



Child's Dream

A charity organization supporting children in need

www.childsdream.org



Our objectives

- To stop migration of Burmese 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

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It is very important to us that all who share our desire to help children in need are regularly updated either by visiting our website or by reading our newsletters. By the way, this is the first of its kind since we launched Child's Dream in late October 2003. A lot happened since and it's time to brief you on our activities.

Organisational developments

Child's Dream was brought to life in form of a charitable society under Swiss law on 22 October 2003 by a small group of friends and family members.

Only a month later, Child's Dream has officially been recognised as a charitable society and therefore been tax-exempt by the tax authorities in Switzerland.

The tedious negotiations with Telekurs, AMEX, VISA and MasterCard finally paid off, when they agreed to waive their setup fees as well as to lower their usual sales charges to 2.5%. The first online donation was received on 17 December 2003 through our SSL-secured website. Ever since, this feature proved to be a very popular way to donate money.

We are currently assessing the need for a charitable legal vehicle in Hong Kong.

Did you know that...

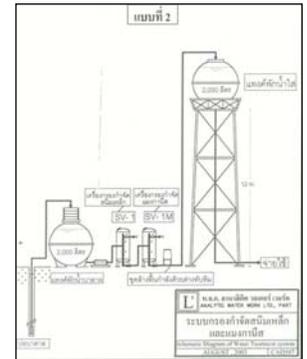
charitable organisations in Singapore have to spend at least 80% of their money in Singapore itself; a very strange regulation for one of the richest countries in the world!!!

Water treatment system for Childlife

Childlife is a shelter taking care of about 70 street children and orphans in Mae Sai, the northern-most city in Thailand and border-town to Burma. The children are mostly from Burmese origin and have crossed the border in hope for a better life. Unfortunately, once they leave their communities, they are very vulnerable to become abused for child labour, drug trafficking and child prostitution. Childlife is one of many shelters along the Mae Sai – Bangkok route, trying to absorb the continuous

flow of children moving south towards Bangkok.

As Childlife has currently no access to clean water, which obviously lowers hygiene standards, Child's Dream is interested in building a water treatment system providing clean water to shower and save water to drink.



Schematic system plan

This will immediately improve hygiene standards and living conditions for the children and staff involved.

Water samples from the existing well have been analysed by the laboratory of the Chiang Mai University. Based on these results, we have been working together with a reputable water management company in Chiang Mai in order to decide on the most appropriate system for the project. The cost to build such a system (including filters, pump, 12-m water tower and 4000 litre tank) is approx. BHT 143,000 or USD 3,500. The construction work can be completed within about five days.

Unfortunately, during our Christmas visit (see below) we were informed that Childlife might have to move due to a dispute with the current land owner. With everything ready, we will carefully monitor the developments. Should Childlife be able to settle the differences with the landlord and decide to stay at their current location, we will be able to erect the system within two weeks. Should Childlife indeed move, we will evaluate the necessity of the system at the new location.

Did you know that...

you consume in average about 350 litres of water per day, whereas in rural areas in Thailand you would only use 100-150 litres?

School in Yabauyaya village in Burma

The Yabauyaya village is only a few walking minutes away from the Thai border and is a focal point for preventing the migration of the



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village children. Many street children in Mae Sai have originated from this village; some of them are now looked after in the Childlife project.

We like the idea of building this school as it is a proactive prevention measure against further migration and would solve the problem at the source. Furthermore, such a school would not only cultivate a better attitude towards life and society, but also raise awareness of child trafficking among the families and communities.



Having received the backing from the local Burmese government, we are now looking for suitable teachers and care-takers, who are able to run the school. Since this investment is closely linked to the Childlife project, we aim to enhance the Childlife facilities first, before investing in the Yabauyaya school.

Did you know that...

Burma was the second richest country in Asia before WWII and is now the 7th poorest nation in the world?

Field trip to Mae Hong Son and OPC

A couple of weeks ago, a friend of us returned from Mae Hong Son with an unusual seriousness. We knew immediately that the project he was visiting meant a lot to him.

