



# Fr. Ray Foundation Newsletter

December 2008 Volume 1 Number 3

## Message from Fr. Larry

On behalf of all the staff and children of the Father Ray Foundation, I wish all of our readers and supporters a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2009. December is by far the busiest month of the year for us, budgets to make, operation plans for 2009 to write. However, at the top of the list of importance is to make Christmas a most joyful event for all of our children. We will have a celebration at each of our projects. I invite those of you who can make it to attend one or the other of our celebrations and see the sparkle in the eyes of the children as they open their presents.

## Loy Krathong



We celebrate the ancient Thai festival of Loy Krathong every year when people gently place colorfully decorated floats on the water of a pond or river. This year it was the first time for the children at the Father Ray Day Care Center and in the Father Ray Children's Village. It was certainly the best celebration that these children ever had. Mothers and Teachers prepared individual Krathongs for children to float. Each child then approached the water's edge, made their wish to the goddess of water, and placed his or her Krathong with a lighted candle on the water and watched it float away.



## Fr. Ray School for Blind Children

Many visitors come to visit our children in each project. One thing they frequently remark is how polite our children and students are, especially when they raise their hands together in front of their face to perform the "WAI", the traditional Thai greeting. Recently a visitor was very surprised when he entered the kindergarten classroom at the School for Blind Children. Instead of being greeted with the regular greeting in Thai "Sawasdi", the children in unison greeted him with the words "G'day mate" complete with a thick Australian accent. They could only have learned that from one place, one of our Australian volunteers who visits the school three afternoons a week to teach English.

## New Curriculum

For many years the Vocational School for young adults with disabilities offered just three courses: Electronic Repair, Computer Science, and Computer Business English. This year we have introduced several new courses which will give our students more choices in what they wish to do in the future. The new Multimedia course is training students in the art of making documentary films for airing on TV, and writing articles that will be used to promote awareness of people with disabilities in Thailand. Another new course is called Empowerment for people with disabilities. In this course the students are taught subjects ranging from English, Computers, and Local Government Law. The objective is to have these young people find employment in local government agencies throughout the country. We hope to develop a network of people throughout the Kingdom who will give help and advice to people with disabilities. Finally, another new course we are offering is Elementary Education. It is a sad fact of life that many people with disabilities never had the chance to learn to read and write or do maths. Primary education is essential if they are to learn a trade.

## Fr. Ray Drop-In Center

Father's Day in December marked the last day of our 5 year stay at the former Drop-in Center located on Central Pattaya Road. In November the staff and all the children carefully moved all the beds and desks, furniture, kitchen ware, anything of value that will be of use in the new Drop-in Center on Theprasit Road. Temporarily the staff and children are living in a building on our Farm while we wait for the completion of their new quarters. Meantime, the children are busy practicing Christmas carols to entertain guests in the hotels of Pattaya. The other day the staff running the Farm invited the children to join in the harvesting of fish from one of our fish ponds on the Farm. This was a new experience for children who have been living on the streets. The photo shows their excitement. Not shown in the photo, is their devotion to the Buddhist respect for life. When the fish were all caught, the Farm staff donated several fish for the children to barbecue. As the children prepared to slaughter the fish they first gave a devout "wai" to the poor creatures about to depart this life.



## Scholarship Program

Many children at our Home actually have parents. However, poverty is so severe that there is no way the parents can raise the children, thus, they are with us rather than wandering on the streets of Pattaya looking for money. We have started a scholarship plan which allows for some children to return to their families and pursue their education from home. We pay for their tuition and things they need such as uniforms, books, pens, fees for school lunches. Most importantly, our social workers visit the

families on a monthly basis to monitor the progress of the children and make sure that they are not in danger of giving up and returning to the streets. Presently we have 58 children in this scholarship program and it is working well.



## Graduation Day



One day I look forward to each year is graduation day for our students with disabilities. This year's graduating class had 47 students. The teachers, volunteers and staff of the school, and some parents of the children attended. All were so proud of their students. We remember how shy the students were when they first arrived at the school 2 years ago. We have watched them build confidence and determination to overcome their disability, and through education, to develop their ability to become independent, contributing members of society. They now join the more than 2,000 graduates of the school who, in the hope and words of Fr. Ray, "earn their own rice". The evening saw a gala dinner at the school for former students - the annual Alumni Party. More than 400 graduating and former students attended, many bringing their husbands and wives. The camaraderie between teachers and former students was impressive. Memories were shared. Fr. Ray was honored in a candle light singing of a song written in his memory "Unsung Hero". The respect and love of their Alma Mater was so obvious. Guests of honor included the Pattaya City Mayor and his consultants.

