

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

Sept- October 2008
Chiang Rai, Thailand

From the Director

As it has been raining heavily this monsoon season, I took the children on two outings to get everyone out of the house. The first trip was to the cinema – which was an experience considering most of our kids had never been before! We watched *‘Where Miracles Happen’* starring Her Highness Princess Ubolrat. I wanted the kids to see it because it is set in the mountains of Chiang Rai and is about a poor rural village in need of a school. Our second outing was to watch a stage performance called *‘Mae Nam’* which raises awareness about HIV/AIDS.

One of our Board Members Ms Pattarawan Chanlen has resigned due to family commitments. On behalf of The Ayui Foundation I would like to thank Khun Pattarwan for her time and advice during our first years as a young organisation. I am also pleased to introduce Mr Phuwanat Phuwajitanon (Aju) who has been able to join our Board. Aju is an Akha man who organises cultural activities for Akha young people, and was a co-founder of the Akha Association. We are very pleased to have him on the Board strengthening our Akha community links. Along with welcoming Aju we are also pleased to have support from an Akha pastor (who shares the school run with me), and Gong, an Akha man studying at university, who teaches free guitar lessons to the kids every Saturday. All three men live on our street. It is encouraging, and good for our children, to have strong links with our local community and have good Akha role models.



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Citizenship and other Hill tribe issues....

Meenae went to the District Office with her mother and two younger brothers to submit their citizenship applications. They also had to bring three villagers to testify that they know them and that their personal details are correct. We will watch with interest to see how long these applications will take to be processed.



May also went with her father, and three villagers, to submit their application. Despite being shouted at by staff and having to pay B5000, (which was not required from Meenae when she applied), May is looking forward to when they will call her so she can receive a Thai ID card.

May's brother Yohan will have to apply separately as he is registered in his mother's house registration documents and their parents are separated. Citizenship issues are complex, ongoing and challenging to many hill tribe people.

Group Discussion Topics....



Global warming and recycling

We discussed global warming, what it means for our world and how we can make a difference to the environment (such as through recycling). The children were asked to list ways that we can reduce, re-use and recycle things we use in the house.

Friendship

After defining friendship, the children talked about qualities they like in a friend, and shared the best and worst thing a friend has done for them.



Road rules and motorbike riding

This was an important discussion because all the boys (regardless of their age) already know how to drive a motorbike so I wanted to make sure they knew the road rules and the reasons for them. I checked their understanding of traffic signs, and we talked about the dangers of drink-driving.

Visitors.....

We were visited by Simon Berry, his lovely wife and three teenage daughters, from New Zealand. After the children sang an Akha song to our visitors the Berry's sang a Maori song in return, and stayed on to share a meal together.



Richard Hackman and his Lao wife visited one afternoon. Richard used to work for an Akha NGO in Chiang Rai, and now works with hilltribe communities in Lao. It was interesting for the kids to learn about the Lao language. Richard's sister, Diana Hertz, has sponsored Ahyi for two years.

Our friend Dennis DiCesare came for his third visit, on a break from work in China.

School work.....

With the school year almost half-way through we have been busy putting lots of effort into our school work. The young people at Baan Ayui have to work extra hard as Thai is a second language, and English a third language for most hill tribe kids. Meega and Meenoo also speak Burmese – so tutoring is important to pick up Thai reading, writing and pronunciation. I have to remind them that while they may sometimes get teased by other kids because of their Thai literacy, they are actually smarter for knowing several languages.

I am always proud when I see the older kids helping the younger ones as it reinforces the family atmosphere we have been able to foster.



Thank you. . . .

- Thank you for individual donations from Dennis DiCesare (and for helping with the school run), the Berry family, Rebecca and Ross Hanrahan, Naree Fascianelli and the Lions Club of Gungahlin ACT.

- Thank you to Patchalin and Skye who held a fantastic party in Canberra, cooked up some great Thai food and invited Anthony and Julianne Cowley along totalk about The Ayui Foundation. Guests made donations to support Baan Ayui – we're impressed with such a great fundraising idea (and heard that the party went on until after 3!)

- A big thanks goes to Catherine Johnstone in Canberra for her chocolate fundraisers. We appreciate everyone who fundraises on our behalf especially in these times of rising costs of petrol, food and rice.

- Many thanks to Canberra Grammar School for their surprise donation which they presented to the Director when a group of teachers passed through Chiang Rai. Also thanks to Pambula Public School NSW for donating the proceeds of their annual International Day.

- We welcome and thank Susan Woolias our newest sponsor from Canberra Australia, who is sponsoring Sriwan.

- After our camera broke down, Penny Milne from Australia donated her old camera so we can continue to take photos of the kids as they grow.



- Finally, thank you to Ellie Simpson, our last volunteer, for her donation to buy a new guitar so we could have two for our kids to learn on. We were also able to buy a guitar stand, a guitar case (for trips) and a free chords chart, which the kids pounced on.

We appreciate everyone's support in helping our young people grow into strong and proud Akha people.... we rely on your generosity.

On behalf of our kids -
THANK YOU!!



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 transfered to
Bendigo Bank - Acc No: 1335 161 195
Sumalee Milne (Ayui Foundation)
BSB: 633 000

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