



## Finding Inspiration and Confidence at Chongshi Girls' School

“Grades aren’t everything,” notes Wuruoyan, a student at Chongshi Girls’ School in China. “What truly matters is the courage to persevere, even when things get tough. Now at the end of my senior year, I realize that every challenge I faced helped shape the person I’ve become.”

When Wuruoyan first started at Chongshi, she was incredibly shy. Math, in particular, felt impossible for her. But Chongshi was a warm and supportive community, and the teachers were always ready to lend a hand. She explained, “Here, I learned that failure isn’t something to fear—it’s an opportunity to begin again.”

Math remained Wuruoyan’s weakest subject, but she knew she had to confront her fears. So she decided to run for Math Representative—and was elected. With that role came responsibility. She began taking more organized notes and seeking help from her teachers. Though her grades still fluctuated, Wuruoyan never stopped trying. “I drew inspiration from Pearl S. Buck, the renowned author who spent her childhood right here in Zhenjiang,” she noted. “Like her—navigating life between Chinese and American cultures while staying true to herself—I persevered, even when math felt overwhelming. Her novel *The Good Earth* taught me that growth, like farming, requires patience and time.”

In her second year, Wuruoyan became the league branch secretary. This position pushed her to think beyond herself. She started organizing meaningful class activities: paying respect at a martyrs’ cemetery, spending



afternoons listening to elders at a retirement home, volunteering at a welfare center to support children, and exploring museums where history came alive through artifacts and stories. These experiences built her confidence. She was no longer the shy girl—she could speak confidently in front of the class and coordinate group projects with ease. “Like the resilient women in Pearl S. Buck’s stories, who never gave up despite adversity, I found my voice,” Wuruoyan said.

Still, challenges persisted. Even in her final year, her math scores were inconsistent. Seeing others improve while she struggled, she sometimes hid her tears. “But I remembered how Pearl S. Buck continued writing through wars and hardships, building understanding between East and West with her words. So I kept going. I came to believe that true strength isn’t about never falling—it’s about rising every time you do.”

On the day of the college entrance exam, Wuruoyan was nervous but a sense of calm came over her. All those hours of practice, the support from my teachers, the study sessions with friends—everything fell into place. In the end, she earned a strong score in math and was accepted into the university of her choice.

“Now I understand: Chongshi didn’t just teach me knowledge—it taught me resilience,” she noted. “Pearl S. Buck’s life showed that building bridges between cultures takes both heart and effort. Through math and through helping others, I learned to be brave. Wherever life takes me next, I’ll carry this strength with me. I will continue to learn, to help, and to shine—even when the path is difficult.”

# Update on Children and Families Affected by Thailand-Cambodia Violence and Border Conflict

In August, Pearl S. Buck International put out an emergency appeal to support sponsored children and families served by Pearl S. Buck Foundation Thailand, who had been displaced by military violence on the Thailand-Cambodia border. These families were living in temporary shelters with limited access to clothing, food, schooling, and psycho-social support. Our generous supporters responded to this call for help, as you always do. We recently received an update on the conditions in the region and the state of our children and families affected by the conflict.

In early October, staff and volunteers from Pearl S. Buck Foundation Thailand traveled to Ubon Ratchathani Province. This trip was a heartfelt mission to reach children and families affected by the border conflict. Many have faced fear, displacement, and uncertainty, yet they continue to show resilience in the face of hardship. Through this visit, the team sought to bring comfort, essential support, and emotional healing—helping the children rediscover a sense of safety and hope for the days ahead. PSBFT distributed relief bags to 202 children in schools, communities, and shelters, as well as to 320 women, patients, injured persons, elderly individuals, and other family beneficiaries — totaling 522 people.



For the team from Pearl S. Buck Foundation Thailand, this experience reaffirmed why the mission matters: to nurture hope where it has been shaken, and to help children rediscover the simple joys of being young. As the vehicle approached Ban Kud Chiang Mun School, the air was still heavy with the memory of past conflicts. Yet amidst the uncertainty, laughter began to echo faintly from the schoolyard—a gentle reminder that even in fragile places, life continues to find its way.

For the team, this trip was a profound reminder that every act of care—no matter how small—can ripple into something lasting. The essential bags distributed to families were not merely items of necessity; they were symbols of hope and reassurance that these children are not forgotten.

Leaving Ban Kud Chiang Mun that afternoon, the team carried with them the laughter of children and the silent promise that Pearl S. Buck Foundation Thailand would continue to walk alongside them.

Looking ahead, Pearl S. Buck Foundation Thailand remains deeply committed to building a safer, more hopeful environment for every child along the border and beyond. The next steps will focus on developing community-based initiatives that strengthen children's emotional resilience, support their

continued education, and empower families to overcome the fear that once shadowed their lives.

Collaborating closely with schools, local leaders, and community partners, the aim is to ensure that every child can grow up with dignity, security, and a renewed sense of purpose.

At present, the situation has eased; however, the military remains fully deployed, maintaining 100% readiness for further operations. Most parents have taken their children back home, but repairs have not yet begun as families still wait for government assistance and compensation. So far, no households have received support; some have made only temporary repairs to make their homes livable.



Only a few families remain displaced, including 12 children sponsored by the Foundation, who have not yet returned home because their houses were flooded after heavy rain. They are currently staying in temporary shelter set up for evacuees, which are far from comfortable—overcrowded, with limited access to toilets and food. The Foundation has provided emergency relief supplies to help sustain these families.

**You can help the Foundation's efforts to continue providing support to these families as well as future projects and endeavors to support families facing displacement and other challenges along the border:**

[https://pearlsbuck.org/bbwp\\_projects/families-displaced-due-to-border-military-violence-thailand/](https://pearlsbuck.org/bbwp_projects/families-displaced-due-to-border-military-violence-thailand/)