The Sharing Foundation Newsletter

www.sharingfoundation.org

CARING FOR CAMBODIA'S CHILDREN

SPRING 2022

Surseday Chnam Thmey

Lee Steppacher

Surseday Chnam Thmey: that's how you say Happy New Year in Khmer...and that's how you would greet people in mid-April when Khmer New Year is celebrated. This is one of the biggest national holidays in Cambodia, spanning three days in which businesses close and most people gather with family to participate in the festivities. Similar to other Cambodian holidays, the New Year combines tradition with religion and includes special foods and parties, as well as Buddhist ceremonies of thanks, honoring ancestors and recognizing the less fortunate.

Trot Dance with Kangcha, one of many traditional Cambodian New Years games | photo by Lyheng https://www.visit-angkor.org/blog/khmer-new-year-cambodia-traditional-games/

Each day of the holiday has a specific meaning and tradition. The first day, Moha Sangkren, is the welcoming of the new angels who come to care for the world for the year. To prepare for the angels, people clean every

Continued on page 4

TSF High School Exam

Marge Stockford

Every August since the TSF High School program began, a dozen or so TSF seniors—either RCC residents or sponsored students—have filed into a classroom and taken Cambodia's National High School Exam. This exam doesn't cover just one class or one subject or even one semester—the exam decides every student's future: a student must pass this test before being accepted into a Cambodian accredited university.

The exam has always been difficult but a few years ago, the Cambodian authorities revamped the test as well as the conditions under which it was given, making the test even more challenging. Two different tests are now offered—one focused on Science and one on Social Science, which gives students a choice. Simultaneously the Cambodian authorities revised the questions and discontinued the use of notes during test-taking, making it tougher to pass the test. Because of the test's importance and the challenge it offers, our TSF students study diligently for it, taking advantage of TSF-sponsored tutoring sessions and peer-led groups to prepare.

Of late, COVID has introduced its own disruptions. With school primarily online for the past two years, studying has been more challenging. However, seniors have gotten a lucky break each year: In 2020, the test was initially postponed, then cancelled, meaning each student could move on to university; in 2021, the test was delayed until December 27th, providing some extra study time.

Exam results have recently come in: ten of our thirteen TSF students passed, a nearly 80% success rate! Congratulations to all of them! (For those who didn't pass this time, we offer them another chance to take the test next year.)

Our students have one more milestone to achieve before entering university—they must pass the ACE (Australian Centre for Education) English test, which, happily, all of them did. As a result, we expect to have ten TSF college freshmen beginning school soon! Our investment in strong English language programming for our youth is paying off.

Congratulations
to our seniors!

80%

passed the rigorous High School Exam!

&

100%

passed the ACE (Australian Centre for Education) English test

We are so proud of all those who studied so hard and all those who are continuing to university—we look forward to seeing all they achieve in the years ahead. TSF

The Importance of a Community

The Sharing Foundation has had one goal throughout its history: to help disadvantaged children in Cambodia. That single goal has brought together many people to form our community of friends and donors. More than 20 years ago, Nancy Hendrie spearheaded the building of an orphanage and the delivery of medical care to children she had found suffering in Cambodia. With the support of Judy Jones and many friends and clients, she launched The Sharing Foundation, creating a community for children who had lost the care of their parents. Over time, several more TSF communities, connected to new TSF programs, sprouted, including our High School students, University students, alumnae group, and village school communities. Each of these groups, including our U.S.-based supporters that you are part of, have contributed to bringing positive change to our world.

Perhaps you are part of our community because you adopted a child from Cambodia, forming your own family unit. Or perhaps you learned about us through family or friends and decided to get involved. Whatever your reason for being here, on this page, we want to celebrate with you this summer at our *TSF Together Again* event. This gathering, on June 18th in Acton, MA, will allow us to share in our accomplishments, strengthen our community, and thank Nancy for laying our foundation. Nancy continues to inspire TSF with her dedication to our work and to the children she still supports in Cambodia; *Together Again* will be a special opportunity to celebrate Nancy's incredible contributions during her 90th birthday year.

If you are able to get to Acton in June, we want to see you. And whether we see you or not, we are grateful to all of you—our amazing friends, donors, and staff who all work to make life a little better for those born with a lot less. TSF

please join us for

TSF TOGETHER AGAIN

A gathering for the entire TSF community on

Saturday, June 18, 2022

Acorn Deck House | Acton, MA

We look forward to bringing together our sponsors, donors, adoptive families, and other supporters—all of those who believe so strongly in the TSF mission—to reconnect, talk, laugh, and celebrate all that TSF has done in support of Cambodia's children.

