

STOCKTONSpeaks!

LEAKHENA SORN

Around the dinner table, the members of Leakhana's household shared stories about their ancestors and about the experiences they each had growing up. Her family has been very close, and they frequently offer support and advice to one another. These times spent with her loved ones, in laughter and conversation, are Leakhena's fondest memories of growing up.

Leakhena Sorn was 13 years old when she immigrated to Stockton in October 1991. Learning a new language and adjusting to a new culture often made her feel isolated during her transition. However, because Cambodians had already established a community here, she enjoyed the support of fellow immigrants immediately—a privilege provided to her by the dedication of those who had come before. She found that Stockton Cambodians were already graduating from universities and beginning careers as pharmacists, physicians, or business owners.

As the oldest of five children, Leakhena knows that her parents have high expectations for her. After all, she has to set the standard for her siblings. Responsibility has always been part of her life. As a teenager, one of her greatest achievements was obtaining her driver's license and being able to drive her own car, one she purchased through hard work and saving.

Leakhena followed her parent's advice to pursue her education. She is a graduate of the Lodi Academy and is currently enrolled in the nursing program at San Joaquin Delta College. She has benefited from the help of others and chose a career where she can provide help in turn.

It is a little early for her to be sure what she'd like to pass on to future generations, but she's gained so much wisdom from her family that she's confident she does have something to share. "Study hard if you want to achieve something," is one piece of advice she values. But her favorite lesson

learned is "Make a good choice about religion, as it provides structure and foundation for your life."

Author: May Lin

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Ethnic Group: Cambodian

Generation: Youth