

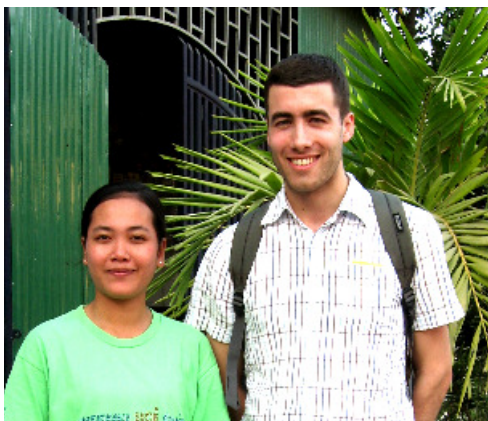
## Our First 8 University Graduates

In 2005, when we first started sponsoring rural students in secondary school, we hoped they would stay in school long enough to finish 12<sup>th</sup> grade. We thought that would be a big success because only 6 % of the student in Cambodia complete high school, and the majority are privileged students from urban areas.

Much to our surprise, not only did our students finish high school, almost all of them wanted to go on to college. We were thrilled to find out that we have been supporting the brightest and most motivated students. However, we were a little daunted by the expense of \$1500 per student – four times more, but we enthusiastically said *YES, we want to support you.*

People asked us – *Will they be able to get jobs?* The students worked hard to find employment. **The results are: 8 out of 8 of our students have jobs in their fields.** Three are teachers, one is in administration at a hospital, one is a nurse at a clinic, one is working in IT, and two work for humanitarian organizations that help disadvantaged indigenous youth and rural families. We are so happy for them!

**This school year we expect to be supporting 40 students in university and 54 in secondary school.** Please consider sponsoring a student for just \$30 per month and exchange photos and letters annually.



*Thyda, one of our first university graduates, is visited by her sponsor Peter Lavelle.*

## How to Stop Sex-Trafficking

**One out of ten girls in Cambodia is sold to a brothel.** How does this happen? Typically, the trafficker goes to a remote village, where people have not heard of trafficking, and offers a girl a job in the city as a housekeeper or a garment factory worker. For decades, extremely poor families have allowed their daughters to leave home to work in the city, so they could send money home. They don't realize the girl will be sold to a brothel.



*A poster warning about traffickers*

Families that are so poor they cannot always feed their children may give one of their children to a wealthier family, hoping the child will have a better life. However, sometimes that new family treats the girl like property and sells her to a trafficker.

What can be done to stop sex-trafficking? **Friendship with Cambodia funds trafficking prevention campaigns.** In one prevention program, a dance troupe travels to remote villages near the border with Thailand, where human trafficking is heaviest. They offer a free cultural performance and the whole village comes to watch. During the show they do a skit that warns the villagers about trafficking. The other campaign we support uses national radio broadcasts and works with the private and public sector to advocate respect for girls.

How can we help the girls who are trafficked? Some of the girls who manage to escape the brothel or are rescued live in a women's shelter where they receive help starting a new life. Friendship with Cambodia is supporting their vocational program, where the girls learn to make jewelry, handbags, and other products. Friendship with Cambodia sells these fair-trade craft items to help support the girls and the training program.

**We also fund the education of girls, which is considered the most effective method of ending poverty** - the root cause of trafficking. When a girl is supported in school, she won't be sold to a brothel. We welcome donations to our programs to stop trafficking and help girls.

Visit our blog to read about traveling in Cambodia, our program updates, and Cambodian news and culture!

[www.friendshipwithcambodia.org](http://www.friendshipwithcambodia.org)

## Should You Give to Begging Children?

Visitors to Cambodia, with the best of intentions, engage in behaviors that sustain or even further increase the risk of marginalized children. Giving money to begging children or buying products from them does little to address the serious problems these children face: lack of education, health care, and a supportive family environment.

