The Sharing Foundation Newsletter

Holidays 2015 · Helping to Care for Cambodia's Children · www.sharingfoundation.org

Anxious to see the sites, middle schoolers from Roteang Orphanage patiently pose at Angkor Wat during their first overnight field trip.

A first for the kids: traveling to Angkor Wat

by Colleen Gearns

On Thursday, August 13th I had the pleasure of accompanying 35 orphanage kids on their first overnight trip, to Siem Reap. The day started early, with a 5 a.m. departure, however it wasn't early for the many kids who had been up all night due to the excitement!

We piled into The Sharing Foundation bus and hit the road, arriving at Angkor Wat early in the afternoon. As many of you know, Angkor Wat is an extremely important cultural site for the Cambodian people. It is the largest religious monument in the world and therefore a source of immense pride for the people. It was amazing to watch our kids experience its grandeur firsthand. While entrance to the complex is free for all Cambodian citizens, most of them never get a chance to visit it. Illustrating this, of the nine adult staff members who traveled with us, only two had previously seen the sites.

After spending the afternoon exploring the Angkor Wat complex and climbing its tall towers, we set up an enormous picnic at the base of the temples. While the adults prepared the food, the kids had a blast running around by the lake and interacting with the other travelers. Many of the kids were tired from the long day, but that did not slow them down. There were lots of laughs, games, and practical jokes, just as you would expect from a group of 35 middle schoolers!

The Sharing Foundation plans to ensure that all orphanage kids have the opportunity to visit Angkor Wat once during their middle school years.

Elephant had packed the bus with fresh meats and vegetables that morning and the nannies cooked a delicious dinner over gas stoves that had been brought along as well. We feasted on the great lawn enjoying the summer night and watching the sunset.

Then, for the first time, the kids spent a night in a hotel, and thoroughly enjoyed playing in the pool there. On Friday, we arose early to explore Angkor Thom and a cultural park before returning to Roteang.

Watching the kids experience this important part of their cultural history was by far the highlight of my visit this summer. All of the kids were on their best behavior and all of them, as well as the staff, were extremely appreciative of this special trip.

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Warm connections, teen activity, and sunny skies abound at TSF event

by Deb Nelson & Laurie Simons

This September, on a lovely fall day, hundreds of TSF friends and supporters traveled to Concord for a warm and engaging Connect and Reconnect Event.

On Saturday evening a casual barbecue was held at the Trinitarian Congregational Church in Concord, thanks to Reverend Dr. John Lombard.

On Sunday, we gathered on the lawn of Bernadette and Michael Feeney's home in Concord, whose kindness and generosity made the entire event possible. Over 325 people attended, including about 90 teenagers, most of whom had been adopted from Cambodia. The Feeneys provided a wide range of amusements, including a Euro-bungee, rock-climbing wall, air tattoo artist, and photo booth.

After a delicious lunch catered by Elephant Walk Restaurant, TSF President Ann Trudeau and Elephant outlined the scope of TSF projects and presented a vision for the future. Angkor Dance Troupe delighted the audience with their

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A challenge! The event activities, particularly for the kids, hit exactly the right note, according to one parent.

Notes from the President

by Ann Trudeau

Looking back over the year, I am struck by how quickly the time has passed. And yet, our team in Cambodia, led by Elephant and working with our Board of Directors, has accomplished a great deal.

Immunizations: The Sharing Foundation has completed the HPV immunizations for all of our female university students and orphanage girls. The boys are next in line, but the vaccine is not yet easily available for them. In addition to the villages we have immunized in the past, the village of Sambour, with 675 children, received three rounds of vaccinations this year. Immunizations are one of our more costly projects, at about $35 per child in a village with 1,000 children. However, health is a top priority for the foundation and we will continue to expand in this area as funds permit.

Special Needs: Board member Rick Recknagel coordinated with Perkins School for the Blind in Massachusetts to obtain assistance for our young blind orphan, Srey Leak. As a result,we hope to fund a group of specialists from Vietnam who would be at the orphanage for four days to evaluate her and provide specialized training for our orphanage staff. Former board member Mary Beth Savage has been working with Rick to oversee the manufacture of a special wheel chair for Horn Panha, a smiley, young fellow with cerebral palsy. These are just two of our children who need a little extra help; the foundation strives to meet the unique needs of each child at the orphanage, whether gifted or challenged.

Construction: This year, TSF built a bathroom for the remote village of Prek Char, as well as repaired school building gutters and provided water tanks for two other poor villages. As always, we maintain the road in our home village of Roteang.

Combined with our current Roteang teens, we have almost 1,000 high school students attending English classes every night!

Orphanage: Our orphans have a television set now, used once or twice a week for movie night and government-recommended television shows. The kids also do chores and receive an allowance. In August, 35 of our middle schoolers went on our first ever overnight field trip, traveling in our new bus to Angkor Wat. Our orphans are starting to sound a bit more like US kids. We remain committed to raising them to be happy, healthy Cambodians who respect those around them and appreciate their own culture as their world view expands.

Education: The foundation continues to evaluate and improve all of our educational programs. Preschool, first and second grade levels are taught at the orphanage. We also teach English to all of our kids there. There are over 40 sponsored high school students on track to attend university, and we recently increased that number to 42. Now, over 30 young adults live in our university dorms, including Tep Vuthea who attends medical school. Our biggest area of expansion for 2015 has been the English Program. We started a program in the village of Beng Krom where almost 500 students attend classes. Combined with our current Roteang teens, we have almost 1,000 high school students attending English classes every night! We also teach computer classes to hundreds of kids so they will have the skills necessary for today's world.

