

The Sharing Foundation Newsletter

November 2011 · Helping to Care for Cambodia's Children · www.sharingfoundation.org

TSF Celebrates 2011 University Graduates



2011 university graduates. Front row: Soy Sovannthida, Srey Nita, Phong Sophy, Nuth Sunny. Back row: Thay Rotha, Pheng Chanphearom, Chhang Seka, Now Sokren

By Dan Shepard, Board Member

On a recent Sunday in October, over 120 of us gathered in the courtyard of the Roteang village school to celebrate the graduation of our 8 seniors from university. My wife Lee and I were honored to attend this special ceremony. What an amazing day for the graduating university students, their families, their community and all who support TSF and care about their work. Imagine a community gathering of graduates, families, current university students and former students, and TSF's leaders Elephant and Mom Sary. The day brought tears to our eyes. If any of us ever wondered if TSF is making a dif-

ference, let there be no doubt that we are changing lives!

The celebration opened with beautiful performances by the orphanage dancers, which included a blessing dance and coconut dance. The children were delighted that they were able to be a part of this event.

After these dances, we heard wonderful student speeches by two graduating seniors: Nuth Sunny and Thay Rotha. Both of them were poised and articulate (although they said they were nervous). They thanked TSF, their sponsors, their families, and also spoke about how their lives had changed, how they had worked

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The following sponsors supported these graduates throughout their college careers and many through high school as well. We sincerely thank them for their boundless generosity.

Srey Nita:	Allison Beason and Jeffrey Laprise of Windsor, CT
Nuth Sunny:	Robert Relinski of Portsmouth, NH
Pheng Chanphearom:	Dan Luoma of Medford, MA
Chhang Seka:	Heather Danton and Joe Travis of Taunton, MA
Thay Rotha:	The Walters Family of San Luis Obispo, CA
Phong Sophy:	Christ Church of Cambridge, MA
Now Sokren:	Richard Blouch of Jonestown, PA
Soy Sovannthida:	Stuart and Judi Deglin of Norwich, CT

Roteang Hit by Recent Flooding

By Sally Stokes

You may have read about the challenge the flooding in Thailand is presenting to the city of Bangkok. Cambodia, too, has been experiencing flooding from the downpours of the rainy season monsoons.

Fortunately, although the water flooded the area in the back of the orphanage, it did not rise high enough to force the children to the second

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TSF Students Rank Number One

By Sally Stokes

We are very proud that two of our TSF-sponsored college students were ranked number one in their majors for the second semester of college last year. As a result, these two students receive free tuition for the first semester of this year.



From left: Sam Putchai and Ram Sarom

Sam Putchai, a junior, ranked number one out of 269 students in Architecture. Throughout high school, Putchai always sent wonderfully detailed drawings of Khmer style buildings to his sponsors, Drs. David and Virginia Latham of Harvard, Massachusetts. Putchai is now studying architecture at Norton University in Phnom Penh.

Now a sophomore, Ran Sarom ranked number one of freshmen majoring in Information Technology at Norton University last semester. We and his long-time sponsor, Sharon Drake Real Estate of Bath, Maine, could not be more pleased with Sarom's strong start to his college education.



Gracie Johnston (center) and her daughter Teany (in back) with children Roteang Orphanage at the new playground in Phnom Penh

Gracie Johnston and her Daughter Teany Visit Cambodia

By Gracie Johnston, Board Member

In mid-July my daughter Teany and I travelled to Cambodia. Teany, 13, had not returned to Cambodia since she was adopted in 1999. Phnom Penh has new construction throughout the city, both commercial and tourism, whereas the country-side has seen little advancement.

When we arrived at the Roteang Orphanage, the 72 children were reading on the veranda, with a smile on each child's face. While at the orphanage, we attended a wonder-

ful performance of traditional Khmer dancing! The children performed three numbers with ease, beauty, and intense concentration. All were happy and proud in their traditional outfits.

Many afternoons the kids play soccer. Both Teany and I had fun playing a game with the boys and one with the girls. The games, played in bare feet (ouch!), were fast-paced and action-packed! The girls were much easier on us than the boys were.

The land we had leased for our Farm Project since 2004 has been

sold, so now we leased the adjacent five acres. The owner put in two wells and

two ponds. Soon the irrigation process will begin, including tilling the land and planting the crops. A new Khmer literacy school for the Farm Project children has already been built.

The English school classes are held at the village school, with eight classes from 5:30-6:30 pm, and another eight classes from 7:30-8:30 pm. Any child in the village may attend. Three teachers are university graduates, including a recent TSF-sponsored graduate. The kids were happy to be there and excited to learn English. We had conversations with a number of the students.

On a beautiful afternoon we took the orphanage kids to the new playground in Phnom Penh. The kids had an exciting time, and we all enjoyed ice cream cones after. The kids were appreciative and we all had a blast.

