



CNCF Australia Newsletter

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What price a child's joy?

Five-year-old Barssaihan's Christmases have all come at once. For years, he and his family had been living in pitiful conditions in Ulaanbaatar's manholes. Some months ago, Barssaihan's parents approached CNCF Mongolia after hearing about the Foundation's 'Give a Ger' program. (A ger is a traditional Mongolian home made of felt and supported by a wooden frame.) The family had nothing. When staff saw the family's desperation and the very poor conditions in which they lived, they agreed to help.

All his life, Barssaihan had wanted a basketball, but there had never been enough money to buy him one. It was all he wanted, he told the staff at CNCF Mongolia.

Recently, the family was able to move into their own home. As well as the ger, the Foundation supplied them with crockery, pots and pans, bedclothes, clothing — and a ball for Barssaihan!

The smile on his face says it all!

You, too, can change the life of a family in need. The cost of gifting a ger is USD\$1,200, and you will receive a report and photos of the family you have supported. For further information, contact australia@cncf.org.



Barssaihan with his new basketball



The family outside their new home

The Christina Noble Children's Foundation is dedicated to helping children in need with education, medical care, social opportunities and job placement. The Melbourne National Office manages the sponsorship of over 300 children in Vietnam and Mongolia, as well as volunteers who raise money via various community activities for projects in both Vietnam and Mongolia.



More CNCF Mongolia news: Nurturing a fine talent

Unudelger entered our child sponsorship program early in 2008. He is the youngest in a large family. Life has been very hard for them all since his father, who had been a professional singer and the main breadwinner, died a few years ago. Unudelger's mother supported her children by boiling sheep's heads in a large pot and selling them in the local market.

CNCF Mongolia provided the family with a ger to replace the mud hut they were living in, which was freezing during the winter months.

When staff learned that Unudelger, like his father, has a brilliant singing voice, they arranged for him to take singing lessons. He did so well that he was invited to London in September 2008 to star in a fundraising

concert organised by Kate Greer of CNCF's London office.

Christina herself attended the concert and is now arranging for Unudelger to receive ongoing voice training. The concert was also attended by the Mongolian Ambassador to the UK, who insisted on meeting Unudelger.

The CNCF Mongolia office had new traditional clothes made for the child so that he would look his best when he sang for the large audience.

Unudelger's greatest wish before leaving Mongolia was to see the ocean. Kate made this dream come true for him, and he enjoyed his first meal of fish 'n' chips on the beach at Brighton.



Unudelger, dressed for success

Australian Manager visits CNCF Vietnam

Kirrily Graham

Recently I made my first official visit to the Foundation in Ho Chi Minh City as Australian Manager accompanying the Charity Challengers. After a few days' sightseeing around HCMC, visiting the Social & Medical Centre (SMC) and the Tay Ninh Centre for the Visually Impaired, I saw the Challengers off on their adventure before starting a week-long visit to the SMC to get to know the staff, and familiarise myself with the other projects that we have under way in Vietnam. Suzanne Sadler, CNCF International Manager, joined me in HCMC so that we could discuss the needs and goals for CNCF Australia over the next couple of years.



Australian Consulate General to Vietnam, Graeme Swift meets with Helenita Pistolas (Chief Operating Officer), Suzanne Sadler (International Manager) and Kirrily Graham (Australian Manager) at the Social & Medical Centre in HCMC

As well as the pleasure of getting to know a lot of the staff members in HCMC, the visit to the Boys' Shelter and Girls' Shelter with Miss Thuy, who manages the projects, was a wonderful experience. I heard many sad stories of how some of the children had come to the shelters, but I also very quickly understood the importance of the shelters in turning them into success stories. A young woman who has been at the Girls' Shelter for around 10 years has recently been awarded an apprenticeship as a pastry chef at the Hyatt Hotel. Another young man from the Boys' Shelter is completing his training to become a computer technician, a highly regarded career.

Another highlight was meeting the Australian Consulate General for Vietnam, Graeme Swift, who graciously accepted our invitation to visit the Foundation. Along with Christina's daughter, Helenita and Suzanne, we enjoyed showing Mr Swift the various projects at the SMC, playing with the kids, and discussing the involvement and support of the Australian expatriate



Girls' Shelter visit by CNCF Australia Manager, Kirrily Graham

community and businesses based in Vietnam.

