRE STATION  
FOR  
DONATED  
GEAR

GIVING  
HOSE  
TO  
THE FIRE  
STATION  
IN  
BATTAMBANG