We will also have something else big to celebrate that day—the 90th birthday of TSF's founder, Nancy Hendrie! In addition, Elephant will travel from Cambodia to honor Nancy. Please come to say hi to Nancy, raise a glass in her honor, and hear her recount stories with Elephant of TSF's history.

We have a few other things in store: a Blessing Dance from a local Cambodian dance troupe, cornhole and other lawn games for the young adults, a silent auction including fantastic getaways, and Cambodian craft sales. You won't go hungry either—there will be lunch options from Bon Me, an Asian food truck, birthday cake, ice cream, and drinks!

Doors will open at 11:30 am with food and drink beginning at noon and the program kicking off at 1 pm.

Bring your family and friends and join us in being together again!

You can find registration info through our site: **sharingfoundation.org**
OR simply scan the QR code on your phone!

Underwriters Needed!

Would you like to be a part of Together Again but can't attend in person? Or perhaps you plan to attend and would also like to help underwrite our costs for the event, so that any proceeds go directly to help support the children. Please consider being an underwriter for the activities and essentials! We've already received underwriting support for the T-shirts and tote bags for sale at the event and we would love you to join those generous sponsors and be recognized in all of our event materials. If you choose, your underwriting help can remain anonymous.

If you're interested, please review the list below and let Laurie Simons (info@sharingfoundation.org) know what and how much you can support.

Blessing Dance (Dancers)	**$500 Honorarium**
Tent	**$3,500**
Comfort Stations (mobile bathrooms)	**$3,200**
Elephant's Transportation Costs	**$3,000**
Asian-themed Food Truck	**$6,000**
Audio-Visual Technician	**$2,000**
Ice Cream Truck	**$3,000**
Cambodian Musicians	**$1,000**
Security Detail	**$500**

Thanks for joining us in making Together Again a success!

Some events past...

Some photos from past events, to give you a little sneak peek of what you can expect in June!

Adoptee travel group (2002) renew their bonds of friendship

A beautiful day for activities enjoyed by our TSF friends in 2018

Catching up never gets old!

Thank You Friend!

We are so grateful to you, all the friends of TSF, for your generosity of both spirit and action—and never more so than in the month of December, when donations arrive in large waves. Opening the mail each week, seeing checks and notes from people, often who we have never met, is a humbling experience.

In this newsletter we give a special shout out to

Angela Conover

Angela and her late husband, Fred, have championed the children of TSF with more than **230 donations** to date, and she isn't done yet. We thank her for her unwavering support and love of our children.

Angela epitomizes the big hearts we know you all have for our kids, and a heartfelt thanks goes out to all of you too.

> They do such wonderful work for the children, and it just means so much to me to be able to help [the children].

NOTEWORTHY

Elephant purchased the much needed bus!

Thank you to all who made this a reality.

Beltei, the school our RCC children attend, currently holds in-person classes **three days a week**.

10 of our **13** students passed the National Exam and are university-bound!

Our TSF English Language school posts regularly on Facebook:

Thirty minute Powerpoint presentations developed by our students about Gender Inequality, Urbanization, and Peer Pressure are available for viewing on Facebook!

At this time, Norton University is offering online classes only so our students are studying at home rather than in the dorm.

Sponsor a High School Student!

We are thrilled to announce that we have accepted ten new students into the TSF high school program as freshmen! They are starting classes now and will soon be working with TSF teachers and peers in tutoring and study groups. We are excited for them to begin their journey in advanced education.

This wonderful news means we are also looking for sponsors to support these students in achieving their educational goals. Please consider sponsoring one of them as you will be changing a young person's life forever.

High School sponsorships cost $360 per year and involve quarterly letter-writing between the student and sponsor.

You can learn more about the program by reaching out to Marge Stockford at **mstockford2000@gmail.com**, or you can contact Laurie Simons at **info@sharingfoundation.org** to sign up as a sponsor.

Thank you in advance for your support of this crucial program.

Surseday Chnam Thmey

Continued from page 1

corner of their homes so the angel will feel welcome. Elders meditate, food is taken to the temples for the monks and traditional games are played. In more recent times, it has become an auspicious time for single men and women to date and find a mate! I am not sure why...but I hope it is successful!

