

The Sharing Foundation Newsletter

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

New Roteang school building swings open its doors



Roteang Village students anxiously await entrance into their new school building.

by Uch Sas

Roteang School is one of the oldest schooling centers in Cambodia. It has been playing an important role in giving an opportunity to not only children in the village, but also the kids nearby to receive an education. Presently, there are 640 kids who are in the regular school and another 425 students are under the English Program. Roteang School consists of three buildings, all of which are being used by The Sharing Foundation. There are ten classrooms and two small libraries, one of which is for the English Program.

The whole school is maintained by The Sharing Foundation. The village is proud to continue the tradition of schooling in Roteang.

The original school was built in 1982. It was constructed by the villagers who had pulled down unused buildings from the Pol Pot regime. At that time, the school was actually naked. The roof was covered by coconut's leaves and the walls were seriously damaged. The students could have seen each other from class to class and they couldn't have come to class at all during raining season due to the fact that each classroom was totally covered by water. Seeing the increase in school enrollment and students' difficulties, the village leader,

the school committee, as well as the people in the village, worked really hard to raise funds in order to buy tiles, cement, dust and other things to get the school repaired. The school was gradually renovated until 1990, but that was done with a very low quality.

The oldest of those buildings remained in use until last year, except

Earning a medical degree en français

Tep Vuthea grew up in Roteang Orphanage, is fluent in Khmer and English, and he now attends medical school in French. In the last newsletter he expressed deep gratitude to his sponsor, TSF founder Dr. Nancy Hendrie, and now explains more about this new and challenging experience, an unusual path for an orphan from a poor village in Cambodia.

Where are you studying and in what language are your classes?

I study at University of Science and Health which is a university run by the government, located in Phnom Penh. This

We thank the many supporters who contributed to the new Roteang Village school building and its contents, particularly those who traveled to Cambodia in January 2014, saw the condition of the old building, and responded so generously.

for one hazardous classroom which became a store room. Because of its poor foundation and fragile construction, the building was damaged seriously. Some parts outside the building were cracked, while some parts inside were collapsed and decayed as well. In spite of such insecurity of the building, the kids didn't simply think how dangerous it was when they were inside the building. What they particularly needed was a place to study. So the children remained coming to school regularly and enjoyed their classes very much.

That crumbling school building was torn down last fall and replaced with a new one that was professionally constructed and donated by The Sharing Foundation. In December, the kids,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

university is mostly supported by the French, thus most of the professors teach in French. Right now there are a few teachers that teach in English, but

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



Tep Vuthea is all smiles during a brief break from his medical studies at the University of Health and Science.

Notes from the President

by Ann Trudeau

The highlight of my recent trip to Cambodia was the feeling of warm appreciation from the kids and staff for The Sharing Foundation, its donors, and their sponsors. In January, I met with the six high school students sponsored by TSF who failed the National Exam last spring and therefore, could not go on to University. When I asked Phann Sophy about his current situation and plans for the future, the most important thing he wanted me to know was how sorry he was for letting his sponsor down. And a number of sponsors have told me they've heard the same sentiment from their kids.

What is unfortunate is that these are competent students. All of them passed their English Exams, and it was revisions to the National Exam that caused so many students across the country to fail. In response, we introduced our students to the "Associate" college in Phnom Penh and encouraged them to attend. A few have chosen that path even though the expenses must be paid by their relatives or by working part-time. Phann Sophy preferred to stay in the English classes and re-take the National test this spring. Another student, whose circumstances were particularly difficult, needed our help to continue another year in high school so she too could re-take the test. As with kids in the United States, things don't always go as planned, but like parents, we support our kids and they have been enormously grateful.

On the university level, I met with

Sokroth, the head of our dorm, who conveyed the same sense of appreciation. "Are there any problems?" I always ask. "No, of course not" is always the answer. Imagine 20 college-aged kids living together, cooking for themselves in a small kitchen, sharing one computer, and claiming they have no problems. Instead, they want to thank me, a representative of The Sharing Foundation, for all they receive. And then they tear into the letters from their sponsors like small children opening their gifts.

We will also start providing immunizations this spring in Sambour, because we believe this is a good first step in helping a community to improve their lives.

In the poor village of Beng Krom, I was greeted by the entire school lined up in the courtyard singing thank you to The Sharing Foundation. I was there to check on the school building that TSF has renovated and it looks fabulous, especially compared to the one across the courtyard. We are grateful that the Trinity Congregational Church in Concord has already donated the funds to repair that building as well. While there, we handed out 2,000 copy books, thanks to a donation from a young TSF supporter, as well as uniforms and pencils. We have also started an English Program there, based on the Roteang model, and hired four

teachers, two married couples, who will receive training and supplies from Uch Sas, the head of our Roteang English Program. The honesty and dedication of the Principal at Beng Krom has enabled us to work well with the entire remote community. His gratitude is always displayed in his warm hand shake and smile.

Admittedly, none of the kids are thanking us for their new series of shots, part of our HPV immunization program started last year, but we know they will appreciate the protection from the virus for years to come. Our girls at the orphanage will be fully immunized by the summer and then we will begin vaccinating our university students. We will also start work in another underprivileged village, providing immunizations this spring in Sambour, because we believe this is a good first step in helping a community to improve their lives.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the friends of The Sharing Foundation, though I can't do it nearly as well as the youth in Cambodia. Thank you for trusting that the world can be a better place and working so hard to make it that way. I am grateful that together we are making a difference — and that it is so well appreciated. □



New Roteang school building opens

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

teachers and villagers were delighted to enter the five classrooms and also see new whiteboards, desks and chairs.

