



The Cambodian Family News

Become a Friend of The Cambodian Family

Congratulations to the Class of 2006!

June is the best time for our Youth Program to celebrate accomplishments because this is the season of promotion and graduation. On June 16th, The Cambodian Family held its annual graduation party to recognize and honor the achievements of our youths.

About 120 youths, their families, volunteers and staff participated. The program included talks from several Youth Program alumni who offered advice to the new graduates on the importance of continuing their education and preparing for a successful career.

We are pleased that all 6 of our 12th graders graduated this year and all will be attending college in the fall. These colleges include California State University, Fullerton, Orange Coast College, and Santa Ana



Century High School graduates Chan Ly, Chanrottana Tan and Lyheang Trang are proud to show off their diplomas.

College. Among our graduates was Viri Gomez, the first of our Latino youths to graduate from high school.

During the event we continued our tradition of awarding scholarship grants to our graduates. This year, The

Cambodian Family handed out \$1320 in scholarship money.

We are proud of the accomplishments of our youths and look forward to continuing our tradition of helping youths from low-income families create new paradigms of achievement.

Our Adults Graduate, Too!

"Ladies and Gentlemen, please welcome..." Each of 21 graduates received a rousing introduction as they approached the stage to receive their certificates last month. These were the members of the 6th graduating class of *Building the Future*, Orange County's Family Childcare

Training Program for refugees.

The graduates included a contingent of Vietnamese women from The Cambodian Family, a group of Somali women from East African Community of Orange County, and a group of Middle Eastern women from

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Our Vietnamese Childcare Training graduates.

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Did you know?

- The Cambodian Family serves approximately **1,000** clients each year.
- In the past 10 years, we have served clients from **41** different countries of the world.
- In the past 10 years, we have found jobs for over **4,000** clients.
- **103** of our Youth Program participants have already graduated from high school.
- **94** of our Youth Program alumni have gone on to attend college.

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Annual Youth Camping Trip a ‘Mammoth’ Experience

For 5 months, our students had been counting the days—ever since they voted to go to Mammoth for our annual camping trip. Altogether, 19 trekked north last month to celebrate the end of the school year—13 students, 2 Camfam alumni volunteers, 3 staff and a baby.

After a six-hour drive, we set up tents and got familiar with the area. Then we made dinner, ate, cleaned up, and sat around the camp fire and relaxed. We organized everyone into teams that took turns cooking, cleaning, and gathering of firewood.

The next day, Tuesday, everyone had lots of fun catching fish and swimming in the

crystal clear water of June Lake. We caught nine fish which we cooked for dinner that night.

On Wednesday, there was more swimming and fishing and a barbecue. Thursday morning, we hiked around Lake Mary, played in the snow, and had a snowball fight. In the afternoon, we tried out the fishing at Mammoth Creek. We caught about 50 trout! Everyone got at least one.

By Friday morning, many of the students wanted to stay longer, but the staff were worn out! And, it was time to get back to O.C. - Sundaram Rama



Students have good luck fishing at Mammoth as they celebrate the end of the school year.



June is the time to relax and celebrate with family and friends after gaining hard-earned high school diplomas.

Her First Graduation: a Pre-Kinder Diploma

Ingrid Zepeda may not be in kindergarten yet but she already has 3 1/2 years of schooling and a diploma to her credit. Ingrid is a recent graduate of the Prekinder program, offered at The Cambodian Family and taught by teachers from the Santa Ana Unified School District.

For her graduation ceremony, Ingrid, her hair done up in curls, joined 25 other 4-year olds in performing songs for their proud parents and other invited guests. It was clear that Ingrid felt a huge sense of

accomplishment when she received her diploma with her classmates.

Ingrid first came to The Cambodian Family while she was still a one-year old. She participated in our School Readiness program (along with her brother, who graduated from prekinder last year) while her mother attended ESL class at our center.

We believe the time Ingrid spent here has provided her with the self-esteem and skills needed to be successful in

school. We have enjoyed watching her grow up and expect great things from her in the future.



A proud graduate of our Prekinder class.





One Youth Finds a Creative Way to Give Back

At age 13, Kuntheary Yin has not yet started high school, but she already has ideas about how to “turn dreams into reality.” Knowing that The Cambodian Family is looking for financial support for our Youth Program, she came up with a creative idea—she decided to make and sell smoothies on hot summer afternoons and donate all proceeds to help sustain the Youth Program.

She got the idea from watching her parents, immigrants from Cambodia who work at a local donut shop. She saw them making smoothies and decided she could do the same. Her mom donates the basic ingredients and Kuntheary brings them to our center and blends them, providing a

refreshing break on hot summer afternoons. So far, her smoothies come in two flavors—mango and honeydew.

Day 1 of the enterprise was a success, raising \$10 for the program.

