

The Sharing Foundation Newsletter

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

A day in the life of a high school student: a testament to the dreams of education



Thai Kanika (right) and her mother in Roteang village

by Thai Kanika

My name is Thai Kanika, 18 years old. I live in Roteang Village. I am a student in grade 12 at Jayavarman VII High School. I have been a sponsored student in the TSF project since grade 9.

Nowadays, I always get up at 5 in the morning because I must cook food for my family and then memorize the lessons. My family and I eat rice with eggs and fish which can be found locally. After that, at 6:30, I have to leave for school by trailer which takes me about 20 minutes. My house is 7 kilometers [4 miles] from school.

I really appreciate TSF scholarship which gives me the chance to study from junior high school.

There are two shifts: morning and afternoon. This month I am taking the morning shift, four hours for public school, six days a week. There are a lot of students, so students are divided into separated classes. However, each class is still big with about 50 pupils.

We must get well dressed (white shirt and blue or black trousers for boys and skirt for girls). The size of my classroom is small, but beautiful with pictures and flowers. Due to the crowded class, it is difficult for teachers to assign group work; they just follow teacher-centered

approach. Moreover, students do not have chance to have discussion. As a result, we do not have good critical thinking and communication skills.

There are two main classes for students to choose from, such as science and social study classes. I have been in science class since grade 10. The subjects I am studying relate more to scientific fields, like mathematics, chemistry and physics, which takes more time than other subjects. After the school ends at 11 o'clock, I have lunch packed

from home with friends, sometimes in class and sometimes under trees. We talk about lessons we learned while eating. Usually we go to library after lunch break to read books and search for interesting documents. Some students don't like to go to the library because there are few books in addition to the textbooks provided by the school.

Certainly, my school has a chemistry laboratory built by Korean charity, but it doesn't have enough chemistry teachers. I hardly ever do experiments in the lab. There is also a computer lab next to it. I don't have time for computer class at public school, but I have been trained in Microsoft Word and Excel at the computer school of The Sharing Foundation instead.

From 1 o'clock in the afternoon, I go to private tutoring classes [sponsored by TSF] in front of the public school with other students. I spend one hour for mathematics, one hour for chemistry, another hour for physics and the last hour for Khmer literature. This class is smaller, so it is easy for students and teachers for discussion at which students have time to talk and share ideas. I have to return home at 5 o'clock when the trailer's driver awaits in front of the school with other students. I have a rest before going to the English class.

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Internship in Thailand: new horizons for college engineering student

by Pom Setha

The challenge of my new experience, my internship in Bangkok, Thailand, provided a great time to develop my knowledge of building construction, bridges, and roads. To begin with, I would like to express my gratitude to The Sharing Foundation which gives me the good chance to study Civil Engineering at Norton University. Being a fourth year student there, I received the short-term internship provided by the school for hard working students.

The experience I got from my internship in Bangkok will give me an advantage in Cambodia.

During my first travels, which took nearly a whole day by bus to Bangkok, I felt really excited about Thailand's infrastructure. Their roads, sky ways, skyscrapers, long-span bridges, and sky trains are complicated structures in the city. In Bangkok, the traffic congestion is everywhere and people rush to work in the morning.

Interestingly, staying with Thai students in the dormitory in Rangsit University, I had good communication with them as our cultures are quite similar. However, the most difficulty there is eating spicy food, which I found very hard getting used to. In addition to this,

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Civil engineering student Pom Setha

Notes from the President

by Sally Stokes

In our 15th year of operation, the members of The Sharing Foundation board have been spending some time assessing the work we have done over the years and determining where we go from here.

Featured in this summer newsletter, one of our most successful projects has been our educational sponsorship program. Begun nearly 10 years ago with sponsorship of a handful of Roteang village high school students, the program was designed to keep families from pulling their children out of school to work in the fields or to take care of younger children at home.

This fall we will proudly celebrate our fifth class of graduating university students.

