The Sharing Foundation Newsletter

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TSF education launches three brothers as "rising stars"

Accomplished but humble, Ban Kosal (left) tries to suppress his wide smile as he stands shoulder to shoulder with younger brothers Chenda and Visey.

We'd like to introduce you to a remarkable young man from Roteang Village, Ban Kosal, who has been part of the TSF family since 2001 when he began studying in the English program. Since then, he has graduated from college, worked in finance, and recently earned a scholarship for post graduate studies in Australia. In addition, his brothers Visey and Chenda are shadowing his path. We asked Kosal about his experience and what follows is a tale of gratitude, accomplishment and the power of education.

How did you learn about TSF?

I was curious to learn English. It was free entry so I enrolled through my grade 5 teacher. My two brothers started in 2004 and 2011 and then all got sponsors in the TSF high school program.

Without TSF, we could not imagine how hard our life would be.... We might migrate to Thailand, Korea to obtain unskilled jobs.

What are you and your brothers doing now?

I began studying Economics at Australian National University in Australia in January 2017. Before that, I worked as National Economist at Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF) in Phnom Penh from April 2014 until October 2016. I will resume my work at MEF upon my return.

My younger brother is a junior student, studying Banking and Finance at Norton University. The youngest one just

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A reason to celebrate: a college graduating class—all with jobs!

By Lee Steppacher

Families, TSF alumni, admiring high school students, and supportive friends cheerfully crowded into the Roteang Orphanage computer room to honor our deserving 2016 college graduates. Eleven students graduated this year, increasing the TSF alumni group to 70!

Almost ten years ago, when the college program began, most students majored in either English or Hotel and Tourism. These were the skills that enabled them to get jobs, but as Cambodia continues to develop, so do job opportunities. This year's graduates had a variety of majors, including two who completed five-year engineering degrees! Other students majored in computer science, business and finance.

Most rewarding is that all of our graduates have secured meaningful work in their fields! One of the engineering students is an electrical designer for an engineering consulting firm. The information technology majors are working for a variety of companies and nonprofit organizations doing web design and technology support. One student has become the assistant to a dean at Norton University, and another works for a bank.

As proud as parents, orphanage pediatrician Dr. Ney and In-Country Director Elephant pose with ten of the eleven Sharing Foundation college graduates in 2016.

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Notes from the President

by Ann Trudeau

The nice thing about a small organization is the ability to get things done quickly and The Sharing Foundation is always working at top speed. That pace and your support allowed us to accomplish a great deal in 2016!

The "to do" list for TSF is generated from many sources. Our In-Country Director Elephant and visiting board members identify problems or areas that need improvement. In 2016, many of our projects focused on our orphanage kids, most of them now in their teens, and how best to meet their changing needs. They included:

- Purchasing a ping pong table;
- Interviewing the older teens for assessment purposes;
- Incorporating field trips;
- Teaching the kids to swim, drive a motor vehicle, and develop work-related skills, like welding;
- Utilizing professional training and support organizations in Cambodia.

We always consider the special needs of our orphanage kids a top priority. In 2016 we provided a custom stroller to Panha who has cerebral palsy, thanks to former board member Mary Beth Savage, and also specialized education, in coordination with Perkins School for the Blind, for Srey Leak, thanks to former board member Rick Recknagel.

It has been clear to all of the visiting board members that Elephant needed a new car. It took us over a year to convince him, but he finally bought a used Toyota van. He also used some capital funds to improve the water system for the orphanage.

Sometimes TSF undertakes projects based on board members' expertise or oversight of certain areas. An example last year would be the new libraries in operation under the direction of member Linda Clark and TSF friend and donor Mary Lou McColl. A fund for college graduates, to help them get settled in their new lives, was initiated by member Lee Steppacher and made possible by the generosity of the Zand family.

Many of our accomplishments were simply an expansion of what we have done well in the past. If we raise the funds and have the resources to expand our reach, then we will. Examples of this in 2016 were:

- Increasing the number of sponsored high school students;
- Finding a new dorm for our university students;
- Beginning the survey for immunizations in Prek Char village;
- Building two playgrounds, one in Lvea Sor sponsored by Emma Savage, and the other in Kampong Speu funded by David Boardman.

Of course we don't start new projects or expand unless our current projects are in good shape. Maintenance is an ongoing issue that is hard to raise money for but must be done. In 2016 maintenance projects included:

- Funding Roteang School repairs, completed by our friends from Australia;
- Renewing a lease for our farmland;
- Building new beds for the boys at the orphanage;
- Renovating bedrooms and bathrooms at the orphanage.

