



Child's Dream

A charity organization supporting children in need

www.childsdream.org



Our objectives

We aim to prevent child exploitation (child prostitution, child labor, child soldiering and trafficking) and migration through

- improving living & health conditions and education standards;
- raising the awareness of child trafficking among families and communities;
- helping children to take pride in themselves and strengthen their self-esteem
- cultivating a better attitude towards life and society and
- encouraging the children to love and respect their own customs and culture.

Contact

Daniel Siegfried
daniel@childsdream.org

Marc Jenni
marc@childsdream.org

Charuwan Phaisantham
charuwan@childsdream.org

Tel. +66 (0)53 214 718
Fax. +66 (0)53 214 718
www.childsdream.org

Child's Dream
Muandam Phrakot Road
Soi 1, House 1
T. Chang Phuak
Chiang Mai 50300
Thailand

Newsletter

April 2006

No matter how many school opening speeches I have been doing since we started Child's Dream, each time I am asked to go to the podium, my heart starts racing, excessively pumping blood into my head. Slightly odd-colored and with my heartbeat visible through my t-shirt, I would walk to the stage asking myself why I feel this anxiety despite the fact that I did many presentations without breaking a sweat back in the old banking days. I guess it is the awareness of how much this special day means to the principal, the students, their parents, the teachers and the community as a whole. A new school building is not just a new learning facility allowing children to benefit from the education, but it is a symbol of pride and hope like a little forget-me-not in a forgotten wasteland.

After adjusting the microphone, normally upwards, and thanking people for joining us, I would usually open the speech by slowly saying: 'Education is the foundation not only for a better future and greater opportunities,



but also for a peaceful coexistence in a multi-cultural community.' Seeing the comprehension and the approval in the audience's eyes is an overwhelming satisfaction and strong confirmation of what we are doing. *By Daniel Siegfried*

Organizational News

Our recent office move proved to be worth every painful second of hauling boxes, tables and chairs. The new location is very convenient and much easier to find, but most importantly the new office allowed us to accept more volunteers and hire more staff. We are excited to welcome the following new members:

Before and during his days as a floor manager in the Dutch television industry, **Sallo Polak** had explored the great wide world spending a lot of time in Africa,

the Middle East, South & South-East Asia as well as China. He joined our team in January as a long-term volunteer assisting Marc in the day-to-day administration & fundraising work. With great motivation he helps wherever his skills and enthusiasm can best be put to use.

As we discovered that there is no education that could prepare an employee for project-related work, we decided to look for someone young, enthusiastic and kind-hearted with lots of motivation, whom we could train on the job. With Khun **Komson Phayonsakdapas**, luckily nicknamed **Wat**, who just finished his bachelor degree in Art (majoring in English), we believe to have found the ideal candidate. His keen interest, his talent to immediately connect with people and his Thai, English and Karen language skills convinced us. Wat joined us in April as an assistant project manager.

Shortly after we moved our office, we hired a 'Mae Baan' (literally meaning *house mother* in Thai). Khun **Say Thong** is looking after the office, the garden and running errands for Child's Dream with a constant smile on her face.

After a long search for a Swiss auditor willing to **audit our books** in Chiang Mai free of charge, we finally met Max Mueller from Inter Regio Treuhand AG in Basel. Max came to Chiang Mai for a week in early April to check whether our accounting is in accordance with the principles of Swiss GAAP FER 21 for charitable, social non-profit organisations. We are pleased to inform you that our financial statements for 2005 were recommended to be approved by the board. We are happy to welcome Max back to Chiang Mai next year.



Our new office



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Malaria Control Program

In the past Child's Dream has mostly been focusing on the sustainable improvement of living conditions and education standards of children. With the malaria control program it is the first time whereby our primary goal is to save children's lives.

Malaria is the leading cause of morbidity and mortality along the Thai – Burmese border, accounting for 23% of illnesses, and 42% of deaths, with a disproportionate impact on young children. The child mortality rate in these areas is comparable to that of the worst countries in sub-Saharan Africa, with more than 200 child deaths (under age 5) per 1,000 live births — over 20% of children die before their fifth birthday. Nearly 50% of these deaths are caused by malaria. Malaria in children also causes stunted growth and anaemia, and increases risk of other infectious diseases such as diarrhoea, measles and pneumonia.



Results from an earlier pilot program showed that the malaria prevalence decreased from an average of 72% to less than 2%, almost eliminating malaria in the pilot areas. The program is implemented based on the following success factors: Vector control using long-lasting insecticide treated mosquito nets, early diagnosis and treatment and education.

With the technical assistance of 'Global Health Access Program (GHAP)', a non-profit organization working for communities in crisis through the provision of health services and capacity building, Child's Dream agreed to cover the children's portion of their budget by buying mosquito nets, medicine and rapid diagnostic tests to diagnose malaria. The budget for this three year program covering almost 12,000 children in 38 villages is approximately USD 60,000.

