

LRC members join forces to help New Day

by Liza Green



Adopting a more direct approach to charity, a group of Hong Kong residents, including many LRC members, are pooling their resources to help women and girls in need across Asia. Founded in May 2007 by Chris and Liza Green, New Day (www.newdayasia.org) is a donor circle that collects monthly contributions from members. The members then work together to fund grass roots projects that provide rescue and the promise of a better life for the many young girls and women in crisis in the region. When they started New Day, Chris and Liza chose to focus their efforts on women and girls as they seem all too often to be the victims of the dark underside of poverty.

With help from LRC member Alex Cheung (now serving on the New Day Committee along with his wife Kim), New Day was incorporated as a private company with tax-exempt status in Hong Kong. Since its initial launch to friends around the Green's dinner table New Day has grown to a membership of over 60 and has funded 11 projects in China, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Nepal and India. Hong Kong law firms Linklaters and Norton Rose have co-funded specific projects with New Day and in doing so have helped to maximize the impact of each donation. As all operating costs are borne by individual members and New Day is run on a volunteer basis 100% of the funds collected go straight to the projects chosen by members.

It has been a rewarding experience for all those involved and a way of learning about the issues facing the region through meaningful giving. As Liza says, "Most of our members have made contributions to charities and supported fund-raising drives for disaster relief but these mostly involved simply writing a cheque with little follow-through on how their funds were spent and the impact they ultimately had. New Day allows them to give

regularly to projects that they can choose and approve and they are updated of each step of the funding process from the sourcing of the project to the lasting impact of the grant."

Members are encouraged to visit New Day projects and report back their findings and experiences to the membership body. There are bi-annual meetings held in Hong Kong where members can get updates on all the current projects and share stories and photographs from visits they have made to the specific charities that New Day supports. "It's a great way of learning about the realities of life for so many Asian women and girls and there's a sense that we can really help by pooling both our financial and human resources to support small organisations doing such wonderful work in these countries", says New Day member Flis Pask.

As part of the grant-making process New Day members try to visit specific projects where possible. On a recent trip to India, Chris and Liza Green visited one of New Day's most recent projects, the KALKI Girl's Centre in Pondicherry. KALKI was set-up by Panjali Arun to provide a refuge and informal education for street and slum living girls. Herself a child of the slums and with a vision of ending the vicious cycle of life on the streets, Ms Arun set up KALKI with support from the Hong Kong based ADM Capital Foundation. The foundation was able to guide New Day in making two targeted donations to support KALKI's work (including a generous grant from Linklaters). Seeing the immediate impact of New Day's funds on the girls at KALKI was a real privilege for Chris and Liza who would like to return to Pondicherry with other New Day members to assist Ms Arun and her staff in a more practical way.

With committed members and successful projects to focus on, New Day is looking forward to growing further in the future without changing its participative model of giving. They are also always on the look out for corporate sponsors who would like to partner with New Day in making no-cost, tailored grants to small regional charities. If you would like to find out more about New Day please have a look at their website www.newdayasia.com or contact Liza Green at cgreen@netvigator.com or on 9191 2710.

