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**[Journeys Within](#)**

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## **Two Massachusetts Teens Change Lives of Students in Cambodia**

NEWBURYPORT, Mass. — Leah Petty and Claire Miller are pretty regular 13-year-olds: They go to school, have fun with their friends, and look forward to summer vacation. But these two teens are no ordinary young women that look forward to hanging out at the beach, the pool, or with friends. These girls look forward to making a difference. Three years ago while living with her family in Singapore, Leah visited Cambodia and was personally impacted by the poverty that she witnessed in this country. Rather than just ignore the problem, Leah talked to her best friend Claire and together they made a plan to raise money for Cambodia and to make a difference in the lives of kids their own age who were struggling just to survive.

For three years, the teens together have raised funds from friends and family to help their cause. Last weekend, Claire and Leah had one of their most successful fundraisers to date. They held a garage sale in Newburyport, Massachusetts, and thanks to donations from neighbors and friends raised over \$1600. This means that to date, these remarkable teens have raised over \$4,000 for **[Journeys Within Our Community \(JWOC\)](#)**, a non-profit organization in Cambodia that Leah and Claire chose to support because of the organizations' proven effectiveness in offering practical assistance to local communities in Southeast Asia.

“We are so amazed by Leah and Claire,” said Andrea Ross, JWOC founder, “To be so young, yet to be able to really embrace the idea that they can make a difference in the world. It’s very inspiring and they embody everything that JWOC stands for: To see a problem and to solve it!”

After her initial trip, Leah visited Cambodia again and visited the JWOC projects she had helped support. She has seen first-hand the impact that her fundraising has had and she and Claire hope to return to Cambodia next summer to volunteer with JWOC so that they can once again be involved in the projects that they help make possible.

When asked what message she hopes that people will get from all of her hard work, Leah answered, “That any little thing can help. Whether it’s \$10, \$100, or \$1000. The people there have so little compared to us. We complain if our hot water takes too long to heat up. Most of the people there don’t even have clean water, not to mention hot water. We don’t know what it feels like to be 10 years old and starving, our parents not putting us in school because they can’t afford it and they need you out to beg. Nobody should have to go through that.”

To date, the money that Leah and Claire have raised together has gone towards repairing wells, buying GPS units for well scouting teams, building a new library and computer center, and sending a JWOC Scholarship Student to university for four years.

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## *About Journeys Within Our Community*

JWOC was founded by Brandon and Andrea Ross, owners of Journeys Within Tour Company in response to guests and travelers desire to give back and make a difference. JWOC believes in its slogan, “See a Problem, Solve a Problem” and has been doing that for the last five years. More information can be found and donations can be made at [www.journeyswithinourcommunity.org](http://www.journeyswithinourcommunity.org) or you can contact Andrea at [andrea@journeyswithinourcommunity.org](mailto:andrea@journeyswithinourcommunity.org).