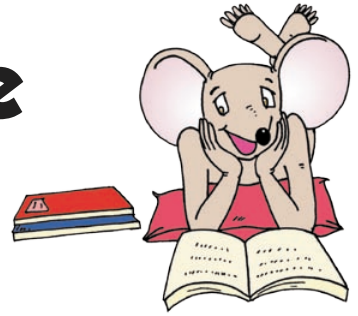


Big Brother Mouse

Annual Report, 2012



Friends:

Seven years ago, I was a student in my last year at Teacher Training College in Luang Prabang. There were no Big Brother Mouse books, and nobody had ever heard of book parties.

If you found an easy book to show to a child in a rural village, probably they could read it but very slowly, often sounding out each word, because they had so little practice reading. If you got the child enthused about reading, it wouldn't have done much good, because there weren't enough books to sustain that enthusiasm.

Today, all that is changing, because of your support. Thank you!

Our 200th book came off the press this week. It's a very special book, intended for villages where we've set up reading rooms. With pictures and short excerpts, it introduces them to more than 100 other books.

Books are still a new thing for families in rural Laos. They don't naturally know all the benefits they can get from the reading room. Families will each have their own copy of this new book. They can spend many hours reading it together; then get more books from the reading room.



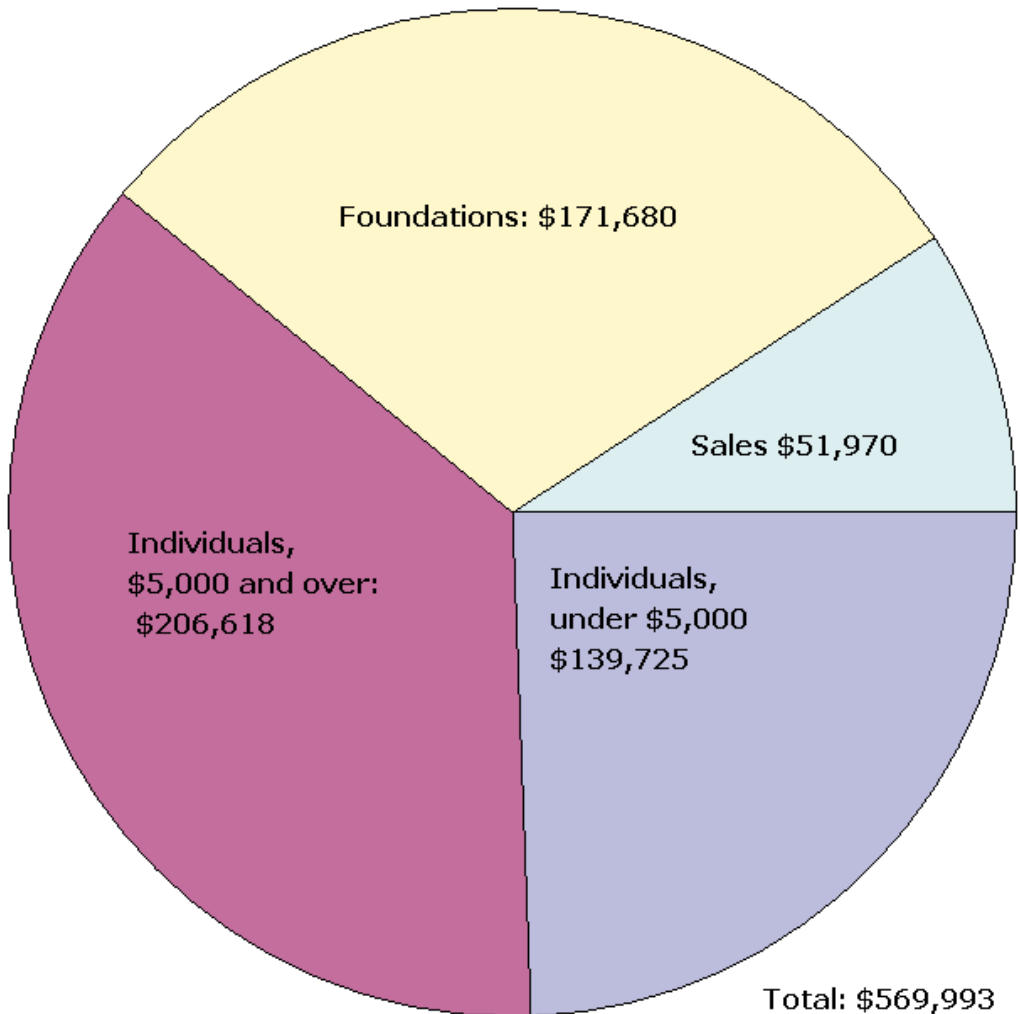
The photo shows me with my wife Kham, and our daughter Neri. She is 20 months old and already loves books; she's pointing to a picture of a ball, and saying the word "ball" in Lao. Thanks to you, many more children in Laos are growing up with books.