Overall, the trip enabled me to:

- celebrate with the Charity Challengers who had raised \$30,000
- see firsthand the projects we have supported in the past and will in the future
- meet and get to know the staff of our Vietnam Foundation Office and Projects
- work with Helenita and Suzanne in developing a successful and progressive Foundation for the future of many children, both in Vietnam and Mongolia.



CNCF Australia Projects Report

December 2008

Mongolia

In our last projects report, we mentioned that CNCF Australia was funding the construction of a building to house an Arts & Music program in the Blue Skies Ger Village in Mongolia. Not only have we funded the building of a small stage, changing rooms, storerooms and toilets, but we have also committed to covering the operating costs for the first year.

The building has now been completed, and we hope that these photos demonstrate the kind of enjoyment such a program can bring. A party was recently held in the new building that houses the program, during which the children sang and put on a fashion show.



A Sunday dance class in the new Arts & Music building, Blue Skies Ger Village, Mongolia



Vietnam

This month concludes our 18-month agreement to fund the Boys Shelter in Ho Chi Minh City. The centre was set up to provide a safe and loving home environment, as well as educational

opportunities, for children previously living on the streets. The Boys' Shelter provides nutritious meals, clean clothing and emergency accommodation for up to 25 children at one time. The boys range in age from six to 17 years.

Once each child has settled into his new home, he is enrolled in school. He also attends additional daily classes provided by the staff in the shelter to ensure he progresses as quickly as possible. Once the boys reach 16 years of age, they will receive career guidance based on their abilities and social needs. They can choose from a range of apprenticeship courses, allowing them to learn a trade and to prepare for their future.

Every week the boys attend football and swimming sessions with CNCF's Sports

Project, and art, music and English classes with CNCF's Art and Music projects. As a result, the boys' skills and fitness levels improve dramatically, and they gain greater self-confidence and social skills.

Ongoing efforts are made to identify and locate each boy's family. Whenever possible, the boys are reunited with their families once their concerns or differences have been resolved. After reuniting the families, regular home visits will continue to monitor the boys' situations and ensure that they receive the care and support they deserve.

We are very happy to have been involved with the shelter over this period and are pleased to say that CNCF Vietnam has secured future funding through the network of CNCF offices around the world.



Kirrily Graham with residents on her recent visit to the Boys' Shelter



Chairman's Report

Stuart Menzies, Chairman, CNCF Australia

The 2007/08 financial year saw a solid financial performance and a significant step forward for the Foundation in Australia in appointing Kिर्रily Graham as Australian Manager to work alongside Kylie Jeffares who remains Administration Officer. Both Kylie and Kिर्रily work for the Foundation on a part-time basis.

The following is a summary of financial year 2007/08:

- CNCF Australia had a modest decrease in income, from \$329,006 to \$305,024 — a 7% fall in revenue.
- The number of child sponsorships increased from 336 to 370.
- Capital works:
 - Completion of the renovation of the Tay Ninh Centre for the Visually Impaired in Vietnam.
 - Commencement of the construction of the Arts and Music Centre in the Blue Skies Ger Village in Mongolia.
 - Completion of the Mongolian School House renovations and extension.
 - Completion of the Kindergarten at Da Rsal, Vietnam.
- Ongoing programs:
 - Financed the running costs for the Boys' Residential Shelter in Ho Chi Minh City.
 - Allocated funds for the operational costs of the Arts and Music Centre in Mongolia for the next (2009/10) financial year.
 - Allocated US\$6,600 to the 'Give a Ger' program in Mongolia.
 - Allocated US\$6,200 to the Special Assistance Fund in Mongolia and Vietnam.
- Non-sponsorship income dropped from \$141,807 to \$97,026. This was primarily due to no bequests being received, compared to \$77,000 being received in the previous financial year of 2006/07.

- Administration costs grew from 7% to 12% of revenue.

The staff — yes, now two part-time staff — have again done a remarkable job. Kylie Jeffares achieves so much in the hours she works, and should be credited in particular with retaining and increasing the numbers of our child sponsors.

