



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 September 2005

Given the drizzle from the low-hanging clouds over Chiang Mai, we made ourselves comfortable on our beds, in a tiny room with bright green wallpaper, to discuss the concept, the objectives, the legal structure and the name of Child's Dream. This was two years ago and without exactly knowing what to expect, we dived into an adventurous and colorful journey to explore the optimization (e.g. in banking terms 'efficient frontier') of humanitarian aid as well as our own personal self-actualizations.

By continuously gaining experience and being constantly exposed to the harsh reality of life, not only Child's Dream has evolved, but so have we. Our skins have grown thicker, our heads harder, our souls more compassionate and our minds more determined. But nothing comes without a price! To daily face discrimination, human rights abuses and complete despair weighs heavily on our shoulders. Fortunately, we have powerful help constantly at our sides. With thousands of children in our projects, we can count on an army of love and happiness. Their weapons are their cheerful smiles and their ever-blooming hope despite their tragic past.



Organizational News

With the rainy season coming to an end, we have started a couple of new projects along the Thai – Burmese border. In addition, we are planning to expand Child's Dream's reach to

Vietnam and Cambodia within the next couple of months. Since we are not too familiar with the situation there, we will have to spend considerable time doing due diligence work and analyzing the local problematic circumstances. Two new volunteers will help us with the increasing workload:

The Greater Mekong Region is an area familiar to **Pamela Phua**, who took off with a backpack shortly after graduation seven years ago, to explore Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam and Burma. The region and its people kept beckoning her, and in 2003, Pamela began working with HIV/AIDS orphans in Chiang Mai. In August this year, Pamela took six months leave from the world of private banking to work with Child's Dream, especially on our plans to expand into Vietnam and Cambodia. Pamela will focus on project assessment, development and due diligence. Pamela enjoys traveling, diving and is slowly but surely learning to cook Thai cuisine.

Over the past few years of traveling, **Stu Thompson** has been increasingly drawn to South East Asia's mystical countryside, friendly peoples and varied cultures. In the summer of this year Stu, a 35-year-old American resident of Zurich, decided to take an extended break from his frantic career in the internet software development world to embark on a five month journey through Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and other SEA countries. During this time he will work for several weeks on the Child's Dream web site, spend two more weeks with another Thai/Swiss NGO, and indulge in his personal interests of diving, hiking, traveling and reading.

With the appointment of Child's Dream ambassadors in Abu Dhabi, we are also expanding our marketing coverage of the world. Dominique and Kathrin Becht, two close friends of ours, will make us heard in the Middle East.



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Hsa Thoo Lei Migrant School

With the help of BMWEC, a committee supporting high quality but basic education for migrant children in Mae Sot, Child's Dream is planning to build a new school complex for the biggest migrant school in Mae Sot called Hsa Thoo Lei. Mae Sot is a town on the Thai - Burmese border. It is estimated that up to 100,000 unrecognized refugees (migrants) of various ethnicities have settled down in this province. Regardless of their legal status, all migrants face tremendous barriers in their struggle to access fundamental services such as basic health care, education, food and other supposedly universal human rights.

Among these migrants is Naw Paw Ray, a woman who deserves the Noble Peace Prize for her work in migrant education. She is the principal of the Hsa Thoo Lei School and tirelessly coordinates the migrant schools in Mae Sot as the chairwoman of BMWEC. There is almost nothing that can dampen her optimistic spirit.



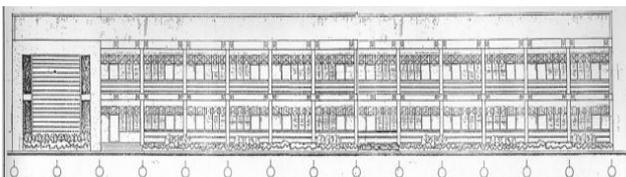
Not enough class rooms

The current school's infrastructure can no longer meet the demand of the growing number of students. The classrooms are packed and students sit cross-legged on the floor. Many classes share the same class

room which makes it very difficult to concentrate given the noise.

For logistical reasons, BMWEC is planning to concentrate grades 6 – 10 from all the surrounding migrant schools at Hsa Thoo Lei as these students are old enough to walk or ride a bicycle to the new school.

The new school complex housing 16 classrooms, one teacher's room, a library and a store room should provide a safe and stable learning environment for about 300 migrant children. With a budget of THB 3.5 million (approx. USD 87,500) this will be the biggest project Child's Dream has ever undertaken so far. The land has already been cleared and raised to prevent future flooding. We expect construction to be completed early next year.



Front view of the school complex

BMSOH Migrant School

Just a bit north of Mae Sot town in the village of Mae Pa is another migrant school. We were warned before our first visit that its headmaster could be quite demanding and insistent, which is probably the reason why the school still exists today. BMSOH (Boarding Middle School for Orphans and Helpless Youths) was established in 1994 by U Khaing Oo Maung, an Arakanese born in Bangladesh.