**In fact, giving money to street children often leads to a lifestyle that ends in drugs, prostitution and crime.**

In addition, most tourists are unaware that corruption in orphanages is extremely common. Some of these institutions purport to protect children, but exploit them for their own gain. They often encourage parents to give up their children so they can create the appearance of greater need to garner contributions from unsuspecting tourists who donate their time, money or both.

The ChildSafe Network encourages travelers to play an important role in safeguarding children. **They ask tourists to avoid buying from children and refrain from giving to begging children.** Directly helping them keeps them on the streets and places them at risk. If you really want to help, support organizations providing services that help these children and their families have a better future.



*Cambodian girls sitting at Bantey Srey Temple*

## The Romance of Responsible Travel

by Shoshana D. Kerewsky, Board President of Friendship with Cambodia

From my hotel window, I can see a dramatic vista of Shanghai—not the postcard view of the Oriental Pearl Tower or the newer Shanghai World Financial Center, but the more prosaic sprawl of interlooping highway cloverleaves, anonymous apartment buildings, and, at the extreme right of my view, one of the two Shanghai IKEAs. As darkness falls, the lights come up, and Shanghai shows its night time action—colorful, vibrant, and still largely unknown to me. I miss Phnom Penh, a city that’s low to the ground, dark, and, compared to Shanghai, quite poor. I’ve met and talked with Cambodians, but I’ve been kept apart from Chinese. Despite its relatively unelectrified skyline, Cambodia glows vividly in my imagination.

My partner and I are just finishing a guided vacation tour of China that was the same length as Friendship with Cambodia’s socially responsible tours. There was a lot to see, much of it historically and culturally significant. What was missing, making the trip seem ultimately superficial, was the emotion that flows from conversations with people. This was a shocking contrast to the quality of my conversations with Cambodians during FWC’s tour.

I had been to Cambodia, both on a professional trip and on my own, before traveling with FWC. The socially responsible tour provided a much more integrated and meaningful experience than these previous trips. FWC’s guides educated us about Cambodian history—not just the glorious parts, but the sad and ill-conceived as well. We saw the temples at Angkor Wat and took a boat trip on Tonle Sap Lake. We visited museums and palaces. We also went to Cheung Ek (the Killing Fields), Toul Sleng Genocide Museum, and a landmine museum. A balanced and nuanced image of Cambodia emerged.

As an FWC donor and sponsor, I was pleased to meet some of the students whose education is sponsored by FWC, as well as the Cambodian staff who provide oversight and guidance. In Cambodia we visited schools, orphanages, hospitals, training facilities for poor rural women and people with disabilities, socially responsible restaurants and hotels, and women’s crisis agencies. We heard stories of devastation, hope, and work still to be done. In short, we learned about Cambodia from Cambodians—the bad, the good, and the future.

I conclude my tour of China thinking, “That was interesting. I might like to spend a week in Guilin sometime.” At the end of the socially responsible tour of Cambodia, my experience was considerably more complex and emotional. I’ve called it “romance” in the title of this article because I feel deeply connected with the people of Cambodia, thrilled to be in such an important relationship. I felt, and still feel, active, engaged, and empowered to contribute to their welfare. I feel invited to continue to learn from and support my new Cambodian friends.

That’s the kind of vacation I want to have. I hope you will consider visiting Cambodia with FWC for what might be the most meaningful travel of your life.

Socially Responsible Travel with Friendship with Cambodia  
[www.friendshipwithcambodia.org/travel.php](http://www.friendshipwithcambodia.org/travel.php)

Trips are scheduled based on interest, so let us know if you are considering a trip with us. Bring a friend and get a discount. Contact us for details. Going on your own? Buy a copy of our *Responsible Travel Guide Cambodia*.

## Meet Kosal Our In-Country Staff



In 1994, when I started the research for my book, *Soul Survivors: Stories of Women and Children in Cambodia*, I hired an English professor in Phnom Penh to be my interpreter, Ms Kosal Cheam. I was so pleased to work with such an extremely bright and capable person.

From 1997 to 2010 Kosal was staff and then director of Krousar Thmey (New Family), Friendship with Cambodia's partner organization that runs our street children's shelter and sex-trafficking prevention program.

