

*Give Kids a Dream*

Some dreams are simple, like a poor child's wish to attend school.  
Yet behind such a dream lies an extraordinary struggle.

*Give the children a dream, and they will find their way.*

*– Unknown –*

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# *Give Kids a Dream*

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# Preface



**G**ive Kids a Dream (GiKaD) was established in 2017. In the spirit of Cat Stevens: *“Education is the most valuable inheritance we can give to children”*, our mission is to support disadvantaged students in Vietnam in realizing their biggest dream– to go to school. For these students, education is their only chance to escape poverty.

Each year, schools submit scholarship applications to GiKaD. GiKaD then organizes school visits to meet the children and their families or grandparents if the parents are absent. During these visits, family income and their current living conditions are documented. Interviews are held to ask the students about their academic performance, future plans, dreams, and interests. The goal is to have a comprehensive picture of their educational progress, their character, and family environment. GiKaD then visits the children at home to better understand their daily lives. Once the applications have been reviewed, the final step is to search for a sponsor for the student’s Greenleaves Scholarship.

The children who receive the Greenleaves Scholarship often come from complicated circumstances. While school fees and health insurance are covered, families still have to bear additional costs throughout the school year, such as

uniforms, books, school supplies, accident insurance, drinking water, foreign language training, computer courses, and dental treatments at school. The scholarship helps cover these extra costs so the children can continue attending school.

The students' home visits often left many long-lasting and disheartening impressions: ruined houses or damaged structures. To enter the house of one of the students, one had to walk on a shaky row of bricks to avoid the smelly, muddy fields strewn with trash. When asked about their dreams, one student said she wished her mother could recover from being disabled. Another hoped her mother would live a long life with her and her sibling. Their father had passed away when they were little. The children knew how hard it was for their parents to provide, even with two simple meals a day, so they never asked for anything for themselves, never thought of gifts or material things.

These visits evoked mixed emotions: the innocent smiles of the children warmed the heart, but the harsh reality of their lives stirred deep sadness. The path to education is full of obstacles for them.



What would become of their future if they were denied the chance to attend school?

*Aza Lee*





# **Born to Survive**



# Benny Breakiron

**K**hánh was born in 2009.

When he was in first grade at Hùng Vương Primary School in Tây Ninh, his mother applied for the Greenleaves Scholarship on May 14, 2017. Khánh never had the chance to meet his father, who had passed away from a stroke before he was born.

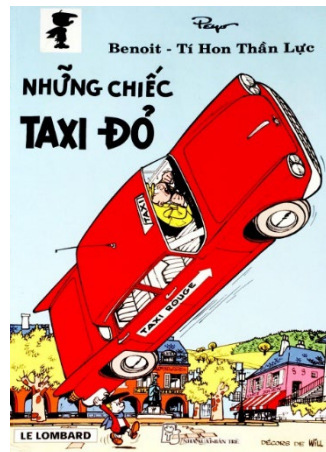
His mother, who could not afford health insurance, was already advanced in age and struggling with health issues. As a single mother, living in poverty and without any support, she worked tirelessly to provide her son not only with daily meals but also the opportunity to attend school. She made a living by peeling and processing cashew nuts — a physically demanding job earning her only 110,000 to 120,000 VND daily (approximately €4).



Because she had to leave early for work, she would drop Khánh off at the school canteen as early as 5 a.m., where he waited until classes began. At noon, he accompanied a young monk — also a student at the school — to the temple, and in the afternoon, he returned with him to continue the school day.

At the time of Khanh’s home visit, GiKaD received a donation of children’s comic books from a donor who wanted the children to have a chance to enjoy them as she did when she was little. Almost everyone grows up reading comic books; they are not just for entertainment, but also an excellent way for kids to foster reading habits. These stories often feature brave and kind-hearted characters who embody values such as friendship, honesty, and respect for nature and animals. A few examples of those books are:

*Benny Breakiron* shows that even young people — or seemingly “small” heroes—can make a big difference when they stand up for others.



*The Smurfs:* These characters embody the spirit of communal unity in the battle against darkness, as the malevolent sorcerer Gargamel casts a dark shadow over their peaceful village. Each Smurf, with a distinct personality, helps weave the rich heritage tapestry of this close-knit tribe.

*Spirou and Fantasio, Johann and Peewit, Asterix and Obelix:* The tales of these characters celebrate the enduring power of their friendship, the courage to help the righteous, and their triumph over evil. Their adversaries — like the eccentric villain Zorglub, with his wild and harmful inventions under the guise of a scientist — add humor and irony, breathing life into these unforgettable adventures.

*Marsupilami, Snowy the dog, and Dogmatix the dog:* More than mere animals, these faithful companions embody loyalty, bravery, wit, and charm. They stand as cherished pillars beside their human friends and are constant sources of warmth and delight.

*Tintin and Snowy:* A clever and intrepid young man who pursues justice and truth through perilous mysteries and noble quests, always standing firmly with those who seek the good.

*Lucky Luke*: Besides paying homage to a selfless hero who is devoted to justice and the fight against wrongdoing, this saga is steeped in history, painting vivid portraits of real-life pioneers who forge their path through the untamed American Wild West.



As shown above, children's comic books are far more than just mere entertainment; they nurture both the mind and the heart, inspiring young readers to always channel their talents for the greater good of society, their communities, families, and friends. Beyond their educational value, these comic books possess a rich artistic dimension: vivid, playful illustrations that enable readers to grasp the story without reading the text. Many beloved comics have been brought to life in films — among them are *Lucky Luke*, *Tintin*, *The Smurfs*, *Asterix*, and *Obelix*.



However, for poor children in Vietnam, comics are a luxury they cannot afford. Simply being able to go to school and owning textbooks often remains an unattainable dream. During a visit to Tây Ninh, the children received a selection of comics, including Benny Breakiron, The Smurfs, Spirou and Fantasio, and Tintin. Little Khánh, then a first grader, was given Benny Breakiron. While we were still talking with his mother, he sat on the floor with a radiant smile and immediately began reading the book with great enthusiasm. It was a rare joy for him to immerse himself, as he lacked the means for other leisure activities and could not afford his own comics.



Khánh is a diligent student with good grades, exemplary behavior, and abundant energy. He is athletically gifted and excels in badminton, foot volleyball, and table tennis. He has already won gold medals in table tennis at the provincial level, secured first place in a competition in Tây Ninh city, and earned second place in foot volleyball.

In April 2022, Khánh's mother suffered a stroke that damaged her nerve cells. While she retained some movement in her arms, she can no longer walk normally. Despite her serious illness, she had to continue working to support herself and her son. She processed cashew nuts — about 20 kilograms every two days — for a meager 50,000 VND daily. Their monthly rent was 650,000 VND, but rent payments were rarely paid on time. Even with the help of charitable organizations, food was scarce, mainly rice, vegetables, and occasionally eggs with soy sauce.

In early 2023, she was involved in a serious traffic accident and sustained severe head injuries. She was taken to Chợ Rẫy Hospital in Saigon, but after a few days, she chose to discontinue treatment because she simply could not afford the hospital fees. A few days later, she fell into a coma. Doctors discovered that blood in her brain was compressing the nerves. Her chances of survival were estimated at just

ten percent. Yet, after a successful surgery, she fought her way back to life, though facing the grim prospect of being bedridden for the rest of her days.

Due to the high cost of treatment, she was transferred back to Tây Ninh. A few weeks later, she was discharged to continue her recovery at home. The expenses for medication, hospitalization, and physical therapy remained overwhelming. The family managed to cover the initial surgery costs, but they could not afford the urgently needed one for skull reconstruction. A relative helped with the payment for storing the removed portion of her skull at the hospital for a monthly fee of 400,000 VND.

Despite her poor health, Khánh's mother continued working by shelling cashew nuts at home, earning barely one million VND per month. During the summer, Khánh worked in a restaurant from 2 p.m. to 10 p.m., earning 150,000 VND a day (around €5). Yet even with this extra income, it was barely enough to cover their basic living expenses and school fees.

Months passed, and the family still could not afford the critical skull reconstruction surgery. By then, the cost had risen to around 30 million VND (about €1,200). In the end, they had no choice but to forgo the procedure. Without the

protection of her skull bone, Khánh's mother lives in constant danger — any minor accident could be life-threatening.

While his mother fights for her life, Khánh's dream of continuing school becomes increasingly fragile, a soap bubble that could burst at any moment.

What will become of this boy who once dove into the world of superheroes with sparkling eyes, but now finds himself in a life where he needs a hero of his own?

## Living Among Rags and Plastic

**T**hanh is a seventh grader with a sharp gaze and a quiet inner strength that speaks louder than words. She answers clearly, confidently, and without hesitation when asked about her grades or family situation.

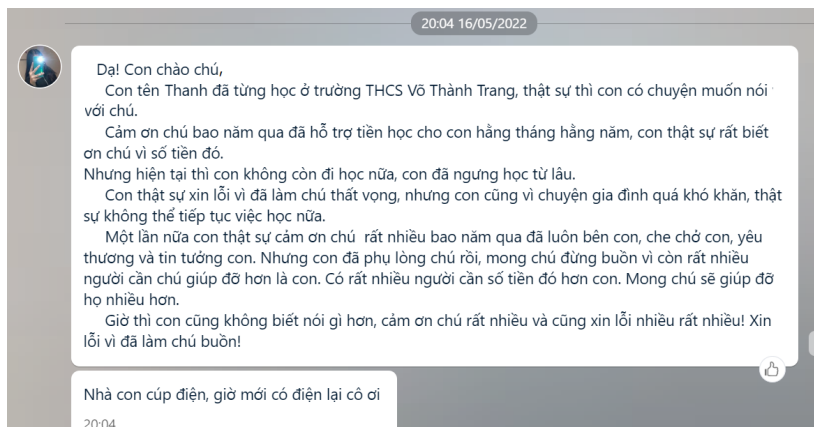
She has two younger siblings: an eight-year-old sister, who attends the nearby Tô Vĩnh Diện Primary School, and a five-year-old brother who has a free place at a kindergarten operated by the nuns. Their parents divorced and each started a new family, leaving their three children in the care of their 66-year-old paternal grandmother. To make a living, she sells lottery tickets on the street. Occasionally, kind-hearted market vendors would give her leftover vegetables or fish, just enough for a simple meal. When that is not enough, she buys what little she can afford.

Their small, rented room is cramped and stifling, packed with secondhand clothes, fabric scraps, rags, and plastic bags, all sorted for resale as recyclables. Thanh sleeps and studies on the top bunk, where the low, dim ceiling forces her to hunch down to avoid bumping her head. The weak light from a lone bulb barely provides enough brightness for her to study by.

Since birth, Thanh has suffered from pulmonary stenosis, a narrowing of the pulmonary valve. When a classmate found out, she informed her mother — a gesture that would change Thanh's life forever. In 2016, her friend's mother arranged for Thanh to receive free surgery at Gia Định Hospital. Since then, Thanh has had to return each year for follow-up examinations. The school principal and many teachers gathered donations for her then, but that money has long since run out.

Despite all the hardships, Thanh's grandmother has always urged her to study diligently so she can one day take care of her younger siblings. The old woman, now growing frail, sells lottery tickets every day, unsure how much longer she can keep going. Thanh's little sister, Tâm, also dreams of continuing school so that she, too, can help someday.

Although Thanh achieved only average results at school, she successfully passed the entrance exam for Lý Tự Trọng College to pursue vocational training in fashion design. However, in the 2021–2022 academic year, instead of applying again for scholarship support, GiKaD received an unexpected message that Thanh had dropped out.



*Dear Sir,*

*My name is Thanh; I used to study at Vo Thanh Trang High School. I am truly sad to inform you of my decision. First, I want to thank you for supporting me over the years. I am really grateful for the money you sent, but now I can no longer go to school. I have stopped going to school for a long time. I am so sorry for disappointing you. However, my family is in a lot of trouble, and I really cannot continue studying. Once again, I sincerely thank you for always being by my side, protecting, loving, and trusting me. I know that I have let you down. But I hope you are not disappointed in me, and you will continue to support many other students who need your help.*

*The following is an Excerpt from the letter that her school board wrote to her sponsor and GiKaD:*

Dear Sir or Madam

First, I am writing this letter to express our gratitude to the sponsor families and the Greenleaves Scholarship group for their kind support of our disadvantaged students. Second, I regretfully inform you that two of our students, Thanh and Tam, have dropped out of school.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Thanh, her sister, and their grandmother - a lottery ticket vendor - faced even greater hardships. The various phases of social distancing only deepened their already difficult living conditions. As a result, the girls had to move to Đồng Nai. Thanh informed me of their decision before their departure. I provided guidance and support to her and her sister regarding the temporary withdrawal from school and the necessary paperwork for transferring schools so they could continue their education.

As I prepared the documents for the renewed scholarship application for the new school year, I tried to reach Thanh by phone and via Zalo. During the last conversation, Thanh promised to complete the required paperwork and send it to me. However, despite numerous



attempts since then, I have been unable to contact her. This has caused me great concern and a heavy sense of guilt, as I felt I had not fulfilled my responsibility toward Thanh and the Greenleaves Scholarship group. I sincerely hope you can understand my situation and forgive any shortcomings.

