



## **Cross-Cultural Ministries, Inc.**

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### **As school begins, Sandee Sledd reflects back on May's graduation.**

I love to attend high school graduations and this year was very special. On this warm evening in May two of Cross-Cultural Ministries' Cambodian teens are graduating.

The commencement exercise is held at an outside stadium. As the graduates walk across the field, we all excitedly look for our friends. Virginia and I are sitting beside one of the proud parents.

An older brother is behind us with Cambodian twin girls who graduated a day earlier from another high school. They are beautiful, articulate and ready to enter Perimeter College. But tonight, our attention is on one teenager who is the senior class president and another student who is a responsible, musically gifted young woman. Their parents were refugees from Cambodia.

Years ago, these teens attended the Pearl Lane Center. Their parents had limited English skills and could not help them with their homework.

At that time the children attending the Ministry Center were mostly Vietnamese and Cambodians. The Vietnamese children sat on one side of the room, the Cambodian children on the other side. The main reason for this separation was language, but also the families did not trust each other. They were haunted by the memories of war when the Vietnamese invaded Cambodia.

Every Friday, the children learned Bible stories and sang songs in Margo's Good News Club. Soon they were reciting Bible verses in English. Change came into their hearts. They learned to laugh and play games together. Gradually, the children began to trust each other and become good friends.

Their joy at the center was often in sharp contrast to what they were experiencing in their homes.

Yes, their parents loved them dearly. But the families were struggling with cultural adjustments, learning a new language, finding a job, cooking and eating strange foods, living in a city, and going to school. Their parents were overwhelmed, but they persevered. Eventually, most were able to buy a home.

There was music in their home, but there was also sadness. Their parents remembered seeing people beaten to death, smelling dead bodies and days of near starvation. At that time, the USA did not offer holistic assistance for the refugees. They suffered in silence.

CCM helped the families with doctor's appointments, language studies, Bible studies, and practical assistance. The homework assistance, Bible clubs and enrichment programs for the children helped the children express their feelings, succeed in school and learn about the love of our Lord.

CCM was there to help when these graduates were born. CCM is still here for them as they are graduating from high school. The twins who graduated from another high school had been at the Ministry Center from pre-kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. At this time they are not followers of Jesus, but the seed has been planted in their heart.

The Class President is a drummer for a local Christian congregation. The young lady has been a lead singer in a church's worship team

Tonight, we watch excitedly as they receive their diplomas. Who knows what the future holds for these young people? The imprints on their heart with the gospel and the love wrapped around them by the volunteers and staff at CCM will carry them into their future years. **Our God is faithful. We can trust Him to continue to work in their lives.**

**You have been faithful too. Thank you for your prayers and gifts to CCM. Thank you for your part in ministering to these young people.**

### **The Present and the Future**

Cross-Cultural Ministries is again using the apartment at Pearl Lane in Chamblee for ministering to the communities of Chamblee and Doraville. Most of the residents in the surrounding complexes are Hispanic. We currently serve from the apartment in the following ways:

- Functional English classes for women from Mexico and El Salvador
- Functional English and reading classes for families from Cambodia
- Bible study for Cambodian-speaking adults
- Weekly homework assistance for middle-school students beginning on September 5<sup>th</sup>
- Weekly Bible club beginning on October 6<sup>th</sup>.

Two churches are considering using the apartment in association with CCM. They hope to start an after-school program and an evening Bible study as their part in transforming the community. In this they would be putting their prayers into action by becoming an answer to those prayers. I am very grateful that they might use the Pearl Lane location to spread the Good News.

We are presently splitting the apartment rent with another ministry. However, Cross-Cultural Ministries needs financial assistance to continue to pay our half of the rent. **If you do not contribute to CCM already, will you think about partnering with us to enable CCM to remain in the apartment complex and in the area so that we might continue to be able to share Christ Jesus with them by meeting their practical and spiritual needs?**

Thank you so much for your financial support and prayers!

Blessings to you,

Virginia Cosgrove