

Rosenberger sees poverty in southeast Asia

By [Rex Rutkoski](#), VALLEY NEWS DISPATCH
Sunday, January 30, 2005

About the writer

Rex Rutkoski is a Valley News Dispatch staff writer and can be reached at 724-226-4664 or via e-mail.

Ways to get us

[Be a Facebook fan](#)
[Follow us on Twitter](#)
[E-mail Newsletters](#)
[On your mobile](#)

[Subscribe now](#)

Richard Rosenberger has worked with the homeless in Pittsburgh and the poor in Appalachia.

"But I have never seen this level of poverty," says the New Kensington resident, a former principal at Valley High School and, most recently, Riverview High School.

Rosenberger, a missionary with the Southeast Asia Prayer Center, is speaking of what he found when he visited Cambodia in the fall, a country to which he plans to return in March.

The prayer center's goals include channeling aid funds into humanitarian projects, spreading the message of the Christian faith and opening 25 Christian schools/orphanages in 24 provinces in Phnom Penh, along with the several already in operation.

Mark Geppert of Oakmont, a missionary for 28 years, is the founder and president of the prayer center. He has more than 30 years of experience in more than 30 countries, and he most recently pastored the English-speaking congregation of the Church of Singapore.

Rosenberger says he felt such a strong spiritual call to get involved in the work that he recently retired early, at age 53, from Riverview.

Through letters and speaking engagements, he has begun an awareness campaign, alerting clergy and congregations in the Valley and elsewhere who may want to support of the efforts.

As a result of the much-publicized actions of brutal Cambodian dictator Pol Pot, there are an estimated 25,000 to 30,000 orphans in Cambodia, and perhaps as many as 50,000.

Estimates of dead from the Khmer Rouge are 2.5 million to 3 million, Rosenberger says. And there are millions of land mines still buried and killing people every year, he says.

"Nearly an entire generation and educated class of people and leaders were killed in the most brutal and cruel ways," Rosenberger says. "When you add the increasing and huge percentage of AIDS-infected people, along with a country that is not at war, and a Communist one that is interested in our Christian help, the situation does stand out as unique."

There is a huge garbage dump on the outskirts of Phnom Penh, he says. When a load comes in, the people who scavenge there run to it by the dozens, many bare-footed, many of them children. Some actually live in the dump.

Rosenberger says it was a difficult decision to retire early last year. "I loved my kids, staff and parents in Riverview. The relationship we had was one I could have only dreamed of being possible," he says. "The board and superintendent were actually some of my closest and most loving friends. I miss them, still today. But I have new children with which to share my love, heart, mind and strength."

Amidst the enormous challenge, Rosenberger has hope.

"When you see the level of dedication and commitment of those involved, and see how the children have responded to the care and love they have received in just the past couple of years, it is evident God has a wonderful plan for this country," he says. "The opportunity to raise up Christian and loving leaders is evident not only to the prayer center, but also the king of Cambodia and its secretary of state, who is the chairman of the Communist Party."

A member of the prayer center's Cambodian board is the special assistant to the prime minister of Cambodia.

"This is an 'impossible' project which will be accomplished," Rosenberger assures, "because the Lord will be directing our hands, hearts and minds."

For more information

Call Richard Rosenberger at 412-996-0566, or e-mail him at rosenberger01@comcast.net or seapc@hotmail.com.

1. Red Wings sign former Pens wing Conner
2. Pagan leader from Hempfield blasts police
3. Speed complaints preceded boat crash
4. Highmark may jump sides in collusion suit, help West Penn Allegheny target rival UPMC
5. Pittsburgh police seek missing boy, 1
6. Hempfield woman killed as car crashes into block wall
7. Razing Civic Arena to cost \$2.9 million
8. Pitt increases tuition 8.5 percent
9. South Park water main break kills fish in Peters Creek
10. North Side worker dies in accident at Lawrenceville plant