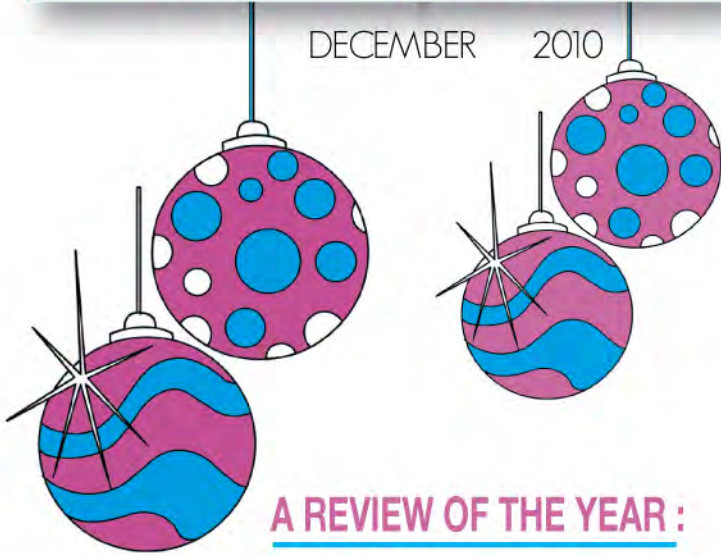


NEWS LETTER

DECEMBER 2010



A REVIEW OF THE YEAR :

Our first graduates have now found work ...

At the Father Ray Children's Home we are very proud of all our children, especially two of our older residents. Earlier this year James and Sia graduated from university, the first ever residents of the Home to graduate with a degree.



James arrived at the Home eleven years ago at the age of thirteen. He was desperate to attend school and since his arrival he has finished school, attended college and graduated from university with a degree in Industrial Business Management. Whilst he is waiting to find a job he is working as a teacher at the Home. Being one of the oldest boys at the Home he has always been a good role model, respected by both the residents and teachers.

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FATHER RAY FOUNDATION

We never turn a needy child away

Message from Father Peter

The news from the United States regarding Father Patin is not good, but at the same time it is not bad. According to reports we have received he is stable and comfortable but we doubt he will ever be well enough to return home to Thailand.

I am sure that he would give anything to be in Thailand during the Christmas time celebrations, to watch the children open their gifts and sing carols in English. He remains in our prayers and we hope that he will be included in yours.

*Christmas is once again upon
us,
further I
you and
very
and before we go any
would like to wish
your loved ones a
Merry Christmas.*



Rehearsals started back in August for the annual visit to local hotels to sing Christmas Carols on the 24th December. As usual the teachers will worry about the singing, will the children perform well, will they remember all the words, but we know it will be alright on the night, the children will perform to perfection, as they always do.





Sia is the oldest of three children who arrived at the Home in 2002. A hard worker, she has now graduated from university with a degree in Accounting, and is now working for a local children's charity, where she is responsible for all the finances. Her time at our

Home has given her not just a good education but also empathy towards other children who find themselves in a difficult situation. Her younger sister is currently studying Law at a Bangkok university, whilst her brother is also doing well at school.

Another one of our residents, this time from the Father Ray Drop-In Center, has also made us very proud. It was just four years ago that our outreach workers met a young teenager, Keng, living on the streets on Pattaya. After much persuasion he left the shop doorway that he called home and came to live with us, on the condition that we never forced him to go back to school. We can never force anyone to do anything, but our workers are a determined bunch, and he not only agreed to go back to school, he also enrolled into college and after graduating in March this year he is now working as an apprentice electrician at one of Pattaya's better hotels.



Others are just starting their education.

You may remember a little boy who we have mentioned in previous newsletters and who goes by the name of Condo. Before arriving at the Father Ray Foundation this little boy lived with his drunkard of a father in the most squalid of conditions. He came to our attention after he had been thrown onto a bonfire, and when he arrived he was in a state of shock; he was very withdrawn, would not speak to anyone and terrified of adults.



For the past two years he has been living at the Father Ray Children's Village, living with his seven brothers and sisters and sharing a bedroom with his best mate, Tony. These two boys are always together, they play together, fight with each other, take care of their younger siblings and in March they both graduated from the Father Ray Day Care Center. Then in May they both joined Grade 1 at a local school. At six thirty each morning the children climb into the minibus and off they go to school, returning home at 4.30, then he has homework to complete, chores to do, dinner and then it is time for bed.

He is now a very happy little boy, and we know that it is only with the love and care that he has received at the Village that he is not affected by his former life.

