


## BODYWORKS

## PHYSICAL THERAPY

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS 

Magazine Committee/งุณภృกัเณภีตโตะเยรஸูู ..... 4
Message from the Executive Director. ..... 5
CMAA'sPresident's Note. ..... 6
CMAA Staff and Board of Directors ..... 7
 ..... d/9
กิิติยรธงเรีฬ ..... פ๐
 ..... จอ
From hell and back: A Cambodian returns ..... 13
ตุรีธุะภา ..... ๑ะ
Multi-Racial Garden ..... 15
 ..... จฟ
CMAA Capital Campaign. ..... 20
Readings for Pleasure ..... 23
โษรวกสตษาตษย้อ ..... 24
 ..... 25
Cambodia Sweet Cambodia. ..... 26
Arthur J. Santos, Jr.
Cambodian Thanksgiving. ..... 26
Young Parent Program ..... 29
Editor's Words

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Khmer Lowell Magazine is a quarterly publication published by the Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association (CMAA) of Greater Lowell, Inc.

All articles published represent the views of the authors; they do not necessarily represent the views of the CMAA or its funders. Your contribution such as articles, folk stories, modern fiction, poems, news, etc. are happily and gratefully welcomed. Please, limit the document to 1-3 (11x8) pages, and make sure to include the author's name, address, telephone, and signature of the responsible person. Khmer Lowell Magazine committee reserves the right to publish an entire document and/or in part based on space and budget.

Besides, we would like to ask for your good heart to help us by subscribing to, or advertising in the magazine. Your generosity is needed to help us continue in publishing this KL Magazine. The subscription rate is $\$ 14.90$ per year, including shipping and handling. Thank you!
















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## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear friends!


Already we are a few weeks into the New Year 2001. I hope that you and your loved ones have had a wonderful holiday season. The year 2000 was a memorable year for us and we are looking forward to many more wonderful things in the year 2001. And welcome again to another edition of the Khmer Lowell magazine, a quarterly publication of the Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association of Greater Lowell, Inc.

In early November 2000, and for the first time in the history of the Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association since its inception in 1984, we were able to go back and help out more than 2,000 families with 55 pounds of rice plus about $\$ 5$ cash for each family who were left devastated by the worst disastrous flood in Cambodia. The flood had claimed many people and animal life and had also caused tremendous damages to their rice paddies and crops as well as other essential elements of Cambodia's sustenance. We thank you so very much for helping to make our humanitarian effort become a reality.

Now, back in Lowell, Massachusetts, there are still many things to do to further assist many more individuals within the Cambodian-American and the Southeast Asian community of Greater Lowell to reach their fullest potential in the American's society. There are a few new and exciting projects that we are working on. One is the Refugee Family Strengthening Project, newly funded for two years by the federal governmental agency known as SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration), where we will be focusing on a number of components such as helping to strengthen the relationships within the family unit, family and surrounding community, family and domestic issues, family health and mental issues, and intergenerational group. With this new program, we will be able to further assess and study the dynamics of the refugee family and come up with alternative ways to help the refugee families to achieve harmonious relationships.

Another exciting project is the Adult Basic Education, funded for five years by the Massachusetts Department of Education. This project is designed to provide a comprehensive adult education for the refugees and immigrants from beginning to advance levels by using the best practical English instruction taught by professional bilingual teachers and support staff.

Yet, another program is the Asian Refugee and immigrant economic and educational opportunities, newly funded by the Freeman Foundation for the next two years. This program is designed to assist Cambodian and Southeast Asian refugees and immigrants, particularly those who are already working, to further improve their English language and computer skills so that they can advance in their workplaces, get better paid jobs, and ultimately increase their family economic standard.

In addition, we are receiving additional funding to support our different initiatives for the Youth Services Program as well. The State Department of Public Health awarded a four-year funding to implement the Youth Action Alliance Project that will be focusing on youth leadership development and policy the advocacy that are tobacco control related objectives.

Furthermore, the CMAA is process of organizing the Khmer New Year Festival 2001. The last event at the Tsongas Arena was a big success and we are looking to even bigger and better this coming April 14, 2001, which is the date for our Khmer New Year celebration. We are looking for artists, artisans, musicians, and people with different talents to help make our celebration more appealing and enjoyable. So if you know of someone, or you yourselves want to participate in different activities of the New Year Festival 2001, please do not hesitate to call and stop by at the CMAA's headquarter.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff members of the CMAA, we would like to express our sincere thanks for your continued support, guidance, encouragement and, best of all, the memorable year 2000.