Today BMSOH is a member of the BMWEC (Burmese Migrant Workers Education Committee) and looks after 150 students, of which 35 are boarders. It offers all levels from Kindergarten up to grade 10. We visited the school for the first time during the summer break in

April 2005. Even though the school was empty at the time, it was hard to imagine that it could accommodate 150 pupils. We kept the promise to return in order to get a first



Students sit on the floor

hand impression of the lack of space. And indeed, it was a sad sight to see all those students sitting on the floor in such cramped conditions. In addition, the noise from the six different classes in one room was deafening making it difficult to concentrate. The two toilets, used by 150 pupils, were another area of concern.



After a lengthy discussion with U Khaing Oo Maung and a Canadian volunteer, Child's Dream started with the construction of a new school building, which will

house grade 6 – 10, and two additional toilets. This project with a budget of THB 100,000 (approx. USD 2,500) is expected to be finished in early October 2005.

Karen Junior College

Whenever we visited Karen Junior College, Heidi, our long term volunteer, would start her anti-mosquito preparation well in advance. She took care not to set foot on college grounds without having at least a barrel of mosquito repellent in her backpack. By the time we would leave the college, Heidi would literally be toxic with the repellent. While the rest of us would just stay close to Heidi and the



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toxic cloud around her in order not to get bitten by the malaria spreading insects. In fact malaria is a huge problem in this area, especially during the rainy season. We had to learn the hard way that the location of the college was not ideal and that the safety and well-being of the students could not be ensured. Luckily, we did not invest a lot of money in the college's infrastructure as all the buildings were constructed using bamboo, wood and leaves.

Given our concept, the college should accept students from all ethnic groups and that selection process for students should be fair. Politically motivated subjects such as Political Science, Human Rights, Criminal Law, etc. should not be part of the curriculum and History and Geography should be taught in a global context.

Together with the Karen Education Department (KED), we have been evaluating various locations of the new college. Since the well-being of the students is our top priority, the best location for the college might be the Mae La Refugee Camp, where the safety of the students can be guaranteed. We have already visited a possible location in Mae La for the school and will continue to pursue our commitment to provide a higher education to migrant and refugee youth in that area.

EMFS Andy Hinkle Nursery School

Is it their skill to speak English, their ability to mingle with farangs (foreigners) or simply their independence, openness and desire to develop the community that makes them so special?

Maung Maung is already the third 'former tour-guide' we met, who took over a leadership role in the community after his license had been revoked by the Tourist Authority of Thailand (only Thai citizens are allowed to be tour guides). These men of honor are of a special breed with a tireless urge to improve the lives of the countless migrants in Mae Hong Son province.



Group photo with the teachers and some villagers

In 2002 a group of migrant workers established the EMFS network (Ethnic Migrant Families Society) headed by Maung Maung in Mae Hong Son province. As of today, the society includes 7 villages with a total of about 300 families. The network's goals are to help their members to find jobs,

to protect women and children's rights, in particular rights to education, and to promote health in their communities.

Since both parents have to work in order to make a living, small children are often left at home unattended or given to relatives for supervision. These children thus lack education and a safe environment, where somebody takes care of them during the day.



The construction is half finished

We were asked by EMFS to help them build a nursery school for about 50 children. The construction was started in early September and is expected to be completed in mid November 2005.

This project is financed by the friends of Andy Hinkle, who sadly died in a car accident in April 2005.

Project Round-up

Children's Ward in Mae Tao Clinic – The new children's ward is completed and the young patients could move in early August. Two young Swiss volunteers also installed and decorated the new play room.

Hle Bee Migrant School – After building a new toilet earlier this year, we recently expanded and upgraded this school in order to accommodate more students.

English School in Tomato Village – The school celebrated its one year anniversary together with the community and it's over 50 students.

How you can help

Since Daniel is the only one who can safely drive our 1970 vintage VW bus, our flexibility and mobility is limited. Whenever Marc drove it, the first gear ended up somewhere, where normally the second gear would be. The growing workload



Really reliable but sometimes not so practical

nowadays has resulted in our splitting up in order to increase our efficiency. Though public transportation is available, it is impossible to bring along donated goods such as clothes, stationery and toys. The reality is that we



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urgently need a second car. However, we don't want to tap into Child's Dream general donation pool, as we feel it is more appropriate to ask for earmarked contributions. Should you be interested in making a donation towards this second-hand pickup truck, please contact us or make the remark 'car' on your payment instructions or checks.

Since we are operating in a hostile environment for mobile phones, they constantly have to be replaced. Should you have any second-hand mobile phones, please send them to us with their chargers.

Even though it is not a legal requirement in Switzerland to have our accounts audited, we are still looking for a qualified auditor, who would be willing to travel to Chiang Mai once a year to audit our books free of charge. Should you be interested in offering your skills, please contact us.

With this newsletter we hope to encourage you to take an active role in taking up responsibility towards society. We are looking forward to welcoming you in Chiang Mai and to bringing our special world a bit closer to you.

'If we are to have real peace, we must begin with the children.'

Mahatma Gandhi

Cheers,

The Child's Dream Team



From left to right: Heidi, Pamela, Stu, Daniel, Tai & Marc