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### Next year's convention in Perth with special guest speaker

#### Co-ordinators report

Another year has commenced, the highlight to date has been the gathering of TOS members at the TS Annual Convention held in Adelaide. **See photo above.** Adelaide TS and TOS members were most welcoming and helpful in assisting interstate members. And sharing with us the delights of this beautiful city. Thank you all for making our stay such a special time.

At our AGM three international projects were proposed and accepted. These being:-

- Continuing to support the four home schools in the city of Karachi, Pakistan.
- Support Annie Besant Memorial Animal Dispensary at Adyar. The dispensary employs 2 veterinary surgeons who treat animals up to one hundred kilometres from the campus. Around ten thousand animals are treated annually. The centre's goal is to be able to provide a new ambulance for these services.
- Vocational Training Programme for women in Nairobi, Kenya. Plus providing funds for solar lighting at schools and hospitals. Usha Sha from TOS Nairobi will oversee this programme.

It was a pleasure to see so many familiar faces and meet new members visiting for the first time. With best wishes to you all for a wonderful year ahead living theosophy.

Jean Carroll, National Coordinator



## TOS Fundraiser Group tour to the Kingdom of Cambodia.

### Sacred Sights and Service Tour 11-23 Oct 2015.

Following the success of the Indonesian tour after the Indo Pacific Conference participants proposed another tour. This new tour not only looks at the three major temples in Siem Reap plus we will look at charities sponsored by the TOS Sunshine Coast and visit the bustling capitol Phnom Penh. The tour has been planned at a leisurely pace, offering plenty of time for relaxation or private sightseeing. TOS receives AUD30 for each booking.

**You do not have to be a member of TS or TOS to participate.**

For further information check this link on our National TOS Website

<http://australia.theoservice.org/newsletters/CambodianItinerary.pdf> or contact [tos.australia@gmail.com](mailto:tos.australia@gmail.com)

From Kaz Shakespeare an active Sunshine Coast TOS member who volunteers at Jimmy's school, Siem Reap

As a habitual traveller to Cambodia, I have been blessed with the great fortune of meeting and becoming good friends with a young Khmer man named Jimmy. He works as a tuk tuk driver & every evening he opens up his family's home to teach English to the local children. His English is excellent due to sponsorship by an Australian couple. Whenever I'm in Cambodia I enjoy helping him. The children are so dedicated to their education. All of them understand the incredible opportunity Jimmy is offering them for free. He tells them that English is the torch that will lead them out of poverty. He invites westerners to attend & join in conversational English so the children become more confident in speaking. As a result, the tourists become acquainted & appreciative of the lives and culture of young Cambodians.

Jimmy will take our group to a remote village that is without the basic luxuries of soap & medication. Through the generous donations of the Sunshine Coast TOS, I am the one that feels their gratitude & experience the over-whelming joy of giving. There are approximately 30-50 families in the village. They are very isolated and extremely poor, like 80% of rural Cambodia. Most have never been to the nearest main town of Siem Reap. They have neither the means nor the desire. They never know when Jimmy is going to

pay them a visit. There is no electricity but even without technology, word travels quickly and we are greeted with a gathering of eager smiles. We always take enough food for a party of noodles & baguettes. It's like Christmas for they mostly live on a plain diet of rice & vegetables. Jimmy is like Santa. Everyone knows they will receive something to take home. One day we bought a \$1.50 bag of elastic bands. The children immediately sat down in small groups & weaved the bands into skipping ropes. Balls are always a huge hit with these toy-deprived kids.



English class at Jimmy's evening school

Medication is always the main priority and parents politely hold their hands out to receive small amounts of pain-killers, antiseptic, bandages, etc.

The most popular gift is soap. Lack of clean water exacerbates their health problems so soap offers some hope in their attempt for hygiene & keeping their skin clean from infections.



There are no medical facilities & most villagers do not have the means to get to town. A young lady there lost her leg from a land mine about 20 yrs ago & wears a prosthetic leg. She had mentioned to Jimmy that her prosthetic leg was broken. When we questioned her through Jimmy about how much it would cost to get a new leg, she told us it was free from the hospital. When we asked why she didn't go, she explained that she had no money to get there. Between the volunteers, we gave her the \$15 to travel the 5 hours there and back. Her relief and her lovely smile were priceless.

I give gratitude to my good friend Jimmy and others like him, who have so little themselves but work so hard to help others. He says, **"I give not because I have a lot, but because I know what it is to have nothing."**

## Reports from national groups

### Adelaide – Travis James

The 2014 Winter Solstice dinner only had 19 people. While we enjoyed the dinner and the conversation, the numbers were disappointing. By supplementing the money we raised with money from our operating account we managed to give \$200 each to three local Charities. We are now planning our next dinner to be in April to move it away from the winter months and any other celebration.

We finally sent our latest and last batch of books to the Golden Link School. Following the apparent collapse of the Philippine shipping group we managed to find and contact the group that ships the medical equipment sent by Rotary. We sent 2500 books for an all up cost of \$229. This included the \$50 hire of a ute along with \$20 of petrol to fill it up.

During my latest email exchange with Vic Hao Chin at the Golden Link School he mentioned that the paper work and expense of clearing the books was making the exercise expensive in both cost and time. He suggested we don't send any more books. It appears that companies are importing commercial goods as donations to get the tax-free entry.

In March next year we are planning to do another Sunday at the TOS. Our current plans are to have an Ethiopian day with people from the Bare Foot Initiative, a group that helps people in Ethiopia. We are also hoping that we will be able to have Ethiopian food. Wishing all a great and productive New Year.

### Hobart – Ro Dallow

The big event for TOS Hobart was a Monday night TS talk given by Margaret Eldridge, a local activist who has worked with refugees and asylum seekers for over thirty years. It was a thought provoking session and the funds raised were donated to a local refugee support group.



At a recent TS Monday night meeting, TOS collected \$39 for Hobart City Mission in response to a letter from them begging funds for creating Christmas cheer amongst their clients

Money has been donated from some TOS members for the animal hospital at Adyar.

Early next year, I will request that at a Monday night TS meeting, the article "Kinship and Community" by Diana Dunningham Chapotin (feature article in the New Zealand Theosophia Dec.2014) be read and discussed. Diana's insight might stir some enthusiasm.



### **Important pre 2016 Convention Notice**

Next year's 2016 convention will be held at St Catherine's College Perth from 16-23 January. The keynote speaker will be Mr Tim Boyd the new international president of both TS and TOS.



I encourage you all to come along and meet Tim. Do book your flights early to take advantage of discounted fares. This will be an occasion not to be missed.

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### **TOS represents action – Right Action. Action without any sense of self/ego.**

As thoughts precede all action, it is wise to regularly observe/witness one's thoughts. Simply watching your thoughts and letting negative ones pass without giving any attention to them, will over time establish a steady awareness and understanding of how the mind works, This being the prelude to Right Thoughts, Right Speech, Right Action and the evolution of consciousness. This practice may be expressed as Service.

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