

The Ayui Foundation is a non-denominational, non-government organisation that provides a home environment, education opportunities and future pathways for disadvantaged hill tribe young people.



Director  
E Milne

# Ayui

January 2008

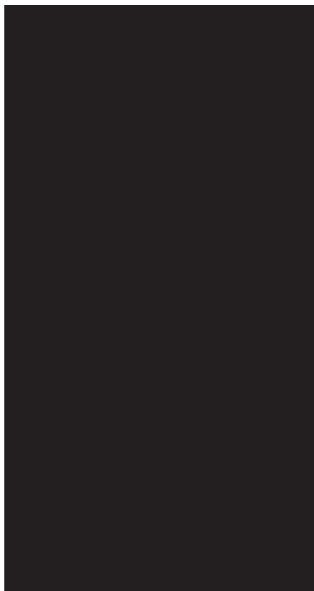
## From the Director

During the last 2 months, the children acquired some new things that were really needed, including bikes to ride to school, blankets for the cold season, a second-hand laptop computer, and we were given another puppy. The children voted to name her Namkhang, which means 'frost'. We started the Saturday afternoon Akha embroidery activity, with the boys and girls making traditional Akha bags. Those who can already embroider teach the others so it is both a learning and social activity. We spread out the big mat, chat, listen to the radio, and learn how their mothers made bags for the men folk.

The children enjoyed producing block-printed paper bags for a friend's handicraft shop, and had fun creating prints from natural sources, such as starfruit and banana leaf stalks. We also had 3 volunteers come and spend time at The Ayui Foundation. I took the kids fishing one day with one of our volunteers – keep reading on to find out how the hilltribe people fish – it's a little different! Everyone had great fun, being in the outdoors, showing off their skills and benefiting from teamwork. At the end of the day I was so proud as there was enough fish caught for our dinner that night. School closed for 2 weeks for the New Year break and everyone returned to study on January 5<sup>th</sup> 2008.



FOUNDATION



## Our Wonderful Volunteers

Amanda Creiglow (20, USA) who has volunteered in Thailand before came to visit The Ayui Foundation for 3 weeks in November. This is what she wrote about her time with us:

Having already known Sue, Noi, and a couple of the kids from a previous visit to Thailand, I must admit to knowing a bit of what I was getting into by coming to volunteer at the Ayui Foundation. Even so, I was still impressed by the family atmosphere forged by children who had mostly not known each other before coming to live together in the hopes of a better life.



I was lucky enough to come around the Thai holiday of Loi Krathong. The children and Noi made beautiful floating lanterns (*krathongs*) to send down the river, we all gathered together launching flying paper lanterns into the night. While seeing the children day in and day out is a wonderful experience, getting to see them gathered together on a special occasion really brings home the community created between them, and the life-long bonds that will help them through a life that sets more challenges than for most.



Another fantastic experience, and perhaps the highlight of my time with The Ayui Foundation was a trip out to a secluded spot to go fishing... hilltribe style. Rather than removing the fish from the river, hilltribe style involves removing the river from the fish. It's a bit of a construction project, sectioning out a part of the stream, and then systematically emptying the water from it so the fish are left in a shallow layer of water from which they are easy to catch. The coordination and teamwork involved, the group effort put forward by all towards filling the bucket with small fish, lots of crabs, and even a couple of eels was great to watch in action. Seeing them all light up at the chance to really spend some time out experiencing nature in such a comfortable way was a great reminder of their position with a foot in traditional village life, and their investment in a future learning to move forward and succeed in a modern world.



**Hilltribe style fishing... rather than removing the fish from the river, you remove the river from the fish....**

**it's a reminder that these kids have a foot in traditional village life at the same time as learning to succeed in a modern world**

## *What 'Baan Ayui' is really*

A few paragraphs is not enough to describe spending time with the kids at Baan Ayui, but even if I described every moment of every day, it would still be impossible to really convey the experience. **I hope you get a chance to see it for yourself**, or barring that, that you can appreciate the special work that you support, if not financially then with your attention in reading these newsletters and spreading the word. I feel blessed to have met these kids and look forward to being involved with the hostel in the future.



## *Volunteers reflection...*

For 2 weeks in December, Australian university students Steph Ellis (21) and Ellie Malbon (20) volunteered at the hostel. They played sports with the kids in the evenings, and taught them how to make piñatas, which was their big art project - they had fun hitting them as part of Fah's birthday party.



## *All Play and No Work?*

The most difficult aspect of volunteering at Ayui was trying to help with the washing up.

