

## July 2010: News from Baan Tharn Namchai

During June there was a steady stream of visitors to the Baan Tharn Namchai home for tsunami victims. There were also training opportunities for staff and children.

### Training activities for staff and students

Every weekend from mid-June to the beginning of August, two secondary level 6 students from Rajprachanukroh 35 School are visiting the orphanage to teach Thai traditional dance and modern dance to 20 of the children (photo right).

The three-hour lessons are taking place in the recently completed earthen building which is being used as a cultural training centre. The dances taught by the visiting students are being used to entertain the many groups of visitors to the home.



Three staff and two children made a week-long visit to Chiang Mai in the north of Thailand. The group joined with 500 others from all over Thailand in a programme of meditation and faith activities (photo left).

Earlier in the month two staff members and twenty children made merit by offering food to female priests (*Ubasikakaew*) from the Chiang Mai temple at an event which took place at the provincial credit union office in Phang-nga.

At the beginning of June, one staff member and two volunteers from Baan Tharn Namchai started a two-month training and work experience programme at the pre-school student development centre at Takua Pa Hospital.

The trainees will be setting up a centre for pre-school students at the Duang Prateep Foundation's building in the village of Baan Nam Khem once it is completed early next year.

Also last month the orphanage director Rotjana Phraesrithong and a colleague participated in a one-day workshop on vocational training for children's development, which was hosted by the local district office.

One staff member attended a week-long training session on protecting victims of domestic abuse and violence. The training was hosted by the TOT Academical Institute in Nonthaburi province north of Bangkok.

### June visitors

Visitors in June included a Thai film company who had nine people working at the orphanage for six days. The visitors filmed life at the orphanage with the objective of getting a short film about Baan Tharn Namchai shown at Film Expo Asia.

During June there were also several contacts with Australian friends from the Hands Across the Water organisation in Australia.

Steph Ellis of Victoria University in Melbourne visited the orphanage on the sidelines of her trip to Thailand for participation in the Phuket marathon. Steph brought some fellow runners with her. The visitors had lunch with the children and were entertained by dance performances from the

children.

Later in the month Steph was back at the orphanage again with, Jen, a colleague from Victoria University. Jen was teaching English at Takua Pa Vocational College as well as teaching some classes at Baan Tharn Namchai. Jen has now been replaced by Lynne, another colleague from Victoria University.

Another Hands Across the Water visitor from Melbourne was Tony Love-Linlay who visited Baan Tharn Namchai with a friend and was also entertained with dance performances.

Three visitors came from Singapore in June for a four-day stay to do activities with children at the orphanage.

Last month children and staff at the orphanage also welcomed five visitors from the Land of Smiles organisation in the UK. The visitors joined in activities with the children.

Not all the visitors were from overseas, a group of 7 Thai tourists in the area also visited the orphanage and met the children and staff.

### Volunteers

During June there were also volunteers from Hands Across the Water helping at the orphanage.

Mrs. Jen Baines, the mother of Peter Baines, the founder and director of Hands Across the Water was at the orphanage for a month. Mrs. Baines helped look after and entertain the children. Steve and Lynette Gilbert were at the orphanage even longer, as they helped for two months.

The volunteer were playing with the children, teaching English, helping with the gardening, cooking and life at the orphanage. All three volunteers enjoyed the experience so much that they have all booked repeat visits for next year.

### Parties

Every month a day is set aside to celebrate the birthdays of all the children who have their birthday in the month.

With many birthdays in June there were plenty of candles to blow out on the individual banana cakes baked for each of the birthday children.



The children and staff put on shows on such occasions. At the June party, Jen Baines and Allyson Parker also provided some entertainment (photo right).

Another special event in June was a party to farewell Steve and Lynette at the end of their two month period volunteering at the orphanage. In total over 100 people attended the party with children, staff and volunteers at the orphanage being joined by children and adults from the local community.