Once again, I wish our sponsors and the Greenleaves Scholarship Group excellent health, peace, and happiness, so that you can continue to support our students who live in difficult circumstances.

With heartfelt thanks and kind regards,



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Dear Thanh, wherever you are and however difficult life may be, please never give up your dream of escaping poverty through education!

# Letters to the Benefactor

**T**ân Phú, July 6th, 2023

Dear Benefactor,

My name is Long, a former student of Võ Thành Trang School. I am writing this letter to apply for the Greenleaves Scholarship.

I am 19 years old and studying Automotive Technology at the National Polytechnic University. After my parents' divorce, my younger sister and I lived with our mother. Since no division of assets took place, we had to rent an apartment. Last year, I commuted daily to university by motorcycle. My campus is located at Campus 2 of the university, right on the border between Thủ Đức and Bình Dương, about 30 kilometers from home. As we only own one motorcycle, I take my mother to work in the morning on school days and pick her up afterward. On days when my classes run until 6 p.m., which coincides with my mother's finishing time, I ride home with a classmate who lives near us.

My academic performance was not particularly strong in my first year of study. The new environment overwhelmed me - the high level of course material, the fast pace of teaching,

and the sheer volume of content were challenges I had never faced before. I was fortunate to meet the minimum passing scores in most subjects, but not all. The biggest hurdle was Analysis 2, a course in which 70% of students fail on their first attempt. Unfortunately, I was among those 70% and had to retake the class. While my overall results did not fully meet my expectations, they were better than I had feared — I worried that the pressure might overwhelm me, forcing me to transfer to other schools or even interrupt my studies.

The thought of quitting school lingered, especially toward the end of that first year, as one challenge followed another. After the Tết holiday, my mother suddenly fell ill and required a month of treatment. I stayed by her side in the hospital for two weeks, which forced me to sometimes neglect my studies — a factor that inevitably affected my performance in Analysis 2. After she was discharged, we moved into a slightly larger apartment where she could recover more comfortably. My mother suffers from vestibular disorders and needs plenty of rest. However, the financial pressure with increased rent, school fees due, and my mother's illness led to tensions and conflicts within our family. During this difficult time, I seriously considered dropping out of university and

working instead, just to ease some of my mother's financial burden.

Fortunately, a Greenleaves Scholarship coordinator reached out to me. She was the one who helped my younger sister with her scholarship; my sister is currently in ninth grade at Võ Thành Trang School. She strongly advised me against quitting my studies, warning that even a one-year break could cause me to lose touch with the curriculum. She also offered to help me find a sponsor for the scholarship program so that I could receive financial support.

For this reason, I am writing this letter to you, my esteemed benefactor. I do not know who you are, but if you are reading this letter and willing to give me the chance to receive your support, I am deeply grateful. Your help would be invaluable, granting me the opportunity to continue my education and shape my future.

With sincere thanks and respect,

Long



In another letter, Long wrote:

Tân Phú, September 4th, 2023

Dear Benefactor,

About two months ago, I wrote you a letter. Since then, I have been working and gaining many new experiences, which I would like to share with you in this second letter. I was hoping you could get to know me better, so although this letter is not as polished, I write it as I have lived it.

Two months ago, after I wrote my first letter, I started working at a Circle K convenience store. It was my first job with an official contract, complete paperwork, and salary guidelines. Previously, I had only done short-term jobs where I was paid immediately after I performed the work.

During the first two days, the work was fairly easy because I only had to follow the instructions from the experienced staff. I found it manageable since it was not too demanding. However, on the fourth day, a Sunday, my first truly challenging shift began: I was assigned the night shift from 10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. My main task was to prepare goods for the early shift — a relatively simple but continuous job that required full concentration.

Between 1:00 and 3:00 a.m., I became tired and worked more slowly. As the tasks piled up, I needed more time to complete them, and I did not leave the store until 7:30 a.m. Being new, I didn't know how to manage my schedule and didn't realize that my next shift was already planned for the same day, from 2:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

That morning, I arranged an important appointment with an acquaintance at 4:00 p.m., unaware that I was scheduled to work. After the night shift, I went home and immediately fell asleep. I woke up around 1:30 p.m., quickly had lunch, and right then, my supervisor called, asking why I had not come to work yet. I was stunned and only then realized that I also had an appointment on the same afternoon. Since it was too short notice to request time off, I had to reschedule my important appointment. Fortunately, my acquaintance was understanding.

With very few hours of sleep, I felt exhausted and nodded off several times during my shift. Fatigue caused me to make several mistakes. I forgot to restock some products and arranged the shelves carelessly. My supervisor was displeased and instructed me to redo everything, which meant I couldn't leave until 12:20 a.m.— nearly two and a half hours later — completely drained.

I slept until 3:00 p.m. the next day and began questioning the job. But gradually, I adapted to the rhythm, grew more confident in my tasks, and befriended my coworkers, mostly around my age. This made the work not only bearable but even pleasant.



However, after just over two weeks, I decided to quit because the job took up too much time and involved some financial risks. For example, cash counting and logging the register balance are always done at the end of the shift, so on average, I had to work more than 30 minutes extra. Additionally, many instant products in the store had very short expiration dates. If an expired product was not removed from the shelf and disposed of in time, the employee was required to reimburse the full price. Given the large number



of items to check, it was nearly inevitable that something might occasionally be overlooked. It was fortunate that I was never held financially responsible for any product.

Besides the financial risks, the working hours often included night shifts, which severely disrupted my sleep pattern and affected my health. While these were normal job challenges that one could grow accustomed to over time, the work simply did not suit me, so I decided to resign. Nevertheless, it was a stable position with decent pay that gave me valuable experience.

After a short break, I took on a new part-time job — a completely different experience in marketing and promotion. The company hired about 40 promoters (Promotion Girls, PGs) who walked through markets in a line carrying advertising signs to promote a brand. In addition, free coffee samples were distributed at fixed stands.

My role as a helper involved several key responsibilities:

- I collected the equipment at the fixed stands – including speakers and 40 advertising signs (divided into four rounds) and handed them over to the PG managers.

- I supervised the personal belongings of the PGs while they walked through the market.
- I assisted with any unexpected problems that arose during the work.

The work itself was simple and not physically demanding, but it was precisely the unexpected situations that made the job challenging.

Since the promotional campaign covered a large area, we worked in a different market every day. This gave me the chance to explore many diverse neighborhoods and streets. Moreover, working in the market offered a direct glimpse into the hectic lives of the vendors. As the person responsible for safeguarding the equipment, I always had to scramble for a good spot, whether in front of a residential house, a shop, or a small food stall. This required keen observation, strong communication skills, and negotiation talent to secure an appropriate place to store the items. If a speaker broke down, I had to coordinate with another helper at a fixed stand. He would watch over my belongings while I took the faulty device for repair or replaced it with a new one.

Navigating the market was extremely difficult due to the many vehicles and frequent traffic jams. In addition, there were numerous challenges, such as:

- Damaged advertising signs that needed repair and transport,
- Microphones with dead batteries that had to be replaced,
- Purchasing water for the team,
- Organizing transportation for additional PGs to their assignment locations, and so on.

All these unexpected situations gave me valuable experience in problem-solving, management, and handling unexpected challenges.



There was one incident that occurred on my last working day that remained etched in my memory forever. That day, our team was assigned to Bình Thới market. The streets there were extremely narrow, and the shops were packed closely together, making it difficult to find a suitable spot to store the PGs' belongings. After observing for a while, I finally chose a small backyard in a tight alley, with the residents' permission. However, the alley was not only narrow but also heavily trafficked, and its great distance from the main street made it hard for me to support my team. To make matters worse, our promotion team was stopped by local police who checked our permits. Our manager and boss had to go to the police station to sort out the matter. I was left alone in the cramped alley with all the equipment, uncertain about what would happen next. Ultimately, the police confiscated all our advertising signs, and the company was fined heavily. As a result, we lost several signs, and in the following days, our team was busy negotiating with the company to find a solution.

In the end, we finally got our pay after ten days, despite initial promises of payment within three days. Additionally, part of our wages for the last working day was deducted.

This job was probably the most realistic experience I have had so far. I faced various challenges — from unexpected

incidents to delayed payments and constantly changing work locations — but these also brought a sense of variety and adventure. Perhaps I will try this kind of work again in the future because, despite all the difficulties, it was incredibly exciting.

That was the story of my two longest jobs in the past two months. Besides these, I have also taken on other short-term work such as waiting tables, delivery services, and warehouse duties.

I sincerely thank you for taking the time to read my letter. I truly appreciate every single second you spend learning more about my experiences and who I am.

I wish you abundant health, joy, and happiness in your work and family life. I hope to reach you again soon with my next letter or, if I am fortunate, to meet you in person one day to share my experiences directly.

With warmest regards,

Long

Fortunately, Long has found a sponsor. In his letter of gratitude, he wrote:



September 20th, 2024

Dear Uncle Phát,

Today, I am writing this letter to express my heartfelt thanks to you. First and foremost, I sincerely thank you. Your support has been a great help to me in life. I wish you good health and success in all that you do.

Regarding my TOEIC exam: as I mentioned before, I currently study for 20 minutes every day. I want to master the material thoroughly because I am worried, I might not achieve the desired score on my first attempt. That is why I am preparing carefully and determined to pass on the first try.

In August, I worked a lot at a workshop. Since the workplace was far away, I spent quite a bit on meals while out and on daily fuel costs. After some time, I quit that job and looked for other work. Thanks to the experience I gained at the workshop, I learned how to wash cars, which helped me get a job as a car washer afterward.

At first, the job went well, but over time, I realized the work environment did not suit me. Most of my colleagues were significantly older — some as old as my mother (born in 1977), which made it hard for me to fit in. One day, I took a day off to study for my English exam with the intention of quitting the next day. But before I could say anything, the boss told me I no longer needed to come in. Probably, there were too many workers at the workshop — five people in total — and the daily earnings had to be split. I worked eleven hours on some days but only had six hours of actual tasks; the rest of the time, I just sat around. On those days, I earned only 120,000 VND (about €4.5). Most likely, the boss wanted to reduce the number of employees.

After giving up the car-washing job, I decided to register as a shipper. I had thought about this for a long time but never had the chance. Thanks to your financial support, it was much easier to register. This job required some initial capital to buy

the uniform, pay a deposit, and advance money for the goods when making deliveries. Without this financial foundation, it would have been difficult for me to start at all.



Working as a shipper suits me quite well: flexible hours, decent income, and I feel much more comfortable than in my previous jobs. Luckily, my semester schedule has been quite relaxed — or so I thought at first. I only have three and a half days of classes per week and plenty of free time. But I soon realize appearances can be deceiving though I have fewer lessons, the number of deadlines is enormous, about twice as many as in the past two years. This has been quite overwhelming. Fridays are especially tough because I have practice classes in the university workshop. The instructor is



very strict; we often have to stay longer, and after class, I spend the rest of the day writing my report. All in all, the start of my third year feels pretty stressful.

In my daily life, I do not feel particularly happy or comfortable right now. My mood has been a bit low lately. When I come home, I am often exhausted. My little sister is going through a difficult phase; she is becoming more rebellious and more challenging to deal with. Moreover, the atmosphere at home is quite tense, which often makes me restless.

By the way, in case you do not know yet: my birthday is on September 26! I hope my 20th year will bring even more exciting experiences than my 19th. And I wanted to ask you: when is your birthday, Uncle Phát? If you feel like it, do tell me sometime!

I am naturally a talkative person who likes to tell stories, but lately, I have often held back, and sometimes I do not say a word all day. What I have written here comes straight from my heart. I think I was just in the right mood to write so much.



Once again, thank you, Uncle Phát, for all the help you have given me in life. I truly appreciate it very much! Also, thank you for our last conversation and your advice. I sincerely wish you good health, happiness, and peace.

P.S. It is now September 27th, and my birthday has just passed. As I read this letter, I realized I wrote quite a lot. I wish you a wonderful weekend!

Long

## Holding the Waistband While Standing

**I**n March 2018, during a Greenleaves scholarship distribution event in Tân Châu, GiKaD learned about the difficult situation of Trâm, a 5th-grade student at Thạnh Đông Primary School in Tây Ninh. Her parents died early in a traffic accident, and she now lives with her elderly grandfather. Her grandmother passed away long ago, and the family receives some support from the local government. Trâm has a 13-year-old cousin who helps her grandfather with daily tasks. Trâm cooks using a rice cooker and sweeps the floor, while her cousin prepares other dishes.

