The Sharing Foundation Newsletter

Holidays 2013 · Helping to Care for Cambodia's Children · www.sharingfoundation.org

Crumbling classrooms need rebuilding

The sign on the crumbling school building means "danger, keep out" in any language.

by Sally Stokes, TSF President

The Sharing Foundation's English School classes have been held in the Roteang village school since 2001. During the typical school day, the village uses the three buildings on the campus to teach its elementary students. After school, TSF leads English classes in the same buildings. Unfortunately, there is now a school building in an extremely unstable condition and the village lacks the resources to rebuild it.

One classroom in the building has not been used for some time because of the danger that it could collapse.

The English School is one of our most valued programs, serving 450 students grades 5 through 12. The young people voluntarily come to classes five evenings a week, all year round, after their regular school day, to learn English. They do this because they know that the ability to speak and understand English will enable them to procure much better employment than they might otherwise obtain.

Our English School has thrived and continually improved under the direction of Mam Sary, its head. The students are working hard, scoring well on standardized tests, and continuing their educations. Three of our current English teachers were once our own sponsored students in the school, graduated from the Institute for Foreign Language of the Royal University of Phnom Penh, the most prestigious university in Cambodia.

TSF has always contributed to the physical upkeep of the Roteang Village school buildings and grounds in exchange for the use of its facilities. Normally, this is a small yearly expense, covering painting and the replacement of desks or rotting shutters. However, back in 2004, TSF replaced one of the three school buildings because it was collapsing and unusable. We now find ourselves in a similar situation.

The school building in question houses four classrooms and is buckling as a result of rotting framework. Newer buildings in Cambodia are constructed with steel frameworks, but the older ones, like this school building, were built with wooden beams. Over time, those beams have rotted because the stucco they abut remains damp in the wet Cambodian climate.

The Sharing Foundation's main goal for the coming year is to replace the collapsing building in the Roteang village school.

If you would like to learn more, and help us advance education in rural Cambodia, please email Sally Stokes at sstokes@sharingfoundation.org.

One classroom in the building, that closest to the main road, has not been used for some time because of the danger that it might collapse. There are large cracks in the walls through which sunlight enters from the outside. That room is currently used only for storage.

To get a better sense of the issue, we invited Mr. Huk, the architect who built our orphanage buildings, to give us his opinion of the building structure. He reported that not only could the classroom on the end collapse, but there's a real danger that such an event could bring down the classroom next to it, which is currently in use. Because the same degradation will happen to the rest of the building over time, Mr. Huk recommended that the entire building be torn down and rebuilt using steel framework.

The architect also suggested creating symmetry with the building opposite it on the small campus by changing the alignment of the new building and adding one classroom. Along with replacing the room being used for storage, that would mean two new classrooms, allowing both the village and TSF to expand the number of students they can serve. □

Cracks in the wall are clearly visible from inside.

Notes from the President

by Sally Stokes

At this time of year, we try to pause from the frenzied pace of our daily lives, reflect on our blessings, and look forward to the bright possibilities in a new year. To you, our extended family and friends, we thank you for all that you have helped us to accomplish this year. Many good things have happened in Cambodia, and we have much to be grateful for.

Except for a small bout of conjunctivitis, our 70 children at the orphanage, approximately one third with some sort of physical impairment, remained healthy and active throughout the year.

During the rainy season, although much of the Cambodian countryside was flooded, water never reached our orphanage buildings and our farmers were able to continue working.

In a test of Cambodia's democratic resilience, contested elections took place this year and, for the most part, the country remained thankfully calm.

A large donation from Tom and Ann Bates allowed us to complete the Diptheria, Tetanus, Pertussis and Hepatitis B immunizations for all children in Beng Krom village so they will be protected from these disabling and potentially fatal diseases. Another donation from Ellen Ives and Colleen Johnson allowed us to do "catch-up" immunizations of the new children of Roteang village and Kampong Speu Orphanage.

The St. Paul Lutheran School raised enough money to furnish our girls' dormitory, Mary Jane's House, and another donor designated the boys' dorm so that all of our older children can sleep in a bed.

Special fundraising allowed us to build the Beng Krom playground, replace the Roteang village equipment, and refurbish the swing set and basketball hoops at the Kampong Speu orphanage to provide thousands of children with some fun, as well as physical exercise.

Looking forward to the coming year, the Bates family has again generously stepped forward and in January, we will begin immunizations of all children in the impoverished Lvea Sor village.

The Lutheran School has already completed another fundraiser, and we will begin working with them on a new project.

One great challenge in the new year will be to raise the funds needed to replace the crumbling Roteang school building. We will be diligent in that effort so that, in the future, more of the village children will be educated in a safe, secure environment.

