

Celebrate Good Times

2016 marks a special year for CHARLIE SCOTT and SHYLA MATTHEWS, co-founders of moving and relocation specialist **SIR Move**, who set up the company ten years ago. Here's how they'll be celebrating.



Charlie Scott
Founder and
Chief Executive
Officer




Shyla Mathews
Founder and
Chief Operating
Officer

From humble beginnings in 2006, Charlie and Shyla have now grown SIR Move into an award-winning moving and relocation business operating out of Singapore and now Malaysia. The company's "give back" policy has seen it support Cambodian orphanages for more than six years, and in addition to this it has recently published a children's charity book, *My First 7 Days in Singapore*.

To celebrate its decade of operations, SIR Move plans several months of gift-giving for customers booking a move. Each month, starting from February, customers will stand the chance of winning sponsored items such as a wrought-iron bed from Ni-Night, an Urban Fairways golf-membership voucher, a two-hour photo shoot with Photography by Azlida, and two Raymond Weil watches, to name a few.

To be eligible for a prize, customers need to book a move between February to May 2016, and complete the move by September 2016. They will then be automatically enrolled in the draw.

Services

SIR Move provides a host of different solutions for international, domestic and commercial moves, and a variety of services to choose from. Among these is Moveprep, which helps you plan and prepare for your move and introduces a systematic methodology applied to all of SIR Move's relocations. Then there's the Movepet service, for the furry friends in your life, and even Movedetox, aimed at helping new arrivals to Singapore, and particularly useful to those who need immediate reliable assistance with their children or other dependents. 

SIR Move Services
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6534 7345 | sirmove.com



A Moving Story

By Amy Brook-Partridge

It's great to have a company and to be able to help make a difference in what you offer people, and to get involved at a community level at the same time. We spoke with SHYLA MATTHEWS, co-founder and chief operating officer of **SIR Move**, about her company's philanthropic activity and some recent improvements to the business.

You've just returned from your annual trip to Cambodia to deliver a container to various charities. Tell us more.

That's right. We've actually been delivering these charity containers to Cambodia for five years now. This year, we shipped a 40-foot container full of gifts including toys and books, plus bigger items like cupboards and shelving units.

Once the container reaches Cambodia, our volunteers who have travelled there (including me!) help to unpack everything. We also take a handyman to assist with putting together any big pieces of furniture.

PROPERTY

Each year we work with an international school to get donations, and this year it was United World College South East Asia (UWCSEA). Ni-Night also runs a donation drive, which allows people to drop off listed products at its offices. So many amazing things were given this time; it meant we could set up a library and resources area in one of the schools, as well as a playroom.

We also donate to Cambodian-based non-profit NGO Green Umbrella, which needed bigger items such as bookshelves. We try to make sure that the products we are sending are relevant and actually needed.

What led you to this idea for giving back?

I adopted both my daughters, and that's one of the reasons we do so much charity work. Although my girls aren't from Cambodia – they're from Singapore and Malaysia – the cause itself is very close to my heart. This year I took my seven-year-old with me to Cambodia, as I felt it was important for her to see what we were doing and to get involved.

Apart from using the Sir Move services, how else can people help?

Well, the thought of publishing a book about settling into Singapore had been on my mind for years and years. This year I sourced seven Singaporean illustrators and one writer, and we created a book focusing on the kind of experiences you may have during your first week after moving here. To launch the book, *My First Seven Days in Singapore*, we carried out crowd-funding, which is really quite a new concept in Asia. We ran many different events, collected pledges and managed to raise \$30,000, which is amazing. The book is now sold for \$25, and all proceeds go towards our annual charity container.




Putting together a library and resource centre for the local children



You offer a wide variety of services around the central moving service. Tell us more about what's proving popular.