Our task of serving the undeserved Southeast Asian population is not possible without you. May the New Year spirit bring you and your loved ones good health, wealth and much happiness!

Gratefully yours,
Samkhann C. Khoeun, Executive Director

## The $\mathscr{F}_{\text {resident's }} \mathscr{H}_{\text {ote }}^{\circ}$

## A Letter from the President

these boats from Cambodia to Lowell. I welcome anyone who wishes to help in this effort to get involved.

As President of the Board of Directors of the Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association, I am proud to present this issue of Khmer Lowell magazine. Through this magazine, we hope to share with you some of the rich cultural heritage of Lowell's Cambodian community, and to invite you to learn more about the many interesting aspects of our community and also of the CMAA's programs and services.

Certainly, in the last 16 years, CMAA has come a long way, just as Lowell's Cambodian community has. As I write this, CMAA has a staff of close to $\mathbf{4 0}$ dedicated people serving the people of Lowell. Through the generosity of the Courier Corporation, the CMAA has its own building. In coming years, the CMAA building will be developed into a professional and commercial center for the entire Southeast Asian community to be proud of.

This past Fall, I went to Cambodia, with the Executive Director, Samkhann Khoeun. We had many meetings with important government and NGO officials. Through our efforts, we received a promise from the Royal Government of Cambodia that they will donate two authentic racing boats to the CMAA for the Water Festival. A number of local business people have agreed to pay for the building of additional boats. We must now meet the challenge of raising the funds to transport

We also received promises that when the CMAA is ready to open its Cambodian Arts and Cultural museum, we will receive donations and assistance in locating valuable and culturally significant artifacts for display. The Cambodian Arts and Cultural Center will become an important part of Lowell's cultural scene, and will help the entire city, and its many visitors, to appreciate the rich cultural heritage that the Cambodian people bring with them to this country.

During the same trip, we brought over $\$ 20,000$ from the people of Greater Lowell to help relieve the suffering of the people affected by the disastrous floods in Cambodia. The money that was so generously given by the people of Greater Lowell was used to purchase rice and other necessities of life and distributed to flood victims. There were more than 2,000 families were being assisted with 55 pounds of rice plus about $\$ 5$ for each family.

However, as much as we enjoy our present success, the Board of Directors and the Staff of the CMAA have our eyes on the future. If you have any suggestions or ideas on how the CMAA can be improved, or can change to help the community more effectively, please write to the Board of Directors, Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association, located at 165 Jackson Street, Lowell, MA 01852.

Sincerely
Bunrith Lach, President

## STAFE-55\%25\%


Samkhann C.Khoeun, Executive Director Sothea Chiemruom, Deputy Director Thirith Hut, Fiscal Manager Jenny Lee, Accountant Joseph Sexton, Development Director Ronnie Mouth, Office Manager Holy Khut, Network Administrator

 Sovann Kheam, Community Health Educator
 Van Chey, Program Coordinator
Instructors: Ang Pheng, Bunrith Sath, Hong Net, Thomas Stylianos

COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT - สัజ్สรనిఖ్న Tom Giossi, CSE Program Director Paul Yin, Assistant Program Director/Job Developer Saloeun Kong, Case Manager/Recruiter Voeun Mao, Job Counselor/Case Worker Janice Pokorski, Skills Training Director Ny Ma, Administrative Assistant


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Ret Meach, Outreach Worker
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Brian B. Chen, Program Director
Maridy J. You, Case Worker
Thy Erica Chey, Case Worker

## PROJECT BASICS - ${ }^{\circ}$ ²

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Sak Seang, Bus Driver

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Sayon Soeun, Acting Program Director \&̌ Criminal Justice Coordinator Arn Chorn-Pond, Coordinator of Arts \& Culture Amy Fortner, Employment \& Education Coordinator Sak Seang, Khmer \& Peer Leadership Instructor Rany Him, Traditional Dance Instructor

FAMILY STRENGTHENING PROGRAM - 6ัล Pitou Phat, Youth Outreach Specialist

Dan McNeil, Denys Meung, Lorraine Cordeiro, Hai Chheng, Andy
L. Kim, Samuel San, Cheryl West, \& Ammarith Oum

Daniel Bumagin, B̌uilding Development Manager
Michael Schaaf, Financial Consultant
Walsh \& Co., Certified Public Accountant
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# Community NewS 

The Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association's Sixteen Years Anniversary Celebration

The Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association celebrated its sixteen-year anniversary on October 21, 2000 at the Doubletree Hotel. Participating Board of Directors and staff considered the event a great success. Represented at the function were many members of our community's non-profits and businesses. Over 350 people attended.

