Celebrations!
On Friday, 1 November, we celebrated our 10th Anniversary together with about 180 esteemed guests at our office in Chiang Mai. We were thrilled to see so many good friends, donors, volunteers, former team members, beneficiaries, partner organisations and family members attending our Open House event. Some of them even came from far-away places such as Japan, Switzerland, Italy, Singapore and Hong Kong. We feel very honoured and grateful that so many shared this special day with us.

As a gift to ourselves, we all went to a sandy beach on the Thai island of Koh Chang, located in South-East Thailand near the Cambodian border, for a few days. The week of 20-25 October saw us lazing around in swimming suits and flip flops under palm trees, building sand castles, occasionally avoiding jelly fish, snorkeling, watching colourful coral fish and playing competitive volleyball with water balloons – this proving to be quite challenging and rather wet. The four team members organising this week struck exactly the right balance between relaxation and fun activities.

Tuesday, 22 October was THE day on which Child’s Dream was exactly 10 years old and on which we celebrated Daniel’s 35th birthday. This we celebrated on the beach with a big cake, of course, and lots of candles.

Upon our return to Chiang Mai, things got frantic. We only had three to four days to prepare everything for our event. What gave me sleepless nights was that it was still raining in Chiang Mai, a phenomenon usually unseen in late October. What if it rained on the big day? We were planning so many things to happen in our garden! Lovely Angie navigated us safely through our preparation days with her endless energy, enthusiasm and a run-down list that would make any ceremonial master planning a royal wedding blush. Everything and everyone was mobilised: we carried, painted, glued, hammered, sawed, drilled, assembled, disassembled, arranged, rearranged, made orders and held last-minute execution meetings. By Friday morning, everything was done. What a team!

On our celebration day, Buddhist monks from our neighbourhood temple came for a religious ceremony to bless us early in the morning. Luckily and finally, Chiang Mai November weather lived up to its famous and fabulous reputation: sunny, mild, cloudless blue skies. Starting mid-afternoon, our guests arrived. Visitors had the opportunity to follow four presentations at small exhibition booths inside our office explaining our three focus groups as well as the work done by our administration team. Around 6:00 pm, our swinging anniversary party started and the buffet dinner was ready.

A big “Thank You” to Gung and Icy who so wonderfully decorated our office and garden, to Veronica Mannhart and Christine Peter who prepared all the tasty European desserts, to Mr. Lee from Akha Ama who offered everyone 1A Arabica coffee, to the CHEDI Hotel which sponsored mouth-watering Indian appetizers, to Michael Hofstetter and his team from the Le Meridien Hotel for supporting our caterer and staffing the important beer taps, and to Forrest who documented all the stages of our lovely celebration with his camera in a way that we will remember in years to come.

Dear guests from near and far: you made our day! Having you with us showed us at Child’s Dream that what we do is meaningful and valued. Your support and trust means so much to us. We hope to see you again latest at our 20th anniversary. Meanwhile feel free to write, call, visit and enjoy our Facebook page, our website and our newsletters.

Manuela Bianchi
Director, Chief Operating Officer
Child’s Dream News

Welcome and Goodbye

Joy, from our Health Focus Group, left Child’s Dream recently. However, our new team members are O in the Children’s Medical Fund, Muay in the Thailand team, Chanutr in the Laos team and M in our Basic Education Team. Our new volunteers in the office are Sabrina Kolodziej and Keith Quiring. Both Prakkamakul Ponnapa and Nataly Diaz Diblenko (our first ever volunteer from Latin America) have started their volunteer English teaching assignments at two schools in the North of Thailand. Julia Schweiger has left after teaching English at Baan Mae Suek School for three months. Many thanks to all of you.

Our documentary «Child’s Dream– Two Bankers on Their Quest for Meaning»

Will be aired on the Swiss TV channel RTS2 in French language on Monday, 6 January 2014 at 20:40h. Enjoy!

Special Feature

Waraporn Intasaen (Nickname: Ta)
- Programme Head
Children’s Medical Fund

After I graduated, I worked at government hospital, Maharaj Nakorn, Chiangmai, for seven years. When the tsunami hit the coast of Thailand in December 2006, my life was changed. From January to March 2007, I was sent to the South to support and help victims twice and volunteered twice. After I came back to the hospital I decided to resign and move to the South to work with the Mission Phuket Hospital as the team leader of the medical mobile clinic for the Tsunami Relief Project. I worked there for five years. I liked the South and travelled to all the islands. It was my wonderful time, but because of family illness I came back to Chiang Mai. After my father was fully recovered, I became interested in a Child’s Dream advertisement because of the job responsibilities as a coordinator nurse. When I was interviewed, I thought I would not get this job because my English language was not good, but Child’s Dream gave me an opportunity.

That was my great time to learn to live in Mae Sot with Burmese, Karen, Mon and Western people.

I love to work with Child’s Dream for many reasons; I like the administration system of CDF— it’s very professional; I like my colleagues’ style— everybody is unique, which I could not see in the hospital (doctor, nurse or other staff); I like a small organisation— not too many staff; I like the CDF founders’ style— Daniel dares to dream and can make it come true and Khun Marc is a smart boss.

For my responsibility, the children medical fund programme, I think I am very happy with my job because my colleagues are very nice, the working time is flexible, our patients after surgery and recovery make me smile and especially I learned from them that I am very lucky because I have a home, a good job, a good family and feel safe.

