

Newsletter from OHF

Jan 2024

OPERATION
HOPE
FOUNDATION



The photo was taken in 2022 for all the children who have left Hope Village Prey Veng. It was a dinner at a Greek Restaurant in Phnom Penh for this precious alumni. Some came with children, some with spouses or girlfriend but all came with BIG SMILES. Even the restaurant owner and staff were touched and wanted to be included in the group photo! To me this was my “payback” for my effort over 20 years in Cambodia. I remember how a child was left at the gate, lying on a mat with the milk bottle near his leg. I wanted to give him away but the children especially the girls loved him so much. Each morning he was passed from one girl to another for kisses! Today he is a young man living in Kampong Som. I took these photos off his Facebook post. He even posted a photo of with other boys in HVPV.

During Khmer New Year, he packed a bag and waited but no one came to pick him up as his parents have abandoned him. He saw the parents or guardians of other children bringing their children back for the New Year celebrations. It was a terribly sad picture, a 2 year old child waiting for someone to pick him up! I remember the song Nobody’s Child with the lyrics, No mommy's kisses and no daddy's smile. Nobody wants me, I'm nobody's child.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iCNN71bBqkM>

I remember teaching them not to be shy, to speak louder and look at the other person in the eye when speaking. Don’t get married at 15 and be a mother of three at 21. The future is much brighter than being a young unemployed mother living in a village. I want them to have a higher expectation of life. I encouraged them to play board games because it teaches them to learn rules and strategy. I even taught some of the boys to play Risk which is a strategy game. They love it so much and told me they played with torchlight at night. Risk is an amazing game which requires negotiation and planning skills. It is a war game where you can convince other players to join you to attack another player. If there is a strong player with a large army, then other players should combine to attack him!



The photo is the first three “orphans” that was admitted to HVPV when their mother died. They had a father who when the children were teenagers came to see them showing some baby photos. But Srey Much, says she has never seen him since she was born and refused to accept him as her father. Today she is married with a business selling fertilizer and rice with her husband. She was very talkative and I told her that she should do sales which is what she did!

The oldest is Sorn Sochea who is married with child (see photo) and is an entrepreneur. Dear sponsors, it was so satisfying to be able to make a difference in a child’s life. Compare the two photos and imagine how they would end up had they not been given the chance to stay in HVPV.

When I met the alumni, memories of our time in HVPV came back vividly. I told them “ I cannot guarantee your future but I can give you happy memories”. HVPV is not a business, nor a job but an opportunity to share our love in very tangible ways.

Love requires sacrifice. In the early days, every alternate month I was in Cambodia staying around three weeks each time. There was so much to do. Finding child sponsors, recruiting and training staff in both Cambodia and Singapore, ensuring the children are well looked after . I had to micro manage like ensuring the place is clean , teaching the children how to mop and sweep floors, checking the electrical wiring as we have power trips when it rains, ensure proper maintenance for the rainwater harvesting tanks, the septic tanks, seeing there are enough sports equipment like badminton racquets and volleyballs, teaching the children board games, setting up the computer room, training the admin staff and house parents, handling the Government officials and dealing with all sorts of emergencies.



This newsletter is about our home in Cambodia. The next newsletter will feature our Nepal home. There is so much to write that I want to split it so the newsletter won't be too long.

Without the financial support of our child sponsors, we would not be able to give hope to so many children. We are grateful for your support. However, we are still in need for more co-sponsors and financially are in the red. Please help us get more co-sponsors and contact Rachel at admin@ohf.org.sg or call 62543886 or visit our web site www.ohf.org.sg to get more information

With sincere gratitude

Robert Kee
MAKE HOPE REAL



Home made Otello game



Going to school



Playing Monopoly



Going to church



Singing at Multipurpose Hall