ChildsArt Group

What almost appears to be a cultural Akha-heritage village given its traditional architectural design, is in fact one of our newest projects. For 25 children, who were living in very poor conditions in the rural area around Mae Sai, the outlook on the future will dramatically change. On a scenic spot, just outside the vibrant city of Mae Sai, a project called ChildsArt has started.



The children and teenagers, between 11 and 18 years old, are all from very poor and troubled families. Families like these do not participate in the growing economy of the region. This growth rather weakens their



position as living costs increase. Furthermore, the lure of the city endangers their family and community structures. Hoping for a better life for their children and, very often mistakenly, counting on better opportunities there, the parents may send them to Mae Sai. A border town like Mae Sai does not offer a very healthy environment for children. The dangers of drugs trafficking, prostitution, HIV-infection, crime and child labour are omnipresent.

And even if the children are not sent to the city, very few options remain. There is simply not enough money to keep them at school after grade six as they will have to help their parents make a living. No education means no opportunities for better jobs and thus the circle of poverty will not be broken.

Thanks to a small group of very enthusiastic and dedicated community workers, for 25 of these children and certainly many more to come in the near future, things will change. Apart from giving these children a warm and supportive environment, their academic and vocational skills will be improved in order to increase their job opportunities.

In addition to attending non-formal schooling, the children will receive special training in:

- Thai, English and Chinese language
- Computer skills
- Arts and crafts
- Baking skills



Whenever we visit ChildsArt, we find it heartening to see with how much eagerness and passion the people of ChildsArt are talking about their ideas. Child's Dream agreed to build the necessary infrastructure such as accommodation, sanitation facilities, a workshop, a kitchen and a classroom worth approx. THB 350,000 (or approx. USD 8,750).

To ensure a solid implementation, Child's Dream covers part of their running costs of approx. THB 34,000 (or USD 850) per month and assists the ChildsArt team in the ongoing management.



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Leadership & Management Training College

To the amusement of the management committee of the Leadership & Management Training College (LMTC), we admitted with defeat that we would stand little chance of being accepted at the college after looking through the entrance test. This hurdle is meant to be high. Only the 60 smartest and most ambitious students from five refugee camps will be able to attend this new learning institute, which will provide higher education and prepare them for university.

Ever since last August when we had no other option than to terminate the support of the Karen Junior College because the safety and well-being of the students could no longer be ensured,



The preparation of the land

we eagerly explored new alternatives to fulfil our commitment to the Karen youth to provide higher education to them.

With the help of a couple of enthusiastic educators from the Karen Education Department, we are in the process of establishing a new college in the biggest refugee camp called Mae La. The construction has already started and we are optimistic that the college with its dormitories, library and computer room can officially be opened in early June 2006. The teaching body is currently conducting the entrance tests and interviews with the candidates. We will keep you posted on the developments in our next newsletter.

Child's Dream agreed to fully support the college's costs. The cost of construction and equipment are estimated at THB 1.2 million (or USD 30,000), whereas the college's running costs will amount to THB 100,000 (or USD 2,500) per month.

Hsa Thoo Lei Migrant School

Together with a volunteer group from UBS Singapore, we added the finishing touches by building a play ground and installing a library. The Hsa Thoo Lei Migrant School is our biggest project so far and has the capacity to easily



The new Hsa Thoo Lei School

accommodate up to 500 students. The sheer size of the building and the quality of the construction stunned the NGO community in Mae Sot. We are very happy with the outcome and are certain to

have not only broadened the access to education, but also improved the learning environment allowing the students to fully benefit from the education provided.

The official opening ceremony took place on February 22. Among the numerous attendees ranging from local Thai authorities, local migrants to NGO staff, once again there was a flushed Daniel seeking his way to the stage.

Project Round-up

Damnok Toek – We extended our support to also cover the construction costs of the three houses for long-term boarders. The construction of the reception houses, the day-care classrooms and common rooms is completed. The houses for the long-term boarders are progressing well and are expected to be finished by June / July 2006.

How you can help us

We work in an environment where nothing is impossible and where one has to expect everything. There are ever-changing circumstances and sometimes the best way to capture and document these events is to simply take pictures. With emails and computers nowadays widely available, we have truly started to appreciate the existence of digital cameras. It is an effective way for our projects to update us on their progress. In addition, internet stations are definitely a more common sight than a photo development shop. Apart from the expensive acquisition costs, digital cameras are cheaper to maintain, easier to handle and more compatible with the current digital age. If you keep up with the latest technology trends, you must have an old digital camera with its moment of gadget-glory long passed. Instead of sending it to IT-heaven, where it can join all the other pixel-lacking, not-having-a-super-mega-privacy-intruding-zoom or too-big-to-fit-into-super-tight-jeans digital cameras, it could still serve a worthy cause here in Thailand. Give your old digital camera a second life and send it together with its adaptor and software to our office in Chiang Mai.

"The pursuit of truth and beauty is a sphere of activity in which we are permitted to remain children all our lives."
Albert Einstein

Not even the best-chosen word and the sharpest picture can replace a first-hand experience. We encourage you to visit us in Chiang Mai. We are most happy to bring our world a bit closer to you.



Your Child's Dream Team