Move Prep has probably made the biggest difference, and a lot of our customers love it because it offers them an interface before they move. We realised that people need a reconfirmation of facts before moving day, to avoid any confusion. We have someone visit three to five days prior to the move to re-confirm what's been booked, explaining things like when the movers will have breaks, and asking which bathroom the movers can use. We find this works well to ensure that no one is surprised on moving day.

Move Detox is for our inbound customers. In the past, we have held welcoming brunches and worked with various partners in Singapore to help welcome newcomers and provide them with as many free services as we can.

We have also just opened a new office in Kuala Lumpur, which is exciting for us as we are now becoming regional. 

SIR Move
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Moving story of SIR's charity missions in Cambodia



Shyla Matthews recently returned from her latest trip to Cambodia, where she helped unpack a container of gifts to benefit various charities around the country.

Matthews, co-founder and CEO of FIDI Affiliate SIR Move, based in Singapore, has been making these aid trips for five years, while sales of a special

book – aimed at expats – have helped SIR's philanthropic work.

My First Seven Days in Singapore was supported by crowdfunding and was launched last year by SIR, which ran various events and collected pledges – all of which raised S\$30,000. The book features the work of seven Singaporean illustrators and a writer, and describes the kind of experiences that expats may have during their first week in Singapore. It sells for S\$25 and proceeds go to the annual charity container shipment.

Of the latest visit to Cambodia, Matthews said: 'We shipped a 40-foot container full of gifts, including toys and books, plus bigger items like cupboards and shelving units.'

'Once the container reaches Cambodia, our volunteers who have travelled there – including me – help to unpack everything. We also take a handyman to assist with putting together any big pieces of furniture.'

Matthews added: 'Each year we work with an international school to get donations, and, this year, it was United World College South East Asia. Children's bedroom furniture supplier Ni-Night also runs a donation drive, which allows people to drop off listed products at its offices.'

'So many amazing things were given this time; it meant we could set up a library and resources area in one of the schools,

as well as a playroom. We also donate to Cambodian-based non-profit NGO Green Umbrella, which needed bigger items, such as bookshelves. We try to make sure that the products we are sending are relevant and actually needed.'

Matthews, who runs SIR Move along with co-founder Charlie Scott, feels strongly drawn to philanthropic work, as she adopted both her daughters.

'Although my girls aren't from Cambodia – they're from Singapore and Malaysia – the cause itself is very close to my heart,' she said in a recent interview with *Expat Living*.

'This year I took my seven-year-old with me to Cambodia, as I felt it was important for her to see what we were doing and to get involved.'



YEAR OF THE GOAT MAKES A COLOURFUL DEBUT

UniGroup Relocation Singapore and Hong Kong celebrated the Lunar New Year with traditional flair this year.

It is the Chinese

custom, before the new year, for families to decorate their living rooms with vases of pretty blossoms, platters of oranges and

tangerines, and a candy tray with a variety of sweet, dried fruit.

Despite having eight dogs and five cats, Chad Forrest, general manager

of Asian Express Beijing, was able to take his first holiday during Chinese New Year for 12 years.

He explained: 'Because Chinese New Year (CNY) is such an important family holiday I have never liked to ask my maid if she would look after our pets during the new year.'

'However, I welcomed a son, Aaron, into the world in November. He is in Indonesia along with his mother, Ninik, and sister, Reevea.'

'This year as we approached CNY, my maid asked me if I was going to see them. She knew I missed them terribly and, by asking,



Happy holidays: Chad Forrest with his partner Ninik, daughter Reevea and son Aaron

she was volunteering to forgo her holiday to watch my animals.'

'I was very touched and was able to spend seven days in Indonesia with my family.'



Ducks In a Row



Have you ever struggled to excavate a piece of luggage from the depths of an over-flowing storeroom, or failed to locate a favourite magazine that has disappeared into the morass?


Tip 9. Receive any unwanted Christmas presents? Next year, if asked, opt for something that you will enjoy but that won't take up space, like movie tickets or a massage voucher.

by Georgia de Graaff

Tip 10. You're not finished yet! You need to declutter regularly for a healthy home. Diarise a date now for your next six-monthly declutter session.

