Despite hard beginnings, Nitaya has grown to be a role model of success for the children in the Pearl S. Buck Foundation Thailand child sponsorship program.

Growing up, Nitaya and her family struggled with extreme poverty. They had so little income that they lived in a small hut with only a leaf roof. Her father died when she was five months old, and her mother and eldest brother were the only sources of income. Due to her mother’s disability from hurting her leg in a fall years ago and brother’s lack of education, the work they could do was limited and sporadic. The family ate mainly rice, and many years did not have enough of it to eat.

Things improved thanks to the generosity of Nitaya’s child sponsor. Nitaya and her family received counseling, as well as healthcare and education advice, from Pearl S. Buck Foundation Thailand. Nitaya received school supplies and uniforms, allowing her to stay in school. She was able to make her education a priority and not have to drop out to help support her family. Because her family didn’t have to worry about spending precious financial resources on school, the little money they earned could go toward living costs, medical care, and growing extra rice and corn as an additional source of income.

Thanks to the child sponsorship program, Nitaya and her family also learned about proper nutrition and started growing vegetables such as pumpkins, peas, Chinese cabbage, and tomatoes. They began raising pigs and chickens as a source of food as well.

Thanks to generous support from her child sponsor, Nitaya was able to complete high school. She studied hard, got good grades, and passed the entrance exam to study nursing in college. She received a scholarship and financial support from her college because she was able to devote herself to her studies. She has completed her first year there, and if she graduates, there will be a nursing job waiting for her. Her dream is to take care of her mother and her family by earning enough money to build them a new home.

Before she was in the child sponsorship program, Nitaya and her family’s future was bleak. Thanks to the generous support and kindness of her sponsor, Nitaya was able to remain in school and forge a path toward a nursing career. She no longer dreams of having enough food to eat, but of caring for her family and building a brighter future for them and herself. She is so appreciative and thankful for the love and support shown to her by her sponsor, which gave her the leg up needed to change her family’s path for the better.
Anna Katz Welcomed as New President and CEO

Pearl S. Buck International welcomed Anna Katz as the new President and CEO on April 13, 2020. Katz brings a wealth of non-profit and international leadership and experience to her new role. Her job history of serving populations in need, especially women and children both domestically and abroad, aligns with Pearl S. Buck International’s mission of carrying on Pearl S. Buck’s humanitarian, social justice, and educational legacy. Katz, just like Pearl S. Buck, has a lifelong reputation for social justice commitment.

Katz received her Bachelor of Arts in Administration from Goddard College, Plainfield, Vermont and her Master of Public Administration from Rutgers University in Camden, New Jersey. She began her career as the executive director of the AIDS Coalition of Southern New Jersey, Inc., which she established to provide support to HIV/AIDS patients. She also served as the executive director of The South Jersey Council on AIDS, Inc., where she established an integrated structure of care/support services in Southern New Jersey for people with HIV/AIDS. When the organization adopted Kenya as a country to support in the fight against AIDS, Katz became the agency representative to Kenya where she spearheaded a collaborative effort between American and Kenyan agencies to develop a HIV/AIDS Certificate Program for High School Teachers. Her non-profit service continued as Vice President of Children Services for Dooley House, Inc., where she managed the overall operation of the residential facility for medically fragile children. It was the first home in New Jersey for children with HIV/AIDS. Katz also served as Director of Programs for Women Against Abuse, a comprehensive service agency dedicated to legal, educational, shelter and housing services for women and children.

In 2011, Katz transitioned from non-profit work to the government sector, as a foreign service officer for U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), which leads the U.S. government’s international development to save lives, reduce poverty, strengthen democratic governance, and help people emerge from humanitarian crises. Katz served in USAID Afghanistan as well as USAID Zimbabwe. As Gender Development Officer, she administered the USAID/Afghanistan portfolio on “Women and the Economy.” This program provides a system of support for new and existing women entrepreneurs, including enrolling women in high skilled training, internship and apprentice programs leading to obtaining jobs in various fields including health, education, and information and technology.

“I am humbled by the mission of Pearl S. Buck International and believe Pearl S. Buck’s legacy of valuing diversity and inclusion is as relevant today as it was in her lifetime,” said Katz. “I am honored to take on this new position and continue to promote her legacy. For me, this position reflects the culmination of both my professional and personal journey. As we move ahead, I look forward to working with all of you to ensure that Pearl Buck’s cross-cultural and life-changing legacy not only continues but grows and inspires a whole new generation for years to come.”