

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

Ayui



Director
Sumalee Milne

July 2008
Chiang Rai, Thailand

From the Director

Welcome to our first edition for the 2008 school year. It was great to see the kids again after they had gone home to their villages for the month-long holiday. Most of the kids helped out working in the fields, for B100 a day, helping their parents earn money. Meega got a paying job selling wares at various markets, living with her employers' family, and one of the boys got work in a factory assembling computer parts. Akha young people are so industrious and not afraid of hard work.

During the school holidays, I went to Canberra to visit my family and gave a presentation on The Ayui Foundation at the Australian National University. I was also interviewed for City News, a local paper which resulted in finding new sponsor and a few donations. Also, with the support of Rotary, we were able to set up tax-deductible donations within Australia.

We also want to thank our volunteers, Ellie Simpson, who stayed with us for a month, and Owen Chadwick-Williams, 19, from England, who helped out for a week, driving the kids to school, while he was traveling through on his gap year. The boys really appreciate the new football and ball pump he bought them.



FOUNDATION



Updates from Baan Ayui

May is the start of the Thai school year and we have had a few changes at our hostel. Our household has grown to 14, with 3 new girls and 1 boy joining us this year. We farewelled one of our girls Pantiwa (Pui). Pui's parents came one day to visit and her Dad said he's going to work for 3 years in the South and wants Pui to go back and live with her Mum. One of our Board Member's Chatree and I went to her village to visit her family and make sure that Pui and her family know she is always welcome at Baan Ayui if things change at home and her Dad's job doesn't work out - many of our kids home lives are not always stable.



Introducing our new family members

Alla (18) completed Grade 9 two years ago. He wanted to continue at school but couldn't find a hostel to support him and, unable to find a good job, ended up farming with his parents. He comes from Aju's village, and when heard about Baan Ayui, he came to apply. He is now in Grade 10. With citizenship, and a motorbike license, he helps our housemother with errands and provides a good older role model for the other boys.



Meenae (17) came to us from another hostel, where she had to pay an annual fee, provide her own food, and school supplies. After only a year at the last hostel, her mother could no longer afford her living costs and told Meenae to find somewhere else to live. She goes to the same school as our kids, and heard about Baan Ayui at school. She is in Grade 9 and hopes to study nursing when she graduates this year. Meenae is in the unusual position of having one government-issued ID document that states she is 20, and another that states she is 17 - another example of government bureaucracy not functioning for minority people.

Suda (15) is in Grade 8. Her parents are separated and she was living in a hostel at her small, village school. On weekends she would alternately stay with each of her parents, who live in villages high up in the mountains of Chiang Mai province.



Sriwan (12) is the niece of one of our boys. Her mother came (with a translator) at the end of last school year to ask if Sriwan could come and stay. When Sriwan was little, her mother could not afford to raise her, and put her in the care of a pastor, who moved to work at a boarding school in Bangkok, taking Sriwan with him. After 6 years in Bangkok, Sriwan told her mother she missed home and the family, and asked if there was any way she could move to be closer to them.

New additions to the house.....

At the end of last year the kids provided some feedback about living at Baan Ayui – following up on a couple of suggestions we built a new toilet block for the boys, after they told me one toilet was not enough to share, and a fishpond to raise catfish.

We bought 2,000 baby catfish which should be big enough to start eating in a few months time.

Just before school started, we were able to purchase a second-hand pick-up truck to take the kids to school during this monsoon season, thanks to donations from North Hobart Rotary (Tasmania) and Hall Rotary (Canberra), in Australia.

Our Wonderful Volunteer.....