In a thank-you letter to her supporters, she wrote:

*Friday, September 2th1, 2018*

*Dear Ladies and Gentlemen of the Greenleaves Scholarship Group,*

*My name is Trâm. I was born in 2007 and live in the Thạnh Đông community, Tân Châu district, Tây Ninh.*

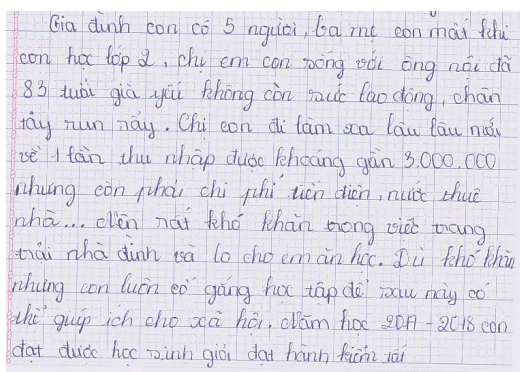
*My family consists of five members. My parents passed away when I was in 2nd grade. My siblings and I live with our*

*83-year-old grandfather, who can no longer work. My sister works far away and rarely comes home. Her monthly income is about 3,000,000 VND (approximately €110), which is insufficient to cover the main household expenses such as rent, electricity, and water. Because of this, it is tough for us to sustain and afford me an education.*

*Despite these hardships, I always try my best at school, hoping to one day give back to society. In the 2017–2018 school year, I received the “Excellent Student” award and earned very good conduct grades.*

*With kind regards,*

*Trâm*



Gia đình con có 5 người, ba mẹ con mãi khi con học lớp 2, chỉ em con sống với ông nội đã 83 tuổi già yếu không còn sức lao động, chân tay run rẩy. Chỉ con đi làm xa lâu lâu mới về 1 lần thu nhập được khoảng gần 3.000.000 nhưng còn phải chi phí tiền điện, nước thuê nhà... lên nói khó khăn trong việc trang trải nhà đình và lo cho em ăn học. Dù khó khăn nhưng con luôn cố gắng học tập để sau này có thể giúp ích cho xã hội, năm học 2017 - 2018 con đạt được học sinh giỏi đạt thành tích rất

Trâm has sad, tired eyes and is very thin. Her hand-me-down pants were too large for her, so she constantly had to hold them up while standing to prevent them from slipping down. Her sponsor intended to provide her with more clothes,

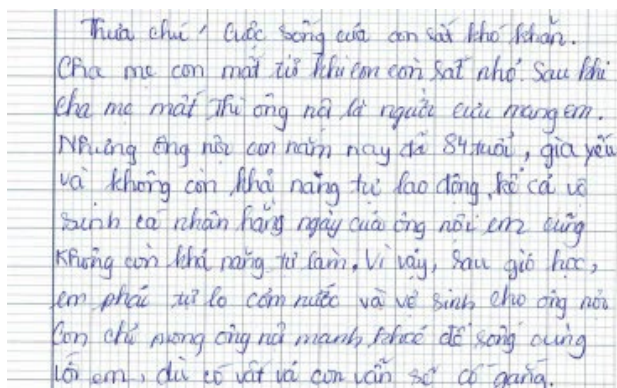
but her family lives quite far away with no means of transportation. Eventually, GiKaD was able to ask the Tan Chau Education Support Association to contact the school and assist Trâm in purchasing new clothing.



*Thanh Đông, May 18th, 2019*

*Dear Uncle,*

*My life is currently very difficult. After my parents passed away when I was very young, my grandfather took me in. However, he is now 84 years old and can no longer work. He cannot even take care of his daily hygiene by himself anymore. Now, I cook and take care of my grandfather after school. Even though life is hard, I will always try my best. All I wish for is that my grandfather stays healthy so he can be with me.*



Thưa chú / Cuộc sống của con rất khó khăn.  
Chưa may con mất từ từ từ con còn rất nhỏ. Sau khi  
cha mẹ mất thì ông nãi là người nuôi con.  
Nhưng ông nãi con năm nay đã 84 tuổi, già yếu  
và không còn khả năng tự lao động, kể cả về  
sinh tố nhân hàng ngày của ông nãi con cũng  
không còn khả năng tự làm. Vì vậy, sau giờ học,  
con phải tự lo cơm nước và về sinh cho ông nãi  
con chứ mong ông nãi mạnh khỏe để sống cùng  
lớn con, dù có vất vả con vẫn sẽ cố gắng.

*Uncle, will you come to my area someday?*

*Can you visit this place to see all the beautiful things it holds, just once? Here, you will find fragrant golden rice fields, lush green cassava forests, and the path I take to school every day. The most beautiful of all is Mount Bà Đen, a well-known tourist destination in the South. I love my hometown deeply — I grew up listening to my mother's lullabies and the beautiful sights of those gentle herons gliding across the sky.*

*I am writing this letter to thank you for supporting me and allowing me to go to school. I am truly grateful for everything you have done for me over the years. As I come to the end of this letter, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks once more.*

*Goodbye, Uncle!*

*Trâm*

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After her grandfather passed away, Trâm moved in with her uncle in Bình Phước, who lives near the Cambodian border. During the summer break of ninth grade, she went to Saigon to visit her older sister, and from that moment on, Trang disappeared without a trace. We do not know her whereabouts.

Does she still have to hold up her pants when she stands?





# The Girl Who Sells Lottery Tickets

**T**he story “The Little Match Girl” by Hans Christian Andersen tells of a poor girl who must sell matches on New Year’s Eve in freezing weather. People passing by are busy buying gifts for the new year, and no one pays attention to the girl selling matches. To keep warm, she lights a match, and each flickering flame brings her visions of warmth: a stove beside a festively set table with a roasted goose, a nicely decorated Christmas tree, and finally, her grandmother appears. But all these beautiful visions vanish when the match goes out.



On New Year’s morning, the girl is found dead in the cold, surrounded by partially burnt matches. No one knew that she

had taken her grandmother's hand, and together, they had ascended to heaven and into endless happiness.

In Tân Phú, a district in the northwest of Saigon, there is no "Little Match Girl," but you will find Doanh, born in 2007, selling lottery tickets under the scorching sun. Doanh looks dirty and small for her age, standing in the middle of the bustling market, selling ticket after ticket to earn a living. Her parents separated when she was just one year old. Her father remarried and did not support her, while her mother left the family and disappeared. Doanh's grandmother raised her, along with an older and a younger cousin, both abandoned by their parents. Her aunt also lives with them; she helps with housework and contributes to the rent. Their apartment is cramped, Doanh's bed is shorter than her height, so she often has to study at the coffee shop around the corner.

In the past, Doanh sold lottery tickets on both days of the weekend. Since starting seventh grade, she has now sold only on Sundays and attends school on Saturdays. On a good day, she earns about 120,000 VND (roughly €4.50). With this money, she helps her grandmother pay the rent and spends the rest on her meals when her grandmother comes home late and cannot cook.

Doanh is a diligent, studious, and polite girl who is always willing to help her classmates. At the end of eighth grade, she was named the best student in her class and was awarded a bicycle by the school as a prize.



During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021, many families who earned a living by selling lottery tickets, street vending, or working as domestic helpers faced severe hardship, as they had no income for months. Doanh's grandmother continued selling lottery tickets, but sales dropped sharply. Doanh ran from place to place, standing in long lines to collect donated food or rice, whatever was available. Her aunt, who had previously contributed some money toward rent, lost her job

due to the pandemic, so her grandmother had to pay the entire rent alone.

At one point, her grandmother considered leaving the city to return to their home village because she could no longer afford the rent. Doanh wanted to stay with her grandmother, but doing so would mean she could no longer attend school. Andersen's little match girl only knew how to light matches to keep warm and ultimately died in the icy night when her last match went out. Doanh's only dream is to escape poverty through education. She considered staying in Saigon, even if it meant sleeping in a nearby temple to continue going to school.



In October 2021, when we delivered laptops to some students at Võ Thành Trang School, GiKaD asked the vice principal to distribute gifts to the girls. Doanh received a

jacket to help protect her from the scorching sun while selling lottery tickets, an electric toothbrush, and a carry-on bag in case she needed to stay at the temple.

While still in ninth grade, Doanh's bicycle was stolen during the Lunar New Year festival. The thief quietly loaded it onto his vehicle and quickly disappeared. Although Doanh chased after him, she could not catch up in time. She was sad and cried a lot at school. To help her, the vice principal and a teacher contributed half of the money needed. The other half came from Doanh's own savings to buy a used bicycle. Later on, when GiKaD learned about the incident, we sent Doanh the money to replace her savings.

In a letter to her sponsor, she wrote:

*Dear Sponsor,*

*My classmates and I come from poor backgrounds. Although each of us faces different circumstances, we share a common dream: to receive a good education and later find a secure job to help our families escape poverty. However, with each advancing grade, the financial burden on our parents or guardians grows heavier as the overall costs rise. Because of this, with tears and sadness, many had to leave school to support their families, burying their dreams and hopes, stepping into*

*the harsh realities of life as the school gates swung shut behind them.*

Kính thưa cô !  
Em và các bạn khác là những học sinh nghèo, dù hoàn cảnh mỗi học sinh chúng em có khác nhau. Nhưng chúng em có cùng chung một ước mơ đó là được học hành đến nơi đến chốn và sau này tìm được một việc làm ổn định phụ giúp gia đình thoát cảnh đói nghèo. Thế nhưng học lên mỗi lớp, gánh nặng của cha mẹ (ngựa non đầy) chúng em ngày càng tăng lên bội phần. Chi phí ngày càng nhiều hơn. Do vậy mà không ít bạn đã thôi học, để làm phụ gia đình, bỏ lỡ ước mơ, hi vọng tuổi học trò, ngắm nhìn một buổi vào đời.

## Crossing Hurdles, Chasing Dreams

**I**n his 8th grade, Toàn, born in 2007, applied for the Greenleaves scholarship. Although his academic performance was average, he stood out through exemplary behavior: he attended school regularly, worked diligently, showed respect to his teachers, and cared deeply for his classmates.

Toàn came from a difficult upbringing. His parents divorced, and his father cut off all contact and provided no support. Toàn lived with his mother, grandparents, uncle, and aunt in Hóc Môn. His grandmother earned a living by cleaning and tending graves at Bình Hưng Hòa cemetery. Toàn's mother used to work as a factory laborer, earning about 4.5 million VND (approximately €185) per month. However, in early 2019, she had to quit when the company relocated to Long Thành. Since then, she struggled to find permanent employment, and the COVID-19 pandemic left her unemployed. To help make ends meet, she assisted her mother in tending graves or crafted artificial flowers.

Toàn qualified for the scholarship because he had no father, and his mother alone could not afford the school fees necessary for him to continue his education.

Lý do xin học bổng :  
Lý do mà em xin học bổng là vì em không có Ba mà chỉ  
xỉu mẹ em không thể đi làm cho em đi học được tiếp nữa  
em muốn xin học bổng này để có thể đi học tiếp và  
được tiếp tục đi học.

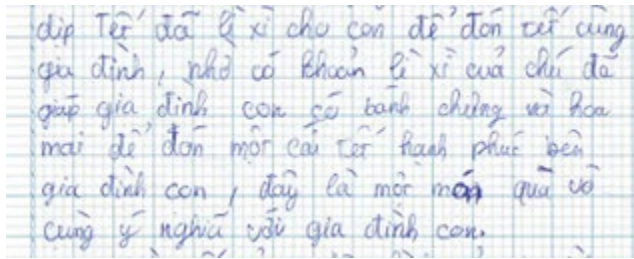
Toàn dreams of becoming a biology teacher at a secondary school. His mother has promised to support him as much as she can. Toàn speaks with the maturity of an adult, often answering questions about his family situation himself rather than letting his mother speak on his behalf.

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In a thank-you letter to his sponsor, Toàn wrote:

*"Thank you for the money gift you sent me for the New Year. The money allowed my family to celebrate the festival together. With your gift, my family was able to buy a New Year's cake and flowers to welcome a joyful New Year. It was a truly meaningful present for all of us."*





In the 2023–2024 school year, Toàn graduated from vocational school with a degree in refrigeration technology. He then enrolled in a supplementary program to complete the last three years of high school (grades 10, 11, and 12). In this program, he only needed to take core subjects such as mathematics and literature, rather than all subjects. After finishing this year, he will serve two years in the military. With both his vocational diploma and the additional high school certification, he will meet the requirements to enroll in university.

Toàn began eighth grade with average grades, but through dedication and determination, he graduated from vocational school with good marks — a truly proud achievement.

Life is not always easy or smooth; everyone has their own struggles. How we confront these challenges shapes the path

ahead. Toàn's story is not only a life lesson, but also a strong message to all who are currently facing hardship: *never give up! If you believe in yourself and persist every day, success will come.*



## The Grandson of the Woman Who Sold Duck Soup

**H**ào, born in 2005, Hào applied for the Greenleaves Scholarship on May 30, 2017, while he was in 6th grade at Lê Văn Thới Middle School in Tây Ninh. His parents divorced; his father provided no support, and his mother remarried. Hào lived with his two younger brothers — one in 4th grade and the other in 1st grade — under the care of their maternal grandparents. The grandparents made a living by selling duck soup at a small street stall and caring for the boys. Their modest home stood beside a smelly drainage canal. For people not used to living in bad conditions, enduring the mingling odors of fish sauce and duck broth alongside the stench of sewage under the hot, humid climate was unbearable.