Extra tip: Martha Stewart, whose linen closet has probably won awards, came up with this gem: store folded sheet sets inside one of the set's pillowcases.

De-cluttered and organised, you will now be ready if a move appears on the horizon. Some relocation companies offer extra services designed to take some of the stress out of a move. We like the sound of SIR Move Service's new service called MOVEPREP, which offers a methodical planning system. And we love the sound of MoveConcierge, which provides support in the form of personal touches such as tracking down your favourite coffee for that first cup in your new home and even minding children.

And, even if you aren't moving anywhere just yet, you will at least have room to breathe in the meantime. 

SIR Move Services is located at #03- 07, 9 Shenton Way. For more information call 6534 7345 or visit www.sirmove.com.

It is not surprising that a synonym of the word 'stuff' is 'impedimenta' which, as it suggests, means things that retard one's progress. Especially in households with children, the mountain of mess can reach Everest-like proportions. As an expat, the need to de-clutter is even greater, as so many of us are frequently on the move.

So, if your cupboards are crammed, your storerooms stuffed and your bureaus bursting, now's the time for a good old sort out. Check out these simple tips for de-cluttering your life.

Tip 1. Plan! Set aside a time to tackle the job – go on, pen it in!

Tip 2. Evaluate items. Do I (or we) love it? Do I (or we) need it? (Careful, we're not saying it's okay to throw out your husband's favourite Hawaiian shirt just because you think it's hideous.)

Tip 3. Start small. To avoid becoming overwhelmed, focus on one area at a time: the children's cupboards on Monday,

the medicine cabinet on Tuesday, etcetera, until you have de-cluttered the whole house.

Tip 4. Recycle. Don't hang on to bits of information that you can just as easily find on the internet. If you must have it, file it.

Tip 5. Give it away. Get your children involved; ask them to choose five toys or books that they would like to give to a child less fortunate and then donate the goods to a local school, church or charity.

Tip 6. Get organized. Place occasionally used items up high and frequently used items in more accessible places.

Tip 7. Maximise space. Use pull-out trays for under beds, labelled tubs for shelving or stacking, and zippered bags for winter clothes. (Visit IKEA for cheap and cheerful storage solutions.)

Tip 8. Only buy things that you really need or really love.





SIR
SIR Move Services
WORLDWIDE MOVING

**Complete
Move
Solutions**

65 6534 7345
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www.sirmove.com



PROFILE

SIR Move Services

SIR Move Services is acknowledged for entrepreneurship and service excellence

SIR Move Services (SIR) is the proud recipient of awards that recognise the top Business Leaders and Service providers in Singapore.

The year 2013 started off on a strong note. SIR received the Promising SME 500 award for its extraordinary contributions to Singapore's economy and business landscape. In the previous year, SIR was presented with the Circle of Excellence award for being one of Singapore's Top Ten Movers.

Now, in the seventh year of business, these validations are a great testament to all their efforts. Founders Charlie Scott and Shyla Mathews credit the growth and development of their company to their hardworking and loyal team, many of who have been with them since SIR's incorporation in 2006.

According to Chief Operating Officer and Founder, Shyla Mathews, "What is unique to SIR is the sum of our people and attention and commitment to each relocation. We focus on Quality and not Quantity which ensures personal contact with every customer".

One of SIR's complimentary services that customers have found extremely useful is MOVEPREP™. Be it a domestic or international relocation, MOVEPREP™ is a systematic methodology designed by SIR to help the customer plan and prepare for the move. This eliminates all the grey areas as a MOVEPLAN is generated for every relocation.

Another fast growing area of the company is MoveCorp™, which offers Move Consultancy, Management and Execution services to Corporations.



For more information please contact
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visit **www.sirmove.com**



Keeping her Cool

Moving house can be traumatic. Couple that with having a baby and you could have a recipe for disaster. **JILL BIRCH** meets Siobhan Cool, who tells us how she coped with her big move.