Highlights of the event include the H 20 band, guest singers from Cambodia and speeches from representatives of city and state governments. Mr. Bunrith Lach, Board President, congratulated staff for a job well done in the last sixteen year. Mr. Lach came in as Board of Director two years ago and has worked diligently with the organization to improve its services and to bring further social and economic development to the Hamilton Mill building that the CMAA currently occupies. Supporters and allies of his endeavors include our State Senator Steven Panagiatakos and Mayor Eileen Donoghue, who provided encouragement and congratulations for the CMAA's roles in providing needed services to Cambodians and other minorities in the city.

Sophath Pheang, one of our star youth shared his experience as a freshman at Brandeis University. He represents the success that the Youth Service Program is trying to achieve. The goal is to provide cultural, social and academic enrichment activities that work to encourage more young people to go on to college. Sophath Pheang is an exemplar to other young people. He received a full scholarship from a special program called Transitional Year Program (TYP) to attend Brandeis.

In most Cambodian community's function, a cultural performance is an essential part. Performance at the event included the CMAA's Friendship Dance Troupe and the Angkor Dance Troupe to bless the celebration and to bring new hopes and wishes for the future. Dances are a reflection of our characters, cultural attributes and social and religious values.

In the past sixteen years, there have been many community members who have contributed to the work of CMAA. Their contributions, whether it is money or moral support, had made a big difference in the way the organization has been able to reach people who need its services. The CMAA takes the opportunity to show its appreciation by publicly recognizing them. Community members awarded recognition include Mr. Andrew C. Bailey, Esq., of Kirkpatrick \& Lockhart LLP, Mr. Donald Washburn of Massbank, Ms. Monica Am of Amara Fashion Boutique, Ms. Maly Thai of Pailin Supermarket, Mr. Srun Sry of Battambang Market, Mr. Samouen Lek of Asia World Enterprise, Inc., and Mr. Kanara Loeu of Safeway Insurance Agency. CMAA thanks them for their many contributions toward social and economic development in our community.

## By Sophy Theam

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(1984-2000)
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## สตีษ゚ตัรรีส์



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1)- Mr. Andrew C. Bailey, Esq., Kirkpatrick \& Lockhart LLP 2)- Mr. Donald Washburn, MassBank<br>3)- Ms. Monica Am, Amara Fashion \& Boutique<br>4)- Ms. Maly Thai, Pailin Supermarket<br>5)- Mr. Srun Sry, Battambang Market<br>6)- Mr. Samoeun Let, Asia World Enterprise, Inc.<br>7)- Mr. Kanara Loeu, Safeway Insurance Agency







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# From hell and back: A Cambodian returns 

## More than 20 years after fleeing horrors, Lowell activist has an emotional homecoming

## By JASON LEFFERTS

## Sun Staff

LOWELL - More than 20 years after he left the horror of the Khmer Rouge, Samkhann Khoeun returned to a Cambodia very different than the one he knew.

The streets are full of men, women, and very often children, selling everything from silks to bracelets. Most people seem to put in grueling hours of back-breaking work with little reward.
"It has changed tremendously. It is more complicated than I remember, and the people seem to be getting poorer," Khoeun said.
"Everywhere there are signs of poverty and it seems people are working and working and working and aren't getting much out of it, sometimes less than $\$ 1$ a day."
Khoeun, the executive director of the Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association, was one of a group of about 15 activists from Lowell, New York, Vermont and elsewhere tha spent two weeks in Cambodia in an effort pro vide relief to flood-stricken areas, while strength-s ening the country's ties with the United States.

For Khoeun, however, the trip was alse a homecoming. He left Cambodia in 1979, and arrived in America on Nov. 5, 1984. Sixteen years later to the day, he returned.

Even though his homeland has changed significantly, the memories of what he left still affect him.
"It was really emotional prior to going home. I didn't think I would be able to face it," Khoeun said. "I was so scared. The bad memories of the Khmer Rouge were really in my mind. I didn't want to be reminded of the bad time. But also, I knew I needed to close that chapter in my mind."