—*Khamla Panyasouk, Director*

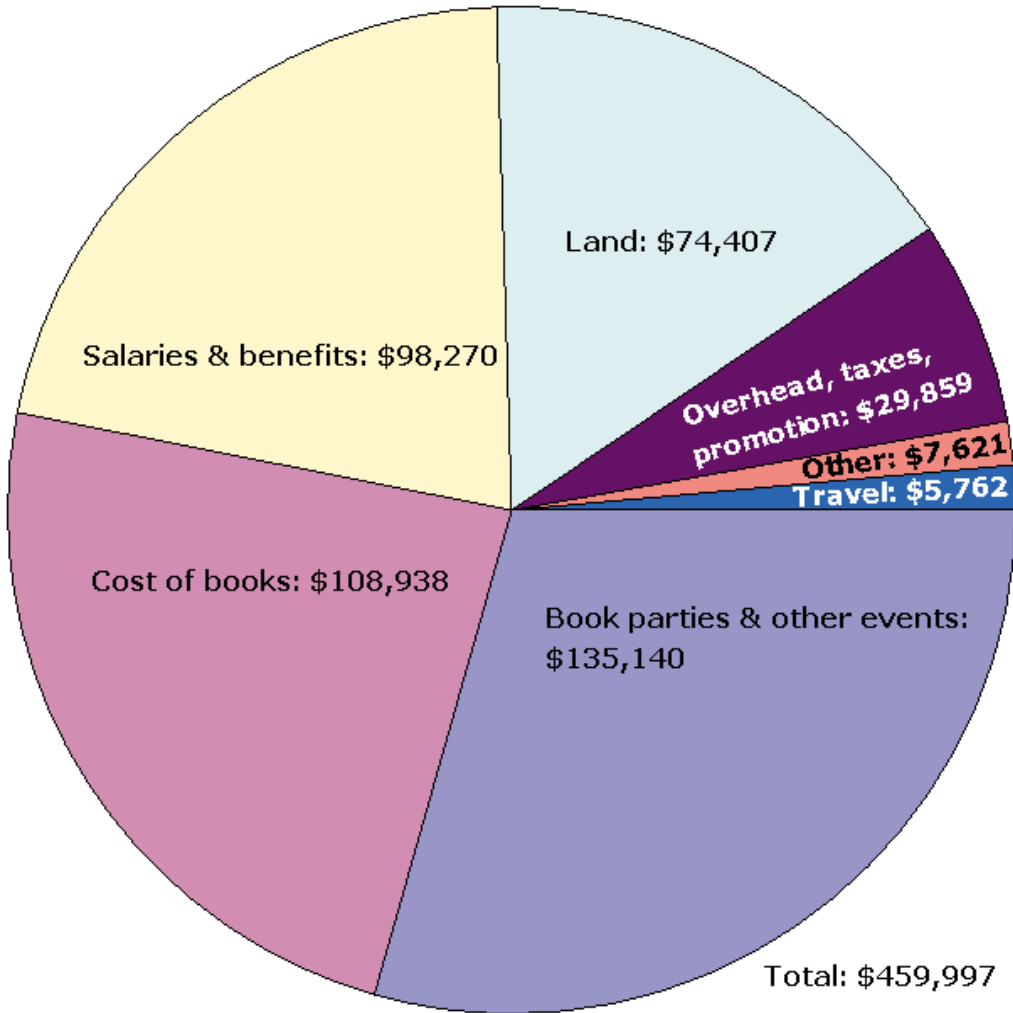
How BBM has grown

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Book parties	196	256	510	544	903
Books donated (1,000)	42	51	134	178	270
New titles published	32	39	30	40	25
Titles reprinted	1	1	4	9	35
Cumulative numbers:					
Village reading rooms set up	32	59	150	191	191
Total titles published	65	104	134	174	199

How you helped us:



And how we used it:



Overhead: Rent for our main shop and office is donated. Sasha Alyson, the full-time adviser, volunteers his time, as do volunteers in other countries. These do not appear in Expenses.

Land: We purchased land on which to build our Discovery World and Learning Center, which are briefly discussed below. A special loan from a supporter made this possible.

