

# Pilgrims100

## 2023 Project Summary

### Light of Mercy Home, Cambodia



*Students at the Light of Mercy Home access formal and informal education and a comfortable home with healthy meals and appropriate care*



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## Overview

Awareness and advocacy for people living with a disability in Cambodia remains low, especially in rural areas and children are among the most disadvantaged. Many parents do not consider sending their child with a disability to school, and most schools, particularly those in rural areas, do not have trained staff to support these children. Consequently, children living with a disability frequently receive minimal formal education and are left at home alone while their parents are at work.

The Light of Mercy Home in Phnom Penh is run by our local Jesuit partner, Jesuit Service Cambodia (JSC). Many of the children supported by the program have impaired hearing and sight and without The Light of Mercy Home, they would not have been able to attend school.

Through the generosity of the Pilgrims100, the program assists children with disabilities to fully engage in society and live a life of dignity. Each child with a disability is enabled and equipped with the skills to help them to live as independently as possible.

The Light of Mercy Home enables the children to attend specialist schools, where they learn Braille and sign language. The program also equips them with essential life skills to foster independence and provides extra-curricular classes based on their interests.

Many of the young people who have been part of the Light of Mercy Home program have gone on to university and gained employment.

## Project Highlights and Impact

Thanks to Pilgrims100, in 2023:

- **20 children** and young people resided at the Light of Mercy Home.
  - 6 boys
  - 10 girls
  - 2 young women
  - 2 young men
- **20 children** attended healthcare training on personal hygiene, sanitation, and Dengue fever.
- **20 children** attended ecology training on the importance of preserving the natural environment.
- **18 students** passed their final exam and were able to move to the next grade.
- **2 children**, who are not able to join the formal education system, produced wonderful sewing and art crafts at the Light of Mercy Home.
- **17 children** had good results from their recent health check-ups, with the remaining three children already meeting health standards in previous check-ups.
- **9 students** participated in sign language lessons.
- **4 students** received computer skills training.
- **4 students** completed English studies.
- **20 students** took part in courses such as Taekwondo, dancing and music.
- **18 children** were able to visit their hometown twice, during school holidays.

## Other Achievements

- **Providing food and daily necessities** – The organic vegetables and fish raised at The Light of Mercy home has improved the children's health, reduced chemicals in their diet, and been cost effective, however food from the market is still needed to provide diversity. To reduce reliance on market food, the Light of Mercy team are experimenting with planting a greater range of produce.
- **Accessing formal education courses** – For the 18 students learning at different educational institutions, the Light of Mercy team manages transportation of the students, and checks in on the children's progress once a month. The team also helps with home studies.
- **Children going on home visits** – Encouraging the children to visit their family members during holidays is important for the children's emotional balance and to maintain good attachment with their family members.



## With thanks

During January to June 2023, your generosity and compassion along with all Pilgrims100 supporters has helped 20 children and young people to attend the Light of Mercy Home where they receive education and live in a community with other children facing similar challenges.

Thank you for helping the Light of Mercy Home to be a supportive environment where children living with a disability can learn, become independent young adults, and gain confidence that their disability is a positive part of their identity.