

Focus on Mercy

NEWSLETTER OF AUSTRALIAN RELIEF & MERCY SERVICES LTD NATIONAL OFFICE

ABN 84 008 643 258 1 Kent Rd Surrey Hills Vic 3127 Australia Email info@arms.org.au

January - March 2002

Continue To Try A Little Kindness

By David Skeat

Kindness is an action that speaks loudly. People can criticize a lot of things; but against thoughtful appropriate kindness there is not much you can say. From time to time people who reach out to others in acts of genuine kindness receive an adverse reaction from the person they are trying to help. When this happens we are sometimes sorely tempted not to persevere and to retreat to a safer place where we less likely to get hurt or offended. My encouragement to people who are in this position is don't yield to this temptation, continue in your kindness.

Years ago I was part of a drama team that used to perform in the parks in Adelaide during the lunch hour period. One day in Victoria Square we were performing to a lunch time crowd. Nearby to us were a group of alcoholic homeless men who were all sharing a bottle of wine. A woman in the crowd went across the road and bought some pies and gave one to each of the old men. All the men started to eat their pies but one of them got to his feet and verbally abused the woman, he walked over to the rubbish bin and through his pie into it. He then continued to berate the woman and then retrieved the pie from the bin and began to eat it. The woman left in tears.



Here we have an extreme case. Someone who tried to extend kindness in an appropriate way, was harassed and hurt by the very person they were seeking to help.

I have often recalled this incident to mind because as a young man starting out in life it concerned me that this woman should have been treated so badly. I never saw this woman again but I assume that she may have felt sufficiently scarred by this incident that it may have been some time before she ventured out to do something like that again.

More recently we were holding an ARMS can rattle in Melbourne. On one of the teams was a young 12 year old girl who is one of our best collectors. The team were stationed in a large shopping mall and were seeking contributions from shoppers. A busker came into where the team was collecting and began to set up his sound gear. This young girl walked over to him and asked him if he would like to make a donation to ARMS. Unexpectedly the man wheeled around and berated this young girl swearing at her and yelling at the top of his voice. The young girl was embarrassed but did not respond. Instead she walked over to where her purse was, got out some loose change and went back to the busker and placed it in his hat. The man immediately apologised and thanked the girl – he talked to her for some time finding out more about ARMS and continually apologising for his rude and demeaning behaviour. Afterwards I was speaking this girl and asked her why she gave the man money after he treated her so badly. Her reply was *"recently I have been reading in my Bible that Jesus said that we are to do good to those who are mean to us, so that's why I gave the man the money."*

The lady in Adelaide all those years ago was hurt and fled the scene before any healing could be applied to the situation; but the girl in Melbourne had the wisdom to continue in kindness, and saw the situation turn around for the better.

Many people who are working in professional fields that demand continued kindness receive adverse reactions, some on a daily basis. However if they give up on kindness because the adverse reactions they receive, the situation will not improve and they will soon move on to other employment.

Kindness, generosity, compassion and mercy and all values we need to express everyday. The wider community needs us all to continue in kindness. The needy of the world need our continued generosity. Our ability to overcome the sting of the occasional adverse reaction will be a key factor in the continued healing of our nation and the solving of the injustices we seek to address in the lives of others.



Karen Refugee News

Ku Paw Htwe Dies

Supporters will remember the emergency appeal we held for Pastor Robert Htwes wife Ku Paw who was taken to hospital with stomach pains in late October and ended up having emergency surgery. The result was that the a large cancer together with nearly 2/3 of Ku Paw's liver were extracted and she was sent home to the refugee camp to die. The hospital demanded full payment from this refugee Pastor for Ku Paw's medical expenses which amounted to \$US5000. Needless to say the hospitals demands were well beyond Ps Robert's means and even though he borrowed all he could from friends.

ARMS' supporters donated more than \$4080 top help meet these expenses. The balance of funds were met by Steve Gumaer's (Partners) supporters in the US and Europe. Any excess funds will be passed on to Ps. Robert to help him cover any other expenses and to also provide for his children in this time of need.

Recently I received and email from Steve Gumaer and thought that I would share some of it with you.