Our staff in Cambodia continues to be the strength of our organization. Many thanks go to them, our dedicated board members, and most importantly, our many generous supporters for making all of these accomplishments possible. □

Traveling to Angkor Wat

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Looking to the future, the Sharing Foundation plans to ensure that all orphanage kids have the opportunity to visit Angkor Wat once during their middle school years. This is another step in our commitment to providing these youth with an understanding and appreciation of their Cambodian heritage.

It was a great inaugural trip where the kids formed memories that will last them a lifetime — I know I did.

Special thanks go to Denise Gosch and Tina and Dan Johnson for making this first field trip a reality. □

Colleen Gearns is a Sharing Foundation board member.

Splashing around a hotel pool was another first for the middle schoolers in Siem Reap — and it was the perfect end to a day of touring.

Warm connections, teen activity, and sunny skies abound at TSF event

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performances, and Cambodian-American author Seng Ty, who survived the Khmer Rouge, spoke about ways to converse with children about that painful history.

Although most of the teens did not know one another beforehand, many walked away with new friends and plans to stay in touch. Adults left with warm feelings about being part of an extended community with a shared commitment to Cambodian kids. Special thanks go to the Feeneys for sharing their home and giving TSF friends an afternoon to connect and remember. □

Deb Nelson is Vice-President of the TSF board and Laurie Simons is the Foundation Coordinator.

Photos from top: The teens strike a tough stance to show off their tats — air-brushed tattoos, that is. In-Country Director Elephant and his wife Rotana reconnected with adoptive parent and hostess Bernadette Feeney at the festivities in Concord. Three young girls are delighted with their air-brushed tattoos. Happiness is a hug shared by two sisters, gladly displayed for the camera. Three TSF supporters enjoy a quiet moment to connect at the event.

Thanks for bringing these smiles to our kids in Cambodia!

Clockwise from top left: Orphanage boys hammer out a rhythm with the new Cambodian drums. While the boys play, the girls giggle and move to the beat. Three first graders are all smiles in their colorful orphanage classroom. Orphanage boys read their letters from US sponsors with Pen Rom's assistance. There's both focus and fun to be had in the farm school classroom. Boys reap the bounty from their vegetable garden at the TSF farm project.

College graduates rise from a circle of support

by Lee Steppacher

It truly does take a village! That is why we host a village celebration for the university graduates each year. Yes, they get a formal diploma at Norton University; but in Roteang Village, family and friends join with The Sharing Foundation to honor the graduates in a more personal way.

This year, we paid tribute to four students. San Soroth, a graduate of the Institute for Foreign Languages, spoke to the gathering. He is a young man who suffered with polio as a child and perhaps was not able to help in the fields as much as was needed. His education has changed his life and provided an opportunity to support his family in a way he could not have imagined. His words are inspiring:

"First of all I would like to express my deep gratitude to my parents who have long been trying so hard in their life without any complaint to take care of me, motivating, encouraging, supporting me…. My parents are a critical indicator that helps me go on.

"Second of all, I would like to show my deep gratitude to The Sharing Foundation. I proudly view TSF as my second parents and my second home because TSF covers almost all the responsibilities like my parents do. Apart from motivation, taking care and advising me, TSF gives me two special and unforgettable gifts, which are life-changing experience and life-changing education that make me a useful member in society."

Sum Sreyrath, who graduated from Norton University with a degree in business, also spoke to the gathering. She came to us from Kampong Speu, a government orphanage, and had done so well on her national exams that TSF agreed to support her during her college years. The Kampong Speu orphanage, located west of Phnom Penh, has been supported by TSF in a variety of ways over the years.

The TSF university alumni took great pride in honoring the new grads and being a part of the ceremony. They provided beautiful flowers to each one, and honored them as if they were a part of their family. When the certificate was presented, not only was the student on stage, but so was In-Country Director Elephant, a TSF board member, representatives of the family, and a member of the alumni. It truly represented a full circle of support.

The morning ended with students vying to have their pictures taken with the graduates, now the local heroes.

What a great occasion it was: to honor the hard work of each graduate, to thank TSF donors who made it all possible, and to observe the hopes for the future in the eyes and smiles of everyone attending. □

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Lee Steppacher is the Sharing Foundation board member who oversees the college sponsorship program.

Our thanks go to the following sponsors whose generosity has enabled the opportunities these students now have:

Student	Job Title	Employer	Sponsor
San Soroth	Management Trainee	Reliance Worldwide International	Judy and Jay Healy
Sek Kanchna	Accountant	Cambodia Japan Agriculture Supporting Organization	Carol Easter, Albert & Jessica Hanneman
Sum Sereyratanak	Teacher Assistant	Cambodia Tomorrow	Barbara Zand
Sum Sreyrath	Bank Teller	Cambodia Public Bank	Caron Shake

TSF college graduates received bouquets from TSF alumni at the Roteang village ceremony in their honor.

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.

Share in Supporting our Kids

Would you like to make a special contribution? Consider these:

- Immunize a child in Prek Char village - $35
- Buy 150 copy books for TSF Farm School - $30
- Buy 1 of 4 computers for college dorm - $160
- Sponsor an orphan in Roteang - $1,200
- Sponsor an evaluation for our blind orphan - $1,600

If you would like to contribute in this way, contact info@sharingfoundation.org

Shopping online? Amazon will donate 0.5% of your purchases to TSF when you shop on AmazonSmile by using: http://smile.amazon.com/ch/01-0518534

The Sharing Foundation

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