

Fr. Ray Foundation Newsletter

June 2010

Message from Fr. Peter



I start this newsletter by telling you that Fr. Patin remains hospitalized in the US. We are praying for his recovery and the only good news is that he is stable.

Fr. Apisit has moved on from Pattaya to take charge of Ruamrudee International School in Bangkok and I have been

brought in as his replacement.

My name is Fr. Pattarapong, but I am known by my Christian name, Fr. Peter. I look forward to the challenge ahead and I hope that I can meet you if you are visiting Pattaya.

Also joining me in Pattaya is Fr. Michael Picharn Jaiseri. Many of you may remember Fr. Michael as in the past he spent several years working here in Pattaya with Fr. Ray Brennan.

All around the world people have seen the recent troubles in Thailand. We have not been directly affected although we have had night time curfews here in Pattaya. Whatever happens our work with the children goes on and we continue to need your prayers and support.

In recent newsletters we have written about the food our children eat, the volunteers who travel to Thailand to help us with our work and the education our children receive, but this newsletter is about the people who ensure that we in Pattaya can continue our work. There are two types of people who make sure the Father Ray Foundation continues to care for children and educate the disabled, one group is the people here in Thailand and the other group is you, our supporters.

Thanks to those of you who responded to our 'YOUR DAY' appeal in the last newsletter. This appeal was to pay for a day's teaching at the Fr. Ray Day Care Center, and our children will be saying a special prayer on the special days chosen by those who replied.

Why help our children?

Fr. Ray was once overheard telling a volunteer that he often wondered why people from all over the world would want to help his children and students. Most of our children now have sponsors, and most of our sponsors may never ever meet the child they sponsor, many will never visit Pattaya, and yet you continue to give, you continue to support our work and you continue to ensure that our children and students can find a safe place to live, enough food in their bellies and an education that will give them a good start in life and so this newsletter is dedicated to you.

Our supporters come in all shapes and sizes. We have many schools from all over the world that help us, and one such school is the Hong Kong International School, who for over twenty years has sent students on their annual trip to Pattaya. This year the whole school went even further to help us and raised enough money to build, furnish and pay the running costs for one year of a new house at the Fr. Ray Children's Village.





When they visited earlier this year they were able to see for themselves the house that they have built; Marigold House. This new house will become a home for orphaned and abandoned children who may never have known what it is like to have a family and a home.

Students and teachers from Sacred Heart School in South London have also been visiting for several years, and these young students spend two years raising enough money to pay for their flights and accommodation, and what is left is spent on our children. They take our children on shopping trips to buy new clothes, to the local water park for a day of fun and if there is still money left over they will ask what we need and then go and buy it.

Come and visit...



Sponsors are always welcome to visit and meet our children. It may seem a little strange to be eventually meeting a teenager that you have been supporting since they were in kindergarten.

You have been receiving regular updates over many years, you have watched as your child has grown into a young adult and you have travelled over to Thailand to meet him or her. People



often ask what it means to our children to have a sponsor; well I can tell you what it means, a lot. It shows our children that there are people out there who care for them, who are interested in their lives and they are loved.

Many of our supporters decided to help us after spending time with our founder, Fr. Ray. They were so enthused by what they

witnessed and the children they met that they wanted to spread the word to make sure that the work could continue for as long as it is needed. A lot of our support comes from people living around the world, but we also have local groups such as Rotary Club, Pattaya International Ladies Club, Pattaya Ex-pats Clubs and the Jesters, just to name a few who have been wonderful supporters over the years.



...and see for yourself...

Most visitors are amazed when they see the actual size of the work here in Pattaya, and I doubt that Fr. Ray had any idea when he started back in 1974 that it would ever grow so huge. From that very first child he took into his care we now have over 800 living with us, and since those early years almost five thousand orphaned and abandoned children

and disabled students have arrived at our doors looking for help and assistance, and we stand by our motto that 'we never turn a needy child away'.



Many buildings have been erected to house and educate all these children and students on several complexes around Pattaya, and we can only build a new building when we have raised the money. We are careful with the money you give to us, we build only what we need and make sure that we get the best possible price from the contractor.

