

# NEWSLETTER



# 2016

Another successful Digging Deep for Myanmar trip comes to a close. This is the fourth year for Digging Deep and we are delighted to announce we have now built 15 toilets since inception, which have provided clean and hygienic sanitation facilities for over 400 people. We have distributed over 600kg's of clothing, sporting equipment, educational supplies as well as delivering health and hygiene training to around 700 children. The scope of our activities continues to expand and this year we also provided support to struggling families as well as building a home for an elderly lady.

During the two weeks that we were in Lintha during April this year, 18 Australian volunteers came and went at different periods, giving their time to the Digging Deep cause. Here are our 2016 achievements.

## Toilet Program

The team supervised and helped to construct of seven toilets at various locations in the village. These will provide for around 200 people and help to reduce the incidence of disease caused by current unhygienic practices. Local tradespeople were employed to do most of the work, thereby providing valuable income for the community.



All hands on deck in the workshop making doors, cutting out the roofs for the toilets.



Htein Lin drilling the roof battens with Graeme lending a hand.



Hot work. Terry and Htein Lin hard at it while Tim looks on.



Local tradesmen building the septic tank.



Installing the corrugated roof.



Pouring the septic tank lid.



Installing the corrugated roof.



Rendering the inside of the toilet.



Steve, Geoff and Terry fitting the dunny door.



Yes it's a dunny Luke!



Jo helping Geoff making the toilet doors.



Proud and happy villagers with some of the Digging Deep team in front of their new toilet.



Written on the toilet door not graffiti, but instructions, 'Please use 20 cups of water to flush' and 'Please leave clean and tidy'.

We are also in the process of repairing and renovating five toilets for the local public school. These toilets had fallen into disrepair and without the availability of government funding to repair them, the school of over 600 children had been left with two functioning toilets, the ones we built last year. We supervised the reconstruction of the septic tanks and installed new absorption trenches while we were there. The renovation of the toilet building is proceeding under the supervision of Htein Lin, our site supervisor.



Repaired septic tanks and plumbing at the government school.

## Health and Hygiene

Katie, Mel and Yasmin continued health and hygiene classes at the school from last year, this time focusing on dental care. They gave all 400 school students a toothbrush, tooth paste and soap to take home and another toothbrush and paste to keep at school. We made toothbrush holders so each child knew which one was theirs and the teachers encourage them to clean their teeth before and after their class.

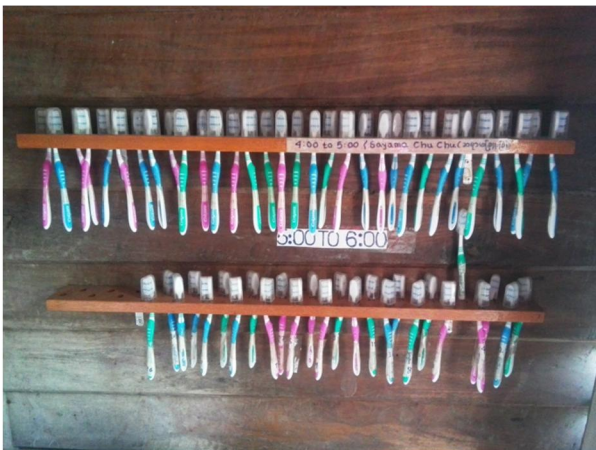
Alex painted a step-by- step reminder on how to clean your teeth properly on the school wall and also painted, with the help of the others, a fantastic world map mural on the main classroom wall. Mama Sue, the teachers and children were overwhelmed.



Katie, Mel and Yasmin teaching the senior students about dental hygiene.



Jack lending a hand in the school.



The toothbrush holders arranged by their class groups.



Alex's mural explaining the five movements to brush your teeth properly.



The world map by Alex and his helpers.



Alex, Yasmin, Mel, Michael and Katie, our inspirational trainers and artists.

## A new home for Daw Than May.

Daw Than May is a 75 year old lady who has health issues and no family to help support her. Her ramshackle home was falling apart, the roof almost non-existent and would not have survived the oncoming wet season. She had no financial means to repair her home so Digging Deep came to the rescue and built her a new but modest home. She was overwhelmed by our help and commented “this is the best home I have ever had”.



Daw Than May's existing house.



She proudly sits on the step of her new home.



From left, Terry, Graeme, Geoff, Jane, Kate, Sonya and Sophie with Daw Than May and Htein Lin at her new house.



Daw Than May was overwhelmed that strangers would do this for her.