Income: More than 1/3 of our donations for 2012 arrived in December. This will help us print an unusually large number of books early in 2013 for our new "Silent Reading Time" school program. We've briefly explained this below, and will give more details in our February newsletter. In the first 4 months of 2013, we expect to print 40 to 50 books for this program.

What you made possible in 2012

We held far more book parties in 2012 than ever before. In took us four years to get to all of Luang Prabang province; we reached schools throughout Udom Xai province in just one year.

You'll see photos from the book parties in the list of donor names. Here are some other highlights from the years.

Discovery Days: In February we held our first Discovery Days, with some 35 interactive activities enjoyed by children and adults alike: Fossils to examine; a microscope and tiny brine shrimp; kaleidoscopes, anatomy models; electronics experiments; a solar telescope; jigsaw puzzle maps of Southeast Asia, and much more.



Literacy seminar: Representatives from reading programs in East Timor and 3 other countries came to a seminar that we sponsored in March, to share ideas and skills. The E. Timor group presented us with an oversize copy of a Big Brother Mouse book that they published.

Teacher Training: Today's teachers have no experience using fun books like ours in class. For the first time, the Teacher Training College let us offer training for 700 teachers and future teachers, and gave them each a set of 70 books. They'll return to rural villages throughout northern Laos with books, a love of reading, and the skills to share that love.

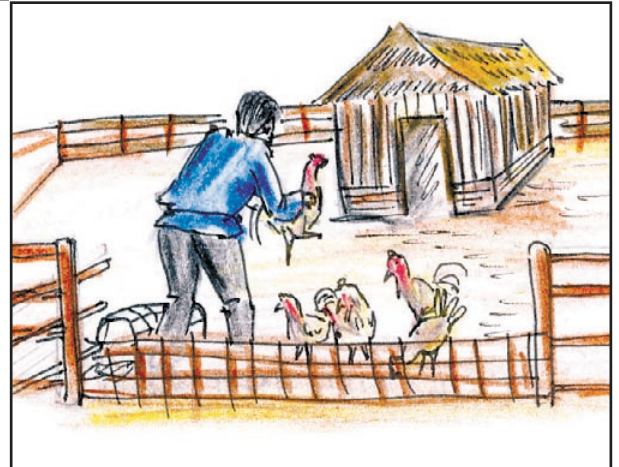


Village Reading Rooms: From 2008 through 2011, we set up reading rooms in the homes of volunteers in 191 villages. Reading rooms are new concepts for these villages and volunteers. We've found that repeated visits, training workshops, and new books are necessary to make them successful. This year we continued those visits and training workshops, but without adding more villages.



Activity Books: In the past, at school book parties we gave each child a few sheets of paper with pictures to color and other activities. With support from Planet Wheeler, this year we printed a large (A4) 16-page activity book for every child, with pictures to color, puzzles, mazes, and number games.

Why Do My Chickens Die? When we published *Baby Care* in 2008, we didn't know if people in rural villages would be receptive to getting such information from a book. They were. Then one said, "I'd like a book about why do my chickens die." It took three years to develop a good book. We have a growing list of books that directly improve the quality of life for thousands of people in rural Laos



Did you think it was funny, too? Chittakone, who illustrated the book published in East Timor, won our second art contest, back in 2006. This year's contest theme was to show people enjoying books. Three winners (all high school students) will help us get new artists for our books, and encourage a new generation of artists.

Teachers and children say thank-you

Just north of the Luang Prabang airport, an unpaved road comes into Highway 13. It follows the Nam Kham river for a while, then goes into the hills. Follow it about an hour and you'll reach Natan village. During a book party there, we talked to the school director, teachers, and students. Then we did the same in other rural villages.



Janta, age 9, student at Natan School

I like to read Big Brother Mouse books in my free time, and with my friends. Some books I like are *The Polar Bear Visits Laos*, and the book about Baby Care.

Every week I trade my book with the teacher, and then read a new book to my little brother.

Bounmany Duangpadith, teacher

BBM books have lots of good information, they are simple and easy to read, and it's fun to read them.

I like the book *Using Books in School*, it has lots of good ideas.

What I want you to improve: Some books for students in class year 1 and year 2 have sentences that are too long.

I would like you to compose more new songs about reading. Because most students have already sung the songs you have now.



Bounmy, a student at Natan School

I like to read BBM books. I can gain education from them and it's fun to read them. And I like to play games and activities with BBM teams very much.