As his grandparents grew older and found it more challenging to run the food stall, his grandfather began working labor jobs at a gas station, while his grandmother had to move in with Hào's aunt because the house had become too cramped. Hào's mother worked as a factory laborer. When money was not too tight, they could eat meat, but most of the

time, they had to make do with rice, eggs, soy sauce, or instant noodles.

Hào loved reading fairy tales and dreamed of becoming a doctor. He particularly excelled in physics and mathematics, often earning praise from his teachers. His good behavior also stood out — he helped classmates with school subjects and showed respect to teachers and school visitors. He was even selected to join the school’s math team for top students.

Every morning, Hào woke up early to make breakfast for the family, then helped his grandparents until 11:45 a.m., before heading off to school. After classes, he changed clothes quickly and went to the food stall to sell duck soup alongside his grandparents until 9 p.m. Only then would he go home to study and complete his homework before finally going to bed.

During a GiKaD fundraising event, he received a fairy tale book by Hans Christian Andersen and “Robin Hood” by Alexandre Dumas.



In 10th grade, Hào was an excellent student with an average grade of 9.0. On January 21, 2021, GiKaD gifted him a laptop, a backpack, a computer bag, and a mouse. He also received a Wi-Fi booster, as his family had no private internet connection and had to rely on the neighbor's network. Hào wrote a heartfelt thank-you letter and a "proud" photo of himself. Looking at Hào studying at a small table and a low-height plastic stool that once served as a guest chair at the duck soup stall, GiKaD reached out to his teacher, Mr. Quan, who had nominated him for the scholarship. With GiKaD and Mr. Quan's help, Hào finally had a better desk and chair to study more comfortably.

Although Hào dreamed of becoming a doctor, his family's circumstances made that dream out of reach. So, he had planned to work as a laborer at a nearby factory after graduation to support his family. However, with a factory worker's salary, he would only offer limited help. GiKaD convinced him to continue his education, with a promise to support him along the way.

As expected, Hào graduated with outstanding results and was honored as an exemplary student throughout all 12 years of his schooling.

## HAO's THANK YOU LETTER

*Gò Dầu, August 27th, 2023*

*Dear GiKaD Team and Supporters of the Greenleaves Scholarship Group,*

*My name is Hào, and I am about to begin my studies in Software Engineering.*

*Finding the proper words to express my deep gratitude and appreciation for you and the Greenleaves Scholarship is difficult. Reflecting on the difficult journey from 7th to 12th grade and remembering how you supported and encouraged me, I felt incredibly thankful and deeply moved. This scholarship was not just financial aid — it was crucial and profound support for me and my family.*

*Initially, I did not fully understand the true value of education and the scholarship. But over time, I came to realize that a scholarship is far more than a monetary gift - I was actually given an opportunity, a source of encouragement, and a powerful motivation to do my very best in every exam, every essay, and every assignment, to prove myself worthy of this gift.*

*As I prepare to enter university, I am proud to share with you that I have been accepted to Eastern International University (EIU) in Bình Dương. This achievement is not only the result of my efforts, but also a testament to your support. I*

*will continue to do everything I can to live up to your trust and to honor the Greenleaves Scholarship through my actions.*

Cháu tên là Trần Văn Hùng, bây giờ, cháu đang  
tân sinh viên mạnh lý thuật phần mềm. Bây giờ, cháu đang  
tìm được thì thế này để đến đạt long biết em cháu thành ra, sau, các  
của mình đối với cô và Aunt Học Bổng là Non. Khi nghĩ về hành trình  
từ lớp 7 đến lớp 12, cháu nghĩ cháu đã được gặp và tiếp xúc của cô  
kể từ, đồng thời, cháu cảm thấy mình thật may mắn mà được biết đến không  
chỉ là một học bổng mà còn là một mối quan hệ đầy ý nghĩa đối với gia đình  
cháu.

Những ngày đầu, khi cháu còn trẻ và nhiệt huyết, cháu không hiểu rõ được  
giá trị thực sự của giáo dục và học bổng. Nhưng qua những năm tháng, cháu  
đàn nhân ra rằng học bổng không chỉ đơn thuần là tiền, mà còn là một cơ  
hội, một bước đi và là một động lực mạnh mẽ để phấn đấu hơn. Mỗi khi thi,  
mỗi khi nghỉ hè, mỗi bài văn, bài toán đều là một trong những niềm vui mà  
cháu phải thực hiện để thể hiện giá trị của học bổng.

Sắp bước vào Đại học, cháu muốn nói với cô Chu Chương rằng cháu đã được  
hân vận một trường Đại học tại Bình Dương mang tên Đại học Quốc tế Miền  
Bông (EIU). Điều này không chỉ là một thành tựu của cháu, mà còn là  
kết quả của sự nỗ lực của cháu, đồng thời cháu còn là sự thúc đẩy  
hầu hết các phần đầu để không phụ lòng của cô đã tin tưởng  
và biết ơn của cháu sẽ không chỉ là lời nói, mà cháu sẽ cố gắng biến nó thành  
hành động. Cháu cam kết sẽ cố gắng học tập và rèn luyện hết một cơ hội mà Đại  
học mang lại. Như những lời hứa trong những lá thư cháu gửi cho cô,  
cháu xin hứa sẽ trở thành một trong những thành viên của Aunt #BLN  
để giúp đỡ những hoàn cảnh khó khăn, vượt khó như cô và Aunt #BLN  
cùng giúp cháu.

*I promise to work hard, make the most of my university education, and use my knowledge to help my family and give it back to society. I aim to support the next generation, just as you have supported me. I promise that one day, I will become a member of the Greenleaves team myself to help future generations.*

*In closing, I want you to know that you and the Greenleaves Scholarship Group will always hold a special place in my heart. Your support has changed my life and left an indelible mark. Please know that your dedication will never be forgotten — it will live on through my future success.*

*With warmest regards,*

*Hào*



## **Excerpt from Hao's Request Letter for the GL500+ Scholarship Application**

*Alongside my studies, I am currently involved in an online sales business operating on various e-commerce platforms such as Shopee, Lazada, TikTok Shop, and Zalo Shop, as well as on social media networks such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. The business specializes in selling imported glass panels and wine glasses. I dedicate about four hours daily to monitor inventory, create or optimize product listings to reduce costs, and maximize revenue. I receive 10% of the sales of this work after all expenses are deducted.*

*In addition to my academic pursuits, I actively participate in charitable activities. Together with the school community, I have helped organize tutoring sessions for underprivileged children and various volunteer efforts, for example, distributing cookies and lanterns during the Mid-Autumn Festival. On weekends, I also take part in the school's community service initiatives — not just to earn points, but to genuinely contribute to society. One such activity was the “Collect Trash for Gifts” campaign, which supported low-income families in the area. Though these actions may seem small, they do bring them joy and serve as a reminder that people in our society are always willing to lend a helping hand.*

*Looking ahead, I hope to become a software specialist after I graduate. Using the knowledge and skills I have acquired, I want to enhance the lives of my family and contribute to society. At the same time, I will also continue to build expertise in online sales and social media. I want to work extra hard to be successful in these two fields that I have chosen.*



*Once I have established myself professionally and become a contributing member of society, I promise to support the Greenleaves Scholarship Group and help others realize their dreams, just as I was once supported. This goal has remained close to my heart since the first day I received the scholarship. I hope to develop educational initiatives and assist disadvantaged children whom I have met through my social*

*work. With my experience and the network I have built, I am confident that I can help create meaningful programs that empower the next generation.*

*Besides my personal plans, I am eager to help grow the Greenleaves Scholarship Group on a larger scale. I would be glad to assist with public relations and help spread awareness of the group's mission through my social media channels. Additionally, I am willing to volunteer at fundraising events, support program logistics, or mentor new applicants. Drawing on my experience, I believe I can offer valuable support in guiding students through the application and interview process.*

*In closing, I sincerely thank the Greenleaves Scholarship Group for being alongside me on my educational journey. I hope to continue receiving your support in the coming year, and I promise always to try my best to live up to your trust in me. Furthermore, I look forward to giving back to the scholarship group that has deeply shaped my path.*

*I wish the Greenleaves Scholarship Group continued success and sustainable growth to keep lighting the way for many more students.*

*With kind regards,*

*Hào*



## A Chicken Coop for Hương

**D**uring a visit to the children during the Tết Festival in 2017, GiKaD learned of the story of Hương, a 13-year-old seventh grader at Nguyễn Khuyến Middle School in Duy Thu, Đà Nẵng. Hương's mother has a mental illness, and her grandmother raised her. The family lived in deep poverty, so badly that the already poor community had to gather to help build them a tiny place to live. There was no furniture inside. Each night, Hương had to sweep the floor and sleep on the bare ground without a bed or mattress.

In 2017, her grandmother, the only person who was able to care for Hương and her mother, passed away. Suddenly, Hương found herself without any support, feeling extremely helpless and uncertain about her future. She faced the heartbreaking possibility of leaving school to care for her ill mother and herself.

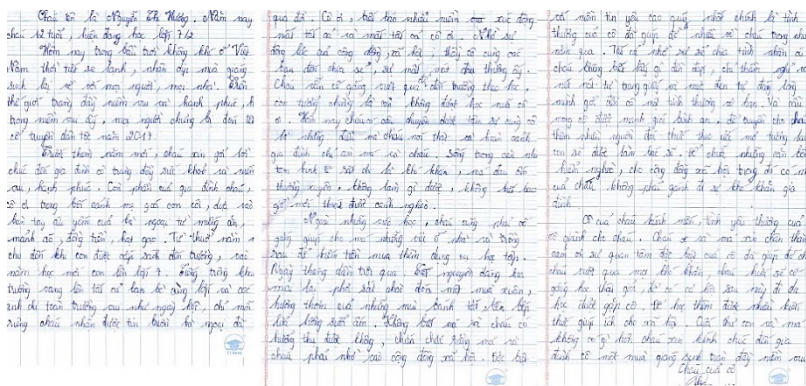
She expressed her feelings in a deeply sorrowful letter:

*As the new year approaches, I want to send you and your family my heartfelt wishes for excellent health, joy, and happiness.*

*As for my own family, dear Aunt, having a mentally-ill mother, I grew up without a father and was under the loving care of my grandmother, who provided me with everything — food, clothing, and money for school.*

*When I entered seventh grade, on the very first day of the new school year, as the first school bell rang and at the very moment when all of my friends were happy celebrating the start of the school year, I received the devastating news that my grandmother had just passed away.*

*Dear Aunt, that devastating moment was filled with overwhelming emotions, and I felt as if I lost everything. Indeed, I had lost everything.*



*Thanks to the community's support, my teachers, and classmates — who showed me kindness and compassion during this extremely difficult time — I overcame several obstacles to*

*continue attending school. There were so many moments when I truly believed I could never make it.*

*My family now consists of only my mother and me. We live in a very modest home, and our financial situation is extremely difficult. My mother is ill and unable to work. Sometimes, I wonder how we will ever escape this poverty. „*

After learning about Hương's circumstances, GiKaD helped build a hog pen, a chicken coop, and also provided a small plot of land for her to grow vegetables. The goal is to provide her family with a sustainable, long-term solution. Although Duy Thu is a dry, coastal area, Hương diligently tended her modest vegetable garden beside the house.

Thanks to the support of generous donors, Hương not only regained her health, but also made remarkable progress in her studies.



In the thank you letter from Hương, one can clearly see the hardships she has endured as a child.

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*Duy Thu, April 14th, 2019*

*Dear Supporters,*

*First, I would like to send you my warmest wishes for great health and happiness.*

*I feel so incredibly lucky and happy to receive your help and support. I am grateful for the scholarship you have given me. To me, it is not just a crucial financial aid, but also a great source of comfort and strength that helps me overcome life's many challenges.*

*It is so true that everyone has their own struggle and their own path in life. When I learned about this scholarship, I also came to know many other children with difficult circumstances — yet they all carried within them an admirable resilience. My own life has not been easy. I lost my father at a very young age, when I was just in second grade, and never truly knew his love. My family consists of only my mother, my grandmother, and me. My mother is ill and unable to work. It was my grandmother who raised me and gave me the chance to go to school. When she became sick and passed away, I felt utterly lost. Suddenly, I*



*had to take care of my mother and myself and find ways to support us.*

*Despite these difficulties, I have always tried my best and worked hard at school. I believe that life does not take everything away from us, because in the worst moments, I have found people with extraordinary compassion, like you. Although you are far away and very busy, you have cared for me with love and generosity, giving me the most precious gifts. Because of you, I can now focus more fully on my education.*

*I am deeply touched and thankful for your support. Your scholarship not only enables me to continue school but also gives me hope for the future and belief in myself. I will strive to achieve good results to honor your trust in me through my actions.*

*I want to especially thank the person who sends the scholarship to me monthly, who constantly encourages me, and gives me strength. Though we have not yet met in person due to the distance, I sincerely hope that one day I will have the chance to meet you.*

*Finally, I wish the scholarship group continuing success so that you can bring support, courage, and hope to many more children in desperate need.*

*With warm regards,  
Huong*



# The Civil Engineer

**L**ong was born in 2007 and received a Greenleaves scholarship when he was in fifth grade. He lives with his mother and a younger sister. His father passed away when Long was only six years old. Since then, his mother, who works as a seamstress, has raised the two children on her own. In his first letter to his sponsor, Long showed remarkable maturity and clear aspirations for the future. His words reflected not only a strong sense of responsibility and integrity, but also a deep understanding of the value of education and hard work.