"Thank you for your prayers and generosity for Pastor Roberts wife, Ku Paw. I am sad to say that she died in Mae Sot after her heath failed again and she was admitted to the ICU care unit of the local hospital. Tuesday afternoon a funeral was held for her in Mae La refugee camp with more than 600 people in attendance. She is survived by her husband (Ps Robert) and four children.

Your prayers and giving have made this hard event easier on the family. The medical bills amounted to nearly \$US5000 dollars, all of which was covered by donations from caring people all around the world. From Ps. Robert and his family let me express deepest gratitude for your help

Ku Paw was a hard working and faithful woman who could always be counted on to serve the poor, help the needy, and comfort the sick. She raised four wonderful Christian children and was partner to her husband in all manner of work and service. Her sacrifice made an impact on many children who were orphaned or lost during war time events as she fostered them or arranged care for them."

Christmas In The Camps

This year our Karen Christmas Gift Appeal raised \$1600, which was a great result. Steve Gumaer and his team distributed presents to hundreds of refugee children, and Christmas dinners of rice, chicken and fruit were enjoyed by many through the generosity of ARMS donors.

Christmas was celebrated in the usual way at Rose Mu's and Pelu's Preschools. There was a concert that consisted of a Christmas play and traditional and cultural dances and songs after which there was the distibution of presents and Christmas dinner for all. The children had a delightful time, and it was a case a case od "smiles all around".



The logisitics involved in getting everything set up to were amazing and Steve was busy for some weeks buying presents and supplies and making regular trips to the border to make sure that everything was distributed on time. All went well except for a problem at Ler Ber Ner camp (a small camp for Internally Displaced Peoples inside Burma.)

On December 23rd Steve and his team crossed into Burma and distributed toys for the children and food for the refugees together with medical supplies. Steve told the refugees of *Gods unfailing kindness to those who call on Him*. On Christmas Day this camp was attacked by Burmese mortar fire – miraculously no one was injured.

On December 27th the Burmese Army burned Ler Ber Ner to the ground. This displaced 82 families. About half have crossed the border into Thailand and are living in the precincts of an old abandoned church near Noh Boh. The rest have run into the jungles and their fate is as yet unknown. Steve Gumaer's team is caring for the families who have crossed into Thailand.

ARMS has sent funds to Steve to help care for these people from our Emergency Response Fund - further donations can be sent through the form on the back page.



Kids In Poverty Need Your Sponsorship

The ARMS sponsorship program continues to grow, we are pleased to say that we now have sponsorships in East and West Timor, as well as in Indonesia, India, Thailand, Philippines, amongst the Karen Refugees, and in Turkey. Managing the many families who are reliant on us to meet the costs of their child's education is a laborious job that we do with a great deal of pleasure because we can see the long-term results that this ministry is bringing about.

From time to time sponsors cannot continue to support their child and we have to find new ones to take over. At this time the National Office has children in Thailand, Philippines, and India who we are desperate to re-sponsor. ARMS Darwin has children in Indonesia, East Timor and West Timor. There are also a number of sponsorships available from our Perth Office.

Child sponsorships vary in price depending on the country in which the child is located. Our cheapest sponsorships are only \$80 per year. Our most expensive are \$250 per year. Your workplace, church or family could have the joy of really helping to make a difference in a young child's life. Please contact the ARMS National Office for further details. Child Sponsorship really does make a difference.

RescueNet Is Nearly Operational And Ready To Go.

Last December 9 people spent two weeks training at the inaugural RescueNet training camp held at the YWAM base in Adelaide.

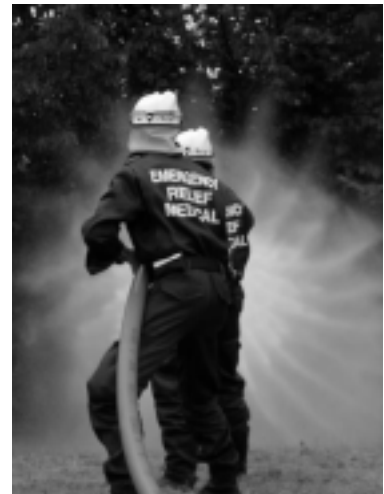
Each person attending the camp was trained by St John's Ambulance in Senior and remote First Aid. They also receive training in Basic Fire Fighting from the NSW Fire Service, and Basic Search and Rescue Methodology by Brett Harwood the International Director of RescueNet. Much fun was had during the training camp and personalised attention was given to each participant. The camp was a truly inspirational time and some participants have expressed the desire to do further training and to specialise in various areas such as Medical Relief, and Search & Rescue.

