

# PORTRAITS OF **PROMISE**



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It's a privilege to share Sumo's story with you.

The children you help through Orphan's Promise are so much more than the labels the world chooses to place on them: Vulnerable. Poverty-stricken. Abandoned. Orphaned. These words do not define them. Their circumstances need not limit them. The space they occupy on this earth does not determine their intrinsic worth.

**These are the stories.**  
**These are the souls.**  
**These are the portraits of the lives we're changing.**



# AN ARMY FOR SUMO





## A NEW FUTURE

He is leaning against the wall, entirely at ease—guitar strap slung around his neck, hands hanging loosely.

His head turns, and you see that his eyes are at once both bright and soft. His brown eyes seem to hold a depth of awareness beyond his years, but they also hold something else: a gentleness that all the heaviness he has faced has not been able to stamp out. A light. Hope.

### **He smiles.**

Mettrai is a 14-year-old boy who goes by the name “Sumo.” He carries himself with a poise and dignity that make him seem much older than he is. But occasionally, you get a glimpse of the child he still is: the goofy grin as he tussles with his siblings, the joy he gets running around the playground. At the same time, you can envision the man he is becoming: someone who

is thoughtful and kind, strong and gentle. Someone who cares for others. He is at that age where you look into his face and can glimpse both the past and the future.

**That future is a reality today because of an Orphan's Promise School of Life at Pondsila Church in Thailand.**

Because of the time they had spent investing in Sumo and building a relationship with him, Pastor Sai and Teacher Phon were able to step into Sumo's life at a critical moment. Sumo remembers it like it was yesterday.

"When I was 11 years old, my parents had a very strong argument," he says. "My mother was very sad ... then she took my younger sister away. At that time, my younger brother, Tawan, and I still lived with my father. I prayed to God that my mother and younger sister would come back.

Thank You, God, that my mother and younger sister did come back. However, not long after, my parents had an argument



again—and continued to fight every day. Sometimes, my sister, brother, and I couldn't sleep.

“My mother decided to leave. Now, all of us live with my father. In the beginning after my mother left, I felt so sad. I thought about it constantly, and was ashamed to see my friends. At that time, Pastor Sai and Teacher Phon would always visit me to encourage and comfort me until I came back to the church again. I feel like I got loved and taken care of.”

At that time, School of Life started at Pondsila Church. School of Life is an after-school club supported by Orphan's Promise that provides vulnerable children with a safe place to hear the Gospel, do homework, learn new skills, and get a nutritious meal. The program also includes home visits in order to build relationships with the parents and community, as well as monthly parent meetings and training on topics like positive discipline. Despite his family's poverty, Sumo was able to enroll

in the School of Life and take part in English lessons, after-school tutoring, music lessons, Sunday school class and worship. His eyes light up when he talks about music:

**“I have practiced guitar and now I serve in the worship team at Pondsila Church!”**

“I have practiced guitar and now I serve in the worship team at Pondsila Church!” he says with a smile. “I love to

come to church and School of Life. I have friends and we're very happy when we meet each other at church.”

**About 1 million children** in Thailand are estimated to be living in vulnerable conditions. Many children lack access to basic necessities like safe shelter, nutritious food, education, and basic health care.



## Automate Your Impact!

The most effective way to give and maximize your gift is to give a recurring monthly gift. If you'd like to become a monthly partner with Orphan's Promise, please fill out the enclosed "You Pledge, We Pledge" form and return it in the Business Reply Envelope. We'll count on you to ensure our commitment to these children is fulfilled!

**If you'd like to give a special gift to Orphan's Promise, there are four easy ways you can give:**

Give online by visiting [OrphansPromise.org/Promise](https://OrphansPromise.org/Promise)

Text **PROMISE** to **71777** and give from your mobile phone

Call **1-800-818-4016** to give by phone

You can **mail a check** made out to Orphan's Promise to:

Orphan's Promise  
977 Centerville Turnpike  
Virginia Beach, VA 23463

**Thanks for your generosity.  
We look forward to making a difference together.**



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## THE STORY ISN'T OVER

Teacher Phon says that everyone can see a big change in Sumo from when he first entered the program. In the beginning, his broken family situation weighed heavily on him and, without positive influences pouring into his life, he was becoming more withdrawn and addicted to video games as a means of escape and survival.

“Without them [School of Life], I may be addicted to gaming still, and may not be like this today,” says Sumo.

“Sumo now is different,” explains Teacher Phon. “In the past, Sumo was aggressive, addicted to gaming, avoiding people, thinking negatively. Now, he speaks politely, loves to meet others and friends, and pays attention to helping others, and thinks positively.”

Thanks to the love and investment of teachers and pastors at School of Life and Pondsila Church, Sumo's gentle spirit has been restored and he is growing

into the man that God created him to be. What a gift to be able to protect that precious spirit from being further battered by the brokenness of the world. What a privilege to be able to intervene and provide this child of God with the tender care, nurturing, and instruction he needs to grow up healthy, healed, and

**Today, only a little over 1% of Thailand's population are Christians. As a minority, Thai Christians are often ostracized and marginalized by their communities and sometimes their own family members. Our Orphan's Promise partners in Thailand provide a valuable place of comfort and community for believers.**



whole. Knowing he has value. Knowing he has purpose.

Looking ahead, Sumo says: “In the future, I would like to be a police officer, or a designer, because I love drawing.”

Orphan’s Promise partners have been so faithful to pour into this young man’s life, but his future is still far from certain. Like many children in rural Thailand, he continues to face an uphill battle to get a higher education and break the generational cycle of poverty he was born into. The burden of his family’s financial situation, and how that will impact opportunities for higher education for both him and his siblings, continues to weigh on him.

We have faith that the Lord will continue to provide for and strengthen Sumo on this journey ahead. It is our privilege to help equip him for his future, but his path is only just beginning. Your partnership with Orphan’s Promise has played a huge role in his story so far.



Let's continue to walk beside him. Let's lift him up in prayer, covering him with the Lord's protection and favor. Let's let him know he doesn't have to face life's challenges on his own.

He has an army behind him, a chorus, a cloud of witnesses, cheering him on.

In closing, we'd like to share a message for you, directly from Sumo: "Thank you for helping and supporting me to have a better life. Even though I haven't met you face to face, I would like to thank you for the good food. I get love from

God and that fulfills me when I have lack in my family. Thank you to everyone who wishes to care for every child that is lacking. May the Lord bless all of you for helping me and other children."

**No child should be hungry. No child should lack love or care. Thank you for playing a part in changing the trajectory of one child's future—Sumo's future.**





give us a call: 1-800-818-4016

**orphan'spromise.org**

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