

## TESSERACT EDUCATORS TRAVEL TO CAMBODIA FOR SISTER SCHOOL'S OPENING CEREMONY

PARADISE VALLEY, ARIZONA—December 17, 2009—Tesseract School educators Tina Kanelos and Michelle Lappin joined students, villagers, community leaders and dignitaries in celebrating the grand opening of the Isabella Primary School of Baray, Tesseract's sister school in Cambodia.

The only educational establishment of its kind in the Kompong Thom province, the Isabella Primary School facilities include a teachers' house, canteen, cook shed and aquaculture pond. The Isabella project was initiated by Dr. Charlene Brannon, in dedication to her granddaughter, Isabella, a student at Tesseract, and made possible by Mr. T.C. Swartz, Dr. Brannon's brother, to help improve the lives and the literacy rate of the children living in this rural community.

The Isabella School is one of five schools that Swartz, Dr. Brannon and the APSARA Foundation have founded in Cambodia. During their eight-day visit, Kanelos, a middle school educator, and Lappin, an early childhood educator, visited three of those schools—the T.C. Kompong Seila School in Siem Reap and the Kok Dong Primary School, located in the rural Koh Kong province, in addition to the Isabella Primary School. On their school visits, Kanelos and Lappin not only had the opportunity to interact with students by practicing conversational English and playing educational games with them, but they were also able to gain a better understanding of the challenges that the students and teachers experience on a daily basis.

"It was humbling to see the amount of poverty, and their incredibly positive attitudes towards life. They've experienced such devastation, but they have such an extreme passion for life and education," commented Kanelos. "This was a once in a lifetime experience that made me see the world through different eyes."

This is the second trip educators from Tesseract have made to the T.C. Kompong Seila School and the Kok Dong Primary School. Since the first trip in 2007, the educators and students at Tesseract School have worked together to extend their outreach programs to include activities with these two schools, and now with the Isabella Primary School. Through Tesseract's service learning program the school has held material and supplies drives, and in their art classes Tesseract students have made books for the students.

Moving forward, Tesseract plans to arrange a pen-pal program and vitamin drive as well as send the schools digital cameras so the students can take photos to share with the students at Tesseract, supporting Tesseract's innovative curriculum and its mission to provide students with an education that has global perspective. Kanelos and Lappin will also be working with Nigel Taplin, Tesseract's head of school, and first-grade educator, Lynne Elberson, to discuss



opportunities for sharing Tesseract's student centered-approach, teaching methods and strategies with the educators in Cambodia.

"We are pleased to support the efforts of the APSARA Foundation, Dr. Brannon and Mr. Swartz and what they are doing to improve lives through their commitment to education," said Taplin. "What they are doing is truly inspirational."

For more information about the APSARA Foundation, please visit [www.apsarafoundation.org](http://www.apsarafoundation.org).

#### About Tesseract:

A leader in education in the Valley, Tesseract School prepares students to excel in college and beyond, lead lives of purpose, and become ethical and compassionate citizens with a global perspective. Tesseract's innovative educational approach engages students in learning, enabling them to master the basics and become critical thinkers. As a non-profit, independent private school for students in preschool through grade 12, resources are directed to recruit and retain outstanding educators and continually enhance the school's two campuses in Phoenix and Paradise Valley. For information visit [www.tesseractschool.org](http://www.tesseractschool.org) or call 480.991.1770.

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