*Dear Aunt,*

*My average grade for the 2018–2019 school year was 9.8. I was the best student in my class and even ranked top in my entire grade. This achievement makes me very happy and grateful. My teacher nominated me for the Greenleaves scholarship, and since then, I have been blessed with your invaluable support. From the bottom of my heart, I thank you for your kindness, love, and compassion. You have enabled me to continue my education, pursue my dreams, and build a better future.*

*During the summer holidays, I participated in school activities and played on my community's soccer team. At home, I help my mother with household chores so she can have more time for her work. She has always taught me to be thankful to those who help me and to use their support as motivation to study harder.*

*I promise to study diligently and develop my character so as not to disappoint you or my mother.*

Cô ơi, điểm TB năm học 2018 - 2019 con được 9.8, đạt học sinh giỏi nhất khối và lớp và nhất khối lớp 6. Con rất vui và rất biết ơn thầy, cô giáo đã đề cử cho con với quỹ học bổng Lê Nam. Từ đó con được sự giúp đỡ của cô. Con rất biết ơn tấm lòng nhân ái, yêu thương, chia sẻ của cô đã giúp đỡ con được tiến ~~đến~~ ~~đến~~ ~~đến~~ lớp được học tập để có tương lai tốt hơn để có thể thực hiện được những ước mơ của mình.

Còn kì nghỉ hè này <sup>con</sup> cũng tham gia sinh hoạt hè của trường và con có tham gia vào đội bóng đá của xã. Lúc ở nhà con cũng giúp đỡ mẹ công việc nhà để mẹ có thời gian làm công việc của mẹ. Mẹ luôn dạy bảo con phải biết ơn những người giúp đỡ mình và lấy đó làm tấm gương để phấn đấu học tập mà làm theo.

Con xin hứa với cô sẽ học thật tốt và rèn luyện thật tốt về đạo đức cũng như học tập để không làm cô và mẹ phải thất vọng.

Long is a lively and clever boy who loves building models and being creatively handy. His big dream is to become a civil engineer.

In 11th grade, he was the top student of the year and achieved impressive successes. He won a bronze medal in mathematics at the Olympic Day in April, took first place in his school's math competition as well as in the "Knowledge for All" contest, and secured third place in the "Intelligent Sensor Models" competition. Beyond academics, he received numerous awards in sports and other school activities. His overall grade average across all subjects is 9.1.



Besides his academic achievements, Long is actively involved in charitable projects. He helps distribute gifts and clothing to needy families in the Khmer village of Đông Thạnh

commune and often visits orphans at the Hoa Hồng Social Welfare Center in Củ Chi, where he also delivers presents.

*Dreaming is the door to the future, but it is your action that truly holds the key to opening that door.* Long is not yet a civil engineer, but he is steadily making his dream come true, step by step.

## Two Generations, One Dream

**I**n the application for the Greenleaves Scholarship dated November 28, 2017, Tín, born in 2005 and then in 7th grade, wrote the following:

*Today, I submit this application because my family situation is very difficult. My parents have separated, and now my mother is the sole provider for me and my younger brother. The meager income she earns as a domestic helper barely covers my brother's school fees and our household expenses. Moreover, my mother is often ill, sometimes so severely that she cannot work. During those times, life becomes even harder for us.*

Tín was fortunate to find a sponsor — an 80-year-old woman. He writes to her regularly, sharing stories about his school life and his dreams.



*August 22, 2020*

*Dear Grandmother,*

*I am very grateful for the help you gave me during the past school year. Because of your support, I did my very best to live up to your expectations.*

*I want to share my academic performance from last year with you. I achieved good grades with excellent behavior. Most importantly, I fulfilled my first wish by being accepted into Trần Phú High School with a total score of 40.5!*

*Unfortunately, this year my mother's health has worsened. She suffers from a slipped disc and works as a household helper, earning about 3 to 4 million VND per month (approximately €110 to €150). Alongside my studies, I help her with housework and tutor my younger brother.*

*Thanks to your support, I have been able to attend school and pursue my dream.*

*I thank you from the bottom of my heart.*

*Tín*

~~~ 0 ~~~



*Dear Grandmother,*

*I have received the book “Cuore – Heart” and have already read it. The story I liked the most was “My Mother”; because my mother is the person who always loves me and makes sacrifices for me. The story is about a letter a father writes to his son after the son was disrespectful to his mother. I was deeply moved when I read it, and it made me love my mother even more.*

*Thank you, Grandmother. I wish you and your family health and happiness always.*

*With kind regards,*

*Tín*



*July 13, 2022*

*Dear Grandmother,*

*I am writing to ask about your health and to thank you for your recent support.*

*First, I want to share that during the past school year, in 11th grade, I continued to receive awards for “good student” and “good conduct.” The last two years, 10th and 11th grade, were truly very challenging, but thanks to your encouragement and support, I was able to overcome these difficulties and achieve good results. For this, I am deeply grateful to you.*

*In recent years, the COVID pandemic has affected the entire world. I hope you and your family are all doing well and staying healthy. Thanks to your help, my family remains strong despite these hard times.*

*I also want to tell you that my mother recently broke her leg and tore ligaments. She has many health problems now and can no longer work as she used to. Thanks to your support, I am still able to attend school like everyone else.*

*Besides my studies, I help out at home and teach my little brother. I continue to strive to do well in school so I can build a better future for myself and my family. You are a true benefactor to us.*

*At the end of this letter, I wish you and your family continued health and much happiness.*

*With kind regards,*

*Tín*

~~~ 0 ~~~

*August 15, 2023*

*Dear Grandmother,*

*I have just finished my final exams and am now waiting for my university admission results. Today, I write to ask about your health and to express my sincere gratitude.*

*How are you, Grandmother? I am doing well and recovering from a challenging year. My family is healthy. My mother's leg has improved significantly, but she still has difficulty walking. She was unable to work as a household helper for a long time, so our family's income remains uncertain. I plan to start tutoring soon to earn money for my studies and to support my family. Unfortunately, my mother also suffers from several other serious illnesses, including vestibular syndrome, which causes frequent headaches.*

*I want to share my progress from the past year. At the end of 12th grade, I again earned the title of best student and*

*maintained good behavior. In my final exams, I scored 25.6 points, which has enabled me to fulfill my dream by gaining admission to the University of Pharmacy. I will continue to work hard to move closer to my goals.*



*I also want to share with you the difficult situation my family is currently facing. Tuition fees keep rising, and only through hard work and daily effort can I improve my future, support my family, and help pay for my mother's medical treatment. I have discovered many online channels that assist people in need by providing food and clothing, and I hope that someday I will be able to help others in the same way.*

*Throughout my entire school life, your support has been essential to me. I thank you from the bottom of my heart! I wish you and your family all the best, with good health and peace. I promise to become a helpful person — an outstanding pharmacist who develops medicines for incurable diseases — and a kind soul who helps others.*

*Thank you very much!*

*With kind regards,*

*Tín*



*July 28, 2024*

*Dear Grandmother,*

*I am currently in my first year at the University of Pharmacy and Medicine, studying Pharmacy. Today, I write to you first to ask about your health and to sincerely thank you for the scholarship that has allowed me to continue pursuing my dream.*

*Dear Grandmother, I want to share a bit about where I live. It is the rainy season now, and the weather is very unpredictable — sometimes sunny, sometimes rainy. Because of this, many people here often fall ill. However, I am staying healthy and able to focus well on my studies. I hope the weather where you live is not too harsh. Regardless, I wish you and your family good health, peace, and happiness always.*

*I am delighted to share that, thanks to your generous support, I received the scholarship that has helped me follow my dream. I thank you from the bottom of my heart! It is hard to express how grateful I am. Although my family lives in difficult circumstances, I have never felt sad or disadvantaged compared to my peers. On the contrary, I feel very fortunate because I have always had your support and encouragement by my side. Thank you once again for helping me continue my education and*

*realize my dream. I know I would not have achieved any of this without you.*

*At the end of this letter, I wish you and your family good health, joy, happiness, and love. I promise to keep working hard to make you proud.*

*With warm regards,*

*Tín*



In his motivation letter for the application to the Greenleaves 500+ scholarship program by GiKaD, Tín clearly outlined his goals.

## **MOTIVATION LETTER**

### **FOR THE APPLICATION FOR THE GL500+ SCHOLARSHIP**

*Dear Greenleaves 500+ Team,*

*My name is Tín. I was born in 2005 and am currently in the 12th grade. Since I require additional financial support to cover my tuition and living expenses, I would like to apply for a scholarship.*

*First, allow me to briefly introduce myself: My favorite subjects are Mathematics, Physics, and Chemistry. I aspire to study Medicine or Business because I believe these fields hold great promise for the future. If high tuition fees become a barrier, I plan to pursue a degree in Education and become a mathematics teacher. However, I believe that degrees in Medicine or Pharmacy offer better prospects, as these professions are increasingly important in our society. I might also consider becoming a dentist or pharmacist, as these careers are currently in high demand.*

*Regarding my academic performance, I was honored with the title of “Good Student” and recognized for positive behavior*



*during my 11th-grade year. However, that year was challenging due to the COVID-19 pandemic; the shift to online classes during the first semester made it difficult for me to keep up. Despite additional study efforts, I feel there are still some gaps I am not yet able to close. Nevertheless, I managed to maintain good grades, even if I was not able to advance as much as in previous years.*

*After completing high school, I intend to dedicate myself fully to my studies and invest a great deal of time and effort. Should I lack sufficient financial resources, I plan to seek a part-time job or pursue teacher training and work as a teacher.*

*In my opinion, a good education should aim to shape students into responsible and talented citizens. Therefore, I strive daily to improve not only my academic skills but also my moral values. A student should begin cultivating their moral character early in life, especially qualities such as compassion, love for one's country, diligence, and honesty. I believe these values are just as important as academic knowledge because, without them, a person ultimately becomes ineffective. For this reason, I have practiced these virtues since childhood and continue to strengthen them daily.*

*As for sports, I did not train regularly during my childhood. However, since the COVID-19 pandemic began, I have exercised*

*daily at home. On days off, I train for about 1 to 3 hours; on school days, I train for about 30 minutes. I perform exercises to promote health, and I enjoy dancing. I have been able to swim since early childhood, around first or second grade. Additionally, I know how to jump rope, do aerobics, and play badminton. Sports have greatly helped me improve my health, fitness, and flexibility. They have also strengthened my immune system, which is why I rarely get sick. So far, I have never contracted COVID-19. Today, sports are essential to me. If I miss a day of exercise, I feel as if I have skipped breakfast — tired and lacking energy.*



*First, I would like to give you an overview of my academic performance during the past year (11th grade). In*

*Mathematics, I scored 8.9 points; Physics, 7.8; Chemistry, 7.4; Biology, 8.5; Computer Science, 8.8; Literature, 7.8; History, 8.1; Geography, 8.9; English, 6.8; Social Studies, 8.8; Technology, 8.7; and Advanced Computer Science, 8.3. I am satisfied with these results, although my grades in my three favorite subjects — Mathematics, Physics, and Chemistry — fell short of my expectations.*

*Since I chose the A-Block, which includes Mathematics, Physics, and Chemistry, the curriculum and exams in these subjects are more demanding than in others. Unfortunately, the pandemic and online learning caused me to fall behind my own expectations in these subjects. In 10th grade, I had an average of 9.6 in Mathematics and 8.7 in Chemistry. For the upcoming 12th grade, I am determined to work harder and improve my performance.*

*I am applying for this scholarship to help cover my tuition fees and living expenses. I have also considered tutoring, as the 12th-grade material is very challenging and requires significant effort to excel at university. Some of my friends have already started taking tutoring classes, but due to financial difficulties, I cannot afford these classes. People advised me to invest in my education during my final school year so that I would not fall behind in subjects such as Mathematics, Physics,*

*Chemistry, and English. I would have liked to attend, but my circumstances have not permitted it. Some friends began tutoring two months before the summer break, while I have only been researching online tutorials and still have many unanswered questions on the subject.*

*Regarding class supplies, my friends are able to share them with me, so I do not have to worry about that. However, I urgently need financial support for tuition and living expenses. With a scholarship, I probably can afford an English tutoring class, which is my weakest subject. I don't think I will have enough for Mathematics, Physics, or Chemistry classes.*

*I believe I am particularly strong in subjects that require analytical thinking and application. I fully understand why studying Mathematics, Physics, and Chemistry is essential. I can solve difficult problems, think quickly, and apply calculations both in daily life and in my future career. I hope to work in Pharmacy or Information Technology, professions that are increasingly in demand and will remain relevant. If my financial situation does not improve, I plan to become a teacher.*

*My dream is not to go abroad. Of course, I would like to work in a good environment to learn more and earn better, but given my current circumstances, I think I will open a pharmacy or work locally so I can care for my mother. Furthermore, I want*

*to be successful so that I can help others who are in similar situations.*

*I consider English very important both for my future career and for today's job market. I had good grades in English in secondary school, but the upper-level English curriculum is more difficult, and the teaching at my school is not very effective. English remains my weakest subject, but I am doing my best to improve and maintain my status as a good student. If circumstances allow, I will work harder to overcome my shortcomings in English.*



*I want to be a good person and a valuable member of society — both talented and morally upright — so that I can help others. I will continue to do my best to achieve good results, succeed at university, and support my mother.*

*At the end of this letter, I sincerely thank you for taking the time to read my application. I hope to be awarded this scholarship so that I can realize my dream.*

*With kind regards,*

*Tín*

$$R_{kps} = (n+kps^2) \dots (nn+kps^{n+1})/n+2$$

The title of this story refers to the mathematical formula Trung studied to solve “all problems with  $n$  points on a straight line,” as described in his scholarship application. Trung is Tín’s younger brother. Usually, only one application per family is accepted for the Greenleaves program. Trung is an exception because he not only demonstrates outstanding academic performance but also exemplary character, which helped him greatly in finding a benefactor.