The addition of Kिर्रily as part-time manager of CNCF Australia continues to strengthen the organisation by helping to increase our professionalism and fundraising efforts. Kिर्रily took up her position in April, and so the results of her efforts will start to flow through in the forthcoming financial years.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Kिर्रily for all her hard work on the committee. She has really driven the fundraising efforts and done outstanding work.

Jeff Hoh joined the committee this year to replace Kिर्रily. Unfortunately for the Foundation, he has been transferred to run Intrepid Travel's operations in India. We wish him well in what will be an exciting adventure.

DGR status still remains some way off. We are confident that this will eventually result in CNCF Australia obtaining tax-deductible status. However, as I reported last year, there is a great amount of work involved in order to be recognised as an Overseas Aid Organisation. The considerable amount of time and work invested to date by our committee, staff and pro-bono lawyers at Allens Arthur Robinson will be worth the effort.

Given the world economic crisis and the collapse of the Australian dollar, it is going to be a challenging time for CNCF Australia in the coming year. We are, however, organisationally stronger than we have ever been and with the continued hard work of everyone involved we can continue the work of the Foundation.



I would like to thank all the fundraisers, volunteers, supporters and committee members for your continued support of CNCF Australia and the underprivileged children of Mongolia and Vietnam. Your collective efforts profoundly affect the lives of the children and their futures.

Stuart Menzies
Chairman
CNCF Australia



If you wish to sponsor a child in Vietnam or Mongolia, contact Kylie Jeffares on australia@cncf.org or (03) 9510 7337 for further information and an application form.



Child Sponsorship Program Report

Kylie Jeffares, Administration Officer

I am sure it will come as no surprise to any of you to learn that the current economic climate is having a profound effect on the day-to-day living of the children and their families in Vietnam and Mongolia.

Earlier this year we were advised by CNCF Mongolia that the cost of a ger (the traditional felt tent that many Mongol families live in) was increased from USD\$900 to USD\$1,200. While this is still a reasonable price for a home in our country, it's an unaffordable luxury for many struggling Mongolian families.

Some of the information we received to explain this necessary increase included the following statistics:

'Prices in Mongolia have been rising constantly for the last two years. All the basics such as rice, cooking oil, flour, electricity, diesel and petrol have increased by over 100%. As all of these items are imported, the distributors have no choice but to pass these increases on to the people who are already struggling. Coal, which is locally produced, and is a very necessary commodity to get the people through the harsh winters, has also increased in price from USD\$130 to USD\$390 per truckload.'

The CNCF Child Sponsorship Program now supports over 2,700 children in Vietnam and Mongolia. The monthly sponsorship fee has remained static for the past ten years. An increase in this fee is not only overdue, it has

now become critical if the Foundation is to ensure the ongoing success of the Sponsorship Program in both countries.

Effective as of **1 January 2009**, the monthly sponsorship fees will increase to US\$31. The increase is modest when taking into consideration the following circumstances:

- double-digit inflation in Vietnam and Mongolia, which has increased the cost of providing education, healthcare and nutrition; and
- a 20%-plus drop in the value of the Australian dollar during the past year.

This final point translates to an increase in the AUD\$ monthly sponsorship fee to \$50. This increase will enable our sponsors to continue to enhance the lives of the children they support, and keep alive Christina's founding principle of 'giving children back their childhood'.

We are so very grateful to the sponsors who have supported our Child Sponsorship Program over the past ten years and we hope we can rely on your continued commitment.

If you have been considering Child Sponsorship, now is a wonderful time to begin. Please do contact the CNCF Australia office on australia@cncf.org or (03) 9510 7337 for an information pack.

Vietnam: Tet Celebrations for 2009

Short for 'Tet Nguyen Dan', which means the Feast of the First Day, the Tet holiday is the most important holiday of the year in Vietnam. It celebrates the beginning of the Lunar New Year, which usually falls at the end of January or beginning of February. Tet will be celebrated between **28 and 31 January** in 2009.

Tet is a huge celebration lasting three days. The atmosphere is very festive. Incense is burned in homes; and the color red, symbolising good luck and happiness, is seen everywhere. Families save money, store food, and plan far in advance for the celebrations.