The process works in part because the board is doing their job well, but more importantly because we have a fantastic group of supporters and friends. I also have to acknowledge our administrator Laurie Simons who accomplishes so much in her part-time role that I wonder if she sleeps. In addition, we are fortunate to have a versatile and energetic administrator in Cambodia supported by wonderful staff. Despite the 8,700-mile separation, we work well with them to fulfill our mission and to make the most of your support, for the benefit of so many young people and their families in Cambodia. □

The annual birthday party grows, along with the kids

By Korey Lee

It was one of the best days of my life! A birthday party for 70 children at Roteang Orphanage! This annual event, begun when the kids were only infants, has always included a large, beautiful cake, and in more recent years, their beautiful dance presentation. This year, with the kids again a little older, they delighted in various methods of bubble blowing, tie-dyeing T-shirts (left), creative uses of shaving cream (right), and wild whacking at a piñata. Did I mention 70 kids? This assignment is not recommended for the faint of heart, but I love being a TSF board member! □

Meet Peng Ron, longtime master of the buildings, and more...

By Laurie Simons

Peng Ron is the Facilities Manager for the Roteang Orphanage and began his career with TSF approximately 17 years ago. However, as you will learn, his role extends well beyond that.

Peng Ron started out doing general maintenance for the Orphanage and is both a plumber and electrician. Over the last few years, he has helped TSF build libraries and water towers, as well as supervised classroom renovations in the village of Beng Krom. Peng Ron and his family live nearby so when something arises at the Orphanage that needs immediate attention, he appears on the scene quickly to offer assistance.

Last year, Peng Ron worked hard constructing new bathrooms and wooden beds for the orphanage. Also, after TSF rented a new dorm for our university students, Peng Ron whipped it into tip top shape. His current project is creating an outdoor basketball court at the orphanage since our soccer and volleyball fields are under water at least one season of the year. With boys making up two-thirds of the orphanage population, keeping them engaged in sporting activities is a good way to harness some of that excess energy! While our girls seem to prefer needlepoint, our hope is that they too will join in the fun!

Peng Ron also frequently wears the hat of a driver. He takes the university students to their Conversations with Foreigners classes during the week, and our orphanage kids to outings, such as doctors' appointments, field trips, and the like. He has proven to be a big help to Elephant, and to TSF in general.

Peng Ron greatly values the role he plays at the orphanage, and he is clearly viewed as an arbiter, mentor and friend.

When asked about his favorite part of the job, Peng Ron replied that it was doing construction and educating the children. He tells the kids to behave and be good to their nannies. Last year when we asked some of the older kids who they went to for advice, Peng Ron's name was a frequent reply. Many of them see him as their best friend.

Peng Ron is considered so much more than TSF's facility manager by the board, his colleagues, and most of all by the children. We are extremely grateful for his service over the years! □

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Laurie Simons is the TSF Coordinator.

A reason to celebrate: a college graduating class—all with jobs!

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The Sharing Foundation cannot underestimate the significance of this accomplishment, for the students, their families and hopefully their country. Parents used to resist having their children attend college because it took them away from the farm fields but now they see hope for better outcomes and support their children's continuing education. In return, most of the alumni are not only supporting themselves, but sending money home to their families.

We owe our deepest thanks to the TSF college sponsors, many of whom have supported their students since high school! They made a long-term commitment to these graduates, not only financially, but also to writing letters, encouraging them to study hard and succeed. TSF could not administer the college program without these generous donors.

TSF stays in touch with the college alums, many of whom are part of an active group. We know they will be our guiding lights as we work to carry the TSF mission into the future. □

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Lee Steppacher is a TSF board member.

The 2016 graduates and their sponsors are listed in the following table:

Graduate	Sponsors
Sao Kakada	Dan Breen and Jim Burnett
Chhem Vatey	Karlyn Curran
Thay Siela	Lisa Hicks and Elliot Swan
Soun Phann	Linda Medcraft
Nhean Kimhieng	Sydney Pierce
Man Sophay	Richard and Kathy Recknagel
Sok Ratana (Som Sreymom)	Jessica Straus and Nora Berson
Sum Sophara	John Hilsabeck
Pang Leakhena	Nancy Penhume
Khut Theara	Holly Taylor and Carl Renshaw, Santha Parke and Brooke Schnabel
Keo Savun	Beth Kanter and Walter Halvorsen

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passed his secondary school exam and starts grade 10 this year. Both of them are under the TSF Education Program.

Tell us about your parents.

They feel happy and proud. They never thought that we would get the education we have today. They have been doing subsistent farming since I was child. I could not imagine how hard they work to support me in primary school and high school. When I was in high school, our daily food were mostly noodle.

My two brothers are a bit luckier. My family is getting better and better with some financial support from my salary. Still, my family grows herbs to earn a living because my salary cannot cover all expenses. This earning can only improve some parts of our life here.

Personally, I feel so blessed that I can finish high school and university. That was a milestone of my life!

Our family is very fortunate by having two brothers under the TSF program. Needless to say, we become rising stars in our village. Whenever villagers meet our parents or us, most of them talk only about education. Most of my childhood friends did not graduate from general education (grade 12) and they all are married. This makes our parents feel very proud and blessed.

