



Father Ray Foundation Newsletter



April 2011

Message from Father Peter



Father Lawrence Patin C.Ss.R.
October 1st 1937 – January 8th 2011
President of the Father Ray Foundation

In previous newsletters I have tried to keep you informed about the health of Father Lawrence Patin, President of the Father Ray Foundation. Unfortunately Father Larry lost his battle against brain cancer and passed away on January 8th earlier this year. Everyone here in Pattaya will miss Father Larry. His strength and support has carried the Father Ray Foundation through both good and bad times.



I hope that I can continue the work, and with the team that is now working here, mostly put in place by Father Larry, I know we can maintain the standards of care in the way he would have wanted.

Our children need...

Last month I was invited to watch the annual sports competitions at the School for the Blind. I was most impressed with the swimming competition, and I watched as the youngsters jumped into the water, and following instructions from the teachers they swam several lengths of the pool. Sport is a very important part of blind students' daily schedule and the swimming pool is in constant use.

Several students have been such good swimmers that they have been selected to represent Thailand at international competitions.

Apart from being lots of fun, the students are also learning a skill that may one day save their life. Swimming also keeping the children in good health and this is what I would like to tell you about in this newsletter.



...regular health check-ups...

The health of the 850 children and students in our care is very important to me. I believe that if we can ensure good health, then our children and students will be able to study and grow into healthy adults.

For all the children who arrive at the Father Ray Children's Home, Father Ray Children's Village or the Father Ray Outreach Work & Drop-In Center a trip to a local private hospital usually takes place within days of their arrival.

We need to make sure that all our children are fit and healthy. A fourteen year old boy or girl may look the picture of health, but we want to know what is going on inside. We may not know where



a new resident has come from, what sort of life they have been living and what they have been doing with their bodies.

The hospital may be very expensive for most patients, but thankfully they perform these examinations for a very low charge as we take around two hundred children to them each year.

We also have to ensure that our children receive regular dental examinations. Some children have never been taught how to properly brush their teeth, and they arrive with large gaps where teeth should be.

...clean healthy skin...

One young boy arrived at the Father Ray Children's Home in 2005 at the age of seven, and our staff immediately noticed that this young boy had a skin condition that was causing all sorts of problems. His skin was literally hanging off his body, he was covered in sores and he smelt so bad that none of the other children would go near him. He ate his meals alone, slept on the other side of the dormitory from



the other boys, and the teachers at the local school did not want him in their class.

He was taken to the local hospital, which in turn referred him to a skin specialist in Bangkok. Even in the capital the doctors could not diagnose what was wrong so he was taken to a private hospital where it was discovered that he was suffering with a rare disease that affects one in several million people. A course of steroids was advised, with the warning that giving steroids to such a young boy could stunt his growth and may even affect him reaching puberty. An alternative was to try and keep the skin clean and moist to prevent infections which would hopefully reduce the irritation and smell.

Twice a day he visits the clinic where the nurse bathes him in cool clean water, washes him with

anti-bacterial soap and once washed and dried, he is smothered with emollient, or moisturizing, cream.

Within a short time he started to show a big improvement. He no longer smelled, he started to make friends, he ate his meals with the other children and he was accepted back at school. He was even selected to join the soccer team.

There is hope and a chance that as this young boy reaches his late teenage years he will grow out of this condition and the body will heal itself. If not, he will start a course of steroids which will keep his problem under control and let him lead a normal life.

...perfect eyesight...

We recently noticed that several teenagers at the Children's Home were squinting whilst working on the computer and getting frequent headaches. We therefore arranged for them to visit a local optician where they received every possible eye examination, and they were then prescribed spectacles and had great fun trying on all the different designer frames. We are pleased to see that



there is no more squinting and no more headaches.

...vaccinations...

Many of the children attending the Father Ray Day Care Center also have medical problems and although these youngsters return home to live with their families each evening, we also take care

of their health.

We are well aware that many arrive each morning without a nutritious meal inside them. Many families do not have food at home, so we give them a hot bowl of rice or noodle soup to start the day.

After a nutritious lunch, all the children take a shower, and it is at this time that the workers can check the children's bodies for infections, bruises or wounds.



Our nurse keeps a close eye on the health of our children and she also gives the youngsters their vaccinations when needed.



