

# UP FRONT



## Bike messenger

LISA McCOY  
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For many Cambodian children, the hardest part of school is getting there. Some walk miles to class along dusty, rural roads. Sweltering heat, snakes, and unexploded land mines, a remnant of the Khmer Rouge's deadly reign, are constant threats. In rural areas, most children attend school only through the sixth grade, and just 33 percent complete ninth grade. Lisa McCoy, executive director of the nonprofit Mine-Free World Foundation, spends half of every year in Cambodia. In 2009, she learned of five students who had no way to get to school. McCoy emailed Rotarians back home, and now, with support from clubs in Canada and Cambodia, Gravenhurst Rotarians provide schoolchildren with simple, sturdy bicycles. The effort has expanded every year, with Cambodian Rotarians, school officials, and local organizations identifying students in need, and clubs throughout District 7010 (parts of Ontario and Quebec) raising funds. The project also has extended outside Cambodia, supporting the distribution of 50 bicycles in rural Laos in 2012. Earlier this year, a team of Canadian Rotarians traveled to Cambodia, where volunteers from both countries attached pedals, affixed handlebars, and inflated hundreds of tires by hand. They presented 1,231 bicycles. — VANESSA N. GLAVINSKAS