



Child's Dream

A charity organization supporting children in need

www.childsdream.org



Our objectives

- To stop migration of children from their origin
- To prevent child labor, trafficking and sexual exploitation
- To cultivate a better attitude towards life and society
- To help children to take pride in themselves and strengthen their self-esteem
- To improve living conditions
- To encourage the children to love and respect their own customs and culture
- To raise awareness among families and communities of child trafficking

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Newsletter

March 2005

Many felt a bit uneasy. The sheer size of Marc Faber's mansion did not fail to stun the founding members. Almost humbled they were gazing at the extravagant interior design resembling a mixture of a museum of communism with a traditional Shanghainese lounge. However, Mr. Erismann, the Ambassador of Switzerland, in his refreshing down-to-earth approach quickly helped to lift the uneasiness among our friends. As guest of honor, he joined the founding meeting of the Child's Dream Foundation Thailand on March 1, 2005. But in fact, his attendance was not only an honor, but even more so a great pleasure.



The proposed board for the Child's Dream Foundation Thailand; f.l.t.r. Tai, Marc, Khun Suneeemas, Khun Chayaphon, Daniel & Khun Surasak (Tai's father)

It was clear from the outset that Child's Dream would eventually need an additional legal structure in order to ensure a sustainable and long lasting operation in Thailand. At first, we were skeptical whether we would succeed with our approach since most social laws in Thailand focus on welfare and wellbeing of Thai citizens only. It was out of question to alter our concept of helping children regardless of their nationality just for the sake of accommodating to local regulations. Ironically with the help of a government official, we found a law called 'Child Protection Act', which has been passed in 2003. Since it states that every child on Thai soil has the right for protection and education, the 'Child Protection Act' corresponds exactly with our concept and therefore represents an ideal legal basis for

our activities. The founding meeting was the first step of a tedious process to get Child's Dream registered as a Thai foundation. We hope to be able to inform you about the successful registration in our next newsletter.

Our house at 45/1 Patan Road was a perfect breeding ground for Child's Dream and a nice private sanctuary for us. With increased recognition, this sanctuary turned into a 24/7 meeting place and resource center for NGO-colleagues diminishing our privacy. Additionally, there is simply not enough room to provide workspace to potential long-term volunteers and to store all physical donations such as clothes and toys. Although we have to admit that we sometimes enjoy a casual ride on one of the donated scooters, currently stored in our kitchen, while cooking pasta and authentic Italian tomato sauce. The fact is that we are looking for a bigger house, which not only helps us to separate our work from our private lives, but also provides enough resources and space to meet the growth perspectives of Child's Dream without jeopardizing its lean cost structure.

Tsunami Aftermath

While watching the news of this natural disaster in a state of paralysis, our immediate reaction was 'Could this world be any more unfair?'. 'Why got those people hit, who have already been struggling to make a living?' We are thankful that none of our projects were directly affected.

Child's Dream decided to stick to its concept and its designated project areas, because we realized that many NGOs were pressured by their donors to reallocate their resources towards tsunami-affected regions. Falling to meet their existing commitments, the indirect effects of the Tsunami spread uncontrollably to regions far away from the actual disaster zones. Yet another unpleasant side effect of this development is that the Tsunami affected areas are literally being swamped with countless laymen with good intentions and pockets full of money, which makes coordinated relief and reconstruction efforts even more difficult.



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On the other hand, it was amazing to see how well the world is capable of bonding during a crisis of such magnitude. Regardless of religion, nationality, ethnic affiliation, gender, race or sexual orientation, people from every corner of this world joined hands to help. And even if not every US dollar, Euro, Swiss franc or Japanese yen reaches its target, the act of solidarity and goodwill of the people is priceless.

Wan Pieang Fha School Complex in Mae Faluang

Well hidden behind the misty mountains of the Chiang Rai province, the largest of our projects so far is just about to be completed. Its goal is to prevent exploitation of children by improving their living, health and education standards. Wan Pieang Fha is a de facto refugee camp, which provides shelter for more than 2000 Shan people, who have fled forced relocation and/or human rights abuses committed by the Burmese military in the Shan State of Burma.