Kuntheary seems to have a good eye for business. She helps out sometimes at her parents’ store. She says that some day, after college, she may want to start her own business, but she has many other interests.

This 13-year old, the only daughter in a family of four children, has been a regular in our Youth Program ever since 3rd grade. She is a conscientious student and is quite mature for her age. As she prepares to enter Century High School in the

fall as a 9th grader, we look forward to seeing her creativity and entrepreneurship continue to develop.



Kuntheary (left) and friends Lida Seap and Kevin Choy prepare cool summer treats to raise funds for the Youth Program.

Our Adults Graduate, too! (continued from page 1)

Access California Services.

Besides receiving their Childcare Training Certificates, the graduates had the opportunity to reflect on their past experiences. They had just completed a training course that included lessons in child development and business management, as well as First Aid and CPR. The graduation ceremony

concluded with a wonderful multiethnic, potluck lunch that included Asian, African, and Middle Eastern delicacies.

Although this was the final graduation of our Federally-funded, 3-year program, we are planning a final gala celebration for all previous graduates in September.



Congratulations, graduates!

An Interview with Employment Specialist Quang Huu Tran

Once newcomers from Vietnam and Cambodia get settled, the first thing many do is call “Mr. Quang.” Quang Huu Tran has worked as an Employment Specialist at The Cambodian Family since 1992. He has been highly successful at finding jobs for those who speak little English and have little or no work experience in America.

Quang works in a program sponsored by the Freeman Foundation that serves refugees and immigrants from Southeast Asia. During the program’s first four years, Quang has proven his expertise by placing over 650 people in jobs, many of them more than once.

How is the Orange County job market changing for newcomers? “There has been a reduction of electronic assembly jobs,” says Quang, “but mechanical, pharmaceutical, and medical assembly jobs are holding up well.”

Quang also noted that companies in the South County area must pay more to attract workers from the central cities. “The same job that pays \$7 in Santa Ana pays \$9 in Lake Forest,” he remarked.

And what has he observed about refugee and immigrant job seekers? “Those who come from Vietnam and Cambodia think

America will be paradise. Many are shocked when they find out how hard they must work.” He added, “Our job is to help them overcome that shock.”



Mr. Quang has 14 years of experience finding jobs for refugees and immigrants.



Become a Friend of The Cambodian Family

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A Multiethnic Human Services Agency Promoting Social Health



The Cambodian Family is a nonprofit organization, founded in 1980 by Cambodian refugees to serve newly-arriving refugees in Santa Ana's Minnie Street Neighborhood. Over the years, in response to critical needs of other uprooted peoples, we evolved into a multi-ethnic organization offering a comprehensive set of human services to immigrants and refugees from all over the world.

The mission of The Cambodian Family is to promote social health. We do this by providing opportunities for refugee and immigrant families to develop the knowledge, skills, and desires for creating health and well-being in their lives.

We currently offer an after school Youth Program, as well as provide services in community health, employment, school readiness for young children, human trafficking intervention, and a training program to help refugees and immigrants open their own family childcare businesses. Our clients come from many countries, including Cambodia, Vietnam, Mexico, Iran, Afghanistan, Russia, Ethiopia, and Somalia.



Thank you! to Our Current Funders

As we begin fiscal year 2006-2007, we acknowledge and thank our major funders.

Our Youth Program receives funding from numerous sources. Government funders include the **Federal Office of Refugee Resettlement**, and the **Santa Ana Community Development Corporation**. Private funders include **The California Wellness Foundation**, **Wells Fargo Foundation**, **Wells Fargo Bank**, **Orange County Community Foundation**, and the **Draper Family Foundation Fund**. The **Orange County United Way** supports ongoing youth activities and helps us build our capacity to raise funds for our Youth Program. Others providing major support include: the **Sidney Stern Memorial Trust**, **Edison International**, **Target Stores** and **Union Bank**.

Our *School Readiness Program* is supported by the **Orange County Children and Families Commission** as well as by the **Merage Foundation**.

Our *Employment Services Program* finds jobs for newly arrived refugees, and also helps them improve relationships, through a contract with the **Orange County Social Services Agency**. Funding for this program comes from the **Federal Office of Refugee Resettlement**. We serve refugees and immigrants throughout the County through a grant from **The Freeman Foundation**, located in Stowe, VT and managed by the **TCC Group** in New York. We provide employment and other services to local Santa Ana residents as part of the Daisy Wheel Network through funding from the **Santa Ana Federal Empowerment Zone Corporation**.

Our *Community Health Program* provides healthcare accessing and also assistance to human trafficking victims through grants from the **Sisters of St. Joseph Healthcare Foundation**. Also supporting healthcare accessing is the **Healthcare Foundation for Orange County**. We provide counseling and referral for local families as part of the **Minnie Street Coalition**, supported by the Orange County Social Services Agency's **Families and Community Together**.



Our graduates and their parents also thank our funders and donors.