

Youra Moeun made a journey as a 9 year old from the banks of the Mekong River in Cambodia to securing a PHD in Biomolecular Chemistry in the U.S. at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Martin and Sharon Bushue were posted in Phnom Penh, Cambodia in 2003 with Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) and began supporting about twenty children with food, shelter, and school fees/supplies. Youra (red t-shirt), came to Phnom Penh from a nearby village in Kampong Cham when she discovered an opportunity to attend school. She was a serious student and did very well. Her most important request at the time was a Cambodian chemistry book.



Before the Bushues departed their assignment in Cambodia, arrangements were established to continue the support for the “Cambodian School Kids” thru their high school years. This effort included multiple trips back to Cambodia to manage their progress.



In 2013 Matthew Bushue, Martin and Sharon's son, was working with an NGO in Cambodia and hired Youra for a few weeks as an assistant in Phnom Penh to help with their program. Later Matt started the process of getting Youra accepted to Montana State University in Bozeman. With his help along with other friends at the University, Youra graduated with highest honors in Chemical Engineering and won a full scholarship to the University of Nebraska where she was awarded with a PHD in December 2023.



The Kirby Simon Trust provided two generous grants that were very helpful in getting the "Cambodian School Kids" through their high school years. The grants came at a time when funding from friends and family were low and therefore very timely. Many of these kids are now leading productive lives with families of their own.