

By Ms Long Huiyi Melody



Project Sabai Team of 2007 receiving drawings of appreciation and well-wishes from the children

Project Sabai

I still remember the time in 2005, when I told my church friends I probably would not be returning to Cambodia any time soon, after we had just completed a mission trip there. I could not have been more wrong. In 2007, together with 9 other medical students, I embarked on Project Sabai. Project Sabai was more than just another humanitarian trip. It was a trip that allowed me to experience great love, hospitality and generosity. Despite the little that we could do medically, contrary to what I initially believed, one thing I believe continued to hold true – that if we continue to sow seeds of love, we will still reap fruits of joy.

I will never forget the day when I washed the hair lice-infested heads of the children. The children flocked towards us when we held out the hair lice washing solution, shouting “*Zhai! Zhai!*” (hair lice in Khmer), expecting us to work magic with our solution and rid them of the problem. When my team leader passed me the hair lice solution and asked me to be “ruthless”, I put in my best efforts and scrubbed relentlessly. Midway through the shampooing session, one of the children pointed out that I had “*zhai*” in my hair. I hurriedly finished up with my last “customer” and made my team mates check that

I had no “*zhai*”. I certainly did not want to bring this “souvenir” home!

This is but one of the many memorable experiences I had last year. A project that started in June 2006 with humble beginnings, Project Sabai has grown to a remarkable size today; where 3 M2s, 23 M1s, 4 dental students and 5 doctors will be going to Cambodia this December to serve children from three different schools under the Don Bosco organisation.

This year, we will be based at three schools – namely, Phum Chreh, Teuk Thla and Tuol Kork. At each of these schools, we will be conducting health screenings and health education lessons for the children. Our dental counterparts will teach the children proper teeth brushing techniques and distribute toothbrushes and toothpaste. At Phum Chreh, we will also be conducting one day of check-ups for the villagers. During the check-ups, we will be taking the blood pressure of the villagers, conducting urine tests and tests for anemia. The doctors will be performing vaginal examinations on female villagers.

From our previous trips, we realised that these children have poorly healed wounds on their feet as a result of their physical activities, because they do not wear protective footwear. Having



Long Huiyi Melody is a Year 2 Medical student who believes in meeting the needs of the less fortunate, and has been deeply involved in community projects. She relaxes from the stressful planning of Project Sabai by indulging in her favourite cartoon of all time - Spongebob Squarepants.



All smiles and decked out in their new PE kits!



Testing haemoglobin levels for a female villager.



Lice, Lice go away!

recognised this problem, we see the need for the children to have a PE kit consisting of a T-shirt, a pair of shorts and a pair of shoes. This will ensure that the children suffer fewer injuries during their physical activities. These kits will be made in Cambodia and each kit costs USD\$13.

There are many needs on this trip that have

to be met. I am thankful for the support that we have received from generous individuals and some pharmaceutical companies. However, we still have a long way to go before we achieve sufficient drugs, equipment and funds for the PE kits.

Sabai means "happy" in Khmer. Will you spare some love and make a child happy today? ■

Please contact Melody Long at 9797 4684 or m.poisonelle@gmail.com if you would like to make donations of drugs, equipment or funds for the PE kits. Any form of sponsorship will be most welcome.

"Love is never wasted; it always comes back to you a hundred times over."