While the atmosphere and the work in Cambodia have changed, it still holds for Khoeun many of the elements of home. Once settled in, he found many of the same comforts he knew more than 20 years ago.
"I broke down when I was there," Khoeun said. "When I was there I was completely at home with the sights and the smells and the rooster screaming at 3:30 in the morning."

Khoeun wants to preserve the traditions and history of Cambodia.

One of his missions on the trip was to create programs with Cambodian artists and schools. The CMAA and other American agencies are funding art classes and other instructional projects in Cambodia.
"We want to teach the younger generation about art and experience music or dance or puppetry," Khoeun said. "The hope is to continue the traditions, which are more or less dying traditions."

Khoeun and other CMAA officials such as Skills Training Director Janice Pokorski visited small villages and schools around the country. In some temples, they met with teachers and administrators as they tried to forge new relationships.
"We want to raise money here and allow others to teach them," Pokorski said. "There's a lot of hope there, and what's happening here will help."

During their trip, Pokorski and Khoeun also collected artifacts for a cultural and historical museum they plan to create at the CMAA's building on Jackson Street. Statues. Other items, enough to fill more than a halfdozen crates, are sitting in Cambodia and waiting to be brought to Lowell.

Before the touring group collected items to bring back, it dropped off food and money to 2,000 families ravaged by the severe flooding through much of Cambodia.

Lowell-area donors raised about $\$ 20,000$ for the effort, which provided a 25 of rice (about 50 pounds) U.S. dollar is worth about and $\$ 5$ for each family. One 3,900 Cambodian riels, and Khoeun said the money will go far in Cambodia.
"At least it helped them address their immediate needs," Khoeun said.

In some villages, children thronged around as the group passed out rice and money. Khoeun said the flooding devastated much of the country, and left many families struggling to survive.
"It is one of the worst floods in 75 years. Sixteen out of 21 provinces in Cambodian were flooded, especially where rice patty fields are," Khoeun said. "The damage is so incredible, it's really terrible."

## CMAA WOULD LIKE TO WISH EVERYONE A SUCCESSFUL NEW YEAR AND EXPRESS OUR APPRECIATION TO:

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Also, we would like to wish a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and Thanks to all of the CMAA Funders.




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# Cultivating and Flowering a Multi-racial Garden 

The world contains multi-human societies. These societies are representations of the environment in which we live as well as the physical attributes that we posses, such as skin colors, facial features, our ethnicity, beliefs, cultures and social norms and values. The human race is one with great potentials to become a garden of many flowers. One can compare members of the human race to a garden. With our physical features, our complexion, our mother tongues, our value and belief system, we represent a garden of many flowers. This is what makes us unique and beautiful. If one only imagines a garden with only one type of flower, it would be dull. The fascination lies, in this case, in our differences as people and respecting those differences in ourselves will bring us closer together because every flower is beautiful in its own way.

Recognizing the importance of our diversity lies within our acceptance of ourselves, the core of our cultural roots and being. However, beware of too much cultural pride and zealot act of superiority over others. This is when human prejudice and racism begin. Such feelings will only destroy the beauty of our multi-racial garden. We do not want to infect our children with virus of intolerance, prejudice and hatred. How we are to each other, as adults will transmit to our children. To assure a better future for our children, we must help our children to truly see the beauty in themselves and in others. Diversity is a human asset that we can learn to effectively use to our human survival.

In Buddhist teaching, all lives are sacred and beautiful. The bugs and the insects have their roles in nature. The frogs and the toads are part of our unique diversity. All lives on our planet have things to teach us. They are part of our human garden, our human consciousness. We must cultivate love and compassion as well as insights and wisdom to build a peaceful place for all to exist in harmony, just the garden of many flowers brings beauty to our eyes.

The way we learn to love and see others as part of ourselves include a Buddhist principal of being mindful to what is around us. Like other living beings, we are part of the natural rhythm, as wind, water and fire, with great potentials to be destructive, and at the same time, to be good, and to love, as if by nature, we are here to realize something wonderful, beyond war, violence and the incessant intolerance and hatred of our current world. Cultivating and flowering a multi-racial garden is detrimental to our survival, especially in our Lowell's community, where there is so much richness and beauty in our diversity, our talents and our cultural attributes and historical experiences. There's no room for hatred here!