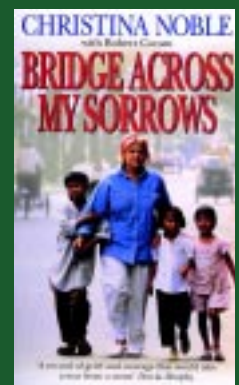
The Vietnamese take extreme care to start the New Year well. They buy new clothes, paint and clean their homes, cook three days worth of food, pay off all their debts, and make amends to rid themselves of all bad feelings.

Many sponsors have already sent monetary gifts to their sponsored children for Tet in 2009. These gifts will be gratefully accepted and will make a big difference to the Tet celebrations of many families.



Give a gift and encourage a friend to sponsor a child

So many people have been inspired to sponsor a child in need after reading the remarkable story of Christina Noble's life, as told in *Bridge Across My Sorrows* and *Mama Tina*. Christina takes us from Dublin, where she was herself a street child, to the streets of Saigon and the Children's Prisons of Mongolia, and recounts her experiences as a staunch campaigner for children's rights. To purchase a copy of either book for \$20 plus postage and handling of \$5, please email australia@cncf.org to obtain an order form. If you have ever felt impotent in the face of Third World poverty, Christina's story will prove that it is possible to help, if we choose to.





Family Assistance Success: Nguyen Vu Duyen's family

In May 2007, the Family Assistance Program provided the starting capital to this family, the total of which was 6,000,000VND (USD\$345). They used half of this amount to breed pigs. The remainder was used to buy bamboo to enable them to produce items and resell it to earn a living.

After one year, Duyen's family was very successful in breeding pigs.



They have saved money to repair the house and have bought a motorbike and paid for Duyen's sister's wedding. But the desire to expand the pig breeding was put on hold for lack of funds to expand their pig stalls.

After speaking to the family and assessing their business plans, they were approved for



a further 5,000,000VND (USD\$285) via the Family Assistance Program.

On 5 September 2008, the Family Assistance Program paid a home visit to Duyen's family and provided further starting capital for them.

We are very happy and proud of this family due to the successful progress of their business, as they now have ten piglets!

From *CNCF Vietnam Staff Newsletter*, July–September 2008

Award for CNCF Vietnam

On 9 July, CNCF Vietnam was awarded a certificate of merit for the good work the Foundation is doing in Ho Chi Minh City. Of the 140 registered and eligible NGOs in the city, CNCF Vietnam was one of only nine who received an award.

Christina's daughter Helenita Pistolas accepted the award on behalf of CNCF.



Helenita accepting the award

Cycle Vietnam & Cambodia Charity Challengers November 2008

'Months of muffin baking (for fundraising), trivia nights, market stalls and chocolate sales, and to make it more challenging, a hand injury, had led to a trip that was far more than I could have ever imagined. The scenery, the people, the food, the culture, our great group — all helped make the trip worthwhile, as did the smiling faces of the kids in Tay Ninh CNCF as they stole our bikes....' **Helen Szabo**

'Friends and family asked me what my highlight of the trip was and I tell them it was *all* a highlight. For my first every trip to Asia and my first cycle tour at the age of 66, it was a fantastic experience.' **John Naismith**

'Visiting the children at the Tay Ninh Centre for visually impaired kids was a wonderful experience. When you see their faces light up whilst using the exercise bike from CNCF, or dancing with members of the challenge 'hip hop style', it makes your heart melt and

want to raise more funds to help them have the best childhood ever! I enjoyed making friends in our cycle group and experiencing the people and culture of Vietnam and Cambodia with them.' **Jodie Taylor**

'We had a great group of people come together to make some valuable contributions and share in the fun of these two amazing and beautiful countries. It made all the work of getting everyone there more than worthwhile. I'm already looking forward to the next trip!' **Michael Naismith**

'The countryside of Cambodia blew me away, and the beauty and purity of the children and communities. I will have very fond memories of running into people's homes to use the 'facilities', and of 'high fives' with the children at the side of the road as we cycled by. Oh, yes, the chants from the children ... 'ello, 'ELLO!!' **Ciara Shouldice**





Charity Challenges Programs, 2009

Are you ready for a Challenge in 2009? Have a look at what's available.

