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New Horizons Society

ធ្វើការរួមគ្នា ធ្វើការជាមួយអ្នក!

NHS Child Advocacy Group's Visit to the American Embassy



The Child Advocacy Group of New Horizons Society (NHS) was invited officially to pay a visit and perform at the US Embassy in Phnom Penh on Wednesday, 13 January 2010.

There were sixteen NHS Child Advocacy Group members of which 12 were girls. They were escorted by Mr Keo Chet, Executive Officer; Mr Suon Rottana, Acting Field Coordinator; Mrs Khiev Sophat, Senior Advisor of UNDP Kampong Chhnang Development Program and member of NHS Panel of Trustees; and Mrs Kong Chandy, Support Rural Children Organisation's Executive Director, NHS NGO partner.

The aims of the visit were to:

- a) Present to the US Embassy and the public to know that NHS child advocacy group did their social works creatively through art, song and other performances.
- b) Get to know more about the US Embassy and United States and how Khmer children and adults can apply for American Scholarship to USA. (NHS's project with Dutch donor, SKN, has the ultimate objective of poor, mainly disabled children being able to obtain the best higher education.)

The visit was welcomed warmly at the entrance to the embassy by Mr. John E. Johnson, Ms. Nhem Pheakdey and their colleagues at the Public Affairs Office of American Embassy. The introduction meeting took place first. Mr Johnson said this year is the 60th Anniversary of US – Cambodia friendship. In July this year there will be a ceremony of Khmer – American culture and the NHS Child Advocacy Group may be invited to join this event.

Kosal, the performance leader of NHS Child Advocacy Group, stressed that the purpose of the NHS Child Advocacy Group is to promote child rights and to advocate through creative performance of arts, songs, dance etc so that the disabled children can go to school and get other rights as normal children and prevent the violence in Cambodian society especially for disabled children and women. Kosal gave a very moving rendition of one of his own self-composed songs, which projects their “We can do” message.

Mao My, an NHS Child Advocacy Group member, reported that recently the group played a leading role in performing at the Kampong Chhnang Provincial Development and Disaster Management Forum, attended by over 400 delegates from all over the province. The hurricane-storm Katrina hit New Orleans city in the USA and destroyed almost everything. The song of “When The Saints Go Marching In” is very famous and popular in this state. The Child Advocacy Group sang this song and gave a short performance to illustrate to the forum that even the USA still faces natural disaster problems, and not just Cambodia as a developing country. We cannot stop natural disasters but we can have a plan to respond to it. The children are like the bamboo shoots. Some of them may be quite young but they can participate together alongside adults in advocacy.



The US Embassy is a new fine modern building which has excellent facilities for access by disabled people. The NHS Group members were very glad to see them, to serve as an example for buildings in Cambodia. Indeed advocacy activities already included efforts to have similar provisions in public buildings such as commune council halls.

The Child Advocacy Group was escorted on a tour to visit the several offices in the Embassy and did a performance in the library. All people there were very impressed by Kosal’s Khmer song. The song of “When The Saints Go Marching In” in English was sung afterward, and Mr Johnson said this is his favourite song. Finally they were served lunch in the cafeteria.

NHS Child Advocacy Group members and all NHS members wish to thank the American Ambassador, Mr John E. Johnson and Ms Nhem Pheakdey and their colleagues for their official invitation and for hosting them at the embassy. The children gave small presents of pots and fishing nets to convey their appreciation. The clay pots are made in their province which gives it its name, Chhnang, and the fishing nets denote the great Tonle Sap Lake and River which is so important in their province.

*Keo Chet
Executive Officer
13th January 2010*

The **New Horizons Society** is an organization of federated self-help groups dedicated to promoting equality, ending poverty and securing life-changing opportunities for our membership of mainly disabled people

A Cambodian NGO registered with the Ministries of Interior and Social Affairs

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