I would like to thank very much Child’s Dream Foundation which gave me opportunities, a good job, new experiences, friendship, time to go back to my home town to take care my parents. I will do my responsibilities the best, I promise.

- Ta -

The first year I was based in Mae Sot, Tak. I was excited to see a small town with a lot of NGOs who work for Burmese migrants and refugees. My job was totally different from the past; I coordinated with the Thai government officer, who didn’t like to give travelling permission to our Burmese patients. I started to learn Burmese language and Karen language to communicate with children and care givers.
Building Educational Facilities in Myanmar:

Together with our local partner, PDO, we have built eight monastic schools in and around Mandalay in central Myanmar. The recent democratisation process and the subsequent easing of security and travel restrictions now allow us to make even faster progress.

Although Child’s Dream is an unbiased development organisation supporting children regardless of religious belief, we support monastic schools as a result of the unfortunate history of the Burmese education system.

Many decades ago, Myanmar was the shining star of Asia, both economically and educationally. However, close to 50 years of oppressive military rule not only ruined the country economically, but also destroyed the once-famous education system. Buddhist temples traditionally provided the basis for education, but under British rule, urban students increasingly attended quality private schools and became civil servants for the colonial administration, while the rural, largely ethnic minority population was educated at traditional monastic schools. After independence in 1948, the government tried to create a state system of schools and, after the revolution in 1962, nationalised non-state schools – except monastic schools – and increased state control. However, as the military regime slowly bankrupted the country, it invested less in education. As state schools became more expensive, but poorer quality, students began migrating once again to monastic schools that were free.

Visiting such schools is an experience in itself, not just because of the laughter and smiles of the boys and girls, but also because classes are dotted with orange-robed novices and also many students of other faiths, thus confirming the unbiased educational approach of these schools. Also, the longstanding monastic system is not only accepted, but also accredited by the government, so children of this system receive official educational certification, which allows them to continue studying at higher levels.

We will closely follow developments over the years to come. Under a now-civilian government, the two systems could merge in the future or at least align, leading to a single education system driven and supported by the state.

The Picturebook Guesthouse – One of our Social Enterprises

A bit more than a year ago we celebrated the opening of one of our first social enterprises, The Picturebook Guesthouse. But let’s start this story in 2007. Back then, we commissioned a needs analysis to assess the vocational training situation in the Thai-Myanmar border town of Mae Sot. As expected, the needs analysis showed a significant lack of opportunities for youth wanting to enter vocational professions. We needed little convincing and ‘Youth Connect’ was born. Ever since, Youth Connect has offered specialised vocational skills training and internships with local businesses, as well as a career centre to facilitate students’ job searches. Several hundred youth in the Mae Sot area have benefited from this initiative by now.

It was always on our radar to add a guesthouse to the services of Youth Connect in order to offer training in the hospitality sector, an industry which contributes significantly to the Thai GDP. Thanks to the generous financial support of elea Foundation, we were able to secure a suitable plot of land and only a year later, the Picturebook Guesthouse was opened with a big bang. Our guesthouse not only serves as an educational facility for Youth Connect; it has also become one of the trendiest places to stay while in Mae Sot. Shortly after its opening, the Picturebook Guesthouse claimed position number one on TripAdvisor. Congratulations to Patrick Kearns and his team for the very successful start of the Picturebook Guesthouse and for climbing all the way up to the top position on Tripadvisor. Keep going!!!

In order to bring Youth Connect and its activities under a stable legal framework, we incorporated the ‘Youth Connect Foundation’ in Thailand, as a separate legal entity.
Building Boarding Houses –
*Developing local education networks to increase children’s and youth’s access to basic education*

2008 – This was the year when we implemented our very first boarding house project in Laos. Two boarding houses (one for the boys and one for the girls) were built for the students of Paklay Secondary School – the very first school in the Paklay district of Xaignabouli province that offered the full range of lower and upper secondary classes (grades 6 to 12). It is still the biggest secondary school in the district and is highly regarded for its educational quality. Each academic year, more than 850 students from the surrounding 30 to 40 villages attend classes at Paklay Secondary School, of which about 20 to 30% have to live in the boarding houses as their homes are too far away.

Remotely located and isolated by their natural environment and poor infrastructure, many of these rural communities are easily forgotten and left behind, even though their nation is striving towards social-economic development and progress. Our individual infrastructure projects in Laos are designed to improve the learning and living environments of students and the educational outcomes of rural communities. Within a geographical area populated by multiple rural communities, these boarding house projects can be synergised to create an effective network of educational infrastructure and services which support children and youth in completing the entire education pathway.

Announcements

**Shopping for Christmas?**

Beat the queues in the shopping malls and shop online! Visit our Child’s Dream online shop. You don’t just shop conveniently but you also make a difference for children in need with your purchases. From greeting cards to our very own cookbook, we have a number of unique presents:

(www.childsdream.org/get-involved/ourshop/)

**Good news for Singaporeans!**

Donations to Child’s Dream in Singapore Dollars can now also be done via all major credit cards (VISA, MasterCard, AMEX, Diners) as well as through Pay Pal. Beside this new donation currency, we further accept payments in US Dollars, Swiss Francs, Euro and British Pounds. See here -

(www.childsdream.org/donate/credit-card-paypal/)

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Connect with us!
Extra: Child’s Dream 10 Year Anniversary in Pictures

What a Party!

Great Entertainment

Wonderful Friends
Extra: Child’s Dream 10 Year Anniversary in Pictures

To all our friends and supporters around the world, thank you and here’s to another 10 years!