

Father Ray Foundation Newsletter



September 2014

A Farewell and A Welcome



Children come to live with us for many reasons. There are those who have been orphaned and have no living relatives who can take care of them, so we become their family.

Others have lived a life of abuse, or are at risk of abuse, so we give them a safe place to live and grow.

And there are those who come from families who are just too poor to provide their child with the basics in life.

One such child is a little boy who we will call Chai.

His story is common among many of our children. His parents had separated. The whereabouts of his father is unknown and his mother was in prison. Chai lived

with his step-father in Pattaya, while his two younger brothers went to live with an aunt and uncle several hundred kilometers away. Not wanting to take care of a child that was not his, the step-father sent this little boy to live with us at the Children's Home.

Chai settled into the Home, made lots of friends, joined the soccer team, did well at school and seemed to be enjoying life; he always had a smile on his face.

We were recently contacted by his uncle with the request that he wishes to become the guardian of his nephew.

Although Chai enjoyed the three years living at the Father Ray Children's Home, he was happy to have the opportunity to leave us and go to live with his uncle and aunt and be reunited with his two younger brothers. But as we said farewell to Chai, we welcomed several new children into our care. Five youngsters, two girls and three boys, including two brothers, were welcomed into their new home at the Children's Village. At the

same time, a few kilometers away at the Children's Home, two boys moved in, where one of the boys joined his elder brother.

Like Chai, they too are all from very poor families.

How long will they stay with us? We don't know.

Will the children ever go back to live with their own family? Maybe.

But whatever happens, whether these children are with us for one year or for the next fifteen years, they will have a home with us for as long as they need it.

And Chai and his family know that we are here to help them if they need it.



A Message from Brother Denis Gervais C.Ss.R.

**“There is one thing money can neither buy or take away... and that is happiness”
– Father Ray Brennan**



Father Ray’s wise words inspire us to seek happiness for our children, but sadly we can only get there with the continuing support of all our friends. As Vice- President of Father Ray Foundation, I thought I should tell you a little about how we use the money you, and all our other generous supporters, give to us. I can only be very brief here, but if you want more detail, please go to our website www.fr-ray.org and click on the Financial Commentary which is shown on the homepage, to learn more.

Every year for the past three years we have raised about 110 million Thai Baht in donations from our supporters (that equates to roughly \$3.5 million US, Canada or Australia; or 2.8 million Euros; or 2.2 Million GB Pounds), and on top of this, we have some support from the Thai Government, and other sources including income from friends and organizations who use the accommodation facilities here at the Redemptorist Center in Pat-taya.

Together these meet the annual costs of providing housing, food, education and health costs for the 850 children and disabled students who live with us, and all the others who come to us on a daily basis. In most years we break even, or

make a small surplus that can be invested for future use and the interest we earn helps pay for the university and college education we are able to give to more and more children. We employ around 280 people, most of whom directly look after our children and students. We employ a small fundraising team who do jobs like maintaining contact with our supporters, preparing this newsletter to keep you in touch, and making sure we say a prompt thank you when we receive your donations. This team is supplemented by unpaid volunteers, and we always welcome help from people who would like to support our fundraising efforts.

Under 9% of our donation income is spent on raising the money we receive; it would be lovely if we incurred no costs, but this is just not possible. However without voluntary assistance, costs would be much higher. Our “cost ratio” compares very favourably to charities in the western world who generally experience costs at a substantially higher level. I don’t want to lose you with numbers, but I do want you to know that every penny we receive is used wisely, either directly for the children, or to ensure we continue to raise money in the future.

Our accounts are professionally produced and audited every year by an international firm of auditors (Grant Thornton Thailand), so you can be confident your money is managed and used wisely and appropriately. Our aim is to act prudently with your money, and be transparent about its use.

Only with your help can we give our children and students the stability in life they have not experienced before they come to us, and give them the happiness we all seek for those in our care.

By the way, the young man in the photo wearing the red shirt and holding the money, he was recently asked to collect admission fees at a local music festival held at the Children’s Home. Not a single person passed by without paying, he even tried to charge his friends. It just so happens that his nickname is Bank, and when he finishes High School he wants to go on to University and study economics.



we never turn a needy child away

From Pattaya to outer space



Our girls from the Children's Home were very excited recently to meet a young lady who later this year will become, not just the first Thai woman, but the first Thai person ever to fly up to space.