Because of you, all of the TSF projects will continue. We thank you for opening up your hearts and contributing to the well being of so many disadvantaged Cambodian children. □

Koh Sinob wants to study engineering.

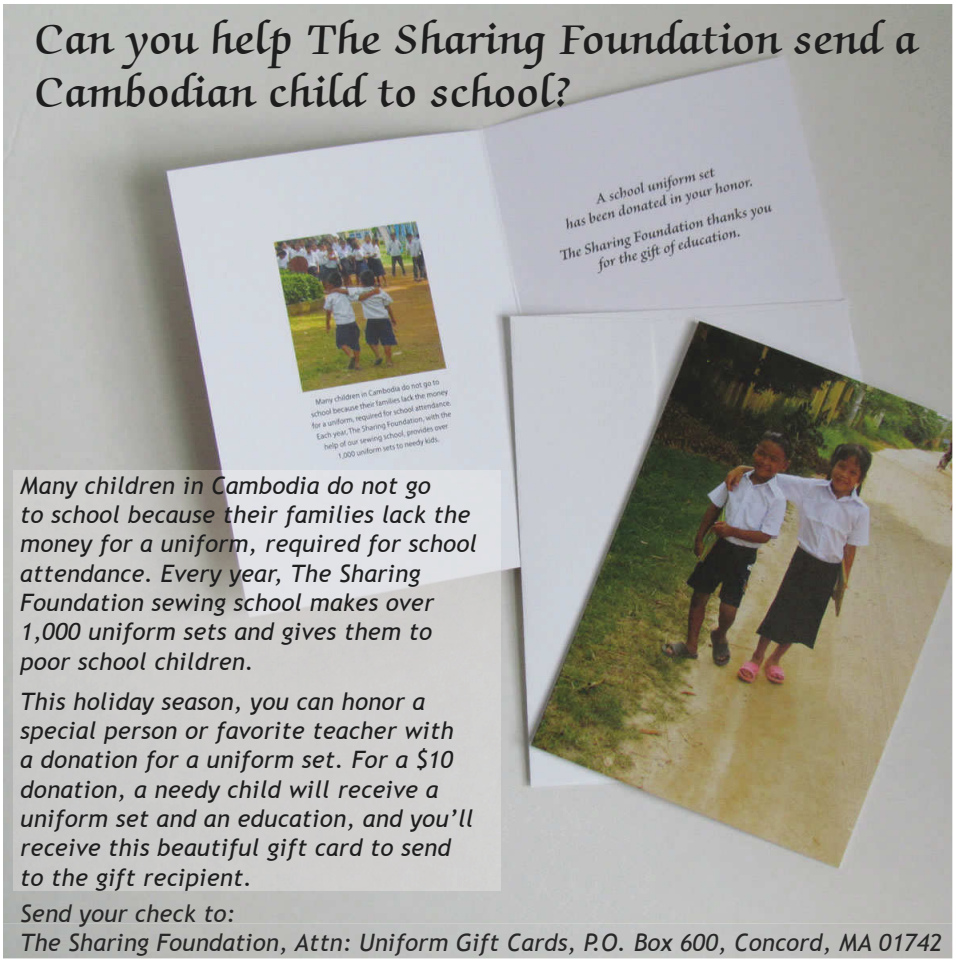
Sinob needs a sponsor to become an engineer

Koh Sinob, 18 years old, is looking for a sponsor so that she can attend university. Sinob scored very well on the national high school examination as well as on the ACE (Australian Center for Education) English exam. She is interested in studying civil engineering at Norton University, and loves the idea of building things. This is a five-year program, which we allow only those students who score high on the national exam to enter.

Sinob has been attending TSF's English school for a number of years, although she was not sponsored by TSF. Because we have an opening and Sinob is such an outstanding student, we would like to help her become an engineer, if we can find her a sponsor.

The cost to sponsor Sinob for one year is $1,000, which covers most of her tuition, room, board, uniforms, medical needs, transportation and additional English exams. (A bargain compared to US college costs!) The college students communicate regularly with their sponsors and share their progress. If you would like to sponsor Sinob, please contact Lee Steppacher at college@sharingfoundation.org. □

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 the money for a uniform, required for school attendance. Every year, The Sharing Foundation sewing school makes over 1,000 uniform sets and gives them to poor school children.

This holiday season, you can honor a special person or favorite teacher with a donation for a uniform set. For a $10 donation, a needy child will receive a uniform set and an education, and you'll receive this beautiful gift card to send to the gift recipient.