We don't hesitate to say, without TSF, our life would be miserable. Without TSF, we could not imagine how hard our life would be. We may have ended up with doing farming or construction workers. Or, we might migrate to Thailand, Korea to obtain unskilled jobs.

We grew up from the scratch, the rural poor family. Back then when I was a child, most of our daily activities were gambling, chit-chat with friends, aside from farming. Those activities cannot help improve anything in the future.

What are your hopes, plans for the future?

I have three plans. Firstly, upon my return from Australia, I want to resume my work at ministry by using my knowledge and experience to contribute a positive change within a system. Secondly, I plan to teach part-time at university. By doing this, I can share my experience with next generations. Last but not least, I plan to continue to volunteer in rural communities and also help manage TSF alumni, which will be a platform of graduates to share and nurture next generations.

My younger brother wants to work at National Bank of Cambodia when he graduates. The youngest brother wants to study Engineering at Institute of Technology in Cambodia. I hope they also can get scholarships to study abroad for their postgraduate studies.

Are there TSF adults that have had an impact on you?

I personally got inspired from Board of Directors of TSF. They always encouraged us to study hard whenever they visited. In the past, Dr. Nancy always called my name to talk to foreign guests and I always got compliment. It helped motivate me a lot, too, in term of speaking English. And at university, Uncle Chan Kim Leng, known as Uncle Elephant, often came to advise us. From his advice, I can keep myself on track and more determined.

Do you have any special or fun memories of TSF?

Yes, indeed. At university, I studied so hard because I was afraid of failure. I read Economics textbook every day and I copied several thick textbooks from library. The librarian knew me well. I got second place among all students in Development Economics Major for two years in a row. In addition, I was the 5th winner of writing competition on "The Future of my Country" at Norton University and the 3rd winner of writing competition on "Role of Youth in Extractive Industry" at Youth Resource Development Program. That was a time I felt so proud of my writing!

At a dorm, we cooked, ate and had fun together. Whenever there was a birthday, we always cooked delicious food and celebrated for one another. It was very joyful, although we faced challenges with our study assignments. We studied separately, but we also talked to each other. It was sometimes a fruitful discussion, but it can be somehow distracting. Anyway, we comprised and helped one another.

Personally, I feel so blessed that I can finish high school and university. That was a milestone of my life!

I will maintain my working hard. I believe that, with perseverance and persistence, we will achieve our dreams one day. I wish I make more accomplishments. □

In unison with his classmates, Ban Kosal tosses his mortarboard after Norton University ceremonies.

At long last, college students delight in new digs!

What's cooking? TSF President Ann Trudeau asks for a peek as Van Sovannary cooks supper in their new kitchen.

Fifteen TSF college students gladly pose in front of their new home near campus.

By Korey Lee

Half of our university students happily moved into a new TSF dormitory located in a quiet residential area in close proximity to Norton University and the Institute of Foreign Language. The new housing provides 16 of our students with a clean, safe place to live and an easy commute to classes.

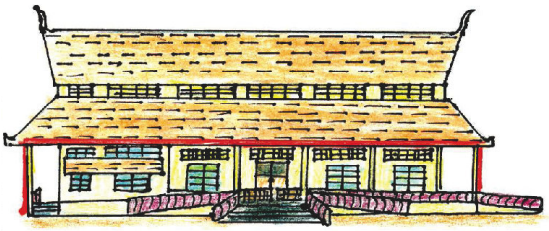
Elephant, our In-Country Director, looked high and low to find a suitable place willing to accommodate our young adults. Their new home would be equivalent to a condominium in the US, although we only rent the space. The entrance is large enough to contain the many bicycles and motor bikes the students use on a daily basis. Also on the ground floor is the beautiful, new kitchen, and then there are three floors, each with several bedrooms and a bathroom facility. On the grand tour, the students were visibly proud of their new home!

On every supervisory trip, TSF board members visit the two dormitories for a "meet and greet" with sponsored students. It is a great opportunity to get to know them better, and from these warm gatherings, friendships have been formed, fostered and continued even beyond graduation. We are fortunate to have these young adults as part of our extended TSF family! □

Korey Lee is a TSF board member.

Doing their share អរគុណ (aw koon) Thank you!

Thanks to the generosity of Tina Johnson, about 55 of our oldest kids from Roteang Orphanage made the trip to the National Palace in Phnom Penh this past November. They were able to learn firsthand about the royal family and see the gardens, historical friezes and sacred places there. Ice cream rounded out the day before they headed back to the village, enriched by all they had seen and done.



Helping to Care for Cambodia's Children

The Sharing Foundation

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These two young girls from the Farm Literacy School offer the Cambodian "sampeah," a sign of respect, and a way of saying thank you. We offer our Au Kuhn Ch'ran to our supporters for being faithful friends to the children of The Sharing Foundation. In-Country Director Elephant also expresses his deep appreciation to all who contribute so much for the children in Cambodia in a video posted on our website and Facebook page.

The Sharing Foundation

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