The Sharing Foundation Newsletter

www.sharingfoundation.org

CARING FOR CAMBODIA'S CHILDREN

SUMMER 2024

Super Sisters Chanthan and Chanthorn

Deborah Nelson & Laurie Simons

The Sharing Foundation is so fortunate to have a dynamic sister duo, Chanthan and Chanthorn, each of whom holds a key position at our Roteang Children's Center. During our most recent supervision trip in June, board member Jim Ganley talked with the sisters about their history with TSF, their current roles, and how they envision continuing to support our children.

Fourteen years ago, Chanthan found her way to the RCC from her home in Kampong Cham province when a friend recruited her to join her on our nanny staff. Chanthan quickly demonstrated her skill in caring for, educating, and advocating for our children, which led to our increasing her scope of responsibilities over time. Currently, Chan-

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The sisters (Chanthorn–front, & Chanthan–third row, middle, in light blue) snap a selfie with the kids at the RCC

On October, 27th, 2024, we will graduate our largest TSF class ever...

21 students!

Each year, more of the children you sponsor pass the entry exam into college. We now have **65 students** living in our three dorms; TSF rented a third dorm this year to accommodate everyone—an investment we're thrilled to make. Board members Lee Steppacher and Emma Schumacher will be in Roteang to hand the graduates their certificates.

Graduation day is one of the best days of the TSF calendar. Not only do the families of the grads attend but many alumni *(numbering over 110 now!)*, high school students and village residents come too. Last year, several sponsors of graduates attended the ceremony, and we expect another group this year. The sponsors have supported their students for eight years—from high school through college—which is remarkable.

We thank you for all you have done to help graduate the largest class ever! We plan to share photos in our holiday newsletter.

Letters are due **September 15th** to your sponsored student or child.
They can be sent by email as follows:

UNIVERSITY	HIGH SCHOOL	RCC
university@sharingfoundation.org	highschool@sharingfoundation.org	childrenscenter@sharingfoundation.org

Where Do We Go From Here?

Over the past twenty-five years, The Sharing Foundation has sheltered more than 300 children from a lifetime of homelessness. Beyond providing a home at the RCC, we have provided them the needed medical and educational resources we can find in or bring to the country.

We have also supported other disadvantaged young Cambodians who live in the Roteang area. We have enrolled many of the youngest in the Naomi School located on our farm. We have taught thousands of local children the English language to help them prosper in their country. Over 110 university graduates, all well-employed in Cambodia, have The Sharing Foundation to thank for their education.

And we have served those outside the Roteang community too. Our sewing center has provided more than 100,000 uniforms to the poorest children in the country so that they can attend school. We have built 13 school buildings in eight villages as well as six water tanks, six bathroom facilities, four playgrounds and four libraries.

The kids holding their brand new uniforms

All of our programs are designed to have maximum impact on disadvantaged Cambodian youth and are implemented using local employees and sustainable practices. The numbers above are one way to measure our success. However, the best way is to hear from the kids we serve. **Ban Kosal**, TSF University graduate:

> **Needless to say, we become rising stars in our village. Whenever villagers meet our parents or us, most of them talk only [about] education. Most of my childhood friends did not graduate from general education (grade 12) and they all are married. This makes our parents feel very proud and blessed. We don't hesitate to say, without TSF, our life would be miserable."**

Throughout our history, we have enacted Nancy Hendrie's initial vision of The Sharing Foundation: to address the medical and educational needs of the poorest children. But, as Nancy says, times are changing. We must continue her tradition of working to fulfill the needs of the poorest children in Cambodia. But, perhaps the way to do that has changed.

We are confident of the continuing need for some of our programming. Our English Schools and university sponsorships are still critical to assist Cambodian youth and their country, so we will continue to invest in those programs.

On the other hand, one key priority of our past history – providing a home to young children whose families can no longer care for them – has become much less important. This is a result of several changes in the country including an improvement in both the Cambodian economy and medical care. If we take a child into the RCC today, s/he comes to us most often because the parents suffer from drug addiction and mental health issues rather than poverty.

Our highest priority, the 70 children we have raised at the Roteang Children's Center, remains central. Yet their needs have changed significantly in the last five to ten years. Many of these children are now teenagers or young adults—as a result, we need to support them as they navigate new challenges including sexuality, drug and alcohol use, and career success. Our efforts to date have shown that Cambodia has few resources to help with these concerns. We imagine this might be a new arena where we can have a positive impact on disadvantaged Cambodian youth. TSF

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

As the Board begins another round of strategic planning, we'd love to hear your thoughts! You are The Sharing Foundation.