Last year, Kosal took the position of Country Director for Southeast Asia Development Program, another one of our partner organizations. Kosal manages our Student Sponsorship Program and Women's Self-Help Programs. Like every Cambodian who is over 32 years old, Kosal is a genocide survivor. She has one daughter.

We are so lucky to have talented and kind-hearted Kosal at the helm of our programs.

*--Bhavia Wagner, Founder/Director of  
Friendship with Cambodia*

## How Your Donations Changed Lives

### Education for Rural Youth Living in Poverty

- 70 secondary school students sponsored
- 35 university students supported
- 12 high school graduates
- 4 university graduates

### Women's Empowerment

- **237 Women's Groups** serving over 4000 rural women and addressing domestic violence, land rights, and low education
- **42 Women's Savings Groups** for setting goals, saving money, borrowing, and improving lives
- **Women's Networking and Training** in development, gender equality, leadership, financial management, and active non-violence



### Campaign Against Sex –Trafficking

Promoted respect and safety for women through national radio shows, brochures, posters and advocating policy changes in government and businesses.



### Fair-Trade Crafts

#### Employment for the Disadvantaged

Provided training and employment for landmine survivors, families with AIDS, and destitute women through craft sales. Funded the equivalent of 20 full-time jobs.

### Care for Street Children and Orphans

- 25 street children received safe shelter, food, schooling, and help from a social worker
- 47 orphaned children were given loving care and higher education



### Staff & Program Volunteers

*(equivalent of 1.5 fulltime paid staff)*

Bhavia Wagner, Executive Director  
Erin McSpadden, Office Manager  
Carol Gleason, Cambodia Trips  
Karen Molleson, Student Sponsorship  
Linda Young, Fair-Trade Crafts

## Friendship with Cambodia

Founded in 2003 as a 501(c)3 non-profit organizations to provide humanitarian aid to Cambodia and education about Cambodia.

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541-952-2009

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## You Can Protect Girls

This year we launched our *Make a Change* campaign to raise funds for sex-trafficking prevention and education of girls.

Why is it so important to educate girls? *Half the Sky* by Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl Wu Dunn documents the violence and oppression directed at women worldwide. The proven solution is education for girls. "Investment in girls' education may well be the highest-return investment available in the developing world," stated the chief economist of the World Bank. "Progress is achieved through women," confirmed the founder of Doctors without Borders.

## Please Donate *Your Change* to Make a Change in Her Life!

Less than **10 pennies a day** over one year (**\$30**)

- Gives food & shelter for a month for a girl living on the street

Less than **5 nickels a day** over one year (**\$75**)

- Provides a loan for a destitute mother to start a small business

Less than **5 dimes a day** over one year (**\$150**)

- Funds a women's self-help group

Less than **4 quarters a day** over one year (**\$360**)

- Sponsors a girl in school for a year

*Our work in Cambodia is funded by individuals who make tax-deductible donations. Thank you!*



## Women Emerge from Poverty & Oppression



*Da was one of the poorest women in her village. After 4 years in our program she is now a community leader.*

The traditional role for women in Cambodia is to be passive and in the background, serving their husbands and family. Many experience domestic violence. Cambodian law, however, gives women equal rights as men and outlaws domestic violence.

We are helping women reach their potential by helping them build their skills and confidence. The process involves forming Women's Groups that address problems like violence in the home, children dropping out of school, and illegal land grabbing.

Many of the families we work with have food shortages during the year. To improve their economic well-being and their ability to set goals and achieve them, we are supporting Women's Savings Groups.

In order to disseminate information and to encourage women to work together, we created Women's Networks, where village representatives meet monthly at the commune or district level. The women receive trainings in development, gender equality, leadership, financial management, and active non-violence. Then they go back and train women in their villages.

Not long ago, there were very few women in leadership positions. Now, in two districts, **60% of the leadership roles are filled by women**, including positions elected by commune members. And in many of the areas we are working, **domestic violence has been reduced from 50% to 10 – 15%.**