

Staying in School and Finding Passion for Nursing Thanks to Child Sponsorship

Phanthida, known as Mae Lae, has achieved outstanding academic success due to her discipline in both her studies and life. With the support of the Pearl S. Buck Foundation Thailand, she graduated with a degree in Nursing and is now working as a nurse at a private hospital.

Before joining the foundation's child sponsorship program, Mae Lae faced significant hardships, including poor living conditions. Her family resided in a small, dilapidated wooden house with a tin roof. Her parents, who worked as corn farmers, earned income only once a year. The crops they grew were insufficient for family consumption, and they struggled to afford basic necessities, including medical treatments. The financial strain caused them to contemplate giving up, as they could barely sustain their family of six.

Before joining the child sponsorship program, her parents considered not sending their children to school, even though tuition was free, due to the associated costs such as uniforms and school supplies. Determined to provide a better future for their children, they worked tirelessly, taking on odd jobs and gathering seasonal forest produce to supplement their income. Mae Lae was sponsored while attending third grade.

This brought immense joy and hope to her family. The foundation supported her family with home visits, health and nutrition advice, counseling, and educational supplies



like uniforms, bags, shoes, stationery, and warm clothing. With these resources, Mae Lae could study without worrying about dropping out and the support significantly eased her family's financial burden. It allowed her parents to save money for essential expenses and farming investments.

Mae Lae consistently performed well academically due to her diligence, enthusiasm, and active participation in school activities. After completing junior high school, she continued her studies at boarding school. Staying in the school dormitory reduced her parents' expenses. Adjusting to the new environment and higher academic demands was challenging, but her hard work and determination helped her thrive.

She particularly enjoyed science and biology, discovering her passion for nursing and a desire to help others.

She was admitted to the four-year Bachelor of Nursing Science program at St. Theresa International College in Nakhon Nayok in 2021. She described nursing studies as challenging, requiring significant adjustments to university life and financial management. Mae Lae gained valuable knowledge and practical experience during her hospital internship, which deepened her love for nursing.

Her dedication and resilience, coupled with family support, enabled her to graduate in 2023. Mae Lae now works as a nurse at a hospital in Bangkok. In November 2024, she officially received her Bachelor of Nursing Science degree, a proud moment for her family and the Pearl S. Buck Foundation. Her work brings her great happiness as she fulfills her dream of helping patients regain their health while ensuring a stable future for her family.

Mae Lae extends her heartfelt gratitude to her sponsor for their unwavering support, love, and care for her and her family.

Lunar New Year Celebration to be Held at the Pearl S. Buck Estate Feb. 8

Pearl S. Buck International, in collaboration with the Central Bucks Chinese-American Association (CBCA), will once again be hosting a family-friendly Lunar New Year Celebration on Saturday, February 8 from 11 am-2 pm at the Pearl S. Buck Historic Estate, 520 Dublin Road, Perkasie, PA 18944. Come join us as we usher in the Year of the Snake!

A slate of family activities, live entertainment, and games are scheduled around the grounds throughout the event. Join us and enjoy:

- Kahoot! interactive games
- Chopsticks games
- Chinese calligraphy
- Art of paper cutting
- Traditional Chinese costume displays
- Professional live dancing performances
- Live musical performances, including a variety of Chinese opera
- Chinese zither performance and interactive demo
- Face painting
- Shadow puppets
- Tea ceremony demonstration
- Tours of the Pearl S. Buck House National Historic Landmark museum

Food will also be available for purchase from local restaurants and food trucks, including:

- Teava Rolls
- Wrap n Roll
- Humpty's Dumplings
- Tokio Sushi



Have fun at this cross-cultural gathering while learning about who celebrates and how they celebrate Lunar New Year around the globe. Proceeds from this event will benefit Pearl S. Buck International's humanitarian, educational, and cross-cultural work locally and abroad.

This year, Jan. 29 marks the beginning of the Year of the Snake. Lunar New Year will culminate with the Lantern Festival on Feb. 12. Many of Pearl S. Buck International's sponsored children and affiliate offices celebrate Lunar New Year, or the corresponding new year celebration of Tet.

In China, people wear red and hang red lanterns because red is a symbol of good luck. Children often receive small gifts in red envelopes.

In Thailand, schools hold parties with games and performances and students exchange gifts.

Thai people also visit their temples to offer donations to the Buddhist monks by listening to sermons by the monks, giving food, and releasing birds or fish.

In Vietnam, the children celebrate Tet, which falls on the same day as Lunar New Year. Tet is a seven-day celebration where offerings are made to the Kitchen God to bring good luck in the new year. Ancestors are honored by burning incense, and a feast is prepared to celebrate the new year.

We wish all our international offices, sponsored children and their families, and friends of Pearl S. Buck International who celebrate, a prosperous and healthy New Year!

For the most up-to-date information and to purchase tickets for the Lunar New Year celebration, please go to: <https://pearlsbuck.org/lunar/>. Tickets are on sale now and are limited.