



Winter 2024 Newsletter

*News from Trailblazer Foundation —
Another Successful Year...*



Together, we are achieving the extraordinary!

Bio-sand Water Filter Delivery

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Delivering health, education, and prosperity to rural Cambodia...

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A Note From Trailblazer's Executive Director



Hello Trailblazer Friends,

*I hope you had a wonderful holiday season and happy new year spent with family, friends and other loved ones. It's hard to believe, but Trailblazer is celebrating it's **20th anniversary** this year! Wow! And we must give credit where it is due, with you. We would not be where we are and still operating, if it wasn't for all of you who want to make a difference and leave a lasting impact.*

*As we move into 2024, you will notice a slight increase in the donation amounts on three products [latrines, bicycles, uniforms], and **an appeal to gift a little more** when making your contribution. There are a couple reasons for these increases. First, the product items are costing us more to purchase in the local market. Secondly, and more importantly, is the fact that we have avoided passing on the cost of "keeping the doors open" to our donors as long as we can. However, this practice is proving to be financially unsustainable, as you can imagine.*

*It takes staff, computers, electricity, vehicles, insurance, office supplies, petrol, and more to support the "behind the scenes" work that makes everything happen. We trust that you can find just a little more in your budget to help in this endeavor. We are grateful for those of you who cover the transaction fee when donating online, it is a very helpful step in maintaining operations. **We have been so blessed** and feel very fortunate that we have made it to 20 years. But, we want to be able to continue the good work that is being done for a long time, and that means we need to keep up with growing expenses.*

*Trailblazer experienced **another successful year** with its projects, **thanks to you**. The articles here give you a summary of our 2023 accomplishments in providing access to water, clean drinking water, better sanitation, increased food security, economic opportunities, and support for students to continue their education. When you read these summaries you will realize how busy the teams have been, and all the good work that is being done, because of your kind and generous support.*

***Together, with your ongoing investments**, a real difference is being made in the lives of thousands of poor rural families every year. We can't express our gratitude deeply enough. Your gifts are vital to the continuation of our work and are the financial backbone of the organization, and we thank you.*

Best wishes always,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chris Coats".

Chris Coats

Executive Director

"Kindness in words creates confidence. Kindness in thinking creates profoundness. Kindness in giving creates love."

Lao-Tzu Chinese philosopher,
reputedly the founder of Taoism (6th cent. B.C.)

A Note From Trailblazer's Board President



Twenty Years of Transformation

*In 2004, the Trailblazer Foundation embarked on **a journey to transform the lives** of rural communities in Cambodia. Founders Chris and Scott Coats were inspired to create change after witnessing the warmth and struggles of the Cambodian people. They quickly realized that clean water is essential for health, dignity, and economic opportunity.*

*Trailblazer started its journey of impact with biosand water filters and quickly expanded to building wells, constructing latrines, and training farmers in sustainable agriculture. These efforts have always been **in partnership with the communities they serve**, ensuring long-term sustainability and local ownership of projects.*

*The results of our work are quietly profound. **Over 33,000 people** now have access to clean drinking water thanks to our biosand filters. Nearly 10,000 people benefit from the wells we've built. **Over 8,500 farmers** have learned new skills to improve their livelihoods. And with improved sanitation in over **460 households**, health and hygiene have significantly improved.*

***These numbers represent real people, real families, and real lives transformed.** They are the children who can now attend school without fear of illness, the families who can eat nutritious meals grown on their own land, and the women who are empowered to take control of their health and their future.*

***Our donors and volunteers are the real heroes** behind these success stories. Your giving and selflessness have kept our small organization growing and creating real impact. As we look ahead to the next 20 years, we invite you to continue this trailblazing journey with us.*

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Munro'.

Nick Munro

Board President and On-the-Ground Volunteer (2012)

[Email Nick](#)



Health Program

Touching Lives

The lack of access to clean water impacts 1.8 billion people, which equates to **one in nine people around the world who do not have safe water to drink**. Your investments have made a tremendous impact on improving the health of these beneficiaries, and **we all thank you**.

Trailblazer's Health Program is our largest program to deal with life's most basic needs - water and sanitation. As we head into a new year, we are happy to report on the **successful implementation of our 2023 project activities that met the health needs of poor rural villagers**.

