A Third Truck to Feed 300 More Malnourished Kids

The Central Church of Christ in Stockton, California, who has been involved in Cambodia for several years, is partnering with us to add the third truck to the nutrition program. Working with PIP and missionaries Dennis and Sharon Welch, they are providing $1200+ per month which underwrites the cost of adding 300 more children to the feeding rolls. Concerned brethren had given us $3000 to help pay for half the cost of the third truck, but monthly funds to pay the crew, buy the diesel and the food were lacking until this church stepped forward. Now 300 more little ones will go to bed each night with nourishing food in their stomachs, their little brains developing and an increased chance for a normal life, which they didn’t have before. This brings the total number of malnourished children we are currently feeding to 1600. It takes $7 per month for every child we are feeding and we need your continued help to keep this going. How many will you feed this month?
Cambodia

**PIP Nutrition Program Yields Welcome Results for Children**

by Troy and Tabitha Snowbarger

The Cambodia nutrition program was started in 2005 by Dr. Shannon DeShazo and PIP Director Bill McDonough. It started in response to several village church leaders voicing the need for food. The program has undergone many changes over the past 5 years including 2 expansions. Currently, the program serves 11 villages and approximately 1,600 children. We have a team of 8 nutrition workers, ourselves included, and run 3 trucks 5 days per week. The nutrition program works with local schools and village churches to provide a nutritious snack for children during their mid-day school break. Most villages are served 4 times per week.

Before they receive their snack, children participate in a 15-20 minute learning time. Our Cambodian staff facilitates the children in learning about hygiene, nutrition, social responsibility and most importantly, God’s Word. After the snack is served, children who are interested stay for another 15-20 minute English class. The nutrition program serves all children in the community ages 1 to 14 years, regardless of their religion. The children are served locally produced vitamin fortified soy milk, bread, and a special peanut butter created to be similar to a traditional Cambodian recipe. All the food we serve is locally grown, produced and familiar to Cambodian taste buds.

Every few months the children are weighed and measured. Our Cambodian staff facilitates development in learning about hygiene, nutrition, social responsibility and most importantly, God’s Word. After the snack is served, children who are interested stay for another 15-20 minute English class. The nutrition program serves all children in the community ages 1 to 14 years, regardless of their religion. The children are served locally produced vitamin fortified soy milk, bread, and a special peanut butter created to be similar to a traditional Cambodian recipe. All the food we serve is locally grown, produced and familiar to Cambodian taste buds.

Things we have learned:

- Using locally grown, produced and consumed foods versus expensive imported food supplements encourages self-reliance among recipients and less dependence on “outside” products and aid.
- A nutrition program’s most far reaching tool to fight malnutrition is the education it offers.
- Utilizing an easy to understand child measurement system that encourages community participation, helps educate and commit parents and children to the goal of better nutrition. One of many great resources is the thinness chart by Save the Children.

Taking care of your teeth properly is very important.

These two pie charts represent the improving nourishment statistics we gathered on a group of children in the program. These children were randomly chosen starting in June 2007, and come from all different villages where the program works. They total 418 out of the approximate 1000 kids we were serving when we began to gather data.

Since the nutrition program had been in operation for one year prior to the start of this study, some of the children measured had already experienced health benefits from the program.

Each child reflected in these graphs has been weighed several times, but here we depict only our initial and most recent weighing.

Green represents a child with healthy weight for height. Yellow represents an undernourished child who is at risk of suffering from various nourishment related illnesses.

Red represents a severely undernourished child who does not have the nutritional support to grow into a healthy adult and needs immediate intervention. Brown represents a weight to height ratio that reflects an emergency situation in which the child’s life is in danger due to starvation. For example, a child who weighs 20 kg and measures 115 cm tall would be in the green area. However, 20 kg is insufficient weight for a child who measures 135 cm tall. Such a child would be in the red area.

Most of the malnourished children we work with in Cambodia were/are in the yellow category. They suffer from the long term effects of malnourishment such as: the brain and body may not develop properly, they catch colds and other sicknesses easily, they are slow to recover from illness, and they cannot concentrate well in school because of hunger and therefore do not perform well, etc.