



September 2, 2019

Good Morning Beautiful!

It's a rainy Tuesday morning here (a nice break from the heat). Breakfast and morning exercises are done and all the wee ones are getting dry in class. I thought I'd take these few quiet moments with my now cold coffee to extend a quick thank you to you, the members of St. Luke's parish, and your many supporters in Victoria. I know your annual tea is coming up and I thought it would be nice to have a recap of what's happened this year. It is the continued support of communities around the globe that has made it all possible.

In just the past year, we have grown as a school, broadened the projects we run to support the community, expanded our staff, revamped and expanded our curriculum, and added 40 more students. But, there's still much work to be done. We do this through the reverse tuition incentive of sending rice home each month to reward attendance at school. Rice is the center of the success we've had in retaining and developing the education of over 250 children in the villages around us.

Early on in 2019, we added a 7th classroom to our campus, which allowed us to welcome in 40 more students from families in need. With this came employing a new teacher and ensuring each new ABCs and Rice student was enrolled and fully supported both here and at government school.

A short while later, an international school from China came and built us a proper field, complete with a roof! Now our physical education program can grow. Not even the rain can keep our students from volleyball, soccer, dance, and other forms of movement. We are excited to have a new facility that can promote sport and health in a safer environment.

In June, a long-term dream of our project was fulfilled — the opening of a Food Bank. The Food Bank currently sponsors seven families who are most in need. Each week, we partner with area hotels and restaurants who donate fresh vegetables, breads, and rice. The families arrive every Sunday and get to use our voucher system to go shopping for canned goods, fresh food, dry noodles, rice, and even some donated clothes and home goods. This initiative has helped us better connect with the community and further instill education as a path to a brighter future.

While our core values at ABCs and Rice rest firmly in educating the poorest children around Siem Reap, our organization continues to grow in its connection to the community, building trust with the families we support, and helping them to see how their children's education will be life-changing in the future. Not to mention, our new initiatives help offer new opportunities to our students.

The work that you do, Iris, along with your community, to fundraise towards the Rice for a Year campaign has proven invaluable to our mission. Without rice, the families make more short-term choices for their children — everything from begging on the street to seeking employment in extremely poor conditions. Rice is the key to making the right choice and coming to school each day.

Each month, our rice program costs more than \$600 USD, making up 20% of our monthly school budget. Last year, The Rice for a Year project covered over 50% of the rice needed to keep the children coming to school. We are so grateful for your continued support of this initiative!

On behalf of myself, the staff and the more than 250 children at ABCs and Rice, Thank You!

Sincerely,
Tammy 😊
Founder, ABCs and Rice