



NEWSLETTER

Coral Tree Education Foundation, Inc.

2018

www.CoralTreeEducation.org

Preparing for the upcoming school year



Before our school was built, 400 village children (grade 1-6) attended classes in a hazardous building and did not have school during the rainy season because of a collapsing roof, the lack of toilets and other problems. Now the children are attending our English and computer skills classes which started in January 2018. English is offered in the afternoon following the students' morning Khmer instruction which is taught by Cambodian teachers employed by the Cambodian Ministry of Education. Both morning and afternoon classes are held in our new building completed in December 2017.

Computer Classes: We have installed our **E-Library** with a new computer system which will be among the very first in Cambodia. It is based on models used in other developing countries such as Myanmar and India. The system includes Raspberry Pi devices (model 3), and educational content for English classes, such as educational videos, songs, and learning games from the Internet. This system was selected because of its low energy requirements. We feel certain that our model will be replicated by other Cambodian schools. Special thanks go to **Dr. Tim Denny Ph.D., and our in-country director, Meng Dy**, who worked hard to put the system together. We are especially grateful for their creativity in ensuring that this system is low energy use and low cost, yet effective for helping kids to learn. **Our**



students will be the first generation in this village to be connected to the outside world through this E-educational system brought to them by Coral Tree.



English Classes: Coral Tree hired four teachers to teach English to about 300 students for four hours each day. Students who attend regularly spend five hours a week learning English through listening, speaking, and writing. In the upcoming school year, the teachers will implement more activities, including reading, once the E-Library is available. Thanks to your support, we are actively looking for new teachers to add to our team.



Students' Homelife: For most of our students, helping their parents with chores is a matter of survival. Some students accompany their parents to Thailand during school breaks to earn additional income. Some assist their parents in their families' fields and take care of animals. Some help their parents prepare food or other items to sell at market. A few actually enjoy the summer break by riding bicycles around the village. For the most part, these children have very limited means. They do not have basic medical care. It is very common for young people to get sick and die without anyone knowing what their illness was. Some of their homes have only a roof and one wall made of sheet metal scraps they gathered from dump sites. Our presence at this village of Prek Snor has brought much hope, but the support we can provide is still limited. We focus on very poor families and support them, train them in business and in becoming self-sufficient in small business so their children (especially girls) will not be pulled out of school to support their families.



Women College Scholarship Program

Obtaining a college education is very difficult for young women who must also make a living. Once exposed to higher learning, however, the women's awareness grows; we believe that these women will one day make sure their daughters go to college. Our students go to college in the evening at the University of Southeast Asia and Bill Bright University in Siem Reap. These women work during the day to support their own living expenses. College tuition is from \$550-\$600 per year. In four to five years, the women will earn college degrees, leading to an improvement in their lives. They pay for their own room and board. We believe in our students sharing in the responsibilities in their own education. *We would like to thank Dr. Tim Wood and Mrs. Starleen Wood for being our major supporters for this program!*



Phearom Oun, our VP of Scholarship Programs is monitoring the current scholarship recipients to ensure their success, while also working closely with Chenda to screen new scholarship candidates. We are grateful for her ongoing efforts, dedication, and commitment to supporting this important program. Phearom is a great role model to the young women. She and her husband Rithy Soan operate their own private elementary school and are actively supporting Coral Tree as volunteers. We want to especially thank Phearom and Rithy for their dedication and support of our programs!

Our teachers

Our teachers are young men and women who have had very difficult lives but put themselves through school and became teachers to give back to their country. Two of these men lived (and still do) in the Buddhist pagoda, a place they could live for free in a very modest standard in order to afford their education. If they do not have families to support them, our girl students will drop out from school at early age as they face more obstacles in their education and career paths than do our boys. We are very proud of our teachers; they are role models to our students. They are very proud to be a part of our work. We currently have a short term contracted teacher trainer with us. Learn more about our teachers on our website.



Friends and Supporters



"CORAL TREE IS A GROWING FAMILY OF PEOPLE WHO CARE ABOUT THE CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN OF THE SUEVIVORS O THE KILLING FIELDS WHO ARE STILL TRAPPED IN DEEP POVERTY NEARLY A HALF OF CENTURY AFTER THE KILLINGS!!!"

Our friends and supporters are very important to us and we are grateful for their ongoing support!!!