Trung qualified to attend the prestigious Lê Hồng Phong School, one of the best schools in Saigon. Their students regularly win top awards at national and international Olympiads. However, due to the distance from home and the high costs of commuting and meals, which would place a heavy financial burden on his mother, Trung decided to remain at a school closer to home.

Trung is determined and always strives for greater achievements. In a letter to his benefactor, he wrote:

*I felt ashamed to mention that my entrance exam score was not as high as I had hoped. I only achieved 23.25 points in*

*Mathematics, Literature, and English. Several students, parents, teachers, and even graduate-level students complained that the math exam was too difficult and too long. However, I knew I could have solved all eight questions if I had not been so careless. Because of my carelessness, the exam sheet was torn, which prevented me from submitting my answers correctly. It was a terrifying moment, and I panicked when only 15 minutes remained to fix one question and salvage a point. From this experience, I have learned that success depends not only on knowledge, confidence, and calmness but also on paying attention to the “little things” and always being careful every step of the way. What happened was that my exam sheet got caught in the chair of the student sitting in front of me. At the moment of panic, I pulled the sheet and tore a portion of it. To this day, I still have bad dreams about the moment I tore the exam sheet. This incident will probably stay with me for life, but it also serves as a valuable lesson to help me in the future.*

*I have discussed much about my last academic performance, but learning English has now become my toughest subject. When I came to Trần Phú School, English was not only complex but extremely challenging for me. In the last test, which I thought I had done poorly on, I expected a question on a familiar topic from the class’s materials. Instead, the question*



was: *“Using the knowledge you have learned, write at least three sentences to describe the properties and applications of the following chemical elements: Cu, Zn, Ag, Al, H, Fe, Mg, Br, Ne.”*

*I was shocked by the complexity of the question, yet found it exciting. Chemistry has been my favorite subject, and I knew that if I invent anything in the future, I would eventually have to present it in English. Instead of complaining like my classmates, I became even more motivated to learn more about scientific terms and technical writing.*



*I have begun programming in C++, which fascinates me greatly. Ever since my sponsor gifted me a laptop, I have had more opportunities to learn and practice. I believe programming can help me earn some additional income during the remainder of my school years to support my mother. Outside*

*of school hours, I help her with household chores such as cooking, doing laundry, and cleaning. I also really enjoy exercising every day, practicing yoga, singing, and I am currently even learning ballet. Unfortunately, due to the demanding schedule at Trần Phú School, I no longer have time for healthy leisure activities like sports or relaxation.*

*The 70 formulas I mentioned earlier remain unresolved, but I have divided them into two thematic areas: “The Relationship Between Water Vapor and 2-Dimensional Geometry” and “The Relationship Between Resistance and Springs.” Since water vapor is less commonly used today due to its high cost and being replaced by oils and electricity, I am now focusing more intensely on the formula for “Solving All Problems with  $n$  Points on a Line,” particularly in connection with the resistance function, which forms the basis for many practical applications.*

$$R_{kps} = \frac{(n + kps^2)(n2 + kps^3)(n3 + kps^4) \dots (nn + kps^{n+1})}{n + 2}$$

*With this formula, I still lack sufficient knowledge to determine whether it can compensate for the energy loss caused by heat dissipation during long-distance electrical transmission. Additionally, I have another theorem that I have yet to prove, called “Infinite Convergence at Infinity fully.”*

*It states that if there are  $n$  parallel lines, they cannot intersect either in a two-dimensional or three-dimensional plane, meaning neither on paper nor in the real world. Yet these  $n$  parallel lines intersect at  $2n^2$  points, with one point having the coordinates  $(-\sin\alpha/0; 0/0; \sin\alpha/0)$ . This implies that in three-dimensional space, a two-dimensional spatial plane exists. I have conducted extensive research on this topic, which leaves me little time to go outside. Now, as a high school student, I have even less time for leisure activities.*

*The decision to attend university weighs most heavily on my mind. There are so many fields of study I wish to pursue, but the costs are very high. I hope to receive a scholarship to cover my living expenses and to purchase learning materials. At the same time, I do not want anyone to do everything for me because then I would lose my own motivation and drive. Moreover, I am uncertain whether I will find work in my chosen field after graduation. Attending university is a question I think about every night when I cannot sleep.*

*My older brother has already spent a lot of money on his studies, and I do not want to become a burden on my family. This is why I have set many of my earlier dreams aside. Currently, I live by the motto, "Think today, act tomorrow," meaning I am preparing myself to choose the right career. If I continue to*

*improve, it might be possible to work and study simultaneously, allowing me to pursue the field I desire. In any case, I hope to find a job that enables me to support myself and, at the same time, contribute to the GL500+ scholarship program by helping other students and people in dire need.*

*Ever since I received this scholarship, I have always admired the founders and everyone involved in the program. I want to be like them someday. I believe that even if I fail, I must always get back up because I carry the high expectations of many people on my shoulders. To express my gratefulness, I must stabilize my financial situation and help others in need, just as my mentor and benefactor have done for me.*

*Last Mid-Autumn Festival, I donated 250,000 VND (about €9.50) to buy gifts and sweets for disadvantaged children who had to spend the celebration in the hospital. I also made the lanterns for them by hand myself.*



*In addition, after I donated 50,000 VND (about €2) to the Typhoon Yagi relief program, and since there was some remaining money from the GL500+ scholarship, I asked my brother to deliver another 250,000 VND (about €9.50) as a donation to the university. Altogether, I have donated 550,000 VND (about €21). Although this is the money that I did not personally earn, donating has made me very happy. This experience has strengthened my determination to become more successful in the future so that I can donate not just thousands but millions to help as many people as possible and ease their suffering. Even when I am no longer part of the Greenleaves scholarship program, I will continue to donate whenever I can. True giving comes from the heart, not from position or status.*

*At the end of this letter, I sincerely thank you for listening to my thoughts. From the bottom of my heart, I wish you good health and joy. May your life always be filled with smiles and happiness, just as you have brought them to me. I hope one day to work alongside you and, like you, I can help people in need around the world.*

Reply from Trung's Sponsor:



*I am thrilled to receive your letter and to learn about your outstanding academic achievements. I wish you the best of luck and hope you realize all your dreams. Every success requires some intelligence, but above all, a lot of “sweat.” Many people often use a lack of intelligence as an excuse, believing it to be innate, and they justify their failures. However, they forget that everyone can decide how much “sweat” they are willing to shed for their success. I wish you, Trung, abundant “sweat” and willpower to achieve your dreams!*

## Must I Quit School?

**T**his question came from Ánh, born in 2004 in the remote Tân Châu district of northern Tây Ninh province, near the Cambodian border. At a critical moment when her family decided she should leave school to start working, Ánh was still in the 9th grade at Thạnh Đông Secondary School in Tây Ninh.

Her family lives in a small, unfinished house built with the help of neighbors. Her father passed away eight years ago, and since then, her mother has become the family's primary support. There are eight siblings in total; three are married and independent, while the remaining five still live with their mother and 74-year-old grandmother. Her mother works harvesting sugarcane, weeding, and picking cashew nuts. During the off-season, when rain prevents sugarcane harvesting, the family faces financial hardship. Her brother suffers from psoriasis and severe arthritis, which makes him unable to work. Her 15-year-old sister had to quit school to help their mother cut sugarcane and pick cashew nuts. Their older sister previously worked in a shoe factory but had to quit due to age restrictions and now works in a noodle restaurant. Only three family members are still

attending school: Ánh and two younger siblings who are in primary school.

Ánh is a very dedicated student. Despite her difficult circumstances, she maintains an average grade of 8.3. In the 2018–2019 school year, she was named a “Good Student.” Her homeroom teacher praised her discipline, devotion to her mother, and her thriftiness. She also willingly takes responsibility for class and school activities and reliably completes her tasks.

Ánh enjoys literature, art, and sports. She likes reading literary books, solving advanced math problems, and reading *Doraemon*. In her free time, she cooks and does laundry. During holidays and school breaks, she helps her mother with work to support the family and share the burden of living. Her dream is to become a literature teacher someday.

Originally, Ánh was listed as a recipient of the EgoStom support (see the chapter on GiKaD Projects). However, by July 2021, she had not submitted any documents. GiKaD reached out to remind her, and at that time, she shared that her family had decided over a month earlier that she must leave school to work at a company producing decorative candles.



Her work follows a shift schedule: one week she works Monday through Saturday from 7:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., the next week, she works the night shift from 7:30 p.m. to 7:30 a.m. If the company receives orders on Sundays, she must work overtime. Her monthly salary is 7,500,000 VND (around €280), but she must cover her own meals. When the company has no orders, she works from home, shelling cashew nuts for 5,500 VND per kilo (around 20 cents), managing 5 to 6 kilos daily on average. When asked if she likes working at the candle factory, she answered, *“Not at all,”* as the workshop smells unpleasant and possibly toxic. Additionally, sitting all day shelling cashews causes her severe back pain.



Though eager to learn, Ánh had to leave school because her mother wanted her to work and help support the family. As a result, she did not apply for 10th grade during the summer break.

The Association for Educational Promotion in Tân Châu, which collaborates closely with GiKaD, asked the school to speak with Ánh's family and persuade them to let her continue attending school. However, secondary education costs significantly more than elementary school, and many students must also take extra courses to keep up with the curriculum. Her family refused.

Moreover, Ánh did not submit an application for the 10th-grade entrance exam, thus losing the opportunity to attend a regular high school. The only alternative was the Adult Education Center's program — an institution offering a shortened curriculum designed for working students or those from difficult backgrounds. The diploma earned there is equivalent to that of a regular high school. Alternatively, she could have chosen vocational training.

Despite all efforts to help Ánh continue her schooling, these attempts proved unsuccessful. Ánh is one of the cases mentioned by Doanh in her letter to supporters:

*“... with tears and sadness, many had to leave school to support their families, burying their dreams and hopes, stepping into the harsh realities of life as the school gates swung shut behind them...”*





# The Dream Shoes

**O**n August 25, 2017, twelve-year-old Thanh, a 6th-grade student at Nguyễn Văn Nghi School in Gò Vấp, submitted an application for the Greenleaves Scholarship. Her father works as a bricklayer, while her mother is paralyzed and unable to walk. To help support the family, her mother makes and sells sweet, fermented rice and sticky rice at the local market.

Thanh dreamed of owning a new pair of shoes for school. The pair she wore had been a gift three years ago; their soles were worn through, and she had to hold them together with glue. Thanks to GiKaD's support of 200,000 VND (about €8), combined with a small contribution of her own, Thanh was able to buy a pair of shoes in her favorite color.



GiKaD then successfully found an English teacher to tutor Thanh for free, helping her pursue her biggest dream: to one day become a university English lecturer.

After graduating from high school in the 2023–2024 academic year, Thanh was accepted into the Academy of Posts and Telecommunications Technology to study Multimedia Technology.

# My Very Own Trademark

**A**ugust 2020

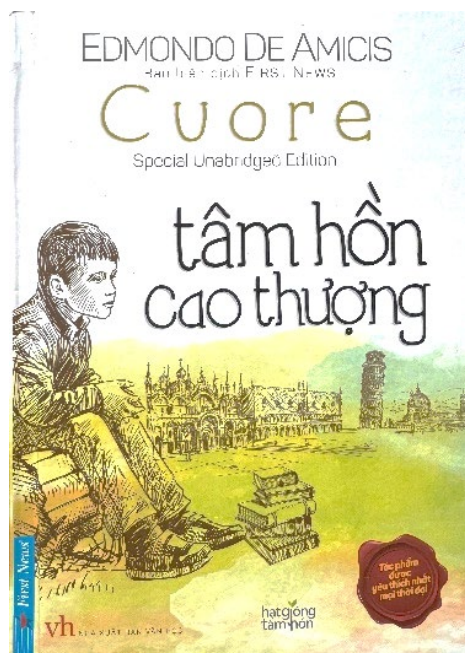
Dear Sponsor,

I have now completed my upper secondary education and successfully passed the 10th-grade entrance examination with a score of 31.5 points. I am overjoyed and proud to have gained admission to the school of my choice. At the beginning of 9th grade, I set the goal of becoming an excellent student. Perhaps it was a bit ambitious because in the end, I had to be content with a “good” result. However, looking at my individual subject scores, I believe the outcome is quite respectable.