For 2 weeks we, Ellie and Steph, students at the Australian National University, lived and volunteered at Baan Ayui. To be honest, we didn't know what to expect when we arrived, we were drawn by the sincerity of Sue in her emails and knowledge of Ayui's vision from the newsletters. But what is Ayui? Why was housework such a struggle for us?

Ayui, is a home where Akha hill tribe young people can live, allowing them to attend school - however Ayui is more than a house, it's a community, where young people (even volunteers) are supported and taught important life skills. It's very easy to provide a person with a bed, anyone can do that, but not everyone can provide young people with the support and confidence they require to pursue their aspirations.

While at Baan Ayui we taught the young people to make piñatas, and spent hours sharing Akha, Thai and English words, however as volunteers it was very difficult to contribute through housework. The young people are so competent, so keen to take responsibility of duties, such as cleaning, they make it nigh impossible to contribute! This, to us, represented the dedication the kids have to the hostel and each other. That is not to say there was no conflict or issues, as comes with communal living, yet it is clear to see that the young people have a genuine commitment to making life in the hostel successful.

We both had a wonderful, genuinely warm and welcoming experience at Ayui. We felt part of the family and loved meeting these young people who were so pleased to see us and willing to play a game, read or engage in any activities. The main message we would send to volunteers, is that Ayui provides the opportunity to share skills and knowledge with amazing young people who are happy to learn. Whether you are an English teacher, sculptor, architect or mathematician, with an open mind and capacity for fun and understanding, Ayui is a wonderful opportunity for both you and Akha hill tribe young people.

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### *Citizenship and Other Hilltribe Issues*

Housemother Noi organized the application of Gold Health Cards for 9 of the children (the rest are ineligible due to lack of documentation). They have now been successfully processed (however, they have to wait till February to receive their cards) and it means these children are entitled to cheaper health care at the Chiang Rai Provincial Hospital, even after they have finished school and are no longer with the Foundation. This is part of helping our young people secure a better future.

### *Thank you. . . .*

As the Foundation does not receive funding on a regular basis, we rely solely on donations to keep us going. We would not have been able to have accomplished this much without the support and generosity of the following people:

- Rob & Robyn Whelan, Maggie King, Pamela Sinclair, James & Philip Koungra, Sheryl Taylor, Jeanette Hesse, Bev & Conrad Fenwick, Alan Sinclair, & Gerd Leinberger - who for their Christmas celebrations decided to skip the pressy buying and instead made donation to the Ayui Foundation - we thank you!
- Ross & Rebecca Hanrahan for their Christmas gift.
- Mr and Mrs Creiglow (Amanda's parents) for their donation to purchase warm blankets, 2 bigger bikes for the 2 oldest girls, and for paying our house rent for one month.
- A timely donation from Rose and Bob McNeil from Queensland, Australia.
- Individual donations from John Milne, Mavis Cummins and Dara Rome, all from the ACT, Australia.
- St John Vianney's Primary School in Canberra who's SRC presented a \$900AUD donation to our Foundation at their end of year Christmas celebrations – thank you for your hard work in fundraising
- St Matthew's Primary School in Canberra – bring a coin day – which bought our new bikes – believe me they're being put to good use!
- Visitor Terry Connolly, also from Australia, for his cash donation, half of which was specifically to buy the kids a guitar.
- Our newest sponsor, Mr Brian O'Keeffe from Australia, who is sponsoring Yohan and Meega on an ongoing basis – we thank you and look forward to your visit one day.
- Canberra work mates - Frank van der Heide, Leslie O'Donoghue, Patrick Bordier, Bonnie Vulin, Gloria Malone, Katrina Dorrington, Dennis Strand, & Claire Kaczmarek - for their Christmas gift to help with citizenship papers.
- The Jaroenpol Sports Shop, in Chiang Rai, for donating 19 pairs of sports shoes and socks.
- Thank you to Analog Devices, Shanghai, for donating one of their laptop computers. This will enable the kids to practice their computer and language skills, and it will be used by volunteers, and during committee meetings, for Foundation work.

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If you would like to contribute to The Ayui Foundation organisation and know that your gift is making a difference please contact

Sumalee Milne at

[ayui.foundation@gmail.com](mailto:ayui.foundation@gmail.com)

[www.ayui.org](http://www.ayui.org)

**Thank you for thinking of us.**

Cheques can be made out to 'The Ayui Foundation':  
414 Moo 4, Baan Mai, T.Rimkok, A.Muang Chiang Rai Thailand 57000 or to Julianne Bradley 14 Fossey Street Holder ACT Australia 2611