## Distributing clothing in Lintha village

The Digging Deep team distributed over 240kgs of clothing, shoes and hats to needy families in the surrounding villages. We also provided basic first aid supplies for the school and medical centre and 200 pairs of donated spectacles which will be given out to villagers by a visiting optometrist.



Kerrie and Kate heading out to hand out some clothing.



Hopeful villagers wait for clothes to fit their kids.



Large bags full of donated clothes moved from village to village on the back of bicycles.



Showing off a new pair of shoes.



Pupils from the Andrew Clark Trust English School are helped to find clothes to fit them.



Sophie distributing clothing, assisted by Aung Win.

## Sports Day

The Digging Deep team brought with them 25 soccer balls, 40 frisbees, 25 skipping ropes, 4 cricket sets, hand balls and beach balls. We held a sports day on the beach and all of the children were invited to join. There was a huge turn out and the sporting equipment was distributed amongst the children afterward.



Sports Day for the village kids. This year they were taught how Aussie Nippers play Flags.



Jack and Luke Banner join in the fun of the flag race with the village kids.



There were about 70-80 kids for the games this year, split into teams.



Playing 'Tug of War', a favourite game.



Gifts are given to every child at the end of the games.



Practicing with their new toys.

## Acknowledgements

Our volunteers have done an amazing job again this year raising the money to fund these projects. A big thank you to:

- Jane and Jamie for organizing a black tie dinner with the help of Susan Gerahty which raised in excess of \$4000. Roberto Matamala & Janine van der Waal donated \$1000 of labour from their landscaping business "Pink Gardens" that was auctioned and bought by David & Sarah Bannerman for \$1500.
- Katie, Michael, Mel, Yasmin and Alex for their "house party for a good cause" that raised over \$3500. Ross and Maya Delaney of "The Bottle-O" Darlinhurst donated 72 bottles of wine for sale on the night plus a \$200 dinner for two at their restaurant "The Rooster" in the Blue Mountains as a major raffle prize.
- Sonya, Graeme, Kate and Steve who organized the Dunny to Dunny run and raised over \$1300. The run between ten public dunnies along a 10km stretch of the coast near Nelson Bay was to raise awareness and highlight how privileged we are. Hilda Orr of "Orresome Cakes" baked and donated 200 "Poop Emoji" Cupcakes which were sold on the day.
- Jo and Tim who sold toilet paper through the "Who Gives A Crap" initiative and raised \$700. In addition they held a Family Splash Day with pool space and splash water park gear for the day donated by Anthony Kelly and his family. This raised a further \$630.

Thanks also to all those volunteers who helped out with these fundraisers.

A special thank you to:

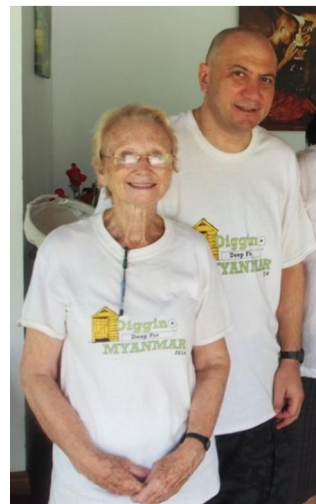
- Hilary and Robin Evans from the UK who sponsored the construction of Daw Than May's house,
- Kerry and Ken Campbell and family who sponsored the construction of their second toilet in Lintha and to
- Sue and Bob Freebairn who also sponsored the construction of a toilet.

Also a special thank you to the following people who individually donated in excess of \$200. Shirley Goodwin, Liz and Ken Grainger, Maureen and Peter Evans, Pip & John Burgess and Steph & Tim Kilroy.

Thanks to our man on the ground Htein Lin for the excellent work he did again this year purchasing materials, organizing the tradespeople for the work as well as translating for us. Without his help our task would have been impossible. Thanks also to Sue and Sahin and the staff at Yoma Cherry Lodge for the warmth, hospitality and ongoing support. We look forward to seeing you again next year.



Htein Lin



Sue and Sahin



Last but not least, thank you to the 18 volunteers who travelled to Lintha with us at their own expense to make this all happen. You are all legends!!!

Again, a massive thank you to all our supporters and for putting your trust in us. I can assure you that 100% of your donation was spent on the ground where it is most needed. Your generosity continues to provide another step towards a healthier, safer and happier future for the families in Lintha Village, Ngapali, Myanmar.

Geoff Mead

Digging Deep for Myanmar