Greetings at the New Year to all donors, supporters and friends of The Chelly Foundation! Thanks to you, over the past three years we have achieved undreamed of success, improving the health and education of literally thousands of children in and around the Chum Kiri District in rural southern Cambodia. We could not have done all of these activities and projects without your support! Here are just some of the highlights of the past year:

**Chelly Scholarships Now Include 19 Scholars Being Given Assistance To Attend College**

We began the Chelly Scholarship program in 2015 with one scholar, Sol Manouv, attending at the Royal University of Phnom Penh. Each year, the program has grown – from one, to 6, to 10, and now as of October 2018 to 19 Chelly Scholars (17 young women, 2 young men). We are providing scholarships in the form of either full or partial tuition, as well as free housing. Our scholars have formed a nuclear community, mostly living together in four apartments, studying together, and looking out for one another. They are interested in a wide variety of subjects, including chemistry, business, banking, accounting, hotel management, and teaching. Everyone continues to be doing well in school, and we are especially looking forward to Manouv’s graduation in the Spring of 2019 as the first Chelly Scholar to obtain a full four-year degree. Here are pictures of most of our scholars with Nan Nop, and a bunch studying English at night.
Chelly Scholar Sey Jakkrya Recipient of A Prestigious Harpswell Foundation Invitation

One of our new Chelly Scholars in 2018, Sey Jakkrya, received the high honor of being one of only 20 young women from all of Cambodia admitted into the prestigious Harpswell program this year, an elite initiative aimed at fostering the next generation of Cambodian women leaders (www.harpswellfoundation.org). Earlier this year when visiting Phnom Penh, The Chelly Foundation facilitated the first-ever interviews by Harpswell staff of students from Chum Kiri’s two high schools, and so we were tremendously excited when we found out that Jakkrya, after exams and interviews, had been accepted into the program. Here is a picture of Jakkrya with a new bicycle we provided for her to get to classes.

Teaming Up with the Peace Corps to Provide Dental Clinics

We learned earlier this year that Peace Corps volunteer Matthew Thielker was working nearby in Chum Kiri, and so we teamed up with him to provide for a series of dental clinics, as well as a special visit by 17 kids to a dentist in Phnom Penh. At year’s end, on Nan Nop’s return to Chum Kiri, we again had a special day giving away 188 toothbrushes and toothpaste donated by Dr. Glenn Prager c/o Jennifer McGovern. Next year we will be installing a dental chair at Chelly House to facilitate visits by mobile dentists.
Bringing Water Filtering Systems to Local Villagers

We are very grateful to Hong Chin @h2hCambodia, who in July brought his water engineer expertise to Chum Kiri in giving out water filter systems to local villagers. (Hong is in red.)

A Field Trip To Angkor Wat

Samorn Khem and Nop Ess took the lead in organizing an exciting August field trip to the world-heritage site of Angkor Wat for 44 lucky students at the local Chum Kiri High School. Chelly Foundation Board Member Jamie Brown, her daughter Ellison and niece Lauren were able to meet up with the group to tour the site, and they returned to Chum Kiri to be our guests at Chelly House while assisting in teaching kids.
Bicycles, Bicycles, Bicycles

Throughout the year we have given away dozens of bicycles, including through designated donations from Lighthouse eDiscovery, Craig Ball, and Darren Weymouth. These donations have helped to ensure that children and especially girls needn’t have to walk up to 10 kilometers each way to attend school (including sometimes in near darkness).
Expansion of The Chelly Library Accommodating Outdoor Seating

In early 2018 the wildly popular Chelly Library underwent expansion in the form of outdoor seating under an extended roof. Hundreds of children visit the library each month, which is overseen by three part-time librarians on The Chelly Foundation payroll.

A Creative Writing Intensive Workshop – Partnering with Writing Through

We were able to host two terrific English teachers from Singapore for a week in December, during which time they conducted a workshop to encourage 20 young people to creatively fashion poems and short stories in English to recite in front of their friends & families. This workshop was the invention of Sue Guiney, a college classmate of mine, who has spent many years doing great work in Cambodia (www.writingthrough.org). We will definitely be doing one or more additional workshops in 2019!
Nan Nop, Ambassador for Days For Girls

In the past year Nan received her certification from the international organization Days for Girls to be an ambassador teaching young girls about hygiene.... In March she conducted a clinic and handed out 75 kits made by a Connecticut chapter of DFG... the first kits ever given out in this part of Cambodia....

Dedications & Celebrations

During 2018 The Chelly Foundation sponsored two bread day feasts for six hundred and nine hundred elementary kids respectively, at two local schools. We also sponsored a special event dedicating the expansion of The Chelly Library, attended by upwards of a thousand high schoolers. And we put on a Cambodian New Year’s party for hundreds of high schoolers, complete with games, dancing and white powder on faces.
Chelly House: The Hub for Special Events & Visits from Friends & Supporters

Chelly House was opened in August 2018 in a special dedication ceremony open to the greater community. Even before its official opening, Chelly House has served as a stopping place and temporary housing for international visitors and all those interested in supporting The Chelly Foundation in its many projects.

Coconut and Mango Farms Built Out

One of the most promising activities we began in 2018 was sustainable agriculture in the form of constructing a new coconut farm just across the way from Chelly House in the village of Snay Anh Chet. This several hectare farm promises to yield crops that we hope will help fund many of our ongoing charitable activities. This is a work in progress and we will be reporting on it both in 2019 and beyond! We also are working on several more mature mango and coconut projects involving parcels of land scattered in various surrounding areas.
And Much More....
The above were just some of the activities we engaged in during the past year.... For example, Ess has acted as a big brother to a boy named Sam An, a street kid in Phnom Penh that Chelly Foundation board member Flo Sofer has sponsored to go to school.... Ess found a new home for Sam An and found a new job for his Mom.... In March we took our Chelly Scholars to Sihanoukville to go to the beach and to visit our farms.... Nan and Ess assisted Dr. Gina Santori in bringing backpacks and supplies to children in a nearby province.... And we continued to maintain our playground as well as sanitation stations and hand washing facilities at several local schools, making thousands of local children healthier and more comfortable during their school days....

And back in the U.S., we held fundraising dinners in D.C. and San Francisco... We were so very grateful to Iwona Stepniak for running a triathlon on the Foundation’s behalf... In October we helped sponsor a gala event in San Francisco put on by the organization She Can, devoted to bringing young Cambodian women to the US for college scholarships... We also initiated a Chelly Foundation Scholarship fund at Middlesex Community College in Lowell, Mass., to provide school supplies to students of Cambodian heritage attending school. And last but not least, I had the pleasure of being invited to a very special Cambodian-style wedding in Michigan of Chelly Foundation board member Kathy Franklin’s son Max and his bride Janie -- whose parents escaped from Cambodia in the 1970s.

On behalf of Nan Nop, Nop Ess, Samorn Khem, and all of us who work to support the The Chelly Foundation, I would like to again say how very much we have appreciated your kindness and support this year, through donations made to Flipcause, PayPal, Benevity, Global Giving and other ad campaigns and corporate matching programs. As the pictures throughout this letter show, along with better health and educational opportunities for the children of Chum Kiri, we are also trying to bring joy. We have ambitious plans for 2019 and intend to continue doing good works across a spectrum of activities. I promise to keep you posted! Please “like us” on Facebook, and please know that all donations made to The Chelly Foundation are fully tax deductible.

With every best wish at the holidays and at the New Year,

Jason

Jason R. Baron
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