Our Friends in the Nonprofit World:

Coral Tree Education Foundation hopes to bring fresh approaches to solving the problem of inadequate education in Cambodia, especially for those too poor to afford a high-quality private education. In our work, we have met with other organizations who have shared their experiences with us. Among our friends are Tipping Points, One Sky, Trail Blazer, Friends Without A Border, American Asian Donors Program, and People Improvement Organization and many more. We are grateful to our friends for their support and help in carrying out our common mission of helping to make the world a better place.

BootUP

We thank BootUp Ventures for their support. Special thanks to Mukul Agarwal, CEO; The BootUp venue has proven to be Coral Tree's supporters favorite spot, increasing the success of our events. We thank you!!!



We would like to thank Rajeev Prasad and Nidhi Doshi at PayBee for their fluid system that accurately tracks all our donations, ticketing and auction purchases. PayBee has saved us so much headache and time so that we can better focus on doing our work for the children.



Matthews International: We want to thank **Mr. William Hackett, CEO of Matthews**

Matthews Asia Asia, a branch of Matthews International, and their spokesperson, **Ms. Alice Wang**, for hosting a luncheon with their employees to hear Chenda's presentation of history of Cambodia and our work. We thank them for their ongoing support and partnership in this endeavor. Their continuing and increased support is a great encouragement to us in carrying on our work.



Ms. Ilona Merli has donated a restroom building at our school. We are grateful for her ongoing support!



Julia Heshimieh of Aryana Healthcare supports teacher salaries at our school. We are grateful for her ongoing support!



PAST EVENTS...

We had three events in the late spring and summer. Our events are increasingly more successful as we receive more and more support.

Thank you to our hosts and guests in attendance at our events.

We especially thank those who participated in the live and silent auction, making this event our most successful.

We also want to especially thank our host, Ashley Ashdown for our San Francisco event.

We thank these following volunteers for their great support: The auctioneer Mr. Frank Sinseri, Melinda Chan, Kevin Blakeman, Rajeev Prasad, Britteney Reynolds, Jennifer Lee.

We want to thank our chefs who provided the best Cambodian food: Hong Chann, Vong Tan, Kelly Chan, Sinareth Chann, Jina McDonald, Jennifer Lee and Michelle Ye.

Thanks to Sidney Silberburg and John Tam for the delicious wine tasting.

Thanks to Guitarist Rolando Morales, for sponsoring the Bay Area's best, Carlos Gordina, to serenade us.

Thanks to our photographer, Frank Jang for the great photos.



THANK YOU!!!!

A very special thank you to our major donors:



Mr. Russell A. Taplin – The very first Coral Tree “You made the difference” Award was given to Russ Taplin at our summer fundraising event in Menlo Park. Russ has been a dedicated major financial and moral support to the Foundation. Upon receiving the award, Russ expressed his heartfelt gratitude to Chenda and the team for giving him this opportunity to participate in helping to make a difference. He knows that he has been contributing to the lives of others, but feels like he has gained more than he has given. Every time he goes to Cambodia to visit the school, he is moved by the children and their desire to learn

and their appreciation for all the efforts being made on their behalf. Mr. Taplin’s funds provided 24 computers, printers, and all related equipment to create a computer lab for our students, in addition to a computer and a large screen for each classroom. These resources allow us to conduct computer classes and show educational videos to augment English instruction, and to help promote critical thinking skills and social & environmental awareness. Mr. Taplin spreads his charitable spirit all over the world, and we are most honored and moved that Mr. Taplin has chosen our school to be a place to honor his dear late mother. Mrs. Taplin suffered terrible illness all her life, and despite her love for literature and education, was unable to even hold a book to read for her young son.

Our Wish List

We are seeking donations to support more teachers to conduct more educational programs, to provide more scholarships and to build a new building at the school to house more students. For less than \$1 a day, a student's education can be sponsored, and for less than \$2 a day, a young woman can be sent to college. With your support, we also hope to subsidize student housing and institute a micro loan program to help poor families start /maintain their businesses and keep their girls in school.

Our Sponsor a Child Program at only \$200 per year will ensure English, computer programs, math, critical thinking, and social and environmental education for one of our students, classes which are vital to competitiveness in the future job market. Please support this program and help us find additional sponsors for our students.

Financial Coral Tree operates with great transparency in all areas, including its financial affairs. Any financial inquiries should be directed to **Mike Kovalich** (CFO) or Chenda Chhi (President).