For regular school, there are eight classrooms being used for primary classes, the first grade to sixth grades, and another two are used for kindergarten. Regular school is divided into two sessions, the morning shift from 7 to 11 a.m., and the afternoon shift from 1 to 5 p.m.

For The Sharing Foundation's English Program, held after regular school, there are 16 classes and approximately 25 students in each class. The program is divided into the Young Learner Program (YLP) and General English Program (GEP). It is also divided into two sessions, the first from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. and the second from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. It is open for all the kids

ages 7 to 18, not only in Roteang, but also the kids in other villages. Some of them are 2 kilometers from the school.

The whole school is maintained by the staff from The Sharing Foundation. They always work on fixing the school, school's playground, electricity's system, and pure drinking water, also. The students are very grateful and the village is proud to continue the tradition of schooling in Roteang. Thank you. □



Roteang students are hard at work in their new classroom with improved ventilation and lighting, new desks, and a whiteboard.

Uch Sas is the head of The Sharing Foundation's English Program in Roteang Village.

Doing their share

អរគុណ (aw koon) Thank you!



For her Bat Mitzvah, Chenda Kaplan was pleased to raise funds for Khmer books and honor her native country.

Honoring her native country. The following letter is from Chenda Kaplan:

"I am very happy to send you the enclosed check for \$1,800 to cover the cost of Khmer books for the school children of Roteang Village. This money represents a percentage of what I received for my Bat Mitzvah. During the service I talked about my Cambodian heritage and how it is an important part of my story. I look forward to visiting Cambodia, and especially Roteang, very soon.

"On the day of my Bat Mitzvah, the skullcaps that are traditionally worn in a synagogue were made from Cambodian silk to honor my native country. Dr. Nancy kindly agreed to purchase the fabric on our behalf in the Russian Market when she was there. We are so grateful to her, and for everything she does for Cambodian children.

"I hope my contribution will be helpful." □

Every year, the First Church Unitarian Junior Youth Group in Littleton, MA

makes pies and cranberry sauce to sell before Thanksgiving to raise money for a charity of their choosing. This year, the Junior Youth Group decided to split the proceeds between a local and an international charity. To help



This Littleton youth group had fun working together, baking pies, and cooking up funds for the kids in Cambodia.

those abroad, the group selected The Sharing Foundation. One of their families has been sponsoring Cambodian students for the last six years and has shared letters from the students, as well as the TSF newsletter, with the group.

"The Cambodian students are so appreciative and work so hard. I see how I take things for granted sometimes," says one of the youth group members. "It's fun to cook together and nice to know we are raising money to help other kids our own age," says another member. □



In Country Director Elephant listens to book recommendations while English Program staff members, Mom, Uch Sas, and Daline focus on making wise choices with Chenda's gift.

Earning a medical degree en français

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

basically, they use French in school.

How long is your medical training?

I'm now in my fourth year, and I'm not sure that I will take four or five years more. That depends on what specialist I will choose. All of my studies since high school have been, and will continue to be, at University of Science and Health.

Are there any big differences between your Cambodian and French schooling?

Actually, there aren't any big differences, but I think the most difference is French language is not an easy language to learn, so in order to understand the lesson, we have to study French very hard.

Can you describe a typical day?

In the morning I have a training at Calmette Hospital for four hours, from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m. Then from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., I have a private French class. I almost don't have break for my lunch because my lecture class at USH starts at 1 p.m. and goes to 5 p.m.

Will you choose a specialty?

Of course I want to choose a specialty as a pediatrician, but we have to have to have an exam to get this.

What do you plan to do when you finish your training?

After I finish my training, I will come to help the Roteang Orphanage and my Cambodian people and provide them the well health care like other countries. □

Tep Vuthea began studying medicine at the university in 2011.



NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
CONCORD, MA 01742
PERMIT #70

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.

Looking for a great gift for a teacher?

...maybe someone you owe a lot to? Show what their gift of education means to you by paying it forward! In Cambodia, a child must wear a uniform to attend school. This cost can be prohibitive for some families. By purchasing a card (\$10 each or 3 for \$25) that buys a uniform set for a child, a world of opportunity becomes an exciting reality! For one or more cards, please send a check to: The Sharing Foundation, PO Box 600, Concord, MA 01742.



The Sharing Foundation

P. O. Box 600, Concord, MA 01742

www.sharingfoundation.org

Email: info@sharingfoundation.org

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

Board of Directors

President: Ann Trudeau, Concord, MA

Vice President: Deborah Nelson, Ipswich, MA

Secretary: Richard Recknagel, Bath, ME

Treasurer: Kat MacDonald, Lexington, MA

Ass't Treasurer: Jennifer Mendelsohn, Newton, MA

Chuck Bagnaschi, Carlisle, MA

Colleen Gearn, Garden City, NY

Gracie Johnston, South Portland, ME

Korey Lee, Branchville, NJ

Kathryn Recknagel, Bath, ME

Lee Steppacher, Concord, MA

Sally Stokes, Carlisle, MA

Founder: Nancy W. Hendrie M.D., Concord, MA

Foundation Coordinator: Laurie Simons, Newton, MA

Newsletter editorial staff: Mary Hult, Laurie Simons

Newsletter design and production: Bob Luoma