Each year we select 10 ninth graders from the TSF English school for sponsorship. The cost of sponsorship, \$300 per year, covers "private" classes, required school uniforms, cost of transportation to and from school,

and necessary supplies. If, at the end of high school, the student can pass the national exam at a certain level and an English exam administered by the Australian Center for Education at a certain level, we will sponsor the student for university in Phnom Penh.

Our first group of university students in 2005 majored mostly in Hotel and Tourism or English, with one girl studying Information Technology. As Roteang village youth have become exposed to other professions, we now have students majoring in civil engineering, architecture, banking and finance, with one girl majoring in electrical engineering and one boy in medical school. This fall we will proudly celebrate our fifth class of graduating university students.

The essays in this newsletter are evidence of the hard work, dedication and enthusiasm our students have for learning. Their dreams of a life with horizons beyond the fields of Roteang village are made possible by the generosity of our donors and sponsors.



Older Roteang Orphanage kids (in the front row) now attend TSF English classes in the evenings at the village school.

Would you like to sponsor a Cambodian high school or college student?

The cost of sponsoring a high school student is \$300 per year, which covers "private" classes, uniforms, transportation to school and supplies. Sponsors are expected to write their students four times a year, and they will receive a beautifully written reply to each. If you are interested in sponsoring a high school student or would like to learn more, please email Kathy and Rick Recknagel at highschool@sharingfoundation.org.

The cost of sponsoring a college student is \$1,000 per year for a full sponsorship or \$500 for a half sponsorship. Close to impossible for the average Cambodian to afford, the cost of a year's tuition, room and board is about the same as an off-campus meal ticket in the US. If you are interested in sponsoring a college student or would like to learn more, please email Lee Steppacher at college@sharingfoundation.org.

A day in the life of a high school student

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I go to the TSF English school in Roteang Village at 6:15 p.m. by bike, taking me ten minutes, and the class starts at 6:30. I spend one hour a day, five days a week. It is different from public school because both teacher and students speak in English which improves my skills a lot. Students have a lot of group work, pair work, presentations under teacher's supervision. Other classmates are helpful and working hard. Students need to do homework for most of the lessons which is different from public school.

I arrive home at almost 8 o'clock. It is the time for dinner. We get together and eat dinner for 15 minutes, and then I do the washing up before watching TV for 15 minutes. No longer than this because my father doesn't allow me to watch TV a lot. I don't have my own bedroom, but I can spend two more hours at night to review the lessons I have learned and read the next lessons ahead. I don't have much free time, except Sunday and national holiday. I always help my parents with house work and especially farm work that is tiring.

I really appreciate and am thankful to TSF scholarship which gives me the chance to study from junior high school. Without it, I may have left school because there are many members in my family, so my parents can't support my study. Only my brothers can go to school. Furthermore, it helps me learn a lot. I can take this money for private class, buying school materials, and uniform. As a result, I have better grades than other students.

This scholarship doesn't help me only, but help other students in the village. Some students from the English school got sponsored and graduated from university. They can find jobs with good salary, and their family has no difficulties anymore, but students who didn't get scholarship, didn't make it to university because they are poor and not qualified to go to university. They make a living by farm work as their father.

In conclusion, I am very happy of being sponsored by the Sharing Foundation that makes my life change. Thanks for sponsoring me and I promise I work hard to go to university like others. I wish you healthy, happy, lucky.

Thai Kanika is sponsored by Marge and Kanha Stockford of Portland, ME, so she can attend tutorial classes at the high school.

Doing their share...

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

I was at the Roteang Orphanage

when I was a few months old, and I am so thankful for The Sharing Foundation and what they have done for me.

I started a fundraiser at my school in Palo Alto, CA to raise money for TSF because I wanted to give back and show how grateful I am. We sold a cookie and a bracelet to each person for \$2, and as a school we raised a total of \$580.

I hope to continue to raise money for the children of Cambodia every year, and would love to visit some day.

Lots of love, Sophie Fleming



Former Roteang Orphanage resident Sophie Fleming and friends have a ball raising funds for TSF children.

The Best Birthday Gift Ever!

