

Student Sponsorship Program Update – September 2008

Sponsorship Program Expands

Our goal is to increase the number of students we sponsor each year. Here is the progress we've made so far:

2004 – 31 students
2005 – 50 students
2006 – 75 students
2007 – 100 students
2008 – 110 students

Friendship with Cambodia advances the funds to keep the new students in school, and then finds sponsors for the new students. Our ability to fund more students depends on finding new sponsors. Please tell others about our program.

University Student Fund

This year we have 10 students graduating from high school. Some of them would like to continue their education and go to college. This is great news because only 12% of the students who start school finish high school and the number going on to college is very low.

The preferred school is the government-run university, the Royal University of Phnom Penh. It is difficult to get in, and if the student isn't accepted then she or he will attend a private university.

Friendship with Cambodia is committed to supporting our students until they complete their education. The cost of sending students to college will be substantially higher than high school, because they will have expenses for room and board, tuition and books, access to a computer, and continued support from our social workers. Therefore, we are setting up a special University Student Fund, to which we invite everyone to donate. This will help cover the additional costs that are not covered by the sponsor.

New This Year: Essays and Progress Reports

Our sponsored students were asked to write an essay for their sponsor this year. New students wrote about their daily activities. Returning students were given a choice of topics, ranging from career goals to forest destruction to the value of education. We want the sponsors to learn more about their students and Cambodia. And we want the students to write about topics that make them think.

The social workers that support and guide the students were asked to write a brief progress report about each returning student, to give the sponsors more information about how their student is doing.

Our First Teacher Graduates!

Prak Ri' graduated from a two-year teacher training program this year and is now teaching in an elementary school in remote Preah Vihear Province. Cambodia has a shortage of schools and teachers, so it is very heartening to know that we helped someone become a teacher. Thanks to his sponsor, Nancy Gordon of Alameda, California!

"Private Class" Pays the Teacher

Students often mention in their letters to sponsors the need to take "private class." In many schools in Cambodia, some classes are free, but other classes require a tuition fee. These "private classes" are given because teachers are paid only \$15 - \$20 per month by the government and they need to supplement their income. Their living expenses are at least \$60 per month.

Students usually need to take "private classes" in order to pass the test to advance to the next grade in school.

Students Discuss Poverty

This year, for the first time, our students and their NGO (non-governmental organization) social workers from rural areas in seven provinces came together for a three-day meeting.

They shared information about issues in their home provinces, and also discussed important topics, like why the price of goods went up, why people are poor in Cambodia, and the role of youth in the community.

These young people and NGO workers started building networks to help each other and work together. It's exciting to see young people in Cambodia become inspired to help improve life for the rural poor. Part of your student sponsorship fee funded this meeting.



*Some of our students on their way to school.
Kompong Chhnang Province, Chulkiri District*

Student Code Indicates Home District

You may have noticed that your student's code has changed. We have switched from coding by NGO to a code that indicates the district the student is from. Districts are equivalent to counties in the US. The following list of students that we are currently sponsoring reflects this new code, arranged by province. See if you can find your student's district on our map.

Thank you for sponsoring a student!