I want to read more BBM books. It's fun! I never owned a book before. I sometimes go to borrow books from the school. Now I have already finished reading *New Improved Buffalo*, *Grasshopper War* and *The Cat that Meditated*.

I'm so glad that BBM brings books to help us. I learn a lot of new things. And I would like BBM to come back again.

The Director of Natan School

Do you use BBM books?

Books of BBM are very useful to add to our teaching systems: We use ideas from *The Joy of Reading* and *Using Books in School* to lead activities for students. We get teaching ideas from the book *Your Body*. We also use storybooks and many other books to create fun in the classes.

What benefits do BBM books give?

There are many books that make it easy for young children to learn to read, and also for adults. They offer entertainment, fun, and they are helpful for living.



What kinds of books do you still need more?

A book about dance, with pictures and definitions; a book about how to write stories. And more story books.

What kinds of books do students like best?

The most students like to read storybooks and to draw cartoons.

Bounthieng Fongsamouth, teacher at Houeyvaen School.

Books from BBM help us in our school:

They help students be less shy to answer the teacher's questions.

They help students enjoy learning. They don't worry about their family problems.

They make students want to learn more, and so they are not very often absent from school.



Libi, age 11, at Thinsom School

Libi likes story books and easy books most, such as Piiyamoi, Grasshopper War and No Bananas. She can tell the whole story of Piiyamoi without looking at the book. It's her favorite story and she remembers all the important points:

I would like to be like the poor man in Piiyamoi and get a magic pan, and become rich. I don't want to be greedy like his friend was.

When I finish reading a book, I want to read more. It's fun. I get knowledge to help me be better in my studies and get a good job.

Coming in 2013

In 2012 we began preparations for two new projects, both intended to help make reading a part of daily life in Laos. We'll announce more soon; here's a preview:

Silent Reading Time

In many schools in other countries, teachers designate 10 or 15 minutes a day for children to silently read. Children choose what to read. They don't have to report about it, and they don't get quizzed about it. The goal is: They read for enjoyment. They develop a reading habit.

We couldn't do this before; there wasn't enough to read. But now, we have enough. Each classroom in the school will get 40 to 50 different books.

That means giving 200-250 books to a typical school, compared to the 80 that we currently provide. To get the costs down, we're re-formatting some larger books into A5 (standard paperback) size. Some of these are ready for press now; others will be soon. That's a lot of books going to press! If you would like to sponsor one or several, please see the list on our website.

We'll test this in some districts before the school year winds down in May; then make adaptations as needed, and resume in September.

Discovery World and Learning Center

We've purchased land on the outskirts of Luang Prabang for 3 related facilities:

Learning Center: The skills we need to grow -- writing, editing, and basic numeracy -- are in short supply here. For four years we've developed ways to help our staff improve these skills, as well as equally important life skills: perseverance, self-control, and checking your work before you decide you're finished, to name just three. The Learning Center will be a place where our staff and others, including village reading-room volunteers, can come for 2 weeks, a month, or more, to gain important and badly-needed skills.

Discovery World: Adults and children alike enjoy our "Discovery Days." They've never had an opportunity for this type of hands-on learning. Discovery World is best described as an interactive children's museum. It will start much smaller than any you might have visited in the west, but we've got room for growth.

A Small Library. People from 10-12 villages will pass us every time they go to the market or into town. They can stop and read books for a bit, or borrow books to take home. It gives us an opportunity to observe what helps establish reading in typical villages. Volunteers from reading rooms in other villages will get hands-on experience helping us make it a success. We'll keep this library small, so that visitors from rural Laos will feel, "We could do something like this in our village."

ຂອບໃຈຫຼາຍໆ! Thank you!



Big Brother Mouse would like to thank the many individuals, organizations, businesses, and foundations that made it possible for more Lao children than ever before to own their first book.

But words alone cannot do the job. These photos of children reading their first book, will best convey our feelings. There are many more in the Photo Album section of our website. Please have a look!



CLSA Chairman's Trust
Dawn Wheatley
Embassy of Switzerland to Laos
Global Fund for Children
Peggy Horn
Rev. Arthur Peterson
Robert Smith & family
Sasha Alyson
The United States Embassy in Laos

\$25,000 and above
Planet Wheeler Foundation

Manoj Paul
The Cubit Family
Lyle and Agnes Schaller
Laos Literacy Project

\$5,000-\$24,999
The Bengier Foundation
Bruce Schaller



\$1000-\$4999
Alice Vandervoort
Anne-Marie Spagnolo
Anonymous
basmati - authentic help
Becky Schaller
Beh Kim Chin & Chan Kean Eng
with Friends & Relatives
Brian & Gerry Warren

