

## LAO 'FRIENDS' SAVE A YOUNG GIRL'S LIFE

### BACKGROUND

Twelve-year-old Marijua Wa was admitted to the Lao Friends Hospital for Children (LFHC) for chronic burns from a gas explosion she had sustained five months earlier. On the advice of a traditional healer, the family had applied a poultice of burned goat dung, and kept Marijua on strict bedrest and severe dietary restriction (almost starvation) since the accident. By the time she entered the hospital, her wounds were not even healing, and she was severely malnourished.

### INTERVENTION

In the past several months, Marijua has received intensive medical and wound care at LFHC, and underwent a skin graft operation. Marijua also receives intensive physical therapy, including gradual strengthening, range of motion exercises, conditioning, and gait training with parallel bars and crutches. She also has daily lessons and recreational activities with the child life therapist, and has been learning to read, write, and speak Lao. Under close watch of the hospital's nutritionist, Marijua is gaining weight steadily.

### OUTCOMES

Despite their initial reluctance Marijua's family has been extremely involved in her care and rehabilitation, and is a wonderful asset and inspiration for her success. Marijua now uses crutches to get around, has



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**Marijua Wa and her physical therapist, Sengdeuane Phommy, practice effective crutch usage in front of the Lao Friends Hospital for Children.**

dramatically improved her range of motion, and is, at long last, healing. LFHC hopes to collaborate with the provincial rehabilitation center to help Marijua with an orthotic solution to improve her gait. Recently, she and her family were able to go home for a few days on a temporary leave, and returned for a few weeks of continued care and discharge planning. Marijua and her family are very grateful to both World Education's TEAM project and LFHC for their unwavering care and support!