Annual photo of children, students and staff, 2010



First and Last Christmas

I recently heard a story about a past Christmas at the Father Ray Drop-In Center which I would like to share with you. A few days before the big day a young boy arrived at the Center seeking help. He was 12 years of age, from Myanmar, which meant that he was illegally in Thailand, he spoke very little of the Thai language and had a very sad story. Persuaded to leave Myanmar and travel to Pattaya he thought this would be the start of a better life.

Unfortunately when he arrived in Pattaya he was locked in a room, beaten and forced to into a life of providing sexual services to perverts, too scared to refuse and terrified of the consequences of being caught illegally in Thailand.

After several weeks he was 'kidnapped' by a group of older street kids, disgusted by what was happening to this young boy and he was brought to us. The day he arrived was the day the children at the Center were decorating a nine foot artificial Christmas tree, and he watched in amazement as more than thirty youngsters dressed the tree in just a few minutes. He said later that he could not understand why there was a plastic tree in the dining room when there were many real trees on the Center complex.

Being a Hindu he had never celebrated Christmas, but on the 24th December he joined the other children at a local hotel to sing carols, in English. On Christmas Day he woke to find all the other children busy cleaning the Drop-In Center, sweeping the leaves, picking up rubbish, setting up tables and getting ready for the days events. This particular year Christmas was sponsored by a very generous expatriate couple who wanted to give the children a day to remember, providing all the food, drinks and entertainment.

It was mid afternoon when the ringing of bells was heard and Santa arrived carrying several large sacks of presents. At first this young boy was a little scared; he had seen pictures of Santa but never seen him in person. When his name was called he was nervous about approaching such a big fat man in a red suit, with a long white beard and speaking English, but he received his gift and rather than doing what the other children did and open his gift he spent a long time looking at the box, the beautiful wrapping paper and the large bow.

After living with us for several months we returned this young boy back to his sister in the Thai-Myanmar border town of Mae Sot. He did not want to go, but it was too dangerous for him to remain in Pattaya; the local pimps knew he was with us, they wanted their property back, and we could not allow that.

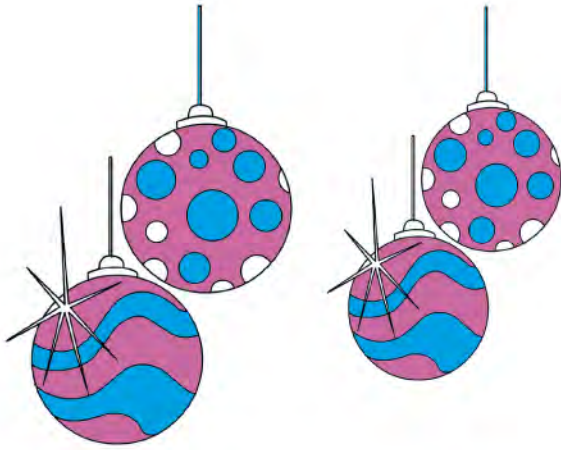


It was a tearful day when he finally left us, he climbed into the back of the pickup truck, placed his hands together and 'waied', and as the truck was about to leave the complex he suddenly jumped out, ran into the office and took one single photo down from the wall.

It was a picture taken on Christmas Day, with him and his friends, and we all know that if he does or does not celebrate Christmas again he will never forget his first Christmas with us.

Every year turns up sad stories like this – the need is never ending, though some of the stories do have a happy ending.





Eye tests for the blind

The blind students have been busy this year. All one hundred and forty four students this year received eye examinations from a local hospital, and all treatments will be paid for by a very generous donor. Many children were prescribed eye drops and ointments, mainly to keep the eyes moist, whilst others were advised to wear glasses to protect the eye from accidents or dark glasses to protect from dangerous UV rays from the sun.

Several children will be undergoing surgical procedures to remove cataracts, and whilst for a few they will be able to see better, for others their sight might not be improved, but life will be more comfortable.



All children and students who are currently residing at our projects will celebrate Christmas. Each and every one of them, no matter how old they are or what religion they follow, will receive a special gift at this special time of year.

We hope that you can help us to ensure that the more than eight hundred and fifty people living at the Father Ray Foundation will have a Christmas to remember.

Once again I would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a healthy, happy and prosperous New Year 2011.

Pattaya Redemptorist School for the Blind
Redemptorist Vocational School for People with Disabilities
Father Ray Day Care Center
Father Ray Children's Home
Father Ray Children's Village
Father Ray Outreach and Drop-in Center
Remdemptorist Foundation for People with Disabilities



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FATHER RAY FOUNDATION

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