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- The Total Research Corporation named UPS number six among the "Top 10 Brands of the Nineties."
- Business Week magazine named UPS to its "WebSmart 50 " list, which honors the 50 best companies who use the internet to further their strategic moves.
- Global Finance magazine selected UPS as the Best Global Company in the Logistics sector in its 2000 "Best Companies" list.
- The MIT Sloan School of Management named UPS winner of its "Clicks \& Mortar" award, citing UPS as the company that had made the greatest advancement in integrating both physical and online business practices.
- UPS received the 100 Black Men of Americals Corporation of the Year award in 2000.
- UPS was ranked number 15 in Money magazine's list of top 50 companies with the best employee benefits package.
- For the second consecutive year, Fortune named UPS one of the " 50 Best Companies for Minorities."


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## A Capital Campaign

The Southeast Asian Family \& Youth Center ษ โ゙์

The Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association (CMAA) of Greater Lowell, Inc. is in the midst of conducting a capital campaign to raise $\$ 1.5$ million to support the physical development of the Southeast Asian Family and Youth Center, scheduled for completion by June 2001. When completed, the center will be able to serve as many as 5,000 individuals and family members a year through its various social, educational, cultural, and recreational activities.

The proposed Southeast Asian Family and Youth Center will be located on the second and third floors in the former Courier Corporation building at 165 Jackson Street in Lowell. The Courier Corporation generously donated its former headquarters building, with over 90,000 square feet of floor space and worth approximately one million dollars, to the CMAA in August 1997. The center will be occupying about 20,000 square feet in the unusable space of the Mills building. Therefore, the much needed work will go into an infrastructure improvement and construction of a new service core that will include a passenger elevator, stairway, lobby, entrance, new roof as well as office space and a performance stage for traditional dance rehearsal, afterschool youth program activities and for community social and cultural gatherings.

The Family and Youth Center project has been and will be involving many youth, families, volunteers, CMAA's staff and board members, elected officials, governmental officials and representatives from various funding agencies and foundations who are committed to working together over a period of 18 months to make plans, carry out those plans to raise enough funding, and to complete their ideal Center for the Southeast Asian American community in the Greater Lowell.

The Family and Youth Center will empower the Southeast Asian youth, young parents, parents, adolescents with development disabilities, and the elders to build positive self-esteem, learn a new language and vocational skills that would lead them to achieve self-sufficiency in their newly adopted country-America. In addition, the center will be a pivotal point in helping to foster and strengthen good relationships, fill the intergenerational gap between family members and build a strong and healthy community.

## Statement of Needs for Lowell's Cambodian-American Community

Lowell has the second largest Cambodian population in the United States, numbering 30,000. The largest Cambodian community is in Long Beach, California, with an estimated number of 60,000 . Many of the Cambodian residents of Lowell are refugees who fled from war-torn Cambodia and now live in poverty in the United States.

In April 1975, the Maoist communist Khmer Rouge regime led by Pol Pot, evacuated the cities and systematically killed over two million people-a quarter of the population--especially targeting the wealthy, educated, or professional people. Doctors, nurses, clergy, teachers, business owners, artisans, city dwellers and even those who wore glasses were singled out for execution since they were seen as bourgeois or contaminated with Western influence.
 ine and disease became epidemic while medicine and medical care were non-existent.

When the Khmer Rouge regime was overthrown in early 1979, thousands of Cambodians fled on foot to refugee camps on the Thai border, where they waited for up to twelve years to be resettled in a third country.
Upon arriving in the United States in late 1979 and early 1980's, either alone or in decimated families, the Cambodian refugees were generally resettled in economically disadvantaged inner city areas such as Lowell's Acre and Highland neighborhoods. Negotiating their way amidst gangs, drugs, urban violence, inadequate housing, and poor schools, many felt they had been transported from one war zone to another.

Moreover, these refugees were among the least prepared to adapt to such an environment. Not only were they suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and physical ailments which resulted from their ordeal, but they tended to be from rural backgrounds, with little or no education, frequently illiterate even in their own language.