Nine months pregnant and bursting at the seams, Siobhan Cool was expecting to deliver her baby within days when she had to uproot her family across town, including her three-year-old son Harry. The term “nesting instinct” took on a new meaning for the Cools. Not only that, Siobhan was juggling her high-flying job as corporate counsel for a major airline.

“I’m no superwoman, I’m just crazy,” jokes Siobhan, as she calmly recalls events. It’s an obvious pun, but it must be said: she knows a thing or two about being Cool under pressure.

The move came as a surprise for the family, who were about to extend the lease on their condo after giving up on a house search. Then Siobhan and scientist husband Simon chanced upon their dream home, a beautiful new three-storey townhouse on Kismis Green, close to Simon’s workplace. They decided to move quickly before the baby was born.

“We moved just after Harry was born, and that was unsettling. So we decided it was better to move before Jack’s birth. I was apprehensive but resigned to it. I worried about how Harry would adapt and, of course, I was worried about how I would juggle everything.”

When moving company SIR gave them a quotation, Siobhan was impressed that the company’s concerns had not merely been about the move itself but the implications it would have for the family.

“They approached it from the angle of my personal logistics rather than the technical details. Their main interest was my son and how they could make the move as smooth as possible for the family. For instance, they would stop the heavy-duty work when it was Harry’s naptime, which was a big help.”



And heaven forbid if Siobhan tried to lift anything. Five burly men would appear and refuse to let her lift a finger, concerned perhaps that they might end up delivering more than a few boxes. “I think they were a bit worried I’d give birth there and then!” she laughs.

This latest upheaval clocks up three house moves since the Cools moved from Australia five years ago. Moving house, then, is something they know all about.

“I am always a bit sceptical when people wax lyrical about services, but I honestly can’t think of anything that went wrong or of anything I would ask them to do differently.”

Just a few days after settling into their new home, with boxes unpacked and photos in place, the Cools had an extra-special delivery. Little Jack was born, blissfully unaware of what had been happening behind the scenes. 🐾

For information, contact SIR Move Services on 6534 7345 or www.sirmove.com.

The Power of tWO

Singapore is known for being an easy place to turn business dreams into reality. But starting a business is just the beginning; making it flourish is another story. MONICA PITRELLI caught up with good friends, Shyla Mathews and Charlie Scott, to ask them how a business idea born from paper-napkin plans and a few bottles of Pinot morphed into one of Singapore's most reputable moving companies, SIR Move Services.

Shyla Mathews

I am Singaporean, the youngest of three, with a Malayalee father (from the Indian state of Kerala) and an Eurasian mother.

The idea for our business started when we realised our combined experience would be ideal for starting and managing a moving company with a specific objective – consistent, exceptional service.

I am the brains behind the marketing of SIR Move. I have consulted for major consumer brands and have set up different businesses, including a modern-ethnic fashion design company.

The philosophy of SIR Move is that moving is not just about household goods and personal effects; it is about people – the adults, the children and even their animal companions.

My advice to new business owners is always to be aware of your customer's needs. We approach the business of moving from the customer's perspective. For example, we started MOVEPREP to fill the gap between the moving survey and the move date. Come moving day, all loose ends are tied, and plans are in place to accommodate unusual situations, like the delivery of a baby – including the chance that Mum pops on moving day!

Charlie is the ideal business partner because, from a business perspective, he completes me. Our business relationship works fantastically because we complement each other's strengths and weaknesses. He has a special way with people and wins their trust with his personal integrity.



Charlie Scott

Aberdeen in Scotland is my hometown, but I have been living in Singapore for 28 years. I came here when I was 10 (*wink*).

One thing I wish I knew then that I know now is that Singapore is home. When I first arrived, I never knew how long I would be staying. I always thought I would be leaving the next year.