Shortly afterwards, on December 14, we were greeted by Khun Kham Chuen, the manager of OPC (Opportunity for Poor Children) at Mae Hong Son airport. After checking in at our guest house, he brought us to the OPC School not far away from Mae Hong Son.



OPC is providing basic education in an unfinished single storey house to about 30 children. They all share the same burden of originating from ethnic minorities in Burma.

Therefore, these children, aged between 4 and 12 years, have no rights whatsoever. About half of the children have lost their parents, while others have fathers in prison for drug trafficking and mothers in prostitution.

Child's Dream is interested in building a shelter providing accommodation as well as space for vocational training.

We aim to realise this by next spring. We are currently working together with a German charitable society which showed keen interest in OPC to ensure that running costs are covered. We have asked OPC to buy the land where the school should be built in order to ensure OPC's long-term engagement (the land value is about USD 1000.--).

On the following day, we made our way to the Burmese border where we visited a place called 'Tomato village'. This village peacefully unites many ethnic minorities from Burma. There is a 'wat' (Buddhist temple) and a Catholic Church and people are free to worship where they feel most comfortable. We were told that some of these families have left the refugee camps, as they prefer to try to make their living on their own instead of depending on the UN or the ICRC (International Red Cross) to care for them.

That's where we met Benjamin, a Burmese who left his home country shortly after the Burmese military took over the control of the country in the 60ies and has been living in Thailand ever since. He is currently teaching English in his little hut to some children in the village for a 10 Baht fee (USD 0.25), which he needs to support his family. Many parents can't even afford this small fee. We agree with Benjamin that his English courses should be offered to everyone who wants to learn regardless of money. English is not only the most important factor to find a job but also necessary to become respected by Thai nationals.



Inspecting the proposed site

We would like to support OPC and Benjamin in their quest to raise the educational level among children from ethnic minorities. Building a small hut, which serves as a school and library would be a step worth taking.

Did you know that...

the Golden Triangle is the second largest heroin producing area (600 tonnes this year) in the world after Afghanistan with a yearly production of 4000 tonnes?

Christmas with Childlife

Celebrating Christmas with the 70 ex-street children from the Childlife project was the highlight since we started our charity work last July. After spending at least 14 hours per day for the last few months over our laptops and being buried in administration work, we truly enjoyed every minute with the kids. It is then when you realize why you are helping the less-fortunate.

But let's start from the beginning. A very close friend of us is working for 'The Toy Company' in Hong Kong and managed to convince her employer to donate three boxes of high-class toys worth approx. USD 2,500.--. Yet thanks to other friends, who came to visit us, and their frequent flyer



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status, the boxes were flown into Chiang Mai. Only a few days later, some of these toys were wrapped as Christmas presents - our fingers are still numb.

But what would Christmas be without a festive meal? Our red chicken curry with potatoes and eggplant served with rice, fruits and fried party sausages was very welcomed by the kids, as their normal diet consists only of plain rice with some vegetables. The eight kilograms of chicken, one kilogram of red curry paste, 8 kilograms of potatoes and eggplants as well as 4.8 liters of coconut milk were almost eaten up. Some children came four times to refill their bowls but the record is held by a girl queuing five times.



But the highlight of the evening was the hand-over and unwrapping of the presents. We were overwhelmed by the joy and happiness. Certain kids were hanging onto their gifts for minutes before opening them. Our concerns over fights and jealousy (memories of our own childhoods) were completely proven wrong since the kids immediately

shared their joy by exchanging toys and playing together. Some children needed some guidance and instructions, as they didn't quite understand how to play with the toys from the developed world. Also, our perception of toys more suitable for boys and toys more suitable for girls was wrong. Many girls liked to play with the toy cars while some boys put on bracelets and necklace from the 'Pretty Girl' set.



Did you know that...

you can cook a festive meal for 70 children including staff for less than USD 60 or 85 cents per person?

We hope, that with these lines we were able to let you take part in our work, at least to some extent. We so often wish that our friends and sponsors could see and experience our impressions.

We wish you and your families a happy & healthy 2004.

Cheers,

Marc

Daniel

P.S. Should you know somebody who might be interested in this newsletter, feel free to forward it.



Trying out the toys



What are those for?