These challenges continue to affect the Cambodian American community today. According to the U.S. 1990 Census: $26 \%$ of Cambodian families in Lowell are headed by a single mother. The average size of a Cambodian family is 5.03 persons. Only $46 \%$ of Cambodian men and $22.6 \%$ of Cambodian women over the age of 25 have completed high school. The average per capital income for Cambodian population is $\$ 6,250$, and $49 \%$ of Cambodian families live below the established poverty level, constituting the second most economically disadvantaged

Asian American group.
Cambodians came to Lowell to build a new life. Despite their social and linguistic isolation, many were able to find work in Greater Lowell's factories. Factory work was ideal, as it required only technical ability or manual labor: fluency in English might not be necessary. Cambodians got together and built two temples - one located in North Chelmsford and one on Cambridge Street in Lowell. In 1984, the Cambodian community leaders came together to establish the Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association of Greater Lowell, Inc., whose mission is to assist Cambodians and Southeast Asians to achieve self-sufficiency in their newly adopted country-America, while at the same time trying to promote and preserve their native cultural heritage.

## Programs and Services to be housed in the proposed Southeast Asian Family and Youth Center

§ The Monorom Family Support Services Program provides comprehensive services to families that have children with developmental disabilities. The program name came from the Khmer word "Monorom" which means "peace or harmony", which reflects the program's origins as a respite care services. Services available include Case management, translation, and transportation to assist families in accessing other services providers, crisis intervention, counseling services, special education and advocacy; parent support group to assist parents of disabled children in coping with the unique stresses and difficulties of caring for children with special needs; American sign language classes for those whose principal language is Khmer; and social and recreational programs for disabled children, including traditional Cambodian dance troupe which integrates disabled and non-disabled children
§ Youth Services Program offers a safe and supportive environment and an alternative to gang involvement for the " at-risk" and ganginvolved youth between the ages of $10-$ 22. Program activities include peer leadership development, Khmer language instruction, Cambodian traditional dances, music and arts classes; employment training and placement, health education and training; computer training, and homework club; sports and recreational activities, summer camp. The youth have been involved in numerous activities including an annual Water Festival, Khmer New Year, Lowell Folk Festival, and other special events throughout the year. Over 400 youth are enrolled in this program
§ Young Parents Program aims at reducing welfare dependency among young parents, ages 14 - 21, who have not achieved a high school diploma or its equivalent. YPP espouses a model of employability development to successfully prepare an individual to obtain a job as quickly as possible in the primary labor market. CMAA's YPP attends to the whole person, recognizing that basic educational and job specific skills are important to young parents in the acquisition of and advancement in the work environment. More than 50 young parents have been enrolled in this program.
§ The Elderly Outreach \& Assistance offers older Cambodian Americans transportation, family and psychological support, translation, hospital visit, citizenship education, case management, health education, emergency assistance, crisis intervention, cultural and religious activities, exercise and recreational activities. Traditionally, elders are part of the extended family, which provides for their needs. As a result of the war, the Killing Fields under the Maoist communist regime, the refugee episode, disruption and dislocation of families that accompanied them, many elderly Cambodian refugees do not have surviving children, or may have been unable to locate and reunite with their surviving children or relatives. In Lowell, Cambodian senior citizens are often isolated. They often do not speak English. They have limited access to social services because of language and cultural barriers.

## Objectives, Goals \& Measurements

1. To conduct a capital campaign with a goal of raising $\$ 2.5$ million to support toward development of the Southeast Asian Family and Youth Center at the CMAA's headquarter building on 165 Jackson St.


##  Innovative Smoking Intervention



How YOU can support the CMAA Capital Campaign?
If you are interested in supporting the fundraising efforts for the development of the Southeast Asian Family and Youth Center, you can send donations to:

CMAA's Capital Campaign
C/o Southeast Asian Family \& Youth Center 165 Jackson Street; Lowell, MA 01852




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## "CAMBODIA SWEET CAMBODIA"

## By Janice J. Pokorski

My very first visit to Cambodia was a trip of a lifetime! My journey began in Siem Reap, which was very beautiful and relaxing. I visited children's orphanages, hospitals, art centers, restaurants and I rode moto's everywhere. I met a moto driver named Pha that I helped understand how to read a map of Siem Reap. It took a few minutes and we were off into the countryside. I asked him to take me to his family's home, which took twenty minutes from the center of town. His family invited me in for a visit, they were so nice and happy to see me. They had no electricity, no furniture, had a few pieces of clothing, they cooked on an open fire in front of the house, they had one pig, one cow and the children didn't go to school. The only source of income was from Pha's moto driving job. Pha tells me that he drives into the center everyday and looks for tourists to drive around. He spoke enough English to convince me he could take me where I wanted to go. Pha helped me the entire time I was there.

