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VOLUNTEERS: Nayland College students, from left, Danielle Torr, 17, Catherine Cumpstone, 17, Trace Taylor, 16, Ashleigh Geddes, 17, and James Greenland, 17, with VSA fundraising wristbands from Cambodia.

Students to volunteer their time in Cambodia

A group of socially conscious Nayland College students is off to Cambodia tomorrow for two weeks of volunteer work.

The trip is the brainchild of teacher Mary Greenland's year 12 social studies class.

Mrs Greenland said last year's class had been learning about wars, genocide and land mines before studying Volunteer Services Abroad.

The students had been selling VSA fundraising bracelets for the past two years and were now taking their charity work one step further, she said.

The 15 students will visit the place in the Cambodian capital Phnom Penh where street kids make the bracelets. They will also visit schools to give conversational English lessons and donate books.

Mrs Greenland said the students had gained NCEA credits for raising money for the books.

During the visit, they were also going to help a non-profit group with

a water filtering system for Cambodian villages.

The trip is costing the students \$3500 each.

Nelson-based travel agency Gecko Trails, which specialises in "responsible tourism" group tours to southeast Asia, managed the trip for the students.

Tour leader Scott Burnett, of Gecko Trails, said the group would arrive in Bangkok, Thailand and travel overland to Cambodia so the students could experience going over the border and see the contrasting conditions in the two countries.

Sashi Eggers, 17, said she couldn't wait for the trip. She had been to Hawaii, Australia and California but never anywhere like Cambodia.

She said she was most excited about visiting the schools in Cambodia because she wanted to see their way of life and culture.

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