If you've ever thought about fundraising for TSF, but were overwhelmed by the thought, listen up. I found the ultimate no-prep, no-cleanup, no-cost fundraiser. Forget beseeching, decorating, dressing up, hiring bands and caterers. No cupcakes to bake, pennies to wrap, or lemonade stand to tend.

Many of us have kids in the throes of pre-teen angst and it's getting harder for me to lasso a lipstick-obsessed 12-year-old into charity projects. (To my daughter Claire's credit, though, she did can and sell peaches last summer.)

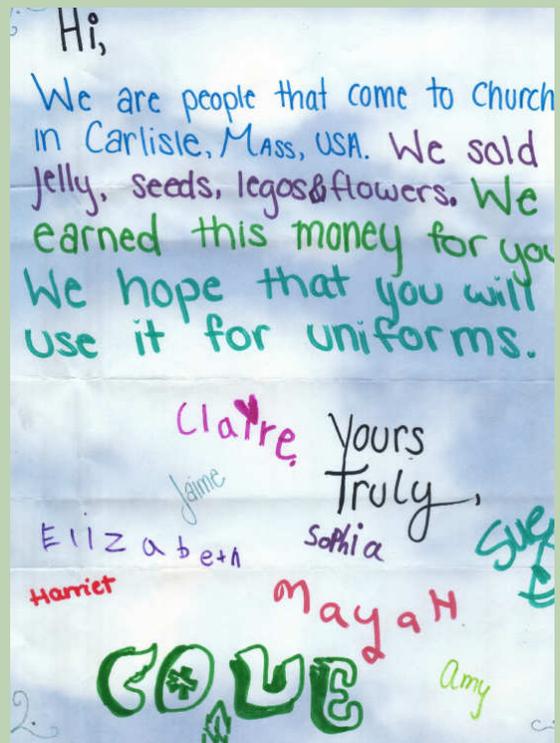
Then, an easy fundraising opportunity landed in my inbox. Causes.com, a portal for charitable giving, invited me to "Create a Birthday Wish". I filled

out the request in about 10 minutes, carefully wording the reason TSF is so relevant to our family. In response, Causes sent the wish to my Facebook friends, as well as another list I provided.

I set a goal of raising \$250, requesting \$5 from each friend. It didn't occur to me that we'd reach that goal. Over the next 10 days, we collected \$1,085!

It was the most gratifying birthday gift I ever received—simple and beautiful!

Amy Farges, New York, NY



Religious Education students, grades K through 2, at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Carlisle, MA sent this letter (right) to TSF about their project to raise funds for school uniforms.

Engineering internship in Thailand

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Thai students often prefer to speak Thai to English, so I learned to speak Thai a little bit, such as "Hello (Sawa dee krap)", "Thank you (Kob khun krap)", "How are you? (Khun sabai di mai?)", and other words and phrases.

Every morning during my internship, I learned a lot of techniques about computer software, introduced and guided by the professional engineers. In the afternoon, I practiced construction technology in the worksite nearby the school,

and tested the soil and concrete in the laboratory. Consequently, I have understood about how to collect data from the worksite and analyze it with computer software. The experience and knowledge I got from my internship in Bangkok will give me an advantage in applying that knowledge in using the materials and equipment which are commonly used in my country, Cambodia.

Hopefully, next time I will have another foreign internship to another country because I think that an internship is very important for me to boost up my capacity in my major. That would surely lead me

to get new experiences for applying for a good job.

In my opinion, Cambodian students have enough ability as students in other countries to show the world—if they have opportunities to study. Thank you for that opportunity.

Pom Setha has been sponsored by Laura Brewer of Fort Washington, PA, so he can attend Norton University in Phnom Penh. Laura previously sponsored his tutorial classes at Jayavarman VII High School and enjoys her regular correspondence with him.



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Helping to Care for Cambodia's Children

The Sharing Foundation

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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.



Does your organization or church in New England have a holiday season craft fair or boutique? We would love to bring and sell crafts made by our sewing school in Roteang village. If you have a venue, we will do most of the work (with your help) and our kids in Cambodia will benefit. For more information, email crafts@sharingfoundation.org. Thanks!

The Sharing Foundation

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

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