

August 2010: News from Baan Tharn Namchai

Chiang Rai trip for children from tsunami orphanage

Last month twenty-five children and three staff from the Duang Prateep Foundation's Baan Tharn Namchai orphanage for tsunami victims made a week-long trip to the northern province of Chiang Mai, some 1,400 km by road from their home in Takua Pa district of Phang-nga province.

The trip was sponsored by Hands Across the Water of Australia and was for children aged from twelve to eighteen. The destination for the



week was the Mae Kok River Resort Outward Bound Centre.

Children and staff enjoyed a mixture of adventure activities such as rafting, biking, archery and wall climbing. They also did cultural activities such as weaving (photo above).

The group also experienced a traditional northern Thai style *Khantoke* dinner (photo left). At the dinner, local children performed northern style dances and the children from the orphanage reciprocated with southern dance performances.

Puppet training for teachers in South

Last month five members of the Nithan Caravan puppet group from the orphanage, including orphanage director Ms. Rotjana Phraesrithong went to the southern province of Songkhla to train teachers in puppet making and the use of puppets in story telling (photo right).

Songkhla Vocational School was the sponsor for the trip with Hands Across the Water sponsoring the fabric used for the puppets made on the course.



A one-day course was arranged for teachers at the vocational school and that was followed

by a three-day course attended by 120 teachers from the province.

*The photo above shows the teachers making their puppets. The photo left shows teachers with their finished story aprons.*



### Visitors and a farewell party

July visitors to the orphanage included guests staying at the Le Meridien Hotel Khao Lak and a group of 10 local Thai visitors who donated a very tasty noodle lunch one Sunday. Another weekend 35 children and staff from the orphanage visited the Palm Galleria Resort at Khao Lak, where they joined a religious ceremony and donated food to monks.

There were also visitors from Bangkok early in the month when Duang Prateep Foundation manager Phenwadee Saengjan and two others from the Bangkok office travelled to the project for the six month work review and staff development discussions.

At the end of the month, staff and children arranged a party to farewell 15-year-old Namthip Nilawong who departed for a year of study at the Youth Initiative High School at Viroqua in the USA state of Wisconsin.

Namthip's stay in the USA is being hosted and sponsored by Karen Dahl, the founder and director of the Flame of Hope Foundation, the Duang Prateep Foundation's support organisation in the USA.

Namthip has been in the care of the Duang Prateep Foundation since soon after the tsunami disaster. At the time of the tsunami, Namthip was already an orphan and then lost her extended family in the disaster. Namthip has an exceptional academic record, regularly getting top grades in her school studies.

*The photo shows Namthip (standing left) at her farewell party*

