

ATHELSTONE

Struggles of poor spark love mission

CHARITY FOUNDER NOMINATED

Alyssa-Jane Tucker

A VISIT to an impoverished town in rural Cambodia three years ago changed Kristin Matzick's life.

What started out as a quick trip in 2011 turned into a mission to help the people.

"I wanted to help someone out because I don't have any children of my own so I started sponsoring children in Cambodia," Ms Matzick says.

"That prompted us (her and partner Geoffrey Adam) to head over there and we developed a close friendship with our guide, who wanted to be able to help his community, who were very poor.

"The poverty was really quite stark and we thought we had to help."

The Athelstone resident has returned nine times and last year founded Building Brighter Futures, a charity that aims to improve access to school for children in Cambodia.

Ms Matzick devotes about three days a week to the charity and is also helped by

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Geoffrey and her sister and brother-in-law Sue and Glen Winkler.

Building Brighter Futures enabled 77 children to attend school last year.

"One little boy that sticks out in my mind is a very bright Year 2 who couldn't attend school because his parents went to Thailand and never came back and he had to look after his invalid grandma," she says.

Ms Matzick's work has been recognised with a nomination for News Corp Australia's Pride of Australia Medal in the Community Spirit category.

But she says her work is far from done. She plans to work with other communities and start a program to help adults access education.

Finalists for this year's awards will be announced at the beginning of October.



Kristin Matzick, with partner Geoffrey Adam, has founded a charity for Cambodian children. Picture: GREGORY HIGGS