Send your check to:
The Sharing Foundation, Attn: Uniform Gift Cards, P.O. Box 600, Concord, MA 01742

A trip topped by spaghetti

Korey Lee can barely stand the heat in the kitchen while cooking spaghetti with Tep Vuthea.

by Korey Lee, TSF board member

The thing I love most about visiting the Roteang Orphanage is that it's like going to a friend's home. Upon arrival, I am greeted by lots of happy children, friendly nannies and attentive staff. I am also reminded, once again, how fortunate we are to have such wonderful people caring for our kids.

A new addition to the team this fall was a delightful young adult, Houston Warren from Washington state, who was spending part of his gap year at our orphanage before he enters college. At the TSF English School evening classes, Houston aimed to improve the students' ability to understand a native English speaker. While there, he also identified some of the orphanage children who were struggling with the language and provided them with the extra help they needed. A bright, likeable guy, Houston got along well with the nannies and other staff, and seemed to enjoy his "pied piper" effect of drawing 20 boys along with him everywhere he went, even while shaving!

A SMALLER FARM, A LARGER SCHOOL

Unfortunately, we had to again move our farm project and Khmer Literacy School to a new location in Roteang village because the land we had been renting was sold. We have now rented a smaller piece of land, more appropriate to the smaller number of workers who are available to farm the land. We brought in a number of truckloads of dirt to fill some ditches on the property, and built a new farm literacy school there. This time, the school was constructed totally with thatch, eliminating the metal roof, so it will be cooler for the students and teachers.

Houston Warren and Piseth.

Our agreement with the farmers is that we will employ one member of their family, and they must bring their children to the literacy school. In reality, many more students attend the literacy school than the children of our farmers. The new school is built to serve over 140 children of various ages during three different sessions in each school day. The goal of the school is to provide Khmer literacy skills for students who are eager to learn but unable to attend the village school.

While we had been somewhat concerned that we might not be able to attract enough students to this new location, once again, the classrooms were full in September.

The new farm project Khmer Literacy School.

ON TOP OF SPAGHETTI...

There is always time to have some fun with the kids at the orphanage; and what could be more fun than sharing with them the original happy meal, spaghetti. Sally Stokes and I did some shopping at the Lucky Market in Phnom Penh and headed back to the orphanage with 11 pounds of spaghetti, a dozen cans of sauce, two entire bulbs of garlic, eight onions, 50 loaves of bread and enough ground pork to feed a small army.

Preparing this dinner was a challenge. We took over the orphanage kitchen, filled it with steam, the young and the old, gratefully accepted some help from the curious staff, and somehow avoided heat stroke while working over the steaming pots in the Cambodian heat. The end result was worth the wait. With only three forks in the entire orphanage, the kids eagerly ate their meal with big spoons, chopsticks and even their fingers. It was a delight to watch these kids slurp their first spaghetti and wear it proudly!

Head nanny Sina enjoys her spaghetti with chopsticks.

SINCERE PRIDE AND GRATITUDE

Always a highlight, this year we had seven college graduates and the rain did not stop their families and other villagers from attending the ceremony.

One mother in particular was filled with joy and her smile beamed with pride. She and her son, Roueng Borey, used to live on the side of the road. Now, equipped with an education and a good job, Borey was able to obtain a loan to buy them a home. In a long letter of thanks to his sponsors, he writes, "I would say that I would achieve nothing without you. You always give me hope, encouragement, motivation and advice… I promise I will share all of my achievements and knowledge… to create a sustainable development for my country, as your country, USA. I am sad because I stop being your sponsored child… I am happy because I can be independent to lead my own life." □

Cambodian children delight in treats from visitors and TSF board members

Clockwise from top left: Prak Srey Neth, 5, proudly wears her first spaghetti dinner.

Elephant helps Telden Lopes-Lotufo of Arlington, MA, carry apples, an exotic treat, to the children.

Telden mesmerizes the Orphanage kids as she fashions balloon animals for them.

Kiry Bates of Atlanta, GA, distributes pencils and notepads to kids at the Farm Project Khmer Literacy School.

Kyle Bates of Atlanta, GA, gives the Orphanage boys a few soccer pointers.

Andi Leach of Galeton, PA, brought frisbees for the Orphanage kids to enjoy.

TSF celebrates five years of university graduates!

Thanks to the generosity of our sponsors, TSF honors its fifth class of university graduates. We now have 39 students who have successfully completed degree programs for the betterment of themselves, their families, and Cambodia.

Left to right, this year's graduates are Ath Vannak, Roeung Borey, Dim Sokban, Heng Sopheap, Born Sophen, Chea Borein, and Khon Sopheak. Their majors, employers, and sponsors are listed below.