My family consists only of my mother and my grandmother. Though over 80 years old, my grandmother remains remarkably spry, managing the household and cooking with great care. My father passed away when I was twelve, and since then, my mother has raised me on her own. In the mornings, she sells bánh cuốn (stuffed rice rolls) and works as a domestic helper in the afternoons. Although she works hard, her income is not enough to support us. Thanks

to this scholarship and your generous support, our lives have greatly improved!

Recently, I began reading the book “*Cuore – Heart*”, which was a gift from GiKaD. As I leafed through its pages, I found it both engaging and beautifully written. It read almost like a diary kept by a third-grade boy, recounting the life around him and the many stories he encounters. Due to my exam preparations, I haven’t finished it yet, but I am looking forward to discovering the many touching and meaningful tales still waiting inside.





I am deeply grateful for your support over the past three years and wish you and your family good health, happiness, and continued success.

With warmest regards,

My

Có học bổng này và cả cô đã giúp gia đình con  
sắt nhiều! Vừa rồi con có nhận được cuốn  
sách "Tâm hồn cao thượng" từ học bổng là non  
tặng con. Cảm nhận của con khi đọc một chút  
về cuốn sách này nó khá hay và thú vị. Cuốn  
sách này có thể được coi như một cuốn nhật  
kí của một cậu bé lớp 3 và những câu chuyện,  
những mảnh đời mà cậu đã trải qua. Những  
vì thời gian ôn thi nên con cũng chưa đọc hết  
nên chắc sẽ có nhiều câu chuyện hay đang chờ mình.  
Có lẽ đây là lời cuối cùng con muốn nhắn gửi

~~~ 0 ~~~

August 12, 2022

Dear Sponsor,

My name is My, and I am currently in 12th grade at Lê  
Trọng Tấn High School.

Although I was recognized as a good student, some of my  
results did not meet my expectations in the previous school  
year. I will continue to work hard to achieve better results. I  
sincerely hope that you and your family have been doing well

during the past two years of the pandemic. Its long duration has affected my mother's business, making our situation more difficult.

Next year will be my final year of school. I have been carrying a big dream in my heart. I hope to be accepted into a university to study law, and I will give my all to make that dream a reality.

The year 2022 was particularly difficult for me. I was diagnosed with lymph node tuberculosis and had to undergo surgery, spending two weeks in the hospital. Afterward, I spent another six months on medication. My health declined noticeably, with my appetite diminished, and my lungs grew weaker. Yet, returning to school and seeing my friends again lifted my spirits immensely. Sadly, just a month ago, my grandmother passed away due to lingering complications from COVID-19, leaving behind only my mother and me.

In closing, I want to express my heartfelt thanks for your support over the past years. I will continue to study diligently so as not to disappoint you and my mother.

I wish you and your family good health and much happiness.

Thank you very much!

My

In another letter from My to her sponsor:

September 25, 2023

Dear Sponsor,

How are you? How is your work and daily life going?

It is already past 10 p.m. as I sat down to write this letter, hoping to express my deep gratitude for your unwavering support throughout all these years.



Did you know I passed my high school graduation exam at the end of June? This was a big milestone, an important turning point in every student's life. It made me realize just how quickly those twelve school years have flown by. I am truly grateful for life itself and for my parents, who gave me life and a chance to experience such wonderful experiences. Throughout my school years, I felt happy and fulfilled. My time as a student was like a beautiful painting, full of laughter and wonderful memories. It was only after we parted ways that I understood how fleeting time really is.

Sadly, this summer did not bring the joy I had hoped for; I was not accepted into the program I had dreamed of. Perhaps I had not yet done enough to earn that blessing.

Stepping into university marks the beginning of a new chapter in my life, the one that pushes me to work even harder. I'm currently studying at the University of Economics and Trade, majoring in Food Business Administration. While it was not my first choice, it feels like a safe and sensible path for now.

Would you like to know what I truly wish I could study? I am someone who loves to experiment and explore new things — today I'm fascinated by one thing, tomorrow by another. I have always had a deep affection for the arts. However, my mother advised me to choose a more stable career path, so I decided on business administration, hoping it would open doors to many other fields. Still, my heart keeps turning back to art, and maybe one day I will find a way to work in that world too. Don't you think?

My mother was worried about my health and wanted me to choose the safest path. Although I have been on medication for the past six months and my condition has improved, my body remains fragile. In cold weather or air-conditioned rooms, I begin to cough easily. I don't hold any bitterness about my chronic illness — I simply think I was not given the same kind of luck others have. But heaven has blessed me in so many other ways: a mother who loves me unconditionally,

friends and relatives who care for me, and you, my sponsor, who has always been there to support me. For all of this, I am deeply grateful.

My mother now works as a live-in nanny, so she rarely comes home, only two or three days a month at most. Sometimes, I feel quite lonely at home, especially in the evenings when I cannot share a meal with my mother and no one is sitting at the table.

During the summer months, I took on a part-time job to help my mother with our living expenses. Unfortunately, the workplace was far from home, and because of my class schedule, the manager could not arrange suitable shifts for me. As a result, I had to give up the job. Now, I am looking for something closer to home so I can better balance work and study more effectively. It is tiring, but I am determined to do whatever I can to help my mother.



I want to thank you for taking the time to read my letter. Once again, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude for your support over the past years. It has given me the strength to stay motivated, continue my education, and experience many life's beautiful moments.

Finally, I wish you and your family good health, and a life filled with happiness and peace — for with health, anything is possible!

Thank you once again.

With warmest regards,

My

đó, con cũng không có trách móc gì, cũng chỉ nghĩ đơn giản là mình không may mắn bằng các bạn khác thôi. Những bữa ăn 'ông trời' cho con rất nhiều thứ có mẹ luôn yêu thương con hơn bố và người thân luôn bên cạnh chăm sóc, một người cũng không kém quan trọng luôn hỗ trợ cho con hết mình trong khoản học phí là có nữa. Nên con cảm thấy biết ơn cuộc đời này lắm. Mẹ con dạo này phải lo cơm áo gạo tiền cho con nên phải đi chăm em bé ở lại nhà người ta, thỉnh thoảng mẹ về thăm con 3 ngày gì đấy. Con ở nhà một mình đôi khi cũng buồn lắm nhất là lúc về khuya hay thậm chí là những bữa cơm không được thường xuyên ăn cùng mẹ nữa. Những tháng hè vừa qua con cũng có đi làm thêm giúp mẹ tiền sinh hoạt nhưng vì chỗ làm xa và giờ con lại đi học nên những lịch học, chỉ chủ lại không hỗ trợ xếp ca làm cho con nên con đành phải nghỉ chỗ làm đấy. Con cũng đang tìm kiếm việc nào gần nhà để đi học đi làm cho tiền có ạ. Tuy hơi vất vả và những đồ mẹ được điều gì đấy con cũng sẽ cố gắng.

Con cảm ơn vì cô đã dành thời gian của mình đọc bức thư này của con. Lời cảm ơn chân thành nhất dành cho cô vì đã hỗ trợ con những năm học vừa qua để con có động lực đi học được đến trường và cảm nhận được những thú vị trên cuộc đời này. Sau cùng, con bình chúc sức khỏe đôi cô và gia đình có được một cuộc sống bình an và khỏe mạnh. Chỉ cần có sức

**MY's APPLICATION LETTER**  
**FOR THE GL500+ SCHOLARSHIP**

Dear Sponsors and the GiKaD Team,

My name is My, and I am currently in my first year at the University of Economics and Technology, majoring in Business Administration with a focus on Food Management.

I have recently completed my first-semester exams and am now awaiting the results. Compared to high school, the coursework at university is more challenging, but I continue to work hard to improve my performance. My program includes subjects such as Mathematics, Chemistry, Biology, Marketing, and English. I am doing well in Mathematics and Biology, but I still need to improve in Chemistry and English. This is mainly because I have not devoted enough time to these courses. Going forward, I plan to focus more on English to earn the required language certificate. Chemistry is particularly challenging for me, as my high school education leaned more toward the social sciences than natural sciences. Nevertheless, I am determined to overcome these obstacles.

In my studies, I have already encountered many new and fascinating topics that motivate me to keep learning. For English, I have purchased a study book that includes easy-to-

follow videos and practice exercises. This has helped me to learn better.

Alongside my studies, I work in customer service at *Phạm Gia Seafood*, a company in the food sector. I am very grateful to have secured this position as a first-year student. I have been working there for over a month and have already learned a lot from my colleagues, especially about acquiring clients and handling business situations professionally. A friend recommended the job to me, and I am truly thankful for her support. The company pays me a monthly salary of 5 million VND (around €190), plus a 500,000 VND food allowance. I work seven hours per day, but my studies always come first. I organize my schedule to ensure that I have enough time for learning and rest. My classes are held in the mornings, so I spend my afternoons studying at home before heading to work. The workplace is only about a kilometer away, which is very convenient. I feel fortunate for this opportunity and for the kind colleagues who support me. At the end of last year, the company's director even organized a two-day trip to Nha Trang for all employees, a wonderful experience that gave me many new insights.

I use my salary mainly to cover personal expenses such as food, electricity, and miscellaneous items. If there is any



little left, I help pay some of the tuition fees, and my mother helps with most of it. The fees for the second semester amount to more than 17 million VND (about €650), which is a heavy burden for my mother. Besides studying and working, I volunteer whenever my company organizes charitable missions in remote areas.



In the upcoming semester, I must obtain the MOS certificate in computer skills and improve my English, Chemistry, and Physics by using online videos and courses. My goal is to work in my field after graduation, build my own food brand, and achieve success. I know this will not be easy, but I am determined to do my very best. One day, when I have a stable income, I want to give back by supporting other

students in the Greenleaves program — students who, like me, have had to overcome great challenges — so that they too may realize their dreams.

In closing, I sincerely thank the sponsors and the GiKaD team for helping me continue my education by supporting me. I wish you and your families a joyful and healthy new year.

With heartfelt thanks,

My

## Like her Grandpa, Caring is in Her Blood

**T**rân, born in 2011 in the remote Tân Hiệp, a district of Tân Châu, Tây Ninh. Trân's life began under the shadow of great hardship. Her mother is deaf, mute, and also suffers from mental illness. Trân was born as a result of abuse and has no father. She and her mother live with her grandparents, who are both 63 years old. Her grandfather, once a nurse, is now retired, while her grandmother works as a traditional healer, offering acupuncture and herbal remedies for a small fee. Despite their best efforts, their income is not enough to adequately support the family. Because of her condition, Trân's mother is unable to work and receives only a modest disability pension.

The family lives with quiet dignity, carrying on day by day with limited means, but with deep love and resilience at their core.

Trân is a lovely young girl who loves to dance and sing. She performs well in school and is known for her diligence and exemplary behavior. She enjoys reading books and does not watch movies. When asked about her dreams, Trân said

she wanted to become a nurse to help others just like her grandfather once did.

In a letter to her sponsor, she shared:

*I still vividly remember an argument between my grandparents about money. It made me very sad, and I stayed silent. The bills for electricity, water, food, and rent kept piling up, weighing heavily on our family's finances.*

*I am truly grateful for the money you sent; it eased the burden on my family tremendously. To many people, it might seem like a small amount, but to me, it means the world and has made a profound difference. I promise to use it wisely, for my family, and for my education.*

*Once again, I send you my warmest wishes and wish you good health. May you and the scholarship group continue to grow stronger and successful.*

Cháu Anh nhớ có lần ông bà ngoại em cãi nhau vì tiền bạc. Em rất buồn và không dám nói gì. Lúc tiền dần dần thiếu dần sinh hoạt của nhà dần dần chật chội dần khiến cho anh và em sống quá đỗi khổ. Cháu biết em cảm ơn cô và đã cho em số tiền đó đã bớt đi nhiều gánh nặng về tiền bạc.

Năm học vừa qua 2022 - 2023 em đã nhận được tổng cộng 4.600.000 (bốn triệu sáu trăm nghìn đồng).

- Số tiền đó đối với cháu nhiều người là rất nhỏ nhưng đối với học sinh nghèo như em là rất lớn và mang nhiều ý nghĩa.

- Em hứa sẽ dùng số tiền mang trả cho gia đình và đầu tư học tập.

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GiKaD hopes that, with the community's support and her strong determination, Trân will one day realize her dream — to bring warmth and care to others, just like her grandfather, whose compassion runs deep in his veins.





# The Girl with the Tooth Gap

**T**âm was born in 2006. Tâm grew up under difficult circumstances after her parents separated while her mother was still pregnant with her. Her mother works as a caregiver at Tô Vĩnh Diện Primary School, earning less than 4 million VND per month. When the COVID-19 pandemic struck, she lost her job as the school reduced its full-day programs. Due to her age, finding new employment became increasingly difficult. To make ends meet, she had to take on various odd jobs — housework, packaging face masks, and waiting tables, etc.

Tâm applied for the Greenleaves Scholarship in the 9th grade. She was a good student with exemplary conduct. She has a keen interest in biology, especially books about blood and medicine, and dreams of one day becoming a doctor. Because of her family's financial hardship, she often spends time at the bookstore reading, as she cannot afford to buy the books herself.

Tâm wears glasses due to nearsightedness: one eye has a prescription of -4 diopters, the other -2. She also has a gap

between her teeth, which makes her self-conscious — she often covers her mouth with her hand when she speaks.



