Son was very young when he lost both his parents in a tragic accident. Son was taken in by a cousin, but his cousin’s family was poor and it was very difficult to make a living and support an additional child. At 12, he went to live in Birla Hanoi Children’s Village, one of seven orphanages operated by Pearl S. Buck International Vietnam.

Here he started a new life in one of the four houses at Birla, where he lived with more than 20 other kids and one housemother. Here, he experienced the support and camaraderie of the other children and the care of his housemother, who looked out for the children’s health, well-being, and their education. He, like the other children in the orphanage, eventually became sponsored through Pearl S. Buck International Vietnam. Even though his sponsor lived on the other side of the world, the care and support he received because of her generosity changed his life. He received medical care, nutritious meals every day, training courses to enhance his ability and competence and most especially, a great friend in his sponsor. Apart from the monthly contributions, his sponsor helped him buy school supplies and clothing and gave him money to put into savings. They exchanged encouraging letters that created an intimate bond between them—once strangers, now close at heart and in mind.

Upon his graduation from high school, Son decided on a vocational path, attending Hanoi Mechanical and Electrical College to study industrial electrical engineering. With no family, he continued to live in the orphanage while he studied, and the continued financial and emotional support of his sponsor allowed Son to focus on his studies, work part-time in a restaurant when he wasn’t in school to save up money for his future, and follow his passion of playing soccer and competing in soccer tournaments in his free time. Son is grateful for the help he received from everyone in his formative years, especially the staff and volunteers of Pearl S. Buck International Vietnam and his child sponsor. He strives to make them proud and live up to their faith in him by getting a good job and being a good electrical engineer so he can take care of himself. He also wants to pay their kindness forward, by helping and making a difference in others’ lives. Son believes, “When you are kind to others, it not only changes you, it changes the world.” So, in a world where you can be anything, be kind! Thank you to Son’s sponsor and all the child sponsors and donors who put their kindness out into the world and change the lives of children like Son every day. 😊
Pearl S. Buck International is thrilled to announce that our buildings and facilities, including the Pearl S. Buck House National Historic Landmark, International Gift Shop, Cultural Center, Awards Room, and Welcome Center will reopen to the public on Monday, August 3, 2020 after almost five months of closure due to the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic.

With the health and safety of our visitors, volunteers, and staff a top priority, Pearl S. Buck International has implemented precautions and protocols based on CDC, state, and local government and health agency guidelines. While visitors to the property can expect the same thought-provoking and educational experience on tours of Pearl Buck’s house or in our awards room and the same quality of service in the gift shop and when interacting with volunteers and staff, COVID-19 has forced all businesses and organizations, including Pearl S. Buck International, to adapt to a “new normal.” Here are just some of the new policies you can expect next time you visit:

• Hand sanitizer is available in multiple places in all the buildings on our grounds for staff, volunteers, and visitors to use frequently
• Bathrooms and high-touch surfaces such as door handles, countertops, and light switches are being regularly and frequently cleaned and disinfected
• Health self-assessments and temperature checks are required for all staff and visitors upon entering the facility
• All staff and visitors are required to wear a face mask and to social distance while on the premises
• There is increased signage around the buildings on health and safety measures such as social distancing reminders and proper hand-washing protocol
• There will be capacity limits for house tours and in all indoor spaces (Cultural Center, International Gift Shop, Awards Room) according to state and local health and safety guidelines

For the time being, only the Taking Action tour focusing on Pearl S. Buck’s social justice activism and advocacy legacy will be offered; please see the website for tour times and details.

Pearl S. Buck International looks forward to reopening our doors and inviting you, your family, and your friends back to a safe, comfortable, and welcoming environment. For more information go to our website at https://pearlsbuck.org.