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*May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.*  
*II Thessalonians 2:16-17.*



## Encouraging High School Students in Mai District

**A Story of Transformation** by Maem Munlom & Carolyn Dean for World Renew Laos

Ms. Maem Munlom has been working with World Renew as part of the agriculture team in the Mai district of Phongsaly Province since September 2014. This year, she turned twenty-five, and has been reflecting on her life. She wanted to do something for the local community, so she decided to organize a special event for high school students, to encourage them in their studies. Over 100 people participated in the event in February, including several other current and former World Renew staff; nine teachers from the secondary school; the former head of the Department of Education, Mr. Kee Xiong; and 86 students from the school.

The day was filled with a variety of fun and educational activities, including games, such as blowing up balloons until they burst; passing flowers around a circle until the music stopped; and a memory game in which each person in the circle had to say their name and something they liked, and then each person had to remember and say what those before them had said also! They also learned an active English song and a dialogue in English in which they had to move around and practice with others. Several young people and older adults shared their own school experiences and advice about how to learn well and learn through helping others.

The lunch break included bread, lettuce, fried eggs, and tomatoes for making sandwiches, a new experience for many. The food was spread out on banana leaves to model not creating more garbage. After lunch, the party continued with more games and then a time of sharing, which focused on the commitment and love of parents in supporting a student's education, and the impact this should have on a student's commitment to be grateful and study hard. In response to the discussion, 8 students pledged to be better students in the future, including two high school students.

A student from one of our target villages said "Someone came to my village and agreed to help me study in high school in town. Their support and this day has been a big encouragement to me."



Another student who had been struggling with the loss of both his father and baby brother was lifted up by the event, saying "I had some problems recently, and felt discouraged to study, but this activity helped encourage me to continue to study and finish high school this year."

At the end of the program, we split into two groups and provided a public service by cleaning up garbage around the Nam Nga bridge and the district meeting hall.

For Maem, it was special to be a part of a group of people excited to help organize the event. Everyone was a volunteer and all of the funds were donated by members of the community and project staff. Maem's heart told her to do something for others using what she knew and what she had to offer and this desire was fulfilled on that day. She got great satisfaction from seeing the enthusiasm of all involved, especially the students.



# World Renew Laos and Fennema Family Recent and Upcoming Events

- Monica greatly enjoyed her experience at REBOOT from July 22 to 29. REBOOT is a special event bringing together young people who have been living overseas that are entering a time of transition back in Canada. She has written a reflection and has now moved into residency at Redeemer University on August 31 and is looking forward to what she will learn.
- School in Laos starts early. Moe Moe started working on August 6 and Maria and Matthew's first day at school was on August 10.
- Mike flew back to Laos on September 4.
- Matthew recently fell and injured his arm, which means no basketball and no swimming. Thankfully it's not broken but is healing slower than we had hoped. Please pray for him.
- During November and December, Marrion Omanyo, the Project Advisor working with the Xieng Khouang Project, was supposed to be undertaking her first Connections Tour in Canada and the US. Due to an automobile accident and some broken bones, this tour has been postponed. Please pray for her healing.
- During July in Phongsaly, and August in Xieng Khouang, our projects hosted stakeholder meetings to provide a wide group of government officials at ministry, province and district levels with an update on project progress and plans for the coming year.

## Monica Reflects on her Experience at REBOOT

ReBoot was an amazing opportunity for me to see that it is possible to put words to what I'm experiencing, and can expect to experience, during this time of transition from living in Laos to living in Canada. I came to truly understand the importance of processing through my thoughts and emotions in the midst of transition. I was given practical tools to support me: people to develop relationships with, testimonies to relate to, Scripture to reflect upon, frameworks to follow, food to share, adventures by which to be strengthened.

Most importantly, I felt the love of God in which a deep sense of peace came to manifest itself within the very depths of my heart. It doesn't mean that I've got it all figured out, or that this new season of life is going to be a piece of cake. But, it is one more step in the direction I feel God is calling me.

## What's that for?

Take a close look at this photo. What could this item be used for?

Don't hesitate or be shy, but send your best guess to Mike at [fivemfamily@gmail.com](mailto:fivemfamily@gmail.com).

The mystery will be revealed in the next newsletter!



## Mystery Revealed

### Your Guesses were:

- a home for little bugs
- a child's game
- some kind of trap

This was a small trap for birds. We were walking around up in the mountains, looking at fields where farmers had planted cardamom and other crops. When I saw several of these little devices scattered about the fields, I was curious. We even found one which had successfully trapped a bird, and thus provided a meal for the farmer's family.

