

“I’m Glad I Was Born in a Slum!”

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When Suchada Nantavong speaks the claim, her smile stretches from ear to ear—and those around her are shocked. She continues, “And through that God has given me understanding to be able to work in the slums in Phnom Penh.”

Most people who are in slums are desperate to get out, and Nantavong was one who succeeded in doing just that. However, she chose to go back. This time with Jesus’ heart, hands and love. She pours all these characteristics out in the biggest slum in Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia.

Her non-Christian, Thai parents don’t understand this decision. To them, Cambodia has not always been a good neighbor, so why would their gifted, bright daughter want to go long-term as a YWAM volunteer to work in a slum there?

The story began when Suchada was about 11 and her family first heard of Jesus through the evangelism of YWAM Thailand’s Slum Ministries. She was given a scholarship, skills and a way to make a small income through the mercy ministries of Project .’s Child Sponsorship Program and Hope Cards. After being so blessed, she decided it was time to give back.

Upon graduating, she joined the founder of Hope Cards in Pattaya to start a new ministry called Pattaya Slum Ministries. “She has such a way with children, like no one else I have ever met. This gift is a God-given talent and she has an impact in a powerful way. The children in Pattaya love her!”

Suchada then took time away to receive more training. She did YWAM’s Discipleship Training School and Principles of Child

and Youth Ministries school. During this time God sparked a burden in her heart for the slums in Phnom Penh.

She went to join YWAM Phnom Penh as a full-time volunteer with a one-way ticket and \$67 in her pocket. Now, she has been in her new home for more than four months and is currently learning a new language, addressing basic health-care needs and helping hold church services for between 100-120 people (made up mostly of children) each week. When their vehicle arrives the children run exclaiming, "Jesus is here! Jesus is here!" They are so hungry and eager to learn about Jesus!

If a woman, born in a slum, now proudly declares she is grateful that she was born there, if she can see God's good in what the world dismisses as bad, what continued transformation does God have in store for the lives of many more like her? Will you join these arms of ministry to embrace many more Suchadas?