Burke Strickland
Charles Felsenthal
Chris Ashton & Emma Morton
Christopher Thomas and Connie
Potter
Daniel Starta
Dave Schaller
Deborah Deitsch-Perez
Doug Ewart
Dunannie School (Bedales Schools),



Julie McIntyre
The Keene Family, in honor of their
family and friends
Laura Dixon
Marco & Evelyne Spaargaren
Maria Victoria Garcia Muela
Marjorie Sippel
Michaela Striewski-Bonizzato &
Family
Miki & Anja Striewski-Bonizzato

Petersfield, UK
Erninga Viscita Manzo
Gill Harwood
Google
Hannah Broessler, Astrid Reitter and
friends
James Marsden
Jo Kelly
Joanna Kafarowski



Nam Jai Amsterdam
Nicola Smith
Nicole Gill
Ray Faulkner
Robert Moyer, Cathy Lee, and Jason
Moyer-Lee
Save the Children
Sponsors of Charity Spring Lamb
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Fiona Clark
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 Malcolm Ruddiforth

Sue Osborne
 Susie Pitlick
 Tammachat Natural Textiles
 Travel Indochina
 Yatai and A World In Need
 Year 2 2012, Morris Hall, Melbourne
 Girls Grammar School
 Zena Carter



Mrs. McCarthy's 2nd Grade Class

Ortrud Borchardt

Pippa Dean

Port of Melbourne Corporation Staff
 - Christmas Raffle

Rosalie Kievith

Royce Mussman

Vicki Lyall



\$500-\$999

Adam Lipson, with donations
 requested for his Bar Mitvah

Beth Hardy

Brian Veale

Butterfield and Robinson

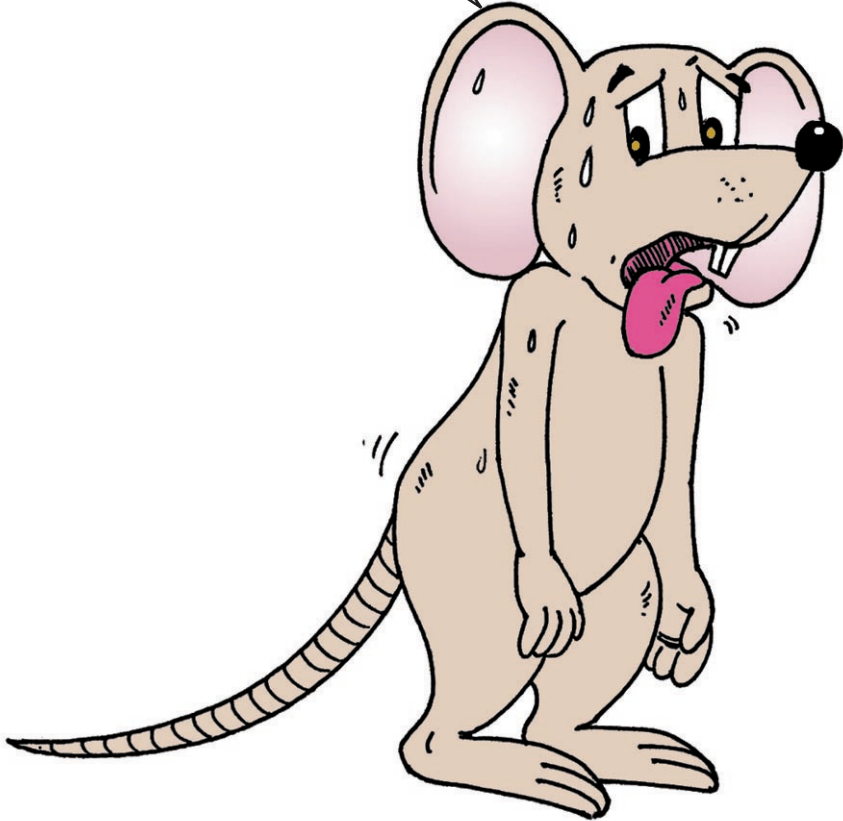
The children of KVV Brandevoort,
 Helmond

Christine Grove

David Millar



Honestly!
Couldn't you have made this
report a bit shorter?



Yes, Mr. BBM, we could have. And we did. We've also made a 4 page report which, like this one, is available on our website (from the "About Us" page). But we're new at this annual-report business, and we didn't know whether most people would prefer brevity, or depth. So this version is just going out to a small number of people who have made a big difference for us. We welcome feedback: Would you have preferred a shorter version?