- Where do you think we should focus for the next 5–10 years?
- What makes you want to be part of this organization? Is it helping abandoned children? Is it helping people born into poverty raise themselves up? Is it to improve the country of Cambodia?

We welcome your thoughts!

Reach out to us at **info@sharingfoundation.org** using the subject line **'What's next for TSF'**

Sponsors Needed 2024

Thank you to those who volunteered to support the students/children named in our last newsletter who needed sponsors. A special shout-out to those who are supporting students in their fifth year of university, who are primarily architectural students. The skyline of Phnom Penh has changed dramatically over the last ten years and it's particularly gratifying to think that some of TSF's students may have an effect on what Phnom Penh looks like in the coming years.

UNIVERSITY

Need: 5 Sponsors | $600 up to full cost of $1,600 / year

This summer, we are looking for a few wonderful people to sponsor our most recent cohort of well-deserving university students. Sponsorship is a financial commitment. A minimum level sponsorship is $600 and we welcome any amount up to a full sponsorship of $1600; we also ask sponsors to write letters to their students three times per year. This is a fun and fulfilling way to connect with a young adult and develop a relationship over their university years; it also is an excellent tool for the Cambodian student to develop their English reading and writing skills.

HUM CHANCHAKYRIA
Third Year
Major: English

CHORN CHANSREYMEY*
Second Year
Major: Graphic Design

PROM KEVITA*
Second Year
Major: Banking

YANY REAKSMEY*
Third Year
Major: Marketing

CHAN LISA*
First Year
Major: Creative Media & Administration

** Receiving partial support*

ROTEANG CHILDREN'S CENTER

Need: 4 Sponsors | $1,800 or $900 / year

We are also still in need of sponsors for our core program, supporting the children and young adults who live at the RCC.

SOK CHAN (L) & SREYLEAP (R)
First year of college
Majors: Accounting (Sok Chan) & Marketing (Sreyleap)

They grew up together at the RCC and were part of the TSF troupe of Khmer traditional dancers. If you ever visited the RCC, you probably enjoyed a traditional dance performance by these two young women.

SOEU SOPHAL
5 year program
Major: Engineering

Seou Sophal is a very bright young man that often helped the younger kids with their homework when living at the RCC. He was a drummer in the RCC band.

HORN PANHA
14 Years old

Horn Panha has the biggest, brightest smile. He regularly uses an iPad for learning, and now that the RCC has a paved driveway, there's nowhere he can't go in his wheelchair! He has cerebral palsy and will probably always be a RCC resident with TSF.

Super Sisters Chanthan and Chanthorn

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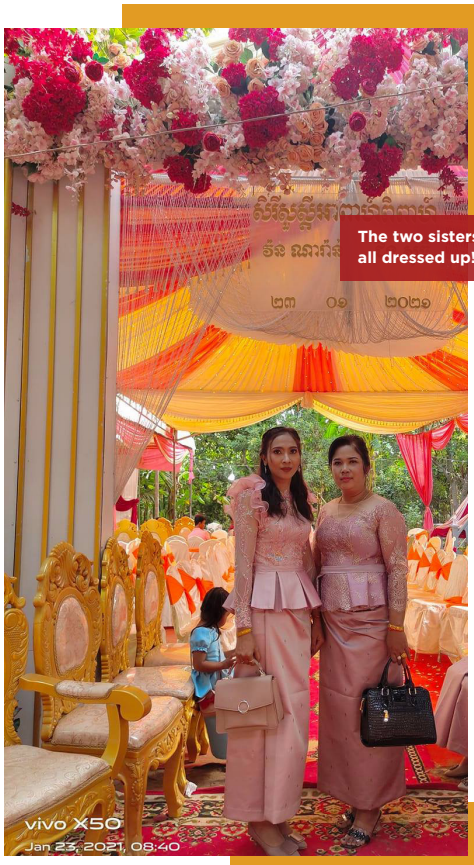
than is the Director of the RCC, overseeing a staff of 21 nannies, drivers, maintenance staff and guards along with six additional teachers! She is known for her firm yet gentle demeanor; she carries the air of a caregiver and educator who has "seen it all, is fazed by little and gives the side eye when appropriate!"

Chanthan is the mother to all the children in many ways, including standing up at graduation with our RCC graduates. When Sokneath graduated in 2019, she stood with him as his mother. She presented him with a bouquet of dollar bills made to look like flowers, that she and all the kids had made for their brother. Additionally, Chanthan is the force behind making the RCC grounds look beautiful, as she organizes the kids' energy to help with gardening. She also teaches them how to make the traditional food required at special holidays. She does all the things any mother does, but she does it for 60!

