



OUR KIDS IN SIEM REAP

Kampuchea House 10th Anniversary

August 2017

THEN AND NOW

Our 10th Anniversary!

This month we are proud to inform you that Kampuchea House has been successfully operating for ten years. In this newsletter we'd like to show you the many faces of our success, from the very beginning in August 2007, when land was purchased in the poverty stricken Sotnikum district at Dom Dek with the intention of building a home for deserted and abandoned children.

In March 2008 our first twelve children moved in to Houses One and Two, built with proceeds donated by our Platinum Members and Wesley College. Over the subsequent months and years, House Three, with its library downstairs, built with money donated by Bev and Geoff Edwards, was completed. Water purification towers, a Community Centre, funded by Westbourne Grammar students and their families, and used for meal preparation, dining and social activities were added. Later, another hygiene block, fencing and a security gate and water storage tanks (donated by the Lane family), were installed, and walkways, garden beds and trees were planted. Eventually two more houses were added.

As you can see, our facilities, and now our location, have changed over the years, but our philosophy has remained constant. For ten years now we have been caring for

children in a situation which is as close as possible to that of a typical Khmer family, being looked after by house mothers, adhering to Khmer culture and practicing the Buddhist religion, with observance of local religious festivals and holidays.

From the start we have worked in close co-operation with the Ministry of Social Affairs, and the local Commune chief before the assignment of children placed in our care. Our aim has been to provide a family-style upbringing, education and vocational training which will give our children a chance to break the cycle of poverty, attain independence and give back to Cambodian society. Our children have attended local schools, been cared for by Cambodian staff – many of our house mothers and management have now been with us since the early days of KH – participated with the local community and attended the pagoda.

From earliest times KH has actively supported its local community with donations of rice and clothing to impoverished families, use of our tuk-tuk and car in medical emergencies, helping with local projects, donations to the Angkor Children's Hospital, and assisting the local schools.



Original Facility at SKK



New House in Siem Reap

Our Philosophy

Our kids have been exposed to their cultural heritage, with regular visits to the temples at Angkor Wat which, even though they are a short distance of 38 kms from Sala Kor Koh, had never been seen by our kids before. They have been taken on annual holidays to the beach at Sihanoukville and to Battambang, seeing the sea and swimming in pools for the first time. Now that they are living in Siem Reap their outings have included adventure playgrounds, local festivals, rock wall-climbing and museums, to name just a few.



Chinh and Minea prior to KH

Hello, my name is Chinh.

I would like to introduce the history of my life and the difference before and after I lived at Kampuchea House.

I was born on 2nd March 1996 in a very poor farming village near Dom Dek which is 45kms from Siem Reap. I only have a younger brother, Minea, who also lives at KH.

My mother died from an unknown medical condition and my father deserted us when I was 4 years old. (We have not seen our father since then). After that we were raised by our grandmother and our family had a miserable living as she was struggling to feed us. In 2007 she died and we went to live with a single uncle.

Chinh's Story - in his own words

by Chinh Nut

January, 2016

During that time it was very hard living as we were very poor. I went to school occasionally and had to stop school as my uncle did not have enough money to support my study. So during the day I took care of the cows trying to find grass for them to eat and doing cooking. We had little food; no sanitation; no education and a house that was falling down with holes everywhere. I did not think about my future as I assumed that I would end up working on a farm.

In 2008 we met with Kampuchea House and they selected us to live with them. My life was changed so much I could not believe it.

They gave me a new life which I never thought I could actually get. A big chance to exist in a comfortable place with loving and caring.

Moreover I can study and go to high school till I finish year 12. I can go to the best English class in Siem Reap too which is very important.

KH gives me lots of good food; nice accommodation; new friends and an education, as well as house mothers to look after me. Also Sokhoeun and Leng help me very much with advice about my future.

I also meet lots of good and kind people from Australia who support KH, including students from schools and making friends with them.

In future I want to be a doctor because I need to save the life of people. Right now KH makes my dream come true.

Nowaday I am about to start studying in Phnom Penh at university doing a medical course. I am also going to learn French as part of this course. I am so lucky and will work very hard. I thank KH so much for what they have given me and the other children as well.

Chinh Nut.