RescueNet Australia now has a group of personnel from all over Australia who are qualified to go into the field where they will receive further practical training by RescueNet International. These people will form the first RescueNet Australia National Team. Our plan is to eventually have a team in every major Australian city.

Although costs are kept to a minimum, training and equipping each member of RescueNet is expensive (about \$2000 per person). Whilst all of the staff are willing to bear the cost of the training, the cost of each person's field kit and uniforms is also expensive – (about \$1,300 per person). Each team also needs to buy radios and other equipment that they can use in the field – the radios alone for one team will cost approximately \$8,000. RescueNet needs your help to go to the next level. Currently we are seeking sponsors

through whom we can fund the capital items such as radios and other communications equipment. However, we would like to ask our supporters to consider donating funds that will help each team member get their own personal kit together. Those who have qualified and have expressed desire to deploy with RescueNet are, Lisa Voltz (Darwin), David Skeat (Melbourne), Mark Cockburn (Sydney), Keith Greig (Sunshine Coast), Gary De La Porte (Brisbane) Will Knight (Newcastle), Steve Withall (Newcastle), Owen (Newcastle).

Donations can be sent to the National Office through the form on the back page.



Find out more about Rescuenet from the rescunet web site, www.rescunet.com.au.



INTERESTING SNIPPETS

New Ship For YWAM Ministry

Marine Reach the YWAM ship ministry based in New Zealand and Australia has finished renovating their new ship the *MV Mercylink*. The ship is currently on tour in NZ and fundraising is steaming ahead to build a new medical clinic on board. The ship will head off to Fiji later this year on the first leg of a Pacific tour.

An Australian tour is being planned for 2003.

Primary Health Care News

The Melbourne Primary Health Care School has completed its lecture phase and students are now on outreach in Africa and Australia.

This school was a great success and a second Melbourne school is being planned, possibly for September 2002. It is hoped that the Perth and Melbourne schools will help boost the numbers of primary health care workers in poor communities in the third world.

ARMS Perth will be commencing a Primary Health Care School in late January. Email health_care@ywamperth.org.au for details.

YWAM Relief Effort In Afghanistan

YWAM International is gearing up to send teams into Afghanistan to be involved in food distribution programs there. Teams from Europe and the US are already being put together and once there will join up with other agencies to take part in this long term effort.

Exciting New Project in Indonesia

ARMS' Darwin is preparing to launch a community development program in the Maluccas in Indonesia. The program will address local community needs in housing, education, micro enterprise development, refugee ministry, as well as orphanage programs.

Aart and Herma Haverkamp are leading the project and the whole office in Darwin are buzzing with excitement as fund raising commences to start stage one.

More information with regards to the Maluku Community Development Project can be obtained through the ARMS website www.arms.org.au/mcdp1.html or you can email them at mcdp@arms.org.au.

Focus On Mercy

is the newsletter of the National Office of

Australian Relief & Mercy Services Ltd.
ACN 008 643 258

1 Kent Rd.
Surrey Hills Vic 3127

Phone: 03 9831 2406
Fax: 03 9836 9231

www.arms.org.au
info@arms.org.au

A Ministry Of Youth With
A Mission Australia

Response Form

I would like to become a supporter of ARMS and will regularly pray for its ministry and /or give a monthly gift of \$ per month.

I enclose a gift of \$ towards:

Emergency Response Fund

Rescuenet

Australian Mercy Fund

National Office Support

Karen Refugee Emergency

East Timor Building

Name.....

Address.....

.....Post Code

Contact Number

Please debit my credit card (circle one) Visa Mastercard Bankcard

Expiry date/..... Signature

Return to Australian Relief & Mercy Services Ltd. ACN 008 643 258 1 Kent Rd Surrey Hills Vic 3127