On one of our moto drives, we were being approached by a Hugh elephant, driven by a villager. This villager had a great sense of humor I quickly noticed. I was standing in the middle of the road trying to get a photo and I noticed the villager was making the really big elephant chase me down. I ran the fastest that I have ever ran in my life into a group of people who were laughing really hard at the whole scene. I grabbed onto two people and we all laughed for quite some time. You just don't have that kind of fun in Lowell.

It seemed like such a short time in Siem Reap and in no time we were on the fast boat traveling on the Tonle Sap going to Phnom Penh. This river was very swollen from the recent flooding and it was so big. Most of the time that was all you could see was water. As we were approaching land you could see so many huts, people in boats fishing and the tree and mountain range were unbelievably beautiful. Every mile we traveled there was something different to see.

As we approached the shore at Phnom Penh there were hundreds of people, mostly moto drivers and transportation services asking us if we need rides. We did have some of our crew meeting us there but I decided to take a moto. It's quicker and you see more street life. On our route to our hotel the streets were so crowded with travelers. The city was so busy with markets, food vendors, school children and workers of all sorts. We got to our hotel and everyone was so tired we called it a day.

There is so much adventure to tell you about, please check the next issue of Khmer Lowell for the next chapter.

# Cambodian Thanksgiving 

By Thysan Sam
On November 21, the Monorom Program, Elderly, Youth and BASICS Program organized a Cambodian Thanksgiving din-
ner at the CMAA. American people always celebrate Thanksgiving on November $23^{\text {rd }}$ to remember their ancestors and the Pilgrims who came to America for their freedom. We, Cambodian refugees and immigrants, celebrate Thanksgiving to remember our walking of life and reflecting our past experiences.

We, the survivors of the communist regime, had continued our lives through hardships to find freedom for our families. From 1975 to the late 1990's, many Cambodians escaped from our country to America under desperate conditions. Along the way of escaping,

bandits, landmines, cruel seas, starvations, and sicknesses killed many of us. Fortunately, many of us arrived at the United States safely. In this new country, we have freedom and more possibilities for our lives than in our native country. But we are still disturbed by emotional and psychological conflicts. However, we are still thankful that we are alive. Therefore, we celebrate Thanksgiving to honor our past experiences so that we can keep our hope to build up our bright future.

At the event,
 our Monorom, Elderly, Youth, BASICS clients and many of the CMAA staffs came to celebrate the C A M B ODIAN THANKSGIVING with joy and great courage. We strongly believe that we will have better lives by next year and many years to come, for we have been through a lot of difficulties in the past and we are doing great. We would like to express our gratitude to St. Memorial Medical Center and Food Bank that donated food for Cambodian Thanksgiving dinner. Also we really appreciate Eliot Church for letting us use their ovens, and thanks to the CMAA' s staffs and our friends from different agencies who helped us in this event. There were about 150 people, ranging from children to elderly, showed up in the late afternoon, and most of us felt very enthusiastic.

We feel very grateful that all of us could work together to make this Thanksgiving celebration happen. So, we hope to see more people in the community come to celebrate this Thanksgiving with us again next year. We all believe that every individual is equally important. Therefore, the more numbers of people show up, the more fun and more peace we have.

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## Coming Again Soon

2001 Khmer New Year Festival "A Celebration of Khmer Arts, Dance, and Music In A New Millennium"

Saturday, April 14, 2001 at Tsongas Arena 2:00 PM - 11:00 PM


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## Environmental Justice on Brownfield Sites Training Program (Environmental J.O.B.S Program)

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Applications for this program are currently being accepted. If you want more information, please contact Kleung Ros at (978) $\mathbf{9 7 0 - 2 1 5 8}$, or Bernadette Rivera at (978) $\mathbf{9 7 0 - 2 1 9 5}$, or stop by our office Coalition For A Better Acre (CBA) 450 Merrimack St., Lowell. MA

CMAA would like to welcome the following staff on board:

## Van Chey

Van worked as Co-Therapist for Family Continually Program (FCP) a collaboration with DSS. As of December 2000, Van is our new Coordinator for the Citizen Assistance Program (CAP). She will be handling all aspect of Citizenship/INS cases.