Chanthan loves her job, particularly interacting with the children. When asked about her biggest challenge, she mentioned the times kids have been resistant about going to school or have otherwise acted up. But as a mother herself, she knows how to meet the current situation and overcome these challenges. Her vision of the RCC's possible future includes adding vocational programs for our children who need that training.

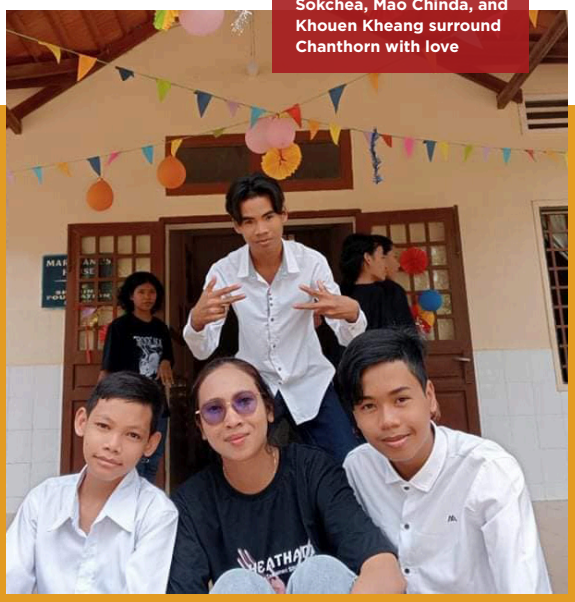
A glance at her Facebook page shows the love she has for our children, with frequent posts about her happy times together with them. True to her warm heart, she expresses gratitude to TSF, and our donors and sponsors. She also quickly shared how much she enjoys working with her sister, Chanthorn.

Chanthorn has been with the RCC for ten years, which she joined, in part, to work with her sister. Coming to us to work primarily in the preschool, she is passionate about educating children. In addition to her work with the preschool, she is also a member of our teaching staff at the evening Roteang English School. She too has taken on many administrative duties for the RCC—she assists Chita, Medical Care Coordinator and University Program Supervisor, with medical appoint-



The two sisters, all dressed up!

Chanthan and the kids smile for a selfie



Sokchea, Mao Chinda, and Khouen Kheang surround Chanthorn with love

Do you remember when you learned to swim?

Do you want to help our children in Roteang learn how?

Elephant wants to ensure each of our kids know the basics of how to swim and be safe in the water. He has located a swimming club where **10 lessons** costs **$45 per child**.

Total cost for all kids at the RCC is $2600.

If the "Learn to Swim" initiative is something that resonates with you, now's your opportunity!

Contact Ann Trudeau or Laurie Simons at **info@sharingfoundation.org**

Thank you!

Volunteer for TSF!

In April 2024, two valued board members, **Korey Lee** and **Chuck Bagnaschi** retired from the TSF board. Theirs are some very big shoes to fill!

If you would like to volunteer and contribute in that way to the ongoing success of this organization you already feel connected to, let us know!

Contact Ann Trudeau at:
atrudeau@sharingfoundation.org

We look forward to hearing from you.

Super Sisters Chanthan and Chanthorn

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ments for the RCC children and brings our kids for medical care in emergencies. She truly believes in our children, hoping they can all continue their education through university graduation. Like Chanthan, she also sees vocational training as an avenue best suited for some of our kids. After ten years at the RCC, her original dreams have come true: she loves working with her sister since they make such a good team, and she gets great joy and pride from teaching and supporting our RCC children. Like her sister, she cherishes her own family as well as her TSF family, frequently sharing her love and pride in Facebook posts. In true Cambodian graciousness of spirit, she too expresses profound thanks and gratitude towards TSF and our sponsors and donors.

A closing story about how important this sister duo is to the work of TSF: during Covid we couldn't travel to Cambodia for two years, yet Chanthan and Chanthorn kept up a steady stream of Facebook posts, photos, and videos during that time. They kept us in touch with our kids through those many months so that we could see the successes and challenges of their daily lives and just watch them grow. We used those photos in our newsletters and emails to keep you, our donors, in touch as well. While the sisters may be grateful to TSF, we are forever grateful to them for the time and care they give our children in so many ways. TSF

Sokneath graduates with his RCC mother, Chanthan, Elephant (Dad), and his many proud RCC brothers and sisters by his side. A happy day for all.

The Sharing Foundation

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$92 for 92!

Nancy Hendrie is 92 years young this June!

Consider donating $92 to The Sharing Foundation in honor of her birthday.

sharingfoundation.org/donate

The Sharing Foundation

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www.sharingfoundation.org
info@sharingfoundation.org

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