

Larry Wan - "Special Tasks" Volunteer - July/August 2011

"The noodle soup is not spicy!" I was told but it still burned my mouth! It was my first lunch with colleagues of Child's Dream. I doubted how many times would my mouth be burnt within these six weeks, besides how do Child's Dream help for children and their role.

Children's Medical Fund, hopes of life

My volunteering assignment was to cleanup the database, link and correct the uncompleted records in the new system. After 2-week repetitive work, the task was nearly fulfilled. Daniel arranged me to visit their Children's Medical Fund (CMF) programme which I was interested. CMF provides life-saving operation or treatment to children from Myanmar and Laos whom have been



diagnosed with critical medical conditions. I was arranged to visit Maharaj Nakom Hospital in Chiang Mai with Ta who is one of three CMF co-ordinators. CMF not only provides medical treatment to patients but also daily supports to accompanying caregivers e.g. safehouse for caregivers and patients during the treatment period. Ta and her teammates play the significant role to communicate between medical staff and caregivers, arrange living needs to caregivers and also emotional support and counseling. During my visit, there were about 25 in and out patients in Maharaj Nakom Hospital supported by CMF. It is difficult to imagine the huge pressure of Ta and other CMF co-ordinators but at the same time, but the brightness future of those patients can be found from their caregivers' smiling faces.

Schools at altitude 1500m, beautiful scenes but lack of resources

In mid of August, I had a chance to participate a field trip to Mae Chaem together with Tha Wah, Jack and Nui. Mae Chaem is about 200km from Chiang Mai only, but the trip was quite exhausted due to the muddy roads in the raining season, poor road construction and most of the schools located at altitude 1500m mountain area. We had visited six schools which included project has been completed but new water system needed to be installed, projects in progress and potential projects under investigation. Tha Wah responded to co-ordinate the new water system for Khuan Tae School from materials acquisition to supervision of



construction works. It was impressive that Tha Wah completed this challenging task within two days which was lack of equipment facilities and bad weather condition.

I continued the trip with Jack and Nui to other villages. It is very memorable how to co-ordinate the project meetings with communities, principals of schools, the enthusiastic of people from communities, how the principals manage the schools by limited resources. Jack and Nui are very skillful to investigate the potential schools. I can see that Child's Dream is professional and systematic in the survey

and investigation process. It is not only to protect donors' donations but also to relocate the limited resources to right projects.

Be a teacher

Returned to Chiang Mai office after the field trip, Manuela suggested me to arrange Excel classes to colleagues in the office. She did not know that this new assignment gave me pressure as I thought I was not a qualified person to teach Excel. However, I am impressed to see their interest and their expectation. I spent hours to search in websites, studied the help menu, prepared the lessons' materials and homeworks. I am glad that not because I can completed this assignment but the improvement of their skill of Excel and their enthusiastic.

Who is helping whom?

I had talked to a group of students in the field trip and advised them to open their eyes to enrich their experiences. During these six weeks, I think I am the one to enrich the experiences to know the real world. I saw the enthusiastic and the visions of people. The successful of Child's Dream is not only the roles of NGO, Child's Dream like a big family to care, to assist people to grow. I believe that I learned from Child's Dream more than I "helped" them. I am so lucky to be a member of this family but regret that it is too short.

Meal is serving in my returned flight to Hong Kong, I asked a flight attendant "Do you think you have chili or chili source?" It seems I found the answers of my beginning doubts.