A Quick Update

From the start our aim has been to help our children find a career or vocation, by giving them access to education and vocational training. In fact two of the first children to reside at SKK, Sophary and Duong, were 17 and 18 years old when they came to us, with little or no education. After attending school regularly, as well as extra English classes at SKK, both were accepted into the Paul Dubrulle School of Catering and Hospitality, and eventually graduated as pastry chefs. Sophary is currently working in a five star hotel in Phnom Penh, while Duong is now married with two children, and still working in a café in Siem Reap. Their lives are a far cry from the possibilities their futures held for them before they came to KH



Ith and Rea

Other siblings who were re-united with the completion of House Three (donated by Bev and Geoff Edwards) were sisters Kosori and Pisey, who had been living with cousins at separate residences.

Also brothers, Sak, who was living with an older sister, and Sor, who was living with a neighbour, moved together into House Three. The brothers gradually opened up from being reticent and introverted children, due to their abusive early lives, to becoming happy and serene in the warm atmosphere created by their house mother, Srei Mom.

Four years after Sor came to KH he began an electricians' course and apprenticeship and today he is fully qualified as an electrician and able to support himself.



Sor

Yim and Yet are sisters who were originally supported by KH off-site, so that they could help their ageing grandmother. This was a foster-type situation where KH paid for their schooling and towards the expenses of the household until the grandmother was moved to care. At that stage the girls moved into SKK as there was no-one else to look after them



Yet



Yim



Sophary



Duong

Another student Youen, has just been accepted to an apprenticeship at Haven, the top training restaurant in Siem Reap. Congratulations Youen!



Youen



Ros

Ros is working as a qualified barista at Red Fox, one of the most popular cafes in Siem Reap.

Over the years, siblings have been kept together or re-united.

Ith and Rea have been with us since they were 6 and 3 respectively. Rea in particular showed the benefit of a healthy diet and the introduction of milk and fruit from an early age, catching up to older children whose growth had unfortunately been stunted due to lack of good food in their early childhood.

with Ammo Jewellers in Siem Reap, where he has now completed a six-month training course. Apart from creating products for the Ammo range, he also designs and produces his own collections. This is a huge achievement on his part and Ammo are extremely happy to have him.



Kenh hard at work

Chinh and Minea are brothers who lived with a single uncle on his farm, looking after the animals and with no possibility of attending school. Chinh is now enrolled in his second year of medicine at the University of Health Sciences in Phnom Penh, and Minea is studying for the entrance exams, hoping to join his older brother there when the new academic year begins. Chinh's account of his story, written in his own words in English, is a moving tribute to the goals and achievements of KH.



Chinh and Minea in Phnom Penh

Kenh is an example of one of our children who was not academically inclined but was extremely gifted as a creative, and was always drawing. A place was found for him

A Broader Education

At Kampuchea House we aim to provide our children with education in the broad sense of the word. Accordingly we send our older girls and boys to life courses at the Women's Resource Center. There is a lack of reproductive health and general health knowledge in Cambodia, which leads to detrimental situations that can easily be prevented with the right education.

Educating and empowering Cambodia's youth leads to a better understanding of their sexual health and gender roles, helping them to respect women and live more equitable lives.

Success Stories

Thankfully our success stories are many.

Those we have outlined are just a few of the happy outcomes. But for every child who has come from a difficult background, being orphaned or abandoned and left to their own devices, with no family care or education, the access to traditional housing, fresh, filtered water, a healthy diet, hygienic living conditions (including spotless bathrooms), clothing, books, extra classes in English, computer and other subjects (depending on their studies), gardens, excursions, outings and holidays, let alone the constant presence of caring staff members and the company of both siblings and the other kids at Kampuchea House, makes them truly lucky compared with many other children in the areas and situations from which they come.

Then and Now

The face of little Ban (below), when he first came to us, compared to just a few months later.

This shows how lots of love, food, security and laughter can change a small child's life.



A Big Thanks

None of all this would have been possible without you, our supporters.

The past ten years have been an extraordinary tribute to your unfailing generosity, willingness to participate in fund-raising events, sponsorships, trips, tours, and by simply donating your time and money to our cause.

The lives of so many children have been irrevocable changed for the better. The prospect of being caught in the miserable cycle of poverty, with no chance for any type of education, has been overcome and the possibility for a bright and successful future put in its place.

Our children have thrived and flourished, and now many are spreading their wings in new-found careers, jobs, vocational training and tertiary education.

Apart from a big thank you to all members of our Committee, who work tirelessly on a totally voluntary basis, we would like to extend a big thank you to all our wonderful donors, sponsors and supporters. Without you, the success story of Kampuchea House would not exist.

From all of us at Kampuchea House, to all of you, a very special THANK YOU



Our director Leng with English teacher Sean and some of the kids at SKK



House mothers and kids prepare dinner