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## My Post Experience: Sathaphone Phophantasak, across the world in pursuit of a dream

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At 17 years old, Sathaphone Phophantasak, known by her classmates and teachers as Soi, departed her home country of Laos for the United States in search of education. With a limited knowledge of the English language, she left her family and everything she knew behind and headed to Fresno, CA as an exchange student.



*Sathaphone "Soi" Phophantasak*

"In Laos education was just a dream," she said. "My parents couldn't afford to send me to one of the few strong schools, so they used every last bit of money they had to send me to the U.S. For this reason, I've always held my education in the highest regard and never took anything for granted."

After starting her schooling in California, Soi relocated to Rhode Island, where she finished high school and earned her diploma. Upon graduation, Soi aspired to attend a U.S. university, but that dream was dealt a significant blow with the untimely passing of her father.

"After my dad passed away, college at that time was impossible," she said. "I really became the head of the household and started working multiple jobs to support

myself and my family back home."

After seven years working in a restaurant and a jewelry factory, Soi saved up enough money to buy a car and move to Connecticut, where she enrolled in an associate degree program through Naugatuck Valley Community College.

“The move made me feel again like I was someone else in a different world,” she said. “I knew no one. I had no one around me. It was hard, but I enjoyed the adventurous aspect of it.”

In May 2013, after earning her associate degree, Soi enrolled in a [financial accounting class at Post University](#). Soi felt that this moment and this class is when it all started to make sense.

“I learned that accounting involved analyzing, recording and summarizing the results of business operations,” she said. “This made sense to me and is exactly what my parents taught me when I was a kid working in their hardware store in Laos. Accounting brought back all my great childhood memories and gave me a desire to become a CPA.”

She was hooked. Soi enrolled at Post full time and immediately became involved. She is now a member of the Honors Society, the Treasurer of the Accounting Society and a student-member of the Connecticut Society of CPA's (CTCPA). Her hard work has earned her multiple scholarships, including the Diversity Scholarship from the CTCPA, and a position in the Accounts Payable Department at The Hospital of Central Connecticut. Her success in the classroom and beyond was born out of her passion for education and her love for accounting.

“The professors have taught and guided me with the accounting knowledge I'll need in the work place,” she said. “They are very hands on and teach every angle of accounting techniques.”

Soi left her family and her life behind her in pursuit of a goal. The pursuit of that goal meant several relocations, countless hours working multiple jobs, learning a foreign language and making a life in a foreign land. Next month, that goal will be achieved and Soi will earn her Bachelor of Science in Accounting and accept her diploma as a member of the National Honors Society.

“It's all about to pay off,” she said. “It's been a lot of work, a lot of hours. I'm so happy that I achieved this for myself and for my family. I know my mother is proud, and I know my father is looking down and is proud of me as well.”

After graduation, Soi plans to take her Certified Public Accountant (CPA) exam and obtain a position with a large firm.

“That would be a dream come true,” she said. “After how far I've come, to start a career here in the U.S. and begin to work my way up the corporate ladder, it's what I've been thinking about for a long time.”

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