We installed 377 bio-sand filters (BSFs) with funds from the following **highlighted partners and individuals**:

- ◆ 83 BSFs with funds from Abercrombie & Kent Philanthropy;
- ◆ 40 BSFs through the contributions received from Buy1Give1 [B1G1];
- ◆ 30 BSFs with a grant from the Christ Episcopal Church Outreach Endowment International Project Fund; and
- ◆ 258 BSFs with funds from individual donors across the globe and the Christ United Methodist Church Mission Committee

Additionally, with the support of the Rotary Denver Southeast International Service Committee we were able to reinstall 34 bio-sand water filters [BSF] to maintain access to clean water for those recipient families. In 2024 funds from the Tag Financial Group of Western Australia will provide for the reinstallation of 30 more BSFs.

These total **411 BSFs are servicing a minimum of 2,055 people**, but because of their design they could be servicing as many as 6,165 people.

There were **100 wells drilled** through support from our partners Abercrombie & Kent Philanthropy and B1G1, and numerous individual donors, providing access to water for a minimum of 500 villagers, but possible up to 1,500 villagers depending on how families are clustered.

With funds from the following donors, it was possible to construct a total of **141 latrines to improve the sanitation and health** for the recipient families:

- ◆ 20 with funds from the Fort Collins Breakfast Rotary Club,
- ◆ 14 with funds from the Rotary Club Zurich,
- ◆ 9 with funds from the Denver Southeast Rotary Club,
- ◆ 98 with funds from the B1G1 and several individual donors.



Please visit our website for more information about our Health Program:

<https://thetrailblazerfoundation.org/health-program>

Food Security Program

Vital Skills

Monypheap, Trailblazer's Agriculture Supervisor, conducted the following training courses in 2023:

- ◇ 17 Homestead Garden with 232 participants
- ◇ 23 Integrated Farming System [IFS] with 331 participants
- ◇ 4 Soil Management with 42 participants
- ◇ 5 Chicken Raising with 65 participants

This totals **670 farmers** who can use what they learned in these training courses which provide farmers with **improved, vital skills** they need to better feed their families.

Mr. Soun, a farmer who attended an IFS training, lives in Takoy village, Ballangk commune, Prasat Bakong district. He cultivates crops and raises a cow, ducks, and chickens. Before he received agriculture training from Trailblazer **he did not know how to prepare the land** for growing vegetables and spent a lot of water, seeds, labor, and money on his farm. His family of six was very poor and suffered. Mr. Soun said life was very difficult for them to grow vegetables because he had no technical training. In addition to growing crops he is also a palm tree climber. After receiving training from Trailblazer about growing vegetables in a modern way, **he is able to save a lot of time, money on seeds, and water.** It became much easier to plant and take care of his crops. His family is now getting more income and has expanded planting to two more agricultural sectors on his land. His family and other villagers are cheerful about their planting and growing. Mr. Soun reported his family is so happy and thankful to Trailblazer for establishing the project in his village.

Farmers who received training are more likely to be successful, have higher crop yields, be able to manage pests and diseases, and are more likely to have higher incomes.



**Give 'In Honor or Memory of'
Someone Special**

**Consider Setting Up Recurring
Donations**

Please visit our website for more information about our Food Security Program:

<https://thetrailblazerfoundation.org/food-security-program>

To Donate

By Mail: PO Box 271767, Fort Collins, CO 80527

Online: <https://thetrailblazerfoundation.org/donate>

Economic Development Program

Hope to the Future

Another responsibility Monypheap has is to **visit and monitor the Farmer Community Groups [FCG]**. Mrs. Noy and Mrs. Doeum of Pouk district, are a mother and grandmother team who stay at home to look after the children and tend their garden. Technical **planting has increased the family's revenue** and vegetable growth. They are comfortable with their knowledge and are now using the integrated farming system to cultivate their garden. **They grow a variety of crops, and are raising chickens, ducks and cows.** They plan to expand their cultivation on land around their home where they can easily water and look after the crops. This project is very important to the villagers, and gives hope to the future for expected higher yields than before to feed their family.



Monypheap, is a busy gal! She is also responsible to **check on the progress of the chicken farmer, Mr. Sopheap, in Chansar village, Chansar commune, Soutr Nikum district** who has rebuilt his chicken barn and was delivered a supply of 500 chicks to re-establish his farm. We give thanks, again, to our donor Rhonda who has been making investments in the project to ensure its success.