I am the brains behind the logistical side of SIR Move. I have been in the international relocations industry for over 25 years.

A professional milestone for me occurred when I took the jump from managing someone else's business to running my own.

One thing that I did not anticipate was how much of our business would be based on referrals. Singapore is a small island, and people talk. Since our goal is to be a quality mover, rather than going for quantity, these referrals reaffirm that our corporate culture of always putting the customer first is working.

In today's hectic business climate, it is imperative to provide the ultimate service experience. Our MoveConcierge service has been known to surprise clients with a bouquet of their favourite flowers, bring coffee from their favourite vendor, mind children during a move, schedule at-home massages or manicures and arrange time with a "local" to learn more about Singapore. If you want it, we aim to provide it.

Working with Shyla is very natural and easy. She brings the ideas, professionalism and perspective that make SIR relevant in the industry. 📞

For more information, visit www.sirmove.com or call 6534 7345.

For the Children

by Monica Pitrelli

Here's the story of how one conversation between two strangers affected the lives of hundreds of Cambodian children.

As Shyla Mathews shopped for children's furniture in Ni-Night's showroom, a canvas print of a strikingly beautiful young boy caught her eye. She asked Ni-Night's owner, Majella Skansebakken, about the remarkable image on the wall. "That is my son, Sorya," said Majella. "We adopted him from Cambodia five years ago."

As the two women talked, Shyla learned about Majella's efforts over the past eight years to improve the lives of Cambodian orphans. As the co-founder of SIR Move Services, Shyla immediately offered to lend a hand.

"Would you be able to send 50 kilograms of soccer uniforms to an orphanage in Phnom Penh?" Majella asked hopefully.

Shyla responded, "I was thinking more along the lines of filling a 20-foot container."

The Drive

As the two local businesswomen pooled their resources and reached out to friends, clients and colleagues, the first annual Cambodian Orphanage Donation drive was formed.


"Last year's drive was unbelievable!" says Shyla. "We received more support than we ever hoped for. In fact, instead of sending one 20-foot container, we sent *three*!"

Majella adds that sending materials into Cambodia can be a logistical nightmare. "But SIR Move never complained or asked for any money even though we went two containers over the original plan. They never let me down."

The Delivery

Shyla and her family personally delivered donations to Missionaries of Charity, an orphanage mainly for children who've lost their parents to AIDS. "The nuns we met were lively, warm and friendly," she says. "There were so few of them to do so much work. They actually asked the young boys to take a break while they unloaded the cartons themselves – and they are in their 50s. One nun was so happy that she simply couldn't stop giggling."

A second container was delivered to Sunrise Children's Village. "The children were so excited, yet they patiently waited while the items were unloaded. Each child received a toy, and afterwards they hugged us, held our hands and sang for us," recounts Shyla. "It was extremely emotional."

This year's donations will go to Sunrise Children's Village, Maryknoll, New Hope for Cambodian Children, and a mobile maternity clinic servicing remote villages. 

SIR Move Services specialises in domestic and international moves. For more information, call 6534 7345 or visit www.sirmove.com.



Please Donate!

New:

- Milk powder
- Muslin cloth for nappies
- Mosquito nets
- Personal products – toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, detergent, shampoo, lice combs and lice shampoo

Gently used (clean and in good condition):

- Clothes
- Baby items – slings, bottles, blankets
- Cooking utensils, Tupperware and other containers with airtight lids
- School supplies – English books, pencils, pencil cases, book-bags

For a complete list, go to:

http://sirmove.com/cambodia_orphanages_2010.html.

Between 1 and 31 March, donations can be dropped at the following locations and times:

Ni-Night
9 Margate Road (call Majella at 9829 7961)

92 Woodleigh Park (private home; call Irene at 9757 7705)
Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, 9am to 5pm

Expat Auctions
102F Pasir Panjang Road
Citilink Warehouse #05-11
Call Zoe at 8268 4114
Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 4.30pm