## Janice Pokorski

After two years of devoting her time and effort as a volunteer, Janice decided to join CMAA as the new Director of Skill Training in the Community Service Employment Program. She will be the director as well as Soldering Instructor. Janice have immeasurable amount of resources and connection in the field of electronics/technical manufacturing. With her background and enthusiasms and willingness to help others, CSE, and CMAA are very fortunate to have her. CMAA, with Janice's help will be the destination organization for employment, job training, and placement for Cambodian community and other minorities.

## Holy Khut

As of November, Holy became the Network Administrative for CMAA. Holy not only kept our computer running accordingly but kept us in tune with today's technology. Such as the latest email network system, Internet, and many new software. Welcome aboard!

## Pitou Phat

Before accepting a position as the Youth Outreach Specialist at CMAA, Pito had worked in many setting which were related to children and youth. He also worked as a camp counselor for the Future Star Camp, which was funded by Red Auerback Foundation and the City of Lowell. CMAA welcome his energy and commitment with youth and families.

## Voeun Mao

We would like to congratulation Voeun on the birth of her new baby girl Maia, who was born on July 6,2000 . Voeun worked as an intern for the CSE program, but as of October Voeun officially became a full time staff as Job counselor/ Caseworker for CSE.

## Judith Dickerman-Nelson

We would also like to welcome back Judith to CMAA as the Director for Young Parent Program (YPP). With two hours commutes from Maine, Judith still made it here on time everyday. Judith, with her experience in dealing with young parents, will continue to provide support services and amongst.

## Catherine M.-Leow

Catherine became a teacher in Young Parent Program since October 2000. Catherine is having a wonderful time educating and counseling young mothers to obtain their GED and higher learning.

## Good-Byes

We would like to give best wishes to Pov Ye, Vincent Un, Bora Yi, Terry Troutt, and Sam Sok who has left CMAA to persue other opportunities and education. We will miss all of you!

## Thank You

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Lianne Lemonte, or as the children call her "Grammy Lianne". She is a Foster Grandparent from Community Teamwork Inc. She volunteers Monday - Friday 8 a.m. to 12 noon down stair in our Komar Daycare Center. All the children love her very much.

## Congratulations

Congratulations to Danny who received an early Christmas gift from his wife. She gave a birth to their healthy baby boy named Darrin Phannarith Div on Dec. 23, 2000.

## Young Parent Program

## By Judith Dickerman-Nelson

The Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association's young parent program is an alternative education program for young parents ages fourteen to twenty-one. Our program is for parents who have dropped out of school and still want to continue their education. We offer GED education, Pre-GED, EOSL, life skills and job skills.

Often a young parent has problems that the average middle school or high school student hasn't encountered. We offer a program that addresses and understands their problems. All of the students in our class are young parents, and they understand the unique difficulties of the young parent-student. Besides our education component, we also focus on parenting. Here, the students feel comfortable to discuss what it is like to have an infant or young toddler. We help each other explore issues surrounding health, nutrition, discipline etc.

The primary goal of our program is self-sufficiency; we want the young parents to be able to care for their children and themselves. Often, after the students receive their GED, they go on to further education through a skills training class or college. Most students then go on to a full-time job.

Our classroom boasts a diverse student body, and we learn from each other about our backgrounds and culture. During the past few months we have had many visitors to our classroom. We had health educator address the students about the health risks of tobacco use to themselves and their children. We even had a student begin the process of quitting smoking as a result of that presentation. We have support groups twice a week that are facilitated by Alternative House and Rape Crisis Center. In these groups, they focus on issues of safety and self-esteem. We had guest speakers from Lowell Community Health who discussed drug and alcohol abuse. And recently, we had a career specialist from Umass Lowell come in to talk with the students.

We feel that it is important to provide the students with a variety of activities to keep them involved in their class. Everyone here at the Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association has the young parents' best interests in their hearts. We always wish them well. May their educations take them far.


## From the Editor-in-Chief

The 2000's have passed very quickly, leaving us with many memories, both good and bad. It was a year that started with a scary moment: most of us worried about bad things that could happen since it was the first day of the new millennium.
It was a year in history when the presidential elections faced a crisis like never before. Fortunately, nothing bad happened as we thought. Instead, it ended up with a good economy providing many opportunities to families, communities and the nation as a whole.

Now, it is the year 2001. We do not have bad feelings about this year; instead, from the beginning of this year,
we look forward to continuing our efforts from our good heart. We will continue caring for our family, communities, and the nation as a whole. Hopefully, it will end up with love and peace in our heart.
Happy New Year to all !!!
















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