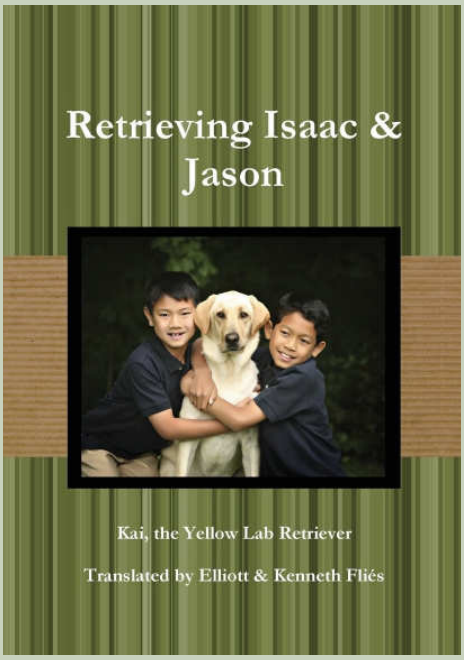
Graduate	Major	Employer	Sponsor
Ath Vannak	Information Technology	Soft-Solution SNS	Dan Shepard & Lee Steppacher of Concord, MA
Born Sophen	Hotel & Tourism	Cambodia Angkor Airlines	Susan & Jesse Goldstone of Fort Collins, CO
Chea Borein	Economics	Prime MF Micro-Finance LTD	Bob & Sue Huckman of South Yarmouth, MA
Dim Sokban	Civil Engineering	Peng Hout Company	Penny & Pete Kathan of Wolfeboro, NH
Heng Sopheap	Economics	Cellcard CamGSM (Mobitel)	Roy Privett of Cambridge, MA
Khon Sopheak	Economics	Cellcard CamGSM (Mobitel)	Judy MacInnis of Beverly, MA
Roeung Borey	Civil Engineering	Comenkhmer Co.	Anna & Jay Coffman of Corvallis, OR

Doing their share...

The Sharing Foundation donors demonstrate both inspiration and originality in the ways that they show their support.

The trek to build a family—through the eyes of a dog

Retrieving Isaac and Jason is a heart-warming tale of the adoption of two boys, one from Cambodia and one from Vietnam, written from the unique perspective of the family dog, Kai, and "translated" by their father Elliot Flies and grandfather Kenneth Flies.



One reviewer described the book as "a deeply personal and very human story of two dads adopting Asian boys, filtered through the pen, and point of view, of the most erudite Labrador Retriever punster to fill a page… Kai writes about her "pack" with unconditional love, lacing her story with joy and wit."

The book is available through the website of the author, Elliot Flies: **retrievingisaacandjason.com**. A portion of the book sale proceeds go to The Sharing Foundation.

Charlotte Rice raised money for TSF by recycling and pet sitting

"My Dad and I one day were talking about helping other people. He told me about The Sharing Foundation and I decided I wanted to raise money for them. First, me and my dad decided we would make duct tape boxes and have my class sell them, but that didn't work out. My next idea was to have lemonade stands but that wasn't earning very much money. Then I asked my mom if there were any jobs that I could do and she came up with the best idea ever! Ever since then, I've been doing my neighbor's recycling every other Monday and I also babysat my grandma's dog for about two weeks."

Charlotte Rice, of Ridgewood, NJ, earned enough, along with a triple match from her dad's employer, to sponsor a young girl at Roteang Orphanage for almost two years! She's looking forward to writing to Srun Sok Heng and getting to know her better.

Helping to Care for Cambodia's Children

The Sharing Foundation

P. O. Box 600, 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 – by the numbers

4	Wells TSF has installed
10	Large water collection systems TSF has installed
39	University graduates who were sponsored by TSF
55	Small water collection systems TSF has installed
72	Girls who have attended TSF's sewing school
86	University students sponsored by TSF
200	Babies given niviripine at birth by TSF to prevent HIV transmission from their mothers
300	Children who have lived at Roteang Orphanage
350	Children at Kampong Speu Orphanage served in kitchen and dining area provided by TSF
500	Students who have attended the Khmer literacy school
1,200	Students who have attended TSF's computer school
2,800	Students who have attended TSF's English program
3,200	Children immunized against Hepatitis B and DPT
13,500	School uniforms TSF has given out

The Sharing Foundation

P. O. Box 600, Concord, MA 01742
www.sharingfoundation.org
Email: info@sharingfoundation.org

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

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Newsletter edited by Mary Hult, Carlisle, MA
Newsletter designed and produced by
Bob Luoma, Carlisle, MA