



TEEN CHALLENGE CAMBODIA

Soung Lay's Freedom from Alcohol



Soung Lay knew he had a problem. His drinking was out of control. At one point, he even asked his wife and children to tie him up in the house so that he would not be able to go drinking. They followed his request. However, they did not tie him tight enough, and when his alcohol craving surfaced, he struggled out of the ropes and made his way to his friend's house for a local rice wine.

Like many young men, Soung Lay grew up drinking with his friends in rural Cambodia. As he got older, he made his living through rice farming, but this is an occupation which also allows for long stretches of leisure time, leisure time he would spend drinking.

Then, in his 40s, Soung Lay's habit began to worsen. He found himself drinking at times up to three liters of rice wine every day. As he alcohol addic-

tion worsened, he would frequently argue with his wife. The arguments at home then made him want to escape to drink even more. He was in a vicious cycle.

Soung Lay's wife, however, was a Christian, and she started reaching out for help. She had often invited Soung Lay to attend church with her, and he would go along with her. He never went in, though. As his wife went in, he would travel on to his friend's house to drink. Soung Lay's wife asked her pastor for help.

Her pastor knew Pastor Mab, who is the manager of the Teen Challenge Men's Center in rural Takeo, not so far from where Soung Lay and his family were living. Pastor Mop and the other pastor encouraged Soung Lay to enter the Teen Challenge recovery program, and finally, Soung Lay agreed.

As is typical for most clients, the first three months were the hardest. However, during that time, God was also working in Soung Lay's heart, and Soung Lay became open to the staff's encouragement and instruction. He was eager to help with the farming in the fields at the center too, even when he did not yet have the physical strength for that kind of work.

The staff, however, took notice of his heart and his eagerness to help, and they encouraged him more and more. They continued to share with him about the gospel too, and he eventually became a Christian.

He also grew in his agricultural skills, learning how to care for pigs and cattle. The staff asked if he would be willing to stay on after completing the program to help work in the fields and care for the animals. He agreed, and today, the clients at the center call him "Om," a term of respect for older men which means "uncle." The younger clients look to him for encouragement too, and he shares about the transformation in his life with them.

Soung Lay and his family are overjoyed with this dramatic change in his life. He said, "Without Teen Challenge, I would have died just like all my friends."

WAYS TO GIVE

SMALL

BUYING ENTRY SUPPLIES

for new clients and children which may include but is not limited to...

Clothes, Bedding, Mosquito Net and Toiletries.
\$120 per year

MEDIUM

OUTREACH MINISTRY

\$3,600 per year

HOUSING AND EDUCATION

for clients's children
\$1,500 per year

FAITH BASED INTEGRATION

\$1,000 per year

LARGE

FOOD SUPPLIES

Men's Center: \$9,900 per year
Women's Center: \$4,500 per year

TRAINING / REHABILITATION PROGRAM

Men's Center: \$8,000 per year
Women's Center: \$4,000 per year

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STREET OUTREACH

Recently, when our Teen Challenge SUV arrived in Phnom Penh's Wat Phnom district, a place known for prostitution, women started running away. They saw our staff dressed in matching polo shirts, and they thought we were police officers coming to round them up.

Especially around national holidays and other major national events, police in Phnom Penh crack down on those who live on the streets. They bring the homeless and sex workers and others to the notorious Prey Speu detention center. This is not a treatment center or a recovery center but rather a government holding center for the city's most vulnerable residents. Local media regularly report allegations of abuse, rape, and even murder at the overcrowded center.

Some of the women that night, however, realized who we were and stepped out of the shadows to talk with us. They knew that we were not there to threaten or abuse; instead, we were coming to build relationships with them. As we talked, they shared about the tremendous fear among the women on the streets and the experiences that some had already had at Prey Speu.

The Teen Challenge way of care and recovery is radically different than anything these women have ever experienced. When they hear "Women's Center," they instantly think of places like Prey Speu. However, we want them to know that there is hope, that there is a different way, and the first step is that we give them a chance to know us. We hope that one day they might accept our invitation to a new life.





Thanks to GDG for their support of our development activities!

* indicated sections are part of Teen Challenge Cambodia's development activity (J628) with Global Development Group (ABN 57 102 400 993), for which gifts over \$2 to GDG are tax deductible. Any excess funding may support other approved activities. Any gifts or costs mentioned are representative only, and no non-development activities (welfare, evangelism or political) are a part of or funded by GDG. For more info: www.gdg.org.au/InfoJ628 Australian donors can support this project (J628) directly through GDG's website: www.gdg.org.au/GiveToJ628



PROGRESS ON THE WOMEN'S CENTER

The vision of having our own center for our women's program is becoming a reality. On March 7, 2016, we began laying the foundations for the center which is being built on the land we purchased on the outskirts of Phnom Penh.

Since we started the women's program in 2011, we have been renting various facilities. As Phnom Penh grows and expands, the rent prices in the city continue to rise. At one location, the landlord wanted to raise the rent from \$600 per month to \$800 per month.

The rising rent costs have led us to make tough decisions to move to smaller facilities with lower rent. Moving our clients and staff requires a lot of time and effort, and our staff face challenges in operating in smaller spaces too.

Counseling and vocational training become difficult without proper space for privacy and for teaching.

However, we hope by the end of the year that the construction will be finished, and we will be able to move our pro-

gram to our new, permanent location.

The final plan includes a center with four buildings, and this will create a spacious environment for serving our clients. We will have adequate space for clients' rooms, a kitchen, office, counseling, teaching, and vocational training.

We are excited about the progress, and we are excited that we can soon stop paying rent and focus on our clients' recovery in our own center.