

Cambodia Corps Update

Spring 2020

Hey everyone, it was another gratifying winter spent with your students in Phnom Penh and out in the boondocks looking for new candidates. We were able to return home in the nick of time, Cambodia was shutting down as we left, and Michigan soon after we returned. Glad to be back even if we are in lockdown.

Once again, the college students in the ISC proved to be happy and proud of what they were accomplishing. They never lose sight of the fact that they are only there because of the kindness of you, our CCI supporters. People living on the other side of the world who are trusting they will use their education to better their community. Given the gift of an education that would never have been possible without that kindness. All they are required to do is return home and work in a job that will help their people. For them, the commitment is too easy, a no brainer. Escape poverty and repay kindness with work that benefits the community. Earn an education that makes them role models. Become an example of what hard work will do for a good future. We see it when they are students, working on their education, and again when we visit them back in their province at work. It is gratifying each and every time. We know it is only possible because of you and your belief in a future for the people who stood beside us in a time of war. They thank you, and we thank you.

The two graduates, Phen and Chanhea, who were hired by World Hope International are both working on a project for a village that will generate income to be used to fund and maintain a clean water system for the village. It involves developing an Eco-Tourism business. Adventure camping, guided hikes to see a rare Gibbon and meals. The two are helping train villagers as guides, cooks and maintenance workers in addition to bookkeeping, banking and payroll. Once established, the ongoing proceeds from the tourism business will be turned over to the village elders to fund and manage a clean water system for the village with wells, piping, metering, billing and testing.

However, due to the countrywide shutdown caused by the Coronavirus, as of April they were both pressed into service as Health Information workers.



Chanhea with Corona literature

Ket, a nursing graduate has been working for a Catholic Church clinic in Phnom Penh while waiting for a new clinic to be built near her home, where she has been promised a job. Meanwhile, her manager reports that since Ket has been at the clinic, the number of Montagnards willing to make the journey to PP for treatment has doubled now they know there is someone there who speaks their language and is trained in medicine.

This year we decided to push further up into the tri-border area in order to reach out to villages there that we had not had contact with before. Our manager, Maren, had a girl recommended to him that he felt would make a good candidate for our high school program and hopefully college as well. He was not able to make a home visit or interview her family during the rainy season as the roads were impassable. So, he arranged for us to meet her in the province capital, Ban Lung and she became our guide for the next two days. Thou is a tenth grader, of the Kerkouk tribe. Her village is near the Lao border. From the capital, we drove a couple of hours, left the main road, drove for about 3 more hours on a truck trail, crossing twelve log & plank bridges. To say her village is remote would be an understatement. As we bounced along, we learned that Thou has four younger brothers and a widowed mother. As a young child, she asked to go to school after her girlfriends told her it was fun. And it was for her too, so she worked at doing well. When her friends decided to quit school around the seventh grade, she told them she wanted to stay so she could earn money in the future. They said she could just take money from her mother and not go to school. But she stayed. Asked what happened to her friends, she says they all have been married by arrangement and now have at least one or more kids.

She feels that it is her responsibility to help raise and support her family. She intends to do it by becoming a teacher. When asked what she would do if she did not pass the examination to enter Teachers Training, she said she would simply wait until the next year and take it again. She is determined to be a teacher. We also learned she speaks five languages and is learning English because she knows that it is important. She works weekends cleaning houses and pulling weeds to earn money to lessons. We know addition to our



Thou at her family home

pay for her English
Thou will be a good
program.