Please visit our website for more information about our Economic Development Program:

<https://thetrailblazerfoundation.org/economic-development-prog>

Education Program

Investing in the Future

Donations provided **much needed transportation and clothing** so that children are able to attend school. Trailblazer delivered 49 bicycles that help students get to school, plus 101 uniforms that are required by the government for school attendance.

We are also **deeply grateful for the several investments** that donor Dale Jankovitz makes in honor of his parents. His recent donations were for 1) the purchase of 7 pieces of playground equipment for the Beng Primary School - making this playground the only full set in the district that children from the surrounding villages come to play on, and 2) for the purchase of enough toothbrushes for the students, their families and the teachers at Beng Primary School. Dale plans to visit the Beng Primary School in February when he travels again to Cambodia.

A **donor through our business partner Abercrombie & Kent Philanthropy** donated funds that purchased 200 reading books, 500 pens, 500 pencils, 5 cases of A4 paper, 5 cases of color A4 paper, 10 sets of printer ink, 5 volleyballs, 5 footballs, 2 nets, 10 boxes of white board markers, 2 roles of plastic tape, 6 jump ropes, 1 playground swing, 10 ceiling fans, and office materials for the Tapang Primary School.



"It's not just about being able to write a check. It's being able to touch somebody's life."

Oprah Winfrey

Please visit our website for more information about our Economic Development Program:
<https://thetrailblazerfoundation.org/education-program>

From Our Volunteers

On the Ground

At times we like to share with you **comments from those who have been on the ground** as a visitor or volunteer and what they have to say about their experience. It's always better to hear things straight from the horse's mouth. Below are several testimonials from a group who volunteered for us this fall.

"In Nov 2023 I brought a group of 10 people to Cambodia to volunteer. I am a dentist, so I was working with a local dental clinic but we brought 4 kids aged 5-18 to work with Trailblazers. This is the 4th time I've worked with them over the last 10 years. Every time we work with them I am more impressed. It's amazing to see young kids get out of their comfort zone and volunteer for the first time helping out people in a faraway land in a culture that is so different from where they are from. The first day is always interesting as none of them are used to going away on a "vacation" and they're asked to help shovel rocks, paint, and clean water purifiers but by the 2nd day, they all found their comfort zone it was so gratifying watching them learn, and grow almost overnight. Hearing their stories every day of helping out, delivering the filters, meeting other kids their age, and going through this amazing experience is what it's all about! Trailblazers is such a great organization and I'm proud to be able to work with them. Keep up the amazing work!!!"
Mike

"Our group had an amazing experience volunteering at the Trailblazers in Siem Reap this November 2023. We had ten people in the group - adults and children - everyone really enjoyed themselves building water filters for the villagers - from pouring concrete, to washing rocks, to painting the filters and more. We all felt that the activities were well organized and felt amazing about doing something so meaningful. The cherry on the cake was delivering the water filters to the villagers one day and seeing how the fruits of our labor impacted the families and children in need. Another thing that truly impressed me was someone we knew gave me \$100 and I found out that's how much a water filter costs. I gave them the money and within a week they sent me the pictures of the water filter with our friend's name on it being sent to a villager's house. I was amazed at how quickly the money was put into use and how quickly they communicated with us. I highly recommend Trailblazers to anyone who would like to go out to Cambodia and do something meaningful while getting some exercise :)" Kristina

"Hi! My name is Kai, I'm 18 and I helped out in Cambodia with the water filtering systems. I had a great experience and would definitely recommend it to anyone and would do it again! The people were awesome and also the food! It felt so good to help families in rural areas get clean water and giving kids toys and books. Everyone had a good attitude which made it so much better. Cambodia is a wonderful country and has so many things that I could talk about but it would be a very long email! Thank you so much for letting me explore an area that I've never been to and happy holidays!"