Every day, Tâm rides to school on a bicycle that her uncle gave her. She also takes tutoring classes in literature, Mathematics, and English, which cost 360,000 VND per month (about €13). Her mother still carries a significant school fee debt that has remained unpaid for years. They live together in a small room of about 8 square meters. Tâm helps her mother with cooking and cleaning every day. Despite these challenging living conditions, she remains diligent and focused on her goals.



In the 2023–2024 academic year, Tâm successfully graduated from high school and was admitted to Văn Hiến University to study in E-Commerce. Remarkably, she no longer covers her mouth when she speaks. Over time, Tâm has grown more confident and can now look back with pride on how far she has come.



## Power Drawn from the Soul

**G**iKaD prioritizes students from disadvantaged backgrounds who demonstrate good — or at least average — academic performance. However, there are also cases like Tuyết's. Despite her modest grades, she shows a remarkable eagerness to learn. Without GiKaD's support, she would likely have to abandon her education and begin working at an early age to help sustain her family.

Tuyết's family faces tough living conditions. She has two younger sisters, and Tuyết herself lives with a mild intellectual developmental delay. Although her father works labor jobs, and her mother runs a small food stall, their income remains unstable and insufficient.

In her letter to her sponsor, Tuyết writes with simple yet thoughtful words that reveal a pure heart and an unyielding determination.

*First, I would like to send you and your family my warmest wishes for good health. I hope you are always well and that your work continues to thrive. You are someone with a big heart, and your support has meant so much to me and my family — we are deeply touched and grateful for your kindness.*

*We were very fortunate to make it through the difficult times of the pandemic. Although we continued to face many challenges and there were days when we had very little to eat, we still found happiness in little things. During that time, my mother was unable to work, and we had to rely on our neighbors' help and the government's support, all while living in a small twenty-square-meter apartment.*

*After the pandemic ended and schools reopened, my father left our family without any further care or support. But instead of discouraging me, this gave me even more motivation to strive harder. I want to have a stable job in the future to support myself, help my mother raise my two younger sisters, and — if given the opportunity — support other children in situations like mine, just as I have been helped.*

*Thanks to your support, my mother worries less about my schooling, and I am truly grateful for that. I do not know how to express my appreciation fully, except through this letter, which comes from the bottom of my heart.*

*I have successfully completed the 10th grade, and I sincerely hope you will continue supporting me to finish school and graduate.*

*Once again, thank you so much. I wish you and your family the best of health, happiness, and success in everything you do.*

*Tân Phú, July 22nd, 2022*

*Tuyết*

*Chú ơi! gia đình con vô cùng may mắn khi vượt qua đại dịch vừa qua tuy vẫn gặp rất nhiều khó khăn đôi khi vẫn có bữa đói bữa no nhưng vẫn rất vui vẻ. Trong suốt những tháng dịch bệnh mẹ con không thể bước chân gia đình con sống nhờ vào sự chợ cấp của nhà nước và bà con hàng xóm xung quanh trong căn nhà trọ hơn hai mươi mét vuông.*

*Dịch bệnh tạm lùi con và các em được trở lại trường <sup>thi</sup>ba lại bỏ mẹ con con ở lại mà không quan tâm nữa chính đầu này làm con quyết tâm cố gắng học tập để sau này có công việc ổn định lo cho bản thân phụ mẹ nuôi hai em ăn học cho thành tài để gia đình con bớt khổ và nếu có cơ hội con sẽ giúp đỡ những bạn nhỏ khác khó khăn như con bây giờ đang được chú yêu thương giúp đỡ trong học tập và cuộc sống. Cho con tiền đóng học phí, lệ phí tốt cho con, hỗ trợ gia đình con qua mùa dịch.*

After the COVID-19 pandemic, overwhelmed by their challenging and seemingly hopeless situation, Tuyết's father left the family. Since then, all of the family's expenses have depended entirely on her mother's modest grilled fish stall. Tuyết herself lives with a disability and often finds it challenging to keep up with her classmates in school. Yet she has never given up. With quiet resilience, she works tirelessly, holding onto her dream of one day being able to support herself and help her mother raise her two younger siblings.

Since 8th grade, Tuyết has been a recipient of the Greenleaves scholarship and has consistently strived to improve her academic performance. Now in 12th grade, she continues to push forward with unwavering determination.

Tuyết's story is a powerful testament to the strength of will and perseverance. It reminds us that even the most difficult dreams can come true with relentless effort and hope.



## The Sunflower

**D**uyên was born in 2005 in Tân Châu, a district in Tây Ninh province along the border with Cambodia. Since 7th grade, she has been a recipient of the Greenleaves Scholarship. Her father left the family when she was very young, leaving her mother to raise three children alone by shelling cashew nuts. Now in her fifties, her mother looks frail and worn down by years of hard labor.

Duyên's older brother once studied technical education at a university in Saigon. He wished to pursue accounting, but financial hardship forced him to drop out and work to support the family. Her elder sister completed 12th grade and moved to Saigon but soon returned to start a family, as life's challenges in the big city proved too harsh for her.

Alongside her studies, Duyên helps her mother shell cashews daily. After graduating from 12th grade in 2023, her mother insisted Duyên start working because she no longer had the strength to support the family alone. However, her brother encouraged her to continue her education, promising initial support, believing that schooling would bring better opportunities in the long run. Encouraged, Duyên successfully

enrolled at the University of Foreign Trade in Saigon, majoring in Marketing.

Initially, she shared a small, rented room with her brother in Bình Thạnh. The tuition fee for her first year was 15 million VND (around €560), payable in two installments. While her brother helped cover tuition, Duyên managed her living expenses, such as food and books, by working a labor-intensive job. She worked the evening shift until 10:30 p.m. at a restaurant, serving customers, cleaning tables, and washing dishes.

Because her courses were held in District 9 (Thủ Đức), she later had to move into a new room shared with a fellow student and took a job at Pizza 4P's in District 2. She worked Monday through Saturday, 5 to 8 hours daily, depending on her schedule, earning about 25,000 VND (roughly 90 cents) per hour.

Though she felt guilty for not being able to help her family more due to her study expenses, Duyên found joy in organizing small birthday celebrations for her mother and bringing little gifts to her grandparents during visits.

Since November 2023, Duyên has nurtured a heartfelt goal — to support cancer patients by inspiring courage and



confidence in their fight against the disease. On September 9, 2024, she donated her hair to be made into wigs for cancer patients, a symbolic act of generosity and hope.



For a young girl, donating her long, beautiful hair to cancer patients is a profoundly compassionate gesture that brings hope and comfort. For those battling this cruel disease, hair loss is not only physically painful but also emotionally devastating. A wig, even if only temporary, can help restore their confidence, allowing them to feel stronger and more beautiful, free from being defined by their illness. A hair donation is more than a material gift; it is a heartfelt, spiritual offering of love and empathy for the less fortunate, encouraging them to keep fighting.

The path of education is a long journey that must be nurtured, so that the seed, warmed by the sun, may bloom into a beautiful flower. Duyệt stands as an inspiring testament to the power of knowledge and humanity. She shows us that true greatness lies not only in academic achievements but also in small, meaningful acts of kindness. Her dedication proves that every deed, however small, can leave a deep imprint — and that often it is the simplest gestures that touch the lives of others most profoundly.



# **GiKaD Projects**



# Greenleaves Scholarship

**G**reenleaves is a scholarship program that supports underprivileged students by providing essential items such as rice, noodles, books, school uniforms, backpacks, pens, and school fees, helping them continue their education.

To be considered for the scholarship, students must write a letter to their sponsors describing their family situation, dreams for the future, and commitment to working hard in school to honor the support they receive. For younger students unable to write their own letters, a teacher writes on their behalf, explaining the need for assistance.

Scholarships are distributed through the students' teachers. The organization has a representative in Vietnam who manages communication, meets with teachers, students, and their families, and ensures that the support reaches the children directly.

The organization provides a detailed report on how scholarships were allocated each year. Students receiving scholarships maintain contact with their sponsors by writing

letters to share updates on their well-being and academic progress.

Postage fees, phone charges, travel costs, and small gifts or treats for the children are all covered personally by the sponsors. No donated funds are used for these expenses. Even during trips to Vietnam, supporters pay all costs — including travel and gifts — out of their own pockets.



## GL500+ Scholarship

**C**urrently, students who aim for a solid education in a specific field or wish to gain admission to a public university must already have a clear plan for their future during upper secondary school. They should estimate the costs for at least three years of high school, or for the duration of vocational school or university. Expenses related to preparing for entrance exams to public universities can be significant, including tuition fees for various preparatory courses and costs for food, accommodation, books, and learning materials.

GiKaD launched the Greenleaves 500+ (GL500+) scholarship program to support those who dream of pursuing higher education. Scholarships under this program carry the sponsor's name, such as the "J. Doe Scholarship" or "A. Nguyễn Scholarship" — and provide support for at least three years with a yearly donation of at least \$500. The amount can be adjusted annually according to the sponsor's preferences; for example, \$500 in the first year, \$500 in the second, and \$1,000 in the third.

Students apply for the GL500+ scholarship by submitting a motivational letter explaining their reasons, goals, and

future plans. Qualified applications are then forwarded to the sponsors, who select the student(s) to receive their support.



The GL500+ scholarship is awarded annually, requiring students to submit a new application yearly. Along with their application, students must report their academic performance from the previous year and write a new motivation letter detailing their achievements and contributions to their community. Students who continue to meet these requirements receive the scholarship for the following year; otherwise, the scholarship is awarded to another candidate.

The GL500+ program is offered to students who have already received the Greenleaves scholarship. Those who



aspire to pursue higher education or qualified vocational training and demonstrate the necessary skills and financial need (such as additional support for tuition fees) are encouraged to apply. Students may also apply for multiple scholarships if they wish.



## EgoStom

**T**he way to the heart is through the stomach — and so does the way to school. Because many students in the Greenleaves scholarship program need financial support to go to school, the *Education Goes through the Stomach* (EgoStom) program was created. Its goal is not only to provide students with better educational opportunities but also to ensure their basic needs — such as a balanced diet — are met, so they can fully focus on their schooling.



EgoStom has the following goals:

1. To help students who meet the following criteria realize their dreams of higher education:
  - Good academic performance (annual average score above 8.0)
  - Outstanding character
  - Families who are motivated and want their child to continue studying but have an income below the subsistence level.
2. To contribute to education with the hope that these students will grow into compassionate individuals capable of helping others.
3. To encourage students, after achieving success, to give back by supporting the EgoStom program and the Greenleaves scholarship, thereby helping other students in need.

Quarterly, students will receive essays on various topics which they are expected to read, reflect upon, and draw personal lessons from. Participation in the EgoStom program is a prerequisite for applying to the GL500+ scholarship.

EgoStom not only helps strengthen students' academic performance but also promotes their development into socially responsible, accountable, and resilient individuals. Furthermore, participants are encouraged to embrace GiKaD's guiding principles and commit to supporting needy students once they complete their education and enter professional life.



## PC4Kids

The PC4Kids program aims to support secondary school students within the Greenleaves Scholarship program by donating computer equipment to those who demonstrate strong academic performance and a genuine desire to continue their education through graduation. Computers have become indispensable learning tools, especially for college or university students.

GiKaD covers the costs of specialized computer services that inspect, upgrade, and install educational software on the devices. Additionally, accessories such as Wi-Fi boosters, mice, bags, and other aids are provided. Students also receive guidance on how to use the equipment properly.

If a computer encounters any problems, GiKaD offers repair support to ensure students can continue using their devices effectively for learning.





## Free English Tutoring

Currently, English is taught in Vietnam starting from first grade, with the primary focus on vocabulary and grammar. However, speaking and conversational skills receive minimal emphasis. Many students study English at school but also need to attend language centers to improve all four skills — listening, speaking, reading, and writing — as these are requirements for university admission.

Some Greenleaves scholarship recipients who demonstrate exemplary academic performance cannot afford English courses at language schools. Due to difficult family circumstances and living in suburban areas, they also lack the means to travel to language centers located in city centers.

Although these students have received desktop or laptop computers through the PC4Kids program to study English independently, their language skills remain limited because they have had few opportunities to develop their abilities further.

Ms. Lily Nguyễn, a Vietnamese woman born in Australia and an English teacher in Saigon, has kindly volunteered to teach these students free of charge.