February

Melbourne to Sydney Bike Challenge, 26 February. Cycling Challenge: 10 days ex Sydney

March

Cambodia Volunteer Project, 7 March. Volunteer Project Challenge: 10 days ex Phnom Penh—Cambodia

The CNCF Great Ocean Walk, 13 March. Trekking Challenge: 3 days ex Melbourne

Nepal Trek and School Project, 14 March. Volunteer Project Challenge: 14 days ex Kathmandu—Nepal

Cycling the length of Vietnam, 15 March. Cycling Challenge: 12 days ex Australia—Vietnam

The Amazing Race 2009, 29 March. Amazing Race Challenge: 11 days ex Saigon—Vietnam, Cambodia & Thailand

April

The Great Ocean Walk, 24 April. Trekking Challenge: 3 days ex Melbourne

May

Walk the Great Wall of China, 16 May. Trekking Challenge: 11 days ex Beijing—China

June

Mongolia Cycling Challenge, 14 June. Cycling Challenge: 10 days ex Ulaanbataar—Mongolia

July

Mongolia Cycling Challenge, 25 July. Cycling Challenge: 10 days ex Ulaanbataar—Mongolia

August

Cambodia Volunteer Project, 15 August. Volunteer Project Challenge: 10 days ex Phnom Penh—Cambodia

September

Vietnam North to South, 12 September. Cycling Challenge: 12 days ex Hanoi—Vietnam

Contact Kirrily at k.graham@cncf.org for more details.

The Great Ocean Walk October 2008

Analee Matthews

The Great Ocean Walk was spectacular and is an absolute must for any lover of the outdoors.

I work a lot, and so for me being able to spend three days in such serene surroundings was relaxing and rejuvenating, and just the tonic to refresh me for the hectic weeks leading up to Christmas.

Covering so many kilometres under one's own steam provides an amazing sense of accomplishment upon completion.

And if all of this wasn't enough, the accommodation (particularly the bathroom facilities) and the catering (thank you, chef Frank!) were absolutely outstanding, making the overall Great Ocean Walk experience one that I can't stop raving about to anyone who will listen!

Being among like-minded people for three days in the pristine surrounds of the Otway Ranges is a gift everyone should give themselves and their loved ones.

And when you add in the fact that you are also raising funds for those who really need it, there really is no greater feeling.

Two words describe this experience: DO IT!



Fundraising efforts

Lisa Sharpe and her two children Gabriel and Isla (pictured on the left) sold CNCF Christmas cards to help raise funds at their local Fair Trade Community Fair in Bangalow, NSW in December.





Pinot Noir Paddle 18 January 2009

You'll be picked up and driven to a **beautiful Victorian country location** in Nagambie
 You'll be **fed**
 You'll enjoy **wine tasting**
 You'll have experienced guides
 You'll be looked after by wonderful hosts
 You'll enjoy the **fun of paddling** down the beautiful and gentle Goulburn River.
 You'll be **fed** again
 You'll enjoy more **wine tasting**
 You'll have a chance to swim
 You'll have some great **laughs**
 You'll meet some **wonderful people**
 You'll be **fed** again
 and after all that we'll even drive you back.
and you'll be helping kids at risk while having lots of summer fun.



For more information and booking details...
<http://www.naismithenterprises.com.au/PinotNoirPaddle.htm>

CNCF Great Ocean Walk Charity Challenge 13 March 2009

Have you thought about doing a Charity Challenge but weren't sure about taking on that level of fundraising or physical challenge?

Walk the Great Ocean Road and make a difference!

Discover deserted beaches and quiet inlets along this spectacular coastline; see prolific wildlife and bird life; hike along the magnificent Johanna and Station beaches; tour the Cape Otway Lighthouse; experience the remote Milanesia and Wreck beaches; walk through forests of giant Mountain Ash; spot koalas from your accommodation; enjoy a picnic lunch at pristine Aire River Inlet; see the Twelve Apostles.

Payment & Fundraising Option 1

Deposit \$290 + Fundraise or get sponsored \$950+

Payment & Donation Option 2

Pay \$750 + Fundraise or get sponsored \$100+

WE ONLY HAVE 25 PLACES AVAILABLE FOR THIS TRIP!

Please contact Kirrily on 0413 308 035 or email k.graham@cncf.org for more information and date availability.



The Christina Noble Children's Foundation

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'Each and every one of us can make a difference'

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