But it not just buildings that you would see. Thailand is known as the land of smiles, sad, unhappy children have nothing to smile about, but our children do. Their smiles are genuine, they smile because they are well fed, they smile because they are happy, and they smile because they are safe.

...where your money goes.

When you send in your monthly money or a donation to pay for your sponsored child the money does not go to the individual child, but it does go to the particular project where your child lives. If it went to the individual child we would have some very rich children, so it goes to pay for him or her as well as all the other children. We need to pay for the children's food, education and medical bills. We also have to pay salaries to the staff taking care of the children; teachers, cooks, drivers, social workers and nurses. And just like you we also receive regular electric, water and gas bills, though ours are a lot bigger than most households.



Here in Thailand there is a Buddhist belief that if you 'make merit' by donating food to others you will be happy and healthy throughout your life. Many locals in Pattaya arrive at the Foundation and donate rice, oil, milk and other basic foodstuffs to the children. Families who are celebrating a birthday offer to buy lunch or dinner at our projects, which usually means that the children receive a very special meal. With so many young children living with us many visitors will donate toys and cuddly toys.

How your continuing support changes lives

You know that we could not possibly continue our work without your help and support. But your donations put more than just rice on the table and shoes on the feet of our children.



We first met one eleven year old boy in 2006 when he living on the streets of Pattaya. His best friend had found a disused sewer pipe and he was sleeping inside, this young boy however would be left outside and at night he would wrap himself in rags and then curl himself around the upturned pipe. After much persuasion he eventually decided to leave his life on the streets and move into our Drop-In Center. Again after much persuasion he went back to school and earlier this year he graduated from vocational college and is now working as an apprentice electrician at one of the larger Pattaya hotels. Without your help he would still be on the streets, he would still have no education and he may have had no future. Thanks to one Danish support group, the Dansk Pattaya Fund 2003, we have just started building a new 'Half-Way House' near the Drop-In Center, and once complete this young man will be one of its first residents.

One family was separated as the mother was unable to provide a decent life for her four children. The only daughter was living with relatives north of Bangkok, one son lived in Pattaya, whilst his twin brother lived twenty miles away in the port town of Laem Chabang. Her eldest son was the furthest away, living with relatives in the northern city of Chiang Mai. This mother wanted to be near her children and she wanted her offspring to know each other so she asked for our help.

Today her daughter works close by in Pattaya and her three sons live at our Children's Home. Once a month on her day off the mother arrives, carrying several bags of food and the whole family has a picnic and they spend the day together. This is just one of several families who are living at our Fr. Ray Children's Home. We never split siblings up and if we can help keep a family together, then that is what we will do.



Here in Thailand the new school year started in mid-May and we welcomed over sixty new students at the Vocational School for People with Disabilities, and this is just the first step to them changing their lives. They will no longer be laughed at, they are no longer outcasts and they no longer have to put up with doing menial work for unequal salaries. When they return to their homes villages and towns they can now do so with



their head held high, proud of what they have achieved. Thanks to your generosity they now have a chance to become equals in society, one where they will sit side by side next to their able bodied colleagues.

When I was a young novice at the seminary I first heard about the work of the Fr. Ray Foundation.

Fr. Ray Brennan was a larger than life character and all us young novices were in awe of this legendary man, and now it is my privilege to be working here in Pattaya at the Foundation.

Fr. Ray once said "people give me money to help people, and that is what I do. The more money I get the more people I help", and this is what you have done, you have allowed us to help so many children.

I wish I could visit and meet every one of our supporters, shake your hand and thank you personally for your support. Thank you and God bless you all.

"YOUR DAY" Appeal

With this newsletter we continue with our YOUR DAY appeal, so if you would like to give someone close to you a different birthday gift this year, or remember a loved family member please consider paying for a day's teaching at the Fr. Ray Day Care Center.



You or your loved one will be remembered in the children's daily prayers and your \$85, €60 or £55 will ensure that our youngest children receive the education that will prepare them for government schooling.

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

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