One evening we rewarded the TSF-sponsored university students who placed in the top 10% of their class with a dinner at the Boat Noodle restaurant in Phnom Penh. There was good food, laughter, and lots of fun. After dinner we attended a special performance of Cambodian shadow puppets and traditional Angkor dancing at Sovanna Phum.

While we were at the orphanage, staff workers from the One-on-One Cambodia dental program visited. They taught the kids the right way to brush and care for their teeth. Each received a new tooth brush and tooth paste. It was like they were all given a bright new toy.

What an experience to see firsthand all the Sharing Foundation is doing for the health and welfare of each child. I am honored to have had the opportunity to work with our projects in Cambodia and give back to the Foundation.



Orphanage children having fun at their own playground in Roteang Orphanage (above), and at the playground in Phnom Penh (right)



Adorable 10 Year Old Girl Needs a Sponsor

Rith Srey Touch, age 10, has been at Roteang Orphanage since she was a small baby. She arrived swollen, covered with rash, and barely responsive. We could not figure out what was wrong: over several days of blood tests and studies of kidneys, liver, etc., and with the only therapy



good nanny care, she gradually woke up, began to feed, and became a completely normal infant.

Searching for parents, we found that they had medicated her with 6 to 8 types of Cambodian medicines, and had been told by a fortuneteller that she was cursed and would endanger them. The parents refused to have any contact at all, and disappeared.

Srey Touch is a very enthusiastic and verbal 4th grade student at the Roteang village school. She loves to dance, and participates in the traditional Khmer dance lessons at the orphanage. With many friends around at all times, she is, indeed, a very happy, healthy, normal little girl.

If you would like to sponsor Srey Touch, the cost is \$1,200 per year, which can be paid quarterly. This covers her food, clothing, medical care, her nanny, her school and the ancillary people who keep Roteang Orphanage and its programs in top condition. You will receive pictures of Srey Touch with an update four times a year, and perhaps a letter when her English permits.

For information, send email to: orphanage@sharingfoundation.org

Thanks to Claire and Rachel Torregiano for Helping TSF!

Twins Claire and Rachel Torregiano of Mendon, NY, have been busy raising money for The Sharing Foundation. During the summer, they ran a lemonade stand, which raised \$30. The girls then used that money to buy foam flip-flops for the Roteang Orphanage children.

A few months later, they hosted

their 12th birthday party. However, instead of asking for presents as most girls their age would have done, they requested donations for TSF, raising \$200 to help further the care and education of our disadvantaged kids in Cambodia.

Our hats are off to Claire and Rachel for their hard work, and generosity!



Claire and Rachel selling lemonade to support TSF

GRADUATES — CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

so hard, and learned so much. Rotha challenged the current students to continue their hard work.

When Elephant called each student to the front to receive a TSF diploma, he also asked their parents to join them. Imagine the smiles of pride we saw! Each of these families has had to sacrifice in the short term, having had to give up the much needed labor that this child could provide, to allow their child to attend university.

We are thrilled that once again all of the graduating seniors have found good jobs. Champhearom, who attended Institute for Foreign Languages (IFL), will be working for TSF in the English School. Seka, who also attended IFL, will be deputy director of the Asia International School. Other graduates have jobs with the Cambodian Red Cross, Australian Center for Education, Himawari Hotel, and a retail shop. In Phnom Penh, where the youth unemployment rate is over 20%, this is a great accomplishment.

Every graduate that we spoke to shared not only how proud they were of their new careers but also how important it was to be able to send money home to their families in the village. It is a cultural norm for them to take care of family and the graduates take pleasure in doing so.

TSF encourages all of the students to work hard at their studies. It also provides classes at Conversations with Foreigners to enhance English speaking skills. It has developed programs to help each student develop a CV (a resume) and complete an interviewing workshop which includes a video interview. Together, all of these increase the possibilities of success in a very difficult job market. On this day, we saw the culmination of much hard work, and the beginnings of new and successful careers.

No party can be complete without refreshments, so after the ceremony, everyone gathered around for pictures, sodas, and pastry treats. To all of you as supporters of TSF, we thank you for your contributions and hope you will continue your support. You have made an incredible difference in these students' lives.

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floor of "Mary Jane's House." It has, however, flooded the fields of our farm project, so that the farmers have been unable to work steadily since near the end of September.

These farmers are the poorest residents of Roteang village. Our farm project provides them with a small income, nutritious food for their families, and once a year, they earn a "dividend" from the sale of leftover vegetables in the market. Our only requirement of them is that they send their children to our Khmer Literacy School, a two-room thatched school near the fields.

So when the farmers are unable to work, it puts a real strain on them and on their families. We have decided, therefore, to allow them to pull from their future yearly dividend to provide enough food to see them through this period.

The good news is that the rains have begun to abate, and we're hoping the farmers might be able to begin anew in the fields this week.