On the second day, Vireak Vanabot, young members of the families give gifts to their parents and grandparents. Employees are given gifts from their companies and donations are made to those who are less fortunate. At the temples, lay people from the community ask for blessings from the monks for happiness through the coming year.

The third and last day of celebrations is called Leung Sakk and this is the day that the calendar for the new year begins. On April 16th, the year 2022 will begin! Families return to the temple in the morning of this day to build a mountain of sand and be blessed again by the monks. In the evening there is a final ceremony in which a 'special bath' is given to the Buddha statues, spirit houses and elders as a way of apologizing and washing away any wrong doings from the previous year. The children especially like this tradition because it is an opportunity to play and spray others with water! It is really hot in April in Cambodia so I imagine that this is especially fun!

Historically, Khmer New Year was celebrated in November when the lunar year began. During the 13th Century the Khmer King (historians are not sure if it was during the time of King Suriyavaraman ll or Jayavaraman Vll) moved the holiday to the 5th month of the lunar calendar which is April. At that time and also to present day, November to March are the busiest times of year for farmers in their fields. After the harvesting of rice in March, April is a perfect time to take time off and celebrate the New Year. So, the calendar and pragmaticism are brought together!

We at The Sharing Foundation say *Surseday Chnam Thmey* to all of you, and especially to our friends and extended family in Cambodia. This is the Year of the Tiger...May it be a good year! TSF

Much of the information from this article was from The Discoverer Blog from Sonasia-holiday.com and ethnomed.com

Game Playing at the Khmer New Year

The Cambodian people have many games they enjoy playing during festivals and holidays, but no holiday is more festive than the New Year. These games have been passed down from generation to generation and for a long time written rules did not exist. Rules tend to stay the same within a given village and variations are found around the land. Most are throwing games such as tossing a ball, scarf, or nuts, or games which involve playful tapping.

See **www.visit-angkor.org/blog/khmer-new-year-cambodia-traditional-games/** for more information on these and other Cambodian games! Here are a few to whet your appetite:

- **Teagn Prot:** much like tug of war but in this version, it's girls vs. the boys.
- **Bos Angkunh:** throwing the brown nut. Watch out if you are on the losing team: you will have to carry out a penalty such as carrying the winners on your back!
- **Chab Kon Kleng:** played mainly by adults, the "crow" tries to capture as many "chicks" as possible! (see photo)
- **Choal Chhoung:** tossing the traditional Cambodian scarf (krama) between the boys team and the girls team, the krama is tossed at the person you like! If the boy is hit by the krama, the boys team sings and dances for the girls.

Chab Kon Kleng | photo by Lyheng https://www.visit-angkor.org/blog/khmer-new-year-cambodia-traditional-games/

New Years Rice Treats

This delicious treat comes from long time TSF friend, acclaimed author, and former owner of the Elephant Walk restaurants, Nyep De Monteiro.

Nom N'sahm Chaek consists of wonderful rolls of sticky rice with banana, and always comprise an important part of any New Year celebration.

Nom N'sahm Chaek are especially popular during New Years celebrations | Photo by Dion Hinchcliffe/ Flickr www.flickr.com/photos/dionhinchcliffe/

Nyep says:

> The combination of a luscious coconut flavor and the subtle aroma of the banana leaves makes the rolls both a special snack and a festive dessert.

The Sharing Foundation

CARING FOR CAMBODIA'S CHILDREN

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

P. O. Box 600, Concord, MA 01742

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Celebrating TSF's recent university grads in November 2021!

TSF now proudly boasts over 100 University graduates and we thank you for giving them this life changing opportunity!

Proud Day for All—Congratulations!

The Sharing Foundation

P. O. Box 600, Concord, MA 01742
www.sharingfoundation.org
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: Linda Clark, Carlisle, MA
Treasurer: Kat MacDonald, Lexington, MA
Asst. Treasurer: Jennifer Mendelsohn, Newton, MA
Chuck Bagnaschi, Carlisle, MA
Colleen Gearns, Garden City, NY
Emma Schumacher, Medford, MA
Korey Lee, Branchville, NJ
Jim Ganley, Portland, ME
Lee Steppacher, Norwich, VT
Marge Stockford, Portland, ME

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

Foundation Coordinator: Laurie Simons, Beverly, MA

Newsletter Staff: Deb Nelson, Lee Steppacher, Marge Stockford, Laurie Simons & Emma Schumacher