

Former Sponsored Child Finds Home and Happiness in U.S.

The following letter was written by a former Sponsored Child from Thailand who was a beneficiary of the Opportunity House program beginning in the early 1970's. Heartwarming stories like these often find their way to the editor's desk at Pearl S. Buck International, and we are pleased to be able to share this story.

Dear Pearl S. Buck International,

My name is Saowalack. I was born in Thailand, and I recently became a U.S. citizen along with my two children, who were also born in Thailand. Without your help, my amazing journey would have never taken place.

I was born in 1969. At the time, my mother was only 19 years old. My biological father was a U.S. Air Force soldier during the Vietnam War, who left Thailand before I was born. So, my grandmother registered me as her own child, and I grew up in a well-known slum called Khlong Toey, located in the heart of Bangkok. My grandmother was the strongest figure in my life. She managed to raise me and seven of my cousins. It was difficult, but we all managed to survive knowing one thing - that we were loved and happy.

When I was eight months old, my grandmother learned about the Pearl S. Buck Foundation and took me there to apply for the program. Initially, she was afraid because she feared the Foundation would take me away from her. Despite her fears, and because of her great love for me, she decided that it was the right thing to do; she wanted me to have a better life than my real mother.

My grandmother was able to meet with my Pearl S. Buck Foundation sponsors in 1972. I was only three years old then. My sponsors came to visit me to see if they could bring me to the U.S. to live. At the time they wanted to have another daughter. My grandmother told the assigned case worker that I was not to be given away. Her wish was that that the Foundation would offer me the possibility of one day having a better life in the future. Every penny that was received from my sponsors, my grandmother saved, and it went to fund my education.

My grandmother passed away in June 1995 from a serious illness at the age of 77. After her death, I applied for a Green Card with help from my sponsors. I am now a part of the most amazing family in the world. My family here in the U.S. has accepted me with open hearts and arms, warmth and love. This is a great, beautiful, wonderful, amazing country. I am not only lucky to have had my grandmother, but also to have this amazing unconditional love from my American family. Today I am thankful to be in the United States, and I am able to provide my children with freedom and choices. I believe nothing is impossible in life.

No words can describe how I want to say 'thank you' to Ms. Pearl S. Buck and Pearl S. Buck International for creating my amazing journey and to continue making other children's dreams come true.

Sincerely,
Saowalack



Saowalack, age 3, 1972.