The almost finished orphanage for the girls

A total of eight buildings have been constructed to serve as a new school for almost 400 students, an orphanage for girls and a canteen including sanitation facilities. The construction has been slower than expected because of its

remote location. The opening celebration is scheduled for coming April since the new school term will start in the first week of May. We thank Migros, Switzerland's biggest retailer, and Siam City Cement for their support to realize this hearty project.

Kaw Tha Blay Hostel in Mae La Refugee Camp

With deep respect we got to know Cathy and David Downham, a retired Canadian couple, who spends most of their retirement time in Mae Sot, tirelessly helping young Karen people in the refugee camps. In the name of Project Umbrella Burma, a small Canadian registered charity, Cathy and David support 120 students living in a hostel called Kaw Tha Blay, which was built due to an increasing need for protection and schooling of 'Internally Displaced' Karens. The hostel is a local initiative started less than two years ago by a Karen named Saw Kshakalu.

About one hour north of Mae Sot, we reached the barb wired fence of the Mae La Refugee Camp with its stunning mountainous backdrop. Through a solid bamboo gate we entered the biggest of all refugee camps in Thailand providing shelter to about 50,000 refugees. We quickly parked our car and started to walk towards the hostel.



One of the boy's dormitory

Having an uneasy feeling because of the many visiting overseas friends we brought with us, we rushed through narrow paths lined with countless bamboo huts until we reached the hostel. Many teenagers came to

great us with broad smiles eager to show us their home. We spent the whole day in the camp talking to Cathy, Kshakalu and the teenagers.

Besides the traditional school, Kshakalu wants to offer a computer course to these teenagers. Luckily, Child's Dream recently received 10 used (but in excellent condition) laptops from the SWX (Swiss Stock Exchange). We decided to give 5 laptops worth USD



The hostel's assembly hall

2,100 to the Kaw Tha Blay Hostel in order to provide a computer course. The laptops have been delivered on March 3, 2005. We are also considering adding a printer but have not yet found a suitable one.

Hle Bee School in Mae Sot

We have visited this migrant school in January 2005 for the first time and realized that the school's sanitation facility was not able to meet the calls of nature from the 80 students. In addition, about half of the children had no desks leaving them no other choice than to sit crookedly on the floor.



The students at Hle Bee School

Child's Dream bought the material for an additional toilet, 15 wooden desks, and some cement and bricks to extend the school building's walls to protect it against the rain. Even though this project might be considered small in monetary terms (worth USD 545), it has a huge immediate impact on the learning environment of these 80 migrant students.



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Project Round-up

Pyo Khinn School – Start of construction will probably be delayed. Unfortunately, the land owners are reluctant to agree that we build a new and bigger school on their land. Under the lead of the school headmaster, we are currently evaluation alternative patches of land in close proximity.

CDC School – Construction start is scheduled for mid-March right after the school term closes. It will take approx. 6 weeks to add a second floor to the school's one-storey building.

Clothes for refugee camps – The second set of clothes (school uniform and rain coat) for currently over 2800 nursery students aged between 2.8 and 5 years have been bought. Distribution will take place in the first week of April.

How you can help

Besides making a monetary contribution, we also look for less-conventional ways to help us in our quest.

We are fully aware, that by proposing this less-conventional way to help us, we might be grabbing many people's sacred cow by its horns. A frequent flyer status is not just a reward program like the buy-10-get-1-free coffee cards, but even more so a status symbol helping people to compartmentalize other people into the social hierarchy. Since we try to stay in close personal contact with our donors and friends, we aim to visit our three most important fundraising grounds, Singapore, Hong Kong and Switzerland, at least twice, in the case of Switzerland once, a year. So far, we have been paying all our international flights by ourselves, as these costs would be proportionally out of scope compared to the other working & administrative costs of Child's Dream. Therefore, should your mileage account be so big, that you could virtually ruin most airlines or if you simply don't have enough holidays to spend them, please contact us. It would indeed make a big difference to Child's Dream and our own diminishing personal finances.

'Money is only worth what you can do with it. Other than that, it's not worth a damn.'

Medical-device mogul Alfred Mann while donating USD 200 million to medical research institutes in Israel

We hope you have enjoyed this snapshot of our work and look forward to hearing from you.

Cheers,



The Child's Dream Team