Ellie Simpson (18), from England, is traveling around Southeast Asia on her gap year, and volunteered with us for a month, moving in the same day as the kids did. With games, English lessons, and arts and crafts, she did a great job of keeping the kids entertained, and was our resident photographer. We asked her to write about her time with us, and this is what she had to say:

Ban Ayui is a unique place and I'm certain that I had a unique experience there. As I was living in the house I got to see everything and really experience the life the kids lived. From the 5:30am wake-up time to the late night weekend cooking sessions (boys!) I really got to know and love all the kids and the house. Kite building was our first art activity. The boys collected bamboo and skillfully stripped it to create the frames while the girls created the long winding tails. The kites were made from newspaper. They may not have been the most successful kites in the air (add to that the little wind we had), but they definitely looked beautiful- each one painted differently, from abstract to more traditional scenes of village life.

As well as all our games of badminton (which Yohan beat me at), dominoes and flash card games (girls won twice- yay-sorry I'm genetically biased!) we also did two major painting projects. The new fishpond and toilet seemed dull in their concrete bareness until the kids got to work. We mixed up all the colours in big buckets and everyone was armed with a paintbrush and a piece of wall! Now the fishpond is a watery mural and the bathroom bears the handprints of each member of the Ayui family - even mine! I definitely felt like an *ayui* [older sister] during my stay, with fifteen brothers and sisters! Eating Akha dishes, trying Akha embroidery, even learning a few Akha words!

Thanks to Sue for creating and nurturing such an amazing place and giving people like me the chance to volunteer there. Also thanks to all the kids and housemother Noi for being such a fun and helpful family for a month. I only hope I gave back what you gave to me.



Thank you. . . .

We had such a positive start to our year, with people really opening their hearts in their willingness to help us. We would not have been able to have accomplished this much without the support and generosity of the following:

- A big thank you to the North Hobart Rotary Club and Ken Goodsell for assisting in setting up our tax-deductible Rotary account.
- Thank you to Hall Rotary for your generous donation.
- Thanks must also go to the Australian New Zealand Women's Group (ANZWG) in Bangkok, for their educational grant.
- We're very proud to announce 3 new sponsors – the Gordon family in Australia, the Simpsons in England and Nick Staniforth in Australia - we appreciate your kindness.
- Thank you to every single one of our child sponsors from last year for choosing to continue sponsorship this year, it is so encouraging for the Foundation as well as the kids you support. Your occasional letters, photos and gifts really mean a lot to the children.
- Private donations were received from: Murray Yaxley, Julie Samaras, Jeff Bradley, Nim Osborne, Geoffrey Wood, Denis Laing, Isaac Lane, Mrs Naree Fascionelli (*for Visakha Bucha Day*), Glenda Coffey, Roy Hudson, and Mavis Cummins.
- A special donation was received in memory of Sandra Murphy who passed away in June. Her wish was to help children in need – on behalf of our children we are very grateful.
- The Australia-Thailand Association of Canberra donated the proceeds of their Annual Progressive Dinner.
- Thanks to Julianne and Anthony Cowley for donating the proceeds of their NAIDOC week Bush Tucker Afternoon Tea - (An interesting concept - educating others about a way of life of an indigenous people, to help educate another minority group)
- Last but not least, we must thank Graeme from TLC Always Moving the Australian trucker who heard on ABC Radio that we were looking for someone to deliver donated clothing from Canberra to Caloundra at no cost, where they were then flown to Chiang Rai and distributed among the Ayui kids. So many clothes arrived we were able to load up the truck and take all the kids to Baan Doi, a nearby Akha village, to distribute the remaining clothing.



Australian Board member Julianne Cowley receiving a generous donation from Hall Rotary Club in Canberra.



Thanks TLC Moving for helping new clothes find their way to Thailand!

If you would like to visit, or have ideas on how you can support

The Ayui Foundation we would love to hear from you!

Please contact Sumalee Milne - ayui.foundation@gmail.com - www.ayui.org

Thank you for thinking of us.

Cheques to 'The Ayui Foundation':
414 Moo 4, Baan Mai, T.Rimkok, A.Muang
Chiang Rai Thailand 57000

Donations transferred to
Bendigo Bank - Acc No: 1335 161 195
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BSB: 633 000

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Tax deductible donations in Australia cheques to: Rotary Australia Overseas Aid Fund
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