

TO: ROTARIANS AND FRIENDS

FROM: LISA MCCOY, ROTARY WHEELS FOR LEARNING FIELD COORDINATOR

DATE: MAY 17, 2012

RE: CAMBODIA 2013 ROTARY WHEELS FOR LEARNING
BICYCLE DISTRIBUTION TRIP

Hello Everyone,

Please promote this trip to all your friends, as we do still have spaces available as of May 27, 2012. Please view past posts to read all about our January 2012 bicycle distribution trip:
<http://rotarywheelsforlearning.blogspot.com/>

Attached is our daily itinerary with approximate costs as it stands at present. A more detailed itinerary will be supplied at least two months before departure. Cambodia is very poor, is mainly rural and has a population of 14 million. It has a fascinating history and Buddhism is the main religion. The Khmer are gentle people but there are many memories and reminders from the expanded Vietnam War and civil war: the most visible being the many landmine victims (the areas that we will be traveling in are cleared of mines).

Partners

This is a Rotary Club of Gravenhurst hands on humanitarian trip opportunity. You will be supplied with a Team T-Shirt upon arrival to Phnom Penh.

You may have by now met Lisa McCoy – the Field Coordinator for Rotary Wheels for Learning (an international program of the Rotary Club of Gravenhurst). Lisa is a former librarian from Gravenhurst who for the past several years has spent six months a year in Cambodia, Burma and Laos volunteering in schools, coordinating construction of schools, projects for landmine survivors and delivering bicycles to rural children. She is a member of the Rotary Club of Gravenhurst and is very passionate about her work. Her bicycle distribution work is done under the very appropriate name of “Rotary Wheels for Learning”. She has also been the lead sponsor of The Muskoka School which was built by the Muskoka Rotary Clubs. We will also be working with the Siem Reap and Battambang Rotary Clubs and the Cambodian Red Cross. Our main activity will be to work with the local Rotarians and other volunteers from Cambodian organizations to deliver bicycles to identified young children to allow them to travel to school to receive their education.

We also hope to expand our work to include delivery of rice, school supplies, dental supplies to young people and their families. The bicycles and other supplies will be sourced in Cambodia to further assist them.

This year, we will be giving out family-sized mosquito nets with most of the bicycles we provide.

You may be asked to carry over donated items in your second suitcase (if your airline allows).

Please tell all your friends about your upcoming humanitarian trip and ask them if they would like to sponsor a bicycle for a child.

We hope our deliveries will assist with the development of rural Cambodia in a positive, inclusive and cooperative manner.

We will mix and work with the local Rotarians and others.

Because of space considerations and ensuring that we are all suitably active while there, the team will be limited to no more than 18 participants plus Lisa and a local guide will be with us at all times. The focus of the trip will be to work and involve ourselves in a meaningful way in Cambodian life. This will create experiences and insight into the local culture, make a small contribution to the local people to help them move slowly out of poverty.

Flight and Payment

Flight estimates from our January 2012 trip from Laurie Ryan, the Gravenhurst Uniglobe travel agent, for the travel dates (Jan 3 – 24, 2012) of \$1,527 from Korean Airlines via Seoul and \$1,710 from Cathay Pacific via Hong Kong.

We are asking for a \$300 deposit per person payable to the Rotary Club of Gravenhurst to be mailed in before August 1st, 2012 to hold your place. These funds will be refundable if you decide to cancel IF we can replace you from the waiting list. The funds will be used for common travel deposits and expenses while in Cambodia and everyone will receive an accounting of these funds.

Ground Travel

We will be travelling in an air-conditioned, new, fully insured 45-seat bus with local driver and assistant -with luggage stored in the undercarriage.

Other Personal Expenses

Alcohol and other drinks, out of country medical insurance, souvenirs and other personal expenses are extra.

Accommodation

The itinerary shows all of our accommodations with links to their websites.

All rooms have private bathroom with hot and cold showers, satellite TV, air-conditioning, and some have a small fridge. We will plan to have most meals at the hotel where we stay with the exception of lunches, which will be at the place where we go to work or on a day time trip. They will be fairly basic but clean and safe.

Passports & Visas

You will need a passport that has an expiry date no less than 6 months after your scheduled departure from Cambodia. A visa is necessary and can be arranged online

What To Bring

Your positive attitude is the most important thing to bring however, we also attach a What To Bring sheet for guideline only.

Travelling Money

You will need to bring money for separate souvenirs and possible optional dinners. We will be visiting local markets. We suggest you bring at least \$500 US in cash. ATMs are available and credit cards may be used in some places.

Participation

This is a trip in which everyone participates. Many activities will be group activities, however, it is recognized there is a need for individual space. It is not intended that anyone receive special treatment. We will be working along and beside local people. The main focus will be to distribute bicycles, however, we will provide opportunities to participate in Cambodia activities at other places in schools and other organizations. Flexibility and a sense of humour will be much appreciated.

The schedule is important. It will be necessary for everyone to be on time. It is not fair for one person to hold up the entire group. Meals, flights, tours and meetings need to operate on time. Please act with the entire groups' welfare in mind.

It should be recognized though that things do not always go as planned. Being flexible is a must.

First Aid/Medical

Report any medical problems to the team leader immediately.

Remember that in a hot or tropical country, the demands are that you drink plenty of water (four liters per day recommended) whether you think you are thirsty or not. Water will be provided for you.

Check with your family doctor to determine your personal needs for special medical precautions. We suggest you check with your local travel clinics. We would recommend Ducarol, which helps with stomach problems.

You should also exercise great caution with the food.

Out of country health coverage is your responsibility.

If you are interested in more background as a starter, here are some books and websites.

- Siem Reap – www.canbypublications.com
- Cambodia – www.tourismcambodia.com
- Book – *Children of Cambodia's Killing Fields, Memories of Survivors*(Ronnie Yimsut is featured in this) – Dith Pran
- Book – *First They Killed My Father: A Daughter of Cambodia Remembers*- Loung Ung
- Book – *The Disappeared* - Kim Echlin - a novel about a Cambodian Genocide Survivor – I have not read but it was well reviewed in the Globe & Mail

Other Books

An Imperfect Offering – James Orbinski – co-founder of Dignitas, Past President of Doctors Without Borders

Three Cups of Tea – Greg Mortenson – Greg grew up in Moshi, however, he has spent the past 10 years building schools in Pakistan and Afghanistan (there has been a recent piece on 60 Minutes which suggested that some of Mr Mortenson's writings are not entirely true so judge for yourself)

The End of Poverty – Jeffrey Sachs

Creating a World Without Poverty – Muhammad Yunus(former Nobel Peace Prize Winner)

The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries are Failing & What Can Be Done About It – Paul Collier

We are looking forward to the camaraderie not only with the team members on the trip but the wonderful local people with whom we work. One of the highlights tends to be the experiences. The work is a means to understand the issues of the people as well as giving them assistance that will help improve their lives.

A special blog for our trip will be set-up. Those who wish, will have their turn to record their impressions and photos of the day on the blog.

Yours in Rotary Service,

Lisa McCoy, RWFL Field Coordinator

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<http://rotarywheelsforlearning.blogspot.com/>