

# Deborah's passion for Cambodia



**CUTE AND CUDDLY:** Deborah Groves' heart goes out to children.



**PIGGY IN THE MIDDLE:** Part of everyday life in Cambodia.

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work in Phnom Penh as a photographer doing commercial work for advertising agencies. I also sell photographs I've taken of Cambodia in up-market hotel souvenir shops and galleries."

Deborah's aid work revolves around a small remote village called Prasat Char.

"This is my passion and the reason why I am in Cambodia: to help the poor people," she said.

"I just saw a need and decided to do something about it."

With the help of a Cambodian friend and donations from friends and family in Australia, Deborah has been trying to improve the quality of life for the poorest people in the Prasat Char village, who exist on less than 50 cents a day.

So far, Deborah's efforts have helped: construct water pumps to enable the villagers to have access to clean water; provide seeds, farming tools and watering cans; buy bicycles to enable children to get to school; give people medical needs; provide school books, pencils, school clothes and food; and supplied provisions so that people



**POOR LITTLE SOULS:** Deborah captures Cambodian children and their day-to-day life.

can make their huts waterproof.

Deborah said her main aim was to get all the children to go to school and help the villagers increase their income.

"To that end, I have a couple of

ideas in mind such as pig farming and creating a cottage industry, sewing products targeted at the tourist market," she said.

"These people live less than 20km from the main temple of

Angkor Wat and yet they do not benefit at all from the tourist dollar."

On International Women's Day this year, Deborah and a friend helped resurrect the house of a poor Cambodian woman who had no husband and five children.

"The house is still the same size but apart from four of the foundation posts, we have completely rebuilt it," she remembered with pride.

"It was perhaps three of the most profound days of my life. It was a real privilege to be able to do it."

Deborah was also happy to announce her first purchase of two pigs.

"This is very exciting times," she laughed.

"Is this what my life has been reduced to? Getting excited over pigs!"

If you want to learn more about Deborah and her travels or to make a donation, visit her website: [www.grovesphotography.com](http://www.grovesphotography.com).

## Little miracles are more than just 'hearsay'

**N**OW that she has her second Cochlear implant, seven-year-old Mia Arnott, of Buderim, is all ears.

The Ethiopian-born beauty is the first student of the Sunshine Coast's Hear and Say Centre to receive a second implant.

Her mother, Kerry Arnott, adopted Mia when she was only five months old, so had already endured the emotional experience of Mia's first implant — two weeks before her second birthday.

Now, after the second operation, Kerry could not be happier for her daughter, and said she had noticed the improvements.

"For children who have never heard before or have hearing loss, (hearing) is a totally new experience," Kerry said.

"I've just noticed in the last couple of weeks that Mia is hearing directional sound a lot better.

"I've noticed her different eye movements and smiles, and how she'll just stop what she's doing when she hears something new."

Kerry said the new and improved implant was both splash and humidity-proof. The device consists of a microphone behind the ear that sends sound into a processor. The sound then travels down a magnified coil to a magnet inside the head, stimulating the auditory nerve, so sounds are remembered.

Mother and daughter have been visiting the Nambour-based Hear and Say Centre since moving to the Sunshine Coast three years ago. Kerry said the centre had been very helpful — not just for the students, but also in guiding the parents.

"Parents with children who have hearing loss wouldn't know where to start if it weren't for the Hear and Say Centre," she said.

"The centre mainly teaches the parents how to teach the children, and build on what they've been taught in the week's session, in everyday life. (The centre) aims to integrate them into the schooling system."

Mia is in Year 1 at Matthew Flinders Anglican College, where Kerry said the teachers were very supportive.

Mia enjoys going to school, and she was even happy to say so herself: "At school, I write, draw, read and do maths. And maths is my favourite."

THE Hear and Say Centre is conducting its Butterfly Appeal to raise funds to put an extra 12 babies through the program. Buy a \$2 butterfly brooch or pen as well as a \$3 pack of butterfly-attracting plant seeds from your local Suncorp branch or KFC before April 27.



**HEARING YOU LOUD AND CLEAR:** Mia Arnott is over the moon about her Cochlear implants.

PHOTO: BARRY LEDDICOAT/155073



**BEFORE:** Deborah helped a poor Cambodian women resurrect her home



**AFTER:** The rebuilt dwelling is much appreciated.