Selected from hundreds of applicants from 62 countries, Pirada Techavijit was one of twenty three chosen to fly 100 kilometers above earth.

But before leaving this planet, Pirada paid a visit to Pattaya to talk to our children, and also hopefully inspire them to follow their dreams.

Beautiful visitors



Also visiting the Foundation this summer were the contestants taking part in the 2015 Miss Universe New Zealand Pageant. Only in Thailand for a few days, their visit to us attracted a lot of local, national and international film crews. During their short time with us they

were entertained with dances from the youngsters at the Day Care Center and a special performance from our wheelchair dancers.

But it was the blind students singing Amazing Grace that moved many of our visitors to tears.

No sooner had they arrived and it was time to leave, but not before they all got out their smart phones and cameras to take photos and selfies with our children.

Thailand Open Tennis

The Thailand Wheelchair Open Tennis Tournament took place in August and many of our current and former students participated. While the majority of players were local Thai's, competitors also arrived from India and Canada.

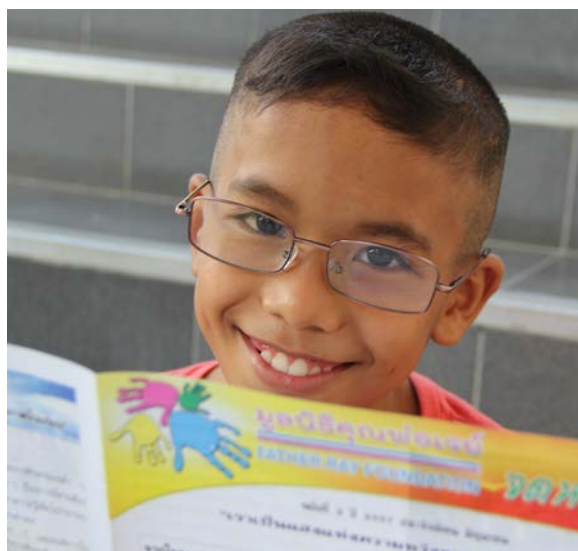
In this newsletter we must say congratulations to Miss Noy, who together with her partner, also a former student at our school, came in third place in the doubles competition. Miss Noy, who works as an administrator here at the Foundation, has brightened up her desk with a very large golden trophy.

Well done to everyone who took part.



We would like to hear from you

We send our newsletters to you four times each year, and we hope you enjoy reading them. But we would like to know what you think of our newsletters. Is there anything you would like to read more about? If there anything we can do to improve the newsletter for you? We would very much appreciate your comments, please send them to info@fr-ray.org



More sporting glory for our students

2014 has been a great sporting year so far for us here in Pattaya. The National Games for the Disabled were followed soon after by the National Games for the Blind, and our students attended both events, returning to Pattaya weighed down with the amount of gold, silver and bronze medals they won.



They participated in many different sports; track & field, swimming, futsal and goalball.

Many of those watching the various competitions for the very first time were curious as to why the futsal and goalball players were wearing blindfolds, when they are supposedly blind. Well, there are many students who are partially sighted, so it would be unfair if some players had a sight advantage over others who were totally blind.



When our athletes are racing they hold a small piece of string which is also carried by their trainer, who runs alongside and makes sure the athletes keep to their designated lane.

Those throwing the shot put, javelin or discus learn the number of turns and steps they need to take before letting go.

Swimmers swim towards an umpire who calls instructions and steers them in a straight line towards the finish line at the end of the pool.

Our students work very hard trying to improve their skills, and not just the athletes, but also our teachers, who give up their own free time to train the children.

In past years, many of our students have represented Thailand at international events, but there is now friendly competition between several students as they would like to

be the first student from our school to compete at a Paralympic Games – the next one takes place in Rio de Janeiro in 2016. I am sure that you join us when we say how very proud we are of our athletes. We wish them all the best of luck in their pursuit of Paralympic glory.

Thank you

A few weeks ago our youngsters at the Children's Home were playing on some gymnastic equipment. They were running as fast as they could, jumping onto a small trampoline before flying through the air and landing on the thick crash mats. They were all having a lot of fun, all except one little boy. You see, he ran so fast and jumped so high that his baggy trousers fell down, and he wasn't wearing any underwear. You can only imagine his embarrassment.

So thank you to all the people who have donated money to buy underwear for our children. This young boy now has a pair of underpants for everyday of the week, and one extra pair to wear when he is doing his washing.



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