Waewwan comes from a very impoverished family in Thailand. They struggled to make ends meet before she enrolled in the Pearl S. Buck Foundation Thailand’s child sponsorship program. Now, foundation staff provide counseling and healthcare advice through home visits to the family, and Waewwan receives school supplies (warm suits, school uniforms, bags, socks and shoes, stationery) to support her education. She no longer needs to worry about dropping out of school to get a job and help her parents. She now has the opportunity to join school activities with friends and because she can spend more time studying, she continues to earn better grades. Because of her sponsor’s support, Waewwan’s parents can now afford to: cover schooling expenses for her siblings, pay for medical treatments, have rice to eat, and grow a corn crop for supplemental income. Waewwan and her family used to live in a small hut. Thanks to the foundation and her sponsor, they now live in a wooden house with a tile roof, strong enough to withstand the elements.

As part of her sponsorship, Waewwan receives nutrition training, and her family learns how to grow a wide variety of organic vegetables. She has not only attended health-promotion and psycho-social development camps sponsored by Pearl S. Buck Foundation Thailand, she has also served as a camp group leader.

Waewwan will enter ninth grade in May and continues to earn excellent grades every year. She is confident, enjoys sharing her talents by joining in school activities such as drawing contests, theater arts performances, Thai classical dance shows, and singing contests. She believes that studying remains the most important thing, however, to help her learn how to live in society, help others, and survive. She plans to finish high school and continue on to a university education to study nursing. She hopes to use her nursing skills to take care of patients and her family, and teach them how to be healthy and have a better quality of life.

Waewwan and her family are so thankful for the kindness of the child sponsors and donors who have helped them and other families in need through Pearl S. Buck Foundation Thailand.

Waewwan with her father and mother outside of their home
While the generosity of child sponsors changes the lives of individual children in the Pearl S. Buck International program, donors also come together to support groups of these underserved children when there is an acute need. In Phitsalulok and Mae Ramard, Thailand, children from the Hmong and Karen hill tribes suffer from head lice. It was found that between 80–90% of the girls, aged 4–14 years old, are infected with head lice. In addition to the physical toll head lice take on their bodies, the symptoms have caused the girls to have a lack of concentration in school and suffer social stigmatization.

Pearl S. Buck Foundation Thailand has a new project which will benefit 600 hill tribe girls in school and 150 girls not in school who are suffering from head lice. Head lice is a disease that can be cured easily by teaching the girls and their families and caregivers how lice are spread, how to get rid of them, and how to keep them from coming back. This project will teach them how to use natural herbs and local knowledge to prevent the spread of head lice, how to use medicine to treat head lice, and provide knowledge for head lice prevention. These goals will be achieved through:

- Organizing meetings with school teachers and parents to make plans and set up a core working team
- Coordinating with related healthcare staff and volunteers to prepare medicine to get rid of head lice per local knowledge, and demonstrate how to make the medicine
- Providing knowledge and advice to children and parents/caregivers in the household about not sharing towels and combs, how to wash bedding, etc.
- Teaching children and their caregivers about the life cycle of head lice, how to control and exterminate these insects, and organizing activities to get rid of head lice in children (twice a month)
- Creating a promotional campaign about head lice awareness and providing follow-up healthcare visits at children’s houses to encourage parents/caregivers to observe and participate in the community effort to eradicate head lice
- Providing hair-cut services to schools and the community to provide a mobile lice prevention education unit

To make a donation to this project or to find more information on this or other Fund A Project opportunities, go to: pearlsbuck.org/fund-a-project