"Trailblazers is amazing program! We had a great time learning about the water filtration systems. It was also so neat to see the villages and where you actually installed them. I hope to get to volunteer again in the future!!!" Ryan

Please visit our website to meet the rest of our Board of Directors:

<https://thetrailblazerfoundation.org/volunteers-2>

From Our Volunteers (continued)

On the Ground

"I recently volunteered at the Trailblazer location in Siem Reap with a group from Colorado, USA. I wanted to share with you that our experience was excellent. Our main group that was there every day consisted of 3 adults, two teens, and a 9 year old. We had a rotating line of volunteers with us that included more adults and a 5 year old. From ages 5 through adult, we all enjoyed volunteering to make water filters. All ages found plenty of tasks to be involved in and rotate through. The men we worked with were so kind and helpful while we figured out each duty, and they shared some delicious local fruit with us. On one day, we all hopped into the truck with 7 water filters and drove about an hour outside the city to a village. We were able to meet 7 families as we set up the filters. This was a great experience because we were able to see first hand who Trailblazers is helping. Before we left on our trip to Cambodia, we had asked for donations of toys, clothing, and books to deliver to families in the rural villages. It was such a pleasure to watch our kids give items and create smiles for local families. The work was hard, sweaty, and laborious, but the smiles we all shared with each other, the Trailblazer workers, and families was worth every moment spent there. I cannot wait to return for another round of volunteering." Sarah



You may wonder: How can I help?

Here are a lot of Ideas!

Winston Churchill wrote, “We make a living by what we do, but we make a life by what we give.”

Below is a list of how your gift(s) can change the life of a poor rural family:

\$20 buys a school uniform

\$50 supports a rural farmer’s agriculture training course

\$75 buys a bicycle to keep a student in school

\$100 buys a biosand water filter for up to 3 families [15 people or more]

\$200 buys a latrine for a family [5 people on average]

\$375 buys a well for up to 3 families [15 people or more]

- * Donate to our **general fund** and help provide solid financial footing to our programs across the board.
- * Become a **Trailblazer Champion** by setting up recurring donors to sustain the difference we are making.
- * Check with your employer about a matching gift program and double your impact. We have a growing number of donors who are taking advantage of these wonderful programs.
- ◇ Like us on **Facebook, Instagram, X, LinkedIn** and encourage your followers to like and follow us. Post comments and stories about our work.
- ◇ Share your stories describing your relationship with Trailblazer and why you support us on **Great NonProfits**.
- * Become a funder by conducting a DIY **Peer-to-Peer campaign**.

If you are seeking alternative ways to give and receive great tax benefits, you can:

Donate from your **Donor Advised Fund**;

Donate stocks or securities to avoid capital gains tax and have a long-term impact;

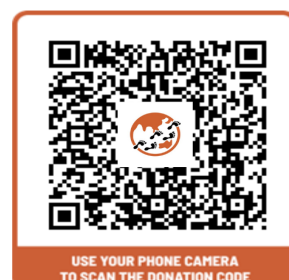
For those 70.5 or older, avoid extra income by gifting from your IRA;

Gift under your Last Will and Testament to ensure your impact will continue for generations;

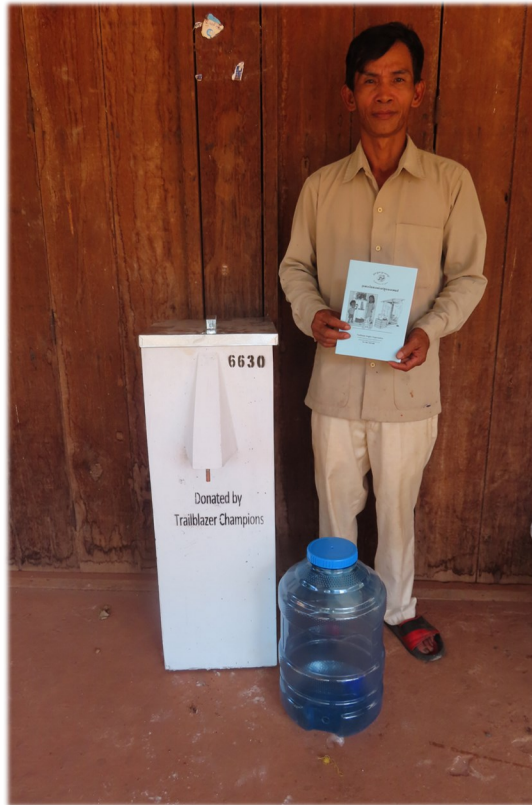
Designate Trailblazer Foundation as a beneficiary on a life insurance policy.

As always, we are ever grateful for your participation and generosity. Our work is only made possible because of people like you who want to leave a legacy!

Your generous donations make a real difference in our mission. To keep our mission running strong, we kindly ask if you would consider adding 15% to your next donation to cover essential administrative costs. Thank you for your understanding and continued support!



Good Works 2023





Trailblazer Foundation

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