



THE GARUNA FOUNDATION

A ministry of sharing the "grace, mercy and compassion" (Garuna) of Jesus in Thailand, Cambodia and surrounding countries.

THE GARUNA FOUNDATION | 2924 East Cholla Street, Phoenix, AZ 85028 | www.garuna.org | info@garuna.org | Volume 19, Issue 2 | August 2019



Rev. Dr. Jeff Ehlers

Dear Friends in Christ:

"To Him be glory both now and forever! Amen." I think I speak for our Garuna team, both here and abroad, when I say that this passage reflects the desire of our heart. It is our prayer and hope that the sharing of the Good News of Jesus will bring God glory and result in more people knowing Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, growing in His grace and knowledge, as well.



Mr. Veasna welcomes the mission team to Cambodia with a traditional Cambodian.

Please join me in giving God glory for the recent Garuna Teacher Training Mission Trip to Cambodia this past June 25th - July 6th. It was a great blessing that 14 teachers and leaders from five Lutheran schools and congregations came together for this important time of teaching and training at our six Garuna Christian Schools in Cambodia. We thank the following Lutheran churches and schools for helping send some of their staff on this mission trip: Christ - Phoenix, AZ, Prince of Peace - Fremont,

CA, St. John - Seward, NE, Bethany - Long Beach, CA, and St. Paul - Peachtree City, GA. The verse from 2 Peter 3:18 served as the theme for our trip. The team was a great blessing to our leaders in Cambodia who face serious opposition and hardship in a nation with less than 2% of the population that is Christian.

From the Chairman:

"...Grow in grace – to Him be glory..."

"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and forever! Amen." 2 Peter 3:18



Garuna Christian School teacher Mr. Tong Bunthen (29 yrs. old) and his nephew, Kong Phanharah (5 yrs. old) are shown with the crosses given to them following their baptisms.

Please notice several of the highlights of this trip in this newsletter. If I had to choose one thing that touched my heart the most, it was the baptismal service in Siem Reap. I was filled with joy seeing the baptism of one of our Garuna teachers. This young teacher heard the Good News at our school during a Bible class taught to the students by his brother-in-law. And, to make it even more joyful, his nephew was baptized with him. God is good. To God be the glory!

Thank you so much for your prayers and support. God is at work in this region through the Bible training of LISA, the local national Lutheran Churches, and the Garuna Christian School system. We ask God to continue to help us grow in His grace and knowledge – to Him be the glory.

Sincerely in Christ,

**Rev. Dr. Jeff Ehlers, Chairman
The Garuna Foundation**



GOOD NEWS TO SHARE



The purpose of this mission trip was to share the Good News of Jesus at two of our schools and to lead a teacher training retreat for our 48 Cambodian staff. In addition, mission trips include time spent learning more about the history and culture of the country being visited. The 14-member Garuna mission trip team enjoyed a visit to Angkor Wat, which is a UNESCO World Heritage site located a short distance from Garuna's sixth school in Siem Reap.



The teachers from America

found that the visits to the Garuna Christian Schools were highlights for them as they were able to interact with the students, lead games, and receive unlimited hugs and smiles. Pictured here is Erin Dueck, a second grade teacher from Prince of Peace Lutheran School in Fremont, CA.



Many new supplies were shared and introduced...



Baptisms

It is a joy to witness baptisms which result from ministry of the local, indigenous staff. On this trip, 28 individuals

were baptized, including youth group teenagers, Garuna School students, a Garuna School teacher, and even a teacher's child. We pray that they cling to this cross and the promise of life eternal – and that many more in Asia come to a saving faith, as well. We thank Mr. Bill Hodgson, a retired teacher from Christ Lutheran-Phoenix, who supplied handmade wooden crosses for all of those who were baptized.



...to the 45 teachers as they had the chance to make and use playdough, puzzles, tangrams, musical instruments, and other simple learning tools. Puzzles provided a fun opportunity for Garuna students and teachers to work collaboratively as they learned to problem solve as part of their learning process. These items are now being used at the 6 Garuna Christian Schools on a daily basis.



WELCOME!



As the Garuna ministry continues to grow, we are happy to introduce Tamie Worthington as our new Garuna Sponsorship programs coordinator. She has been involved with us for many years, helping develop Garuna's Bible curriculum and assisting with mission trips. Tamie and her husband, David, live in the Atlanta area.



Tamie, Pastor Peter, and Rev. Jeff Ehlers meet with the Garuna School Bible teachers to discuss the teaching of the Bible curriculum. They also share ideas about encouraging community outreach, baptisms, and church growth through the school ministry. The retreat theme, "Growing in Grace and Knowledge" is certainly practiced through our daily Bible classes at the schools.