High water flooding the fields near Roteang village

Where Your Money Does NOT Go

The Sharing Foundation has no paid American staff. No money is spent on executive pay, and board members are all volunteers. Many parents and other community members work hard selling crafts, helping with a concert, putting on a benefit evening, or helping their children with a fundraising project. We welcome anyone who is interested in volunteering alongside us.

The Sharing Foundation has no offices. We depend entirely on rent-free spaces in volunteers' homes. There are no paid fundraisers and no paid advertising campaigns. Our only administrative expenses are the required accounting and legal expenses and the printing of newsletters plus postage.

Our overhead is consistently less than 10 percent. 91 cents of every dollar raised goes directly to TSF programs in Cambodia: Roteang Orphanage, five different schools, the farm project, water projects, immunizations, and school uniforms.

If your organization is interested, a TSF board member would be proud to visit and talk with you, and show our DVD or give a compelling PowerPoint presentation.

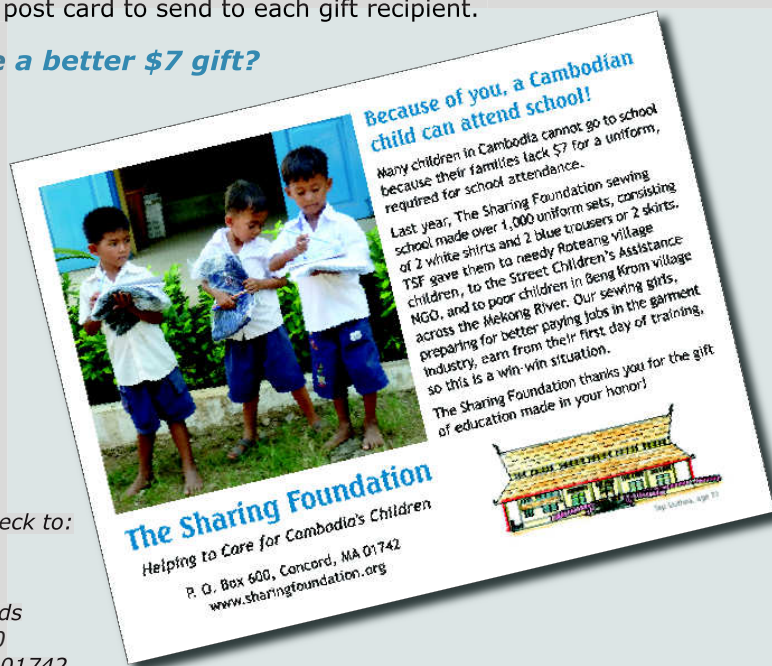
Thanks for helping us care for hundreds of disadvantaged children in Cambodia!

Can You Help The Sharing Foundation Send a Cambodian Child to School?

Many children in Cambodia do not go to school because their families lack \$7 for a uniform, required for school attendance. Every year, the Sharing Foundation sewing school makes over 1,000 uniform sets and gives them to needy children in Roteang village, in Beng Krom village across the Mekong River, and to the Street Children's Assistance NGO.

This holiday season, you can honor a special person, or a favorite teacher, with a donation of \$7 per uniform set. In return, you'll receive a post card to send to each gift recipient.

Is there a better \$7 gift?



Send your check to:

The Sharing Foundation

For: Post Cards

P. O. Box 600

Concord, MA 01742

Shadow Puppets Delight Orphanage Children

By Dan Luoma

While my girlfriend Sarin Sok and I were in Cambodia, we accompanied the children from Roteang Orphanage to Sovanna Phum, an organization that promotes Khmer arts in Phnom Penh. There we saw a traditional shadow puppet show involving intricate, carved leather puppets silhouetted against a backlit screen. Although I did not understand the Khmer being spoken, the silly voices of the characters and the fantastic puppets made for a very entertaining afternoon. The kids had a great time, and laughed throughout the performance.

After the show, the puppeteers brought the children behind the curtain in small groups to try animating the puppets in front of their classmates. They were then given a brief demonstration on how the leather puppets are created before being given a chance to try making puppets themselves. The afternoon outing ended with the children tak-



ing advantage of an open stage and a live band to perform traditional Khmer dances they have been learning. Sarin and I were both very impressed with the dancing, and were happy to see so many smiles. Overall, it was a great afternoon with a wonderful group of kids.

(Because the orphanage children spend a lot of time within the confines of the orphanage, we make it a practice to take some of them on outings when we're in Cambodia. These trips, which are always eagerly anticipated, expose the kids to the wider world and sometimes to the traditional arts of their own Khmer culture!)



Sarin Sok and Dan Luoma with Roteang Orphanage children at Sovanna Phum



Helping to Care for Cambodia's Children

The Sharing Foundation

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Concord, MA 01742

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Our Mission

The Sharing Foundation's mission is to help meet the physical, emotional, educational and medical needs of orphaned and seriously disadvantaged children in Cambodia. Our goal is to help prevent some of the problems associated with poverty by developing, in consultation with Cambodian community leaders, programs to improve the health and welfare of these children and their families.

The Sharing Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

The Sharing Foundation

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