## King's Birthday

The King's birthday is a big day in Thailand. It is Father's Day. The children and students of the Fr. Ray Foundation made the day very special in many ways. The children at the Drop-in Center held a drawing competition with prizes given for the most meaningful and beautiful drawings. The children of the Fr. Ray Children's Village held a sports day. The students of the Vocational School joined thousands of tourists and local people in a parade through Pattaya to honor His Majesty the King. For the 3rd year in a row the Chefs Association of the major hotels in Pattaya honored His Majesty using their talents to create a huge cake 100 square feet in size. They used the hall of our vocational school to assemble their tasty creation. The cake was ceremoniously cut by the Mayor of Pattaya and pieces distributed to everyone. If the cake were cut into normal size pieces it would feed 4,500 people!!! Our children, students, volunteers and staff all were able to toast the King on his birthday with very generous slices of the cake.



## Day Care Center



Each week the number of children at the Fr. Ray Day Care Center increases. Word has gotten around the poorest slum areas of Pattaya that we are taking good care of the 2 to 6 year old children. The parents who are working hard from dawn to dusk are relieved that their children are safe and grateful for the food and care we give their children. We have a set of triplets, 3 boys who attend the Center. It's so cute to see the mother give each boy a goodbye kiss as she goes off to work.

## Birthday at the Old Folks Home



Many years ago Fr. Ray opened a home for elderly and stateless people. Our oldest resident is a lovely Burmese lady who is known to all as "Aunty". For many years Aunty taught English at a school in Bangkok. Now she is blind and deaf in one ear. She recently celebrated her ninety-sixth birthday surrounded by staff and volunteers and with a large cake with several candles to be blown out. This wonderful lady is visited each day by the volunteers and she likes nothing better than having a good gossip and she will know the life story of all the new volunteers within an hour of meeting them.

## Fr. Ray Children's Village

Recently at a PTA meeting in the school where our children study, one of our girls whose nickname is "Honey" was praised for a composition she wrote. I mention it because her writing reflects the happiness she is experiencing in her new home in the village. She wrote: "I have a home, a mother, brothers and sisters. I am very happy. I help with the work and take care of my younger sister. I love my mother - she is an excellent cook!". You remember Condo from my previous letters. In his family in the village he has been put in charge of looking after his little brother Golf when Mom is busy cooking. One day when the wind outside was blowing nicely and kites were flying everywhere, Condo's friends invited him to join them in the fun. Young Condo answered his friends very responsibly, "I really want to join you, but Mom wants me to take care of my brother Golf". Little Frank came to the Village with a history of truancy. He's been skipping out of classes now and then and one evening his mother brought it up at supper with his brothers and sisters. Later that

night as the children were going to bed, Frank's mother stood outside the bedroom door listening to Condo and Frank talk. She was proud of Condo trying to translate into kids' language the lesson she tried to get across at dinner.



The American Thanksgiving Day has already passed. However, Christmas and New Year are also appropriate for us to give thanks. In the name of all of us at the Fr Ray Foundation, staff, students and children, I say thank you to all of you who are our faithful supporters. May God bless all of you on this Blessed Feast and throughout the New Year!

May we remind you that by sending the Newsletter to you via the Internet, we can save a considerable amount of postage. An e-mail from you to [info@fr-ray.org](mailto:info@fr-ray.org) is all you need to do. Thank you.

To read more news, see more pictures and watch video films please see our website: [www.fr-ray.org](http://www.fr-ray.org)



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Dear Friend,

We are planning, as part of the Father Ray Foundation Christmas Celebration in 2009, a large display of Christmas items reflecting different nationalities and cultures from around the world. We think that our children and students will enjoy this very much. It will be open for the public to visit and will also let them see our work with the needy children of Thailand.

If you would like to help us in this project, please send us, VIA REGULAR POST, your old Christmas decorations, nativity scenes, Santa's items as well as anything connected with the Christmas Season. Please, do not send any electrical items that cannot be used with 220 volts (which is standard in Thailand).

**Please see information below that should be attached  
to your shipment to avoid Customs and Duty Taxes. Thank You.**

**CHRISTMAS ITEMS FOR DECORATION ONLY.  
TO BE USED BY FATHER RAY FOUNDATION  
FOR THE CHRISTMAS SEASON 2009.  
NO COMMERCIAL VALUE.**

**ของตกแต่งต้นคริสต์มาส  
สำหรับบริจาคให้มูลนิธิคุณพ่อเรย์  
เพื่อใช้ในเทศกาลคริสต์มาสปี 2009  
ไม่มีมูลค่าทางการค้า**

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