The Foundation’s finances appear healthy. After raising nearly \$150,000 in 2017, and an additional \$10,000 plus in January 2018, as well as paying expenses and building the school, the Foundation had nearly \$50,000 in cash on hand, sufficient to fund existing programs in 2018. Similarly, we received \$98,000 in contributions in 2018, \$9,000 more than expected, and spent \$7,000 less than expected. We thus have enough on hand to fund our basic programs in 2019, but more funds are needed if the Foundation is to expand its after school English and computer classes, award new scholarships and begin to fund programs on the wish list and expand our efforts to reach junior and senior high school age students.

President's Message



Dear Friends and Supporters:

I hope this finds you well during this Holiday Season! It has been a good year for Coral Tree Education Foundation, and the villagers of Prek Snor have been rejoicing and grateful for our support to educate their children. Unfortunately, our friends and some of our communities in the United States have been hurt. My heart especially goes out to those who have suffered this wildfire season. As a refugee of a genocide and wars, I and other Cambodians identify with the horrors of losing one's home and having one's life turned upside down. A fire is much like the wars and bombings that destroyed our homes in the 70's. Life does go on, but not without the supports. As members of the Coral Tree community we believe in doing the best we can to help make life a little easier among our little family and reach out to support others in times of need. I am honored to be a part of the mission to help the Camp Fire victims and as always to be writing to you and to be of service to this community of friends, and especially to our Coral Tree children.

Our Foundation had a very successful event at the end of the Summer that raised more than \$15,000 at no cost to the Foundation: Every dollar raised can be spent helping our children. All the costs, including venue, food and wine and all auction items, were covered by our kind supporters! I am most grateful for their support and for those who rolled up their sleeves to help at the event. We also had a successful #GivingTuesday fundraising event via Facebook which we raised just a few dollars shy of \$6,000 from supporters from all over the United States. We hope to get 100% matched by PayPal. In addition, we are for the first time exposed to Google support, thanks to my niece, Linda Nhem Standen, for her efforts! She personally matches the donations from her colleagues and Google her employer matches all the funds raised. She raised over \$3,000. Finally, we just received word that we will receive a contribution of \$40,000 this year from Mathews Asia. I and our team are very grateful for this contribution which will finance half of the cost of current programs in 2019.

Our children still have so many needs. For example, we hope to feed the kids some healthy snacks, so they will stay healthy and look forward to learning. Some of the children need medical attention as they are clearly malnourished. Our college women are hardworking and resilient and are grateful to have the opportunity to go to college. They face many challenges, but they are steadfastly attempting to complete their education despite family or social obstacles.

Besides all the immediate needs listed above, we also work to help preserve the traditional culture of Cambodia and improve the future of its gentle people who have suffered incredible trauma, by providing both academic education and strengthening character. We teach our students the importance of giving back to their people and the world. While we focus on the girls and young women, we educate the boys and men in the community too. Gender equality will benefit not just girls and women, but also the boys and men as they together fight poverty, rebuild their communities and develop their country.

We are bringing the world to the children of this remote village that does not have a strong internet signal by way of what we call "Internet in the box". Our computer lab, which should be completed installed by the end of this year, consumes little energy and needs no direct internet connection, but will be filled with materials necessary to educate the children. Our long-term goal is to teach the children English, computer literacy, math and critical thinking that will prepare them well either to enter the job market right out of high school or to continue on to higher education.

Thank you for your support and the support of our team of dedicated individuals who believe that "Education is the key to Global Peace and has power to change lives." There are so many names of our kind supporters that we could not fit into this newsletter; we greatly appreciate all you have done and hope you can continue or even increase your efforts. Please always keep in mind that you have helped to make a difference in so many lives!!!

Wishing you and family a Wonderful Holiday Season with Joy, Peace and Good Health!

With great appreciation,

Chenda

How You Can Help

There are many ways you can help Coral Tree besides making monetary donations. You will become a part of something bigger than yourself and will help make the world a better place. I invite you to consider some of these options of which you can get involved:

- *Ask your friends or your employers/employees to match your donations.*
- *Make Coral Tree a charitable organization of choice for all gift giving platforms of your companies.*
- *Connect us with people you feel may have an interest in supporting Coral Tree.*
- *Contribute on behalf of someone special.*
- *Ask people to send donations to Coral Tree in lieu of gifts to you.*
- *Attend our fun events.*
- *Share your talents and expertise in graphic design, marketing, public relations, teaching and much more.*
- *Sponsor a child for just \$200 a year.*
- *Sponsor a young woman for four-years of college tuition for just \$2,400.*

Happy Holidays & Happy New Year

We wish you and your family Peace, Love, Good Health and Prosperity!!!