A 3-day teacher training retreat was a major focus of the mission trip. Teachers from all six of the Garuna Schools gathered with our 14-member USA team. Our theme was "Growing in Grace and Knowledge" (2 Peter 3:18) and we emphasized the importance of physical, cognitive, emotional, and spiritual growth in our schools and in our personal lives.



One of the retreat projects was the decorating of a canvas pencil pouch. The Cambodian teachers are great artists! At the final devotion, the USA teachers filled their pencil bags with items that could be used by the teachers, but they also attached a Bible verse to each item. The packet of tissue given to them was a reminder of God's ability to wipe away their tears of sorrow, but also proved quite useful when the tearful goodbyes resulted at the end of our time together!

Praises

At the school visits, we enjoyed hearing the Garuna students sing songs of praise for us. Some were recognizable hymn tunes and praise songs which they learned in English and Khmer. What a joy to praise God and share in worship in any language!



Quotes

"There is a great opportunity through this mission trip to raise awareness at Lutheran schools. I think school students can be eager to get involved when they know they're helping someone 'just' like them."

"Being a part of an organization which has structure, goals and great vision is very important to me. I feel led to be very connected to Garuna Foundation and to grow with you."

"Sometimes pictures are endearing, but static. Being a live example to share with others – what we saw, heard, and felt can be influential and help others to recognize that we can all be part of the mission."

"This trip has truly met my expectations and confirmed the desire to be a missionary overseas."



Luther Institute Southeast Asia (LISA) Updates

LISA continues to be a vital ministry of Garuna. Classes and training events are scheduled regularly throughout the Southeast Asia region. Recently, LISA's Director of Operations, Rev. Dr. Mark Schroeder, taught a LISA course in Phnom Penh on the "Means of Grace". A few weeks



Rev. Dr. Mark Schroeder and Pastor Peter are leading a LISA class in Cambodia on the "Means of Grace".

prior to that class, Rev. Dr. Timothy Dost of Concordia Seminary in St. Louis taught an Introduction to the Book of Concord, which was recently translated into the Khmer language by the Lutheran Heritage Foundation (LHF). LISA serves a critical role in the training of the leaders of the emerging Lutheran Churches in Southeast Asia and the teachers and leaders of the Garuna Christian Schools in Cambodia.

Future Garuna Christian Schools (GCS)

Garuna is prayerfully moving forward with plans to build two more Garuna Christian Schools in Cambodia in the next two years – God-willing and to His glory. The seventh GCS is in process and will be built near the capital city of Phnom Penh. It will be a two-story, six-classroom building that is easily accessible to the airport and can be utilized for LISA training. It is designed to enroll 200 students and serve as a new church plant for the Cambodia Lutheran Church (CLC). Please pray for God's blessing on this important ministry project.



Garuna is also prayerfully looking at purchasing land for our eighth school. We are looking at placing a second school in the Siem Reap area, which we hope will become a center for training and ministry in this region of Cambodia. Please pray that this project may have a tremendous impact for the Gospel in this area.

Top: Jeff and Veasna are looking at the building plans for the GCS in Phnom Penh. In the near future, we anticipate a new school will be seen on this now vacant land. Bottom: Titus, Veasna, Samnang and Cheryl are looking for land in Siem Reap as a site for the 8th Garuna school, the second in this part of Cambodia.



GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

WHERE NEEDED MOST

Any amount is greatly appreciated!

LISA Theological/Bible Training Projects

- LISA Student Sponsorship: \$50/mo or \$600/yr
- LISA Theological Material Expenses: \$1,000

National Lutheran Church Projects:

- Evangelistic and Outreach Events: \$500
- Planning and Training Meetings: \$1,000

Garuna Schools & Garuna Kids Projects:

- Garuna Kid scholarship: \$30/mo or \$360/yr
- Garuna Teacher sponsorship: \$100/mo or \$1,200/yr
- Construction cost for one new classroom: \$20,000



LISA students studying the *Book of Concord* that was recently published into the Khmer language by LHF.

Have you considered these ways to give to the Garuna Ministries?

- **Thrivent Choice** – Are you a member of Thrivent Financial and eligible to direct Thrivent Choice Dollars? If so, you might consider sharing them with the Garuna Foundation ministries.

- **IRA Charitable Rollovers or IRA RMD's** can provide an opportunity for stewards over 70½ to make gifts to Garuna from their IRAs directly no income taxes due on rolled over or donated funds.

If you are led to make a donation to Garuna, your check may be made payable to **The Garuna Foundation**. Gifts may be mailed to: **The Garuna Foundation, 2924 E. Cholla Street, Phoenix, Arizona 85028**.

You may also donate online by visiting our secure online giving page at **www.garuna.org**. Your gift is tax-deductible as allowable by law. The Garuna Foundation is a 501(c)3 nonprofit. Garuna will mail a gift receipt to the address you provide. Thank you in advance for your generosity.