...regular exercises...

At the Vocational School for People with Disabilities, potential students are assessed at interview to see if they are well enough to study. Many of these young people have been involved in accidents which has left them wheelchair bound, and some arrive with the most horrendous pressure sores on their lower backs and buttocks.

Our nurse recently asked one wheelchair bound young lady if she was doing her exercises each day, and explained how she should be lifting

herself out of her seat every twenty minutes to keep the blood flowing. The students then informed the nurse that, 'there is no blood flowing, I am paralyzed'. Many students think that as they no longer have feeling in their lower limbs then there is no blood flow. No one had told this young lady that although she has damaged her nerves, which is the cause of her paralysis, there is still a blood flow and if the blood is not reaching all areas of her body then the skin will start to break down, causing pressure sores.



We believe we are getting the message across, as our new volunteer teachers are always asking why every one in a wheelchair is lifting themselves up during their lessons.

...a healthy nutritious diet...

A while back we told you about the food our children eat and how much rice we have to buy each year, 75,000kgs, costing almost three million baht. But providing the best available food is important for the health of our children and students.



At the Father Ray Children's Home our young boys are learning how to cook, and not just how to cook, but how to cook healthy food. The boys visit the local markets where they can see just how fresh the food is, and also where the food they are eating comes from. They are learning how to look out for the freshest food at the market and also how to bargain for the best price. But the best thing about these cooking classes is that the boys get to eat what they cook.

...and protection against disease.

Early last year one of our volunteers was in a panic. As she entered her class to teach her daily English lesson she noticed that every student was wearing a face mask, and this was at the height of the swine flu epidemic. Asking her first year students what was the matter, the teacher speaks no Thai and the students knew very little English, they all told her 'have swine flu'.



Panic erupted as she ran to the office and told the Thai workers, who in turn all panicked, and ran up to the classroom to check on the students. It turned out that they did not have swine flu but were wearing the masks to protect themselves.

The following day we arranged for a medical team from a local hospital to visit our school and give an examination to every student, teacher, worker and volunteer. No swine flu was found, but everyone received a vaccination against flu, and they will now receive one every year.



A brave young lady

We have a wonderful young lady currently studying at our Vocational School for People with Disabilities.

This lady was born with a tumour on her face, covering her left eye and it has grown so large that it now covers half her face.

When she was twelve years of age she was asked to leave school, for the simple reason that the teachers just did not want her there. However she kept on with her education at home, attending non-formal classes and eventually completing grade 12.

But finishing school was only the start of her problems. She wanted to find work so she could support her family, but no one would employ her. Eventually she found work as a cleaner, but instead was assigned to do heavy duty painting. She was also unable to receive her 'Disabled Persons' identification card as she was not thought to have a disability. Though after many months traveling from one government office to another she eventually received the card she was entitled to.

She then applied to our school, was accepted onto the Information Systems course and is doing very well in her studies. She is a young lady who is friendly and popular,



and she is full of confidence. Eight years ago surgery was performed and most of the growth was removed. But not long after the tumour started to grow, and will continue to increase in size until it could prove to be fatal. With encouragement from Sister Pavinee, Director of the Vocational School, this young lady has now decided to return to the hospital for investigations. In July she will have a dye injected into her veins to show how the growth is connected to the rest of her body. If the doctor thinks that it can be removed safely, then surgery will take place immediately. Once she has made a full recovery she will continue studying with us,

and hopefully once she graduates she will find the job she wants.

Keeping so many children and students healthy does take a large portion of our yearly budget, but it is the one area where we can not cut corners to save money.

Can you help?

We hope that you can continue to support our work here in Pattaya, and help us to give the best possible health care to our children and students.

If you would like to receive future newsletters via email, then please let us know by sending us a message to info@fr-ray.org



Father Ray Foundation

440 Moo 9, Sukhumvit Road,
Km 145, Nongprue, Banglamung,
Chonburi 20260, Thailand
Tel : +66-38-716628 , 428717
Fax : +66-38-716629
info@fr-ray.org www.fr-ray.org

.....
Bank Account: Bangkok Bank Ltd.
1. Banglamung Chonburi Branch
Current Account: 342-3-04125-4
2. Seacon Square Bangkok Branch
Current Account: 232-3-02275-2

we never turn a needy child away