

JOURNAL

Nr. 2



Dear sponsors, friends and supporters of School for Life,

First of all, we wish to thank you all for your kind help and support. Our circle of sponsors is growing, though it may take a bit longer until we have found someone for every child at our school.

We thank you very much for your support that you have provided so far!

It has been a while already, since the last journal was sent out, and much has happened since: The following is to keep you updated with the events.

Have fun reading!

Contents

Small Introduction

Khru Ya

Khru Tom

Khru Khet

Khru Wischa

Khru Kai

Khru O

Current Events

Holidays

Events and Activities

Visit of godparents

Visit of Lung Kai

Stories of Everyday Life

Daily life

The Restaurant Team

Family

An Introduction



Miss Patchareeya Kiasuwan, “Khru Ya”

Khru Ya is the vice principal of the School for Life. She studied education and teaches Thai language to the children.



Miss Kanchana Chatraphung, “Khru Tom”

Khru Tom has been with the School for Life since February 2005. At that time there were only four teachers and 50 students. She studied social sciences. Now she takes care of the registration-procedure and various kinds of office work. Her family lives in Lamphun, which is about two hours from Chiang Mai.



Miss Sirinya Srikham, “Khru Kai”

Khru Kai has been working with the School for life since February 2005. She teaches mathematics and hotel management. Besides this she is in charge of the school shop and the school bank. The small store is run and operated by the children, selling homemade products to guests and visitors. The children learn how to produce good quality at low costs, how to calculate the price and profit.



Ravadee Sribunruny, “Khru O”

Khru O studied home economics. She is the teacher, who is responsible for the restaurant. She teaches the children how to cook and other things related to the restaurant, including hygiene standards, management and other things. She also helps out with the hotel.

Current Events

Holidays - searching for roots

The holidays are now over and the daily school life has begun again. The two months of vacation (from 15 March to 15 of May) weren't an easy time for the children. The students spent their days partially together in the School for Life, or in their home villages, or on the trip to the south.

It is important for the development of the children to know where they come from. Even if they don't have parents anymore, there is usually still an aunt or an uncle, a grandma or grandpa or a cousin around living in their village. The children need to stay in touch with their home place, in order to keep an understanding of where they come from. It is important to them not to forget or suppress their home culture. At school they are exposed to a multi-cultural setting, but life in, for example, a Lahu or Akha village is still very different. Since most of their family members in the villages can't afford a trip to Chiang Mai, it is a great opportunity for the teachers to go to homes of the children and to gain insight to the background of their pupils. This gives them ideas, how they can relate to these home-cultures in their activities at the school.

Events and Activities

Visit of Godparents

A new and rather difficult situation was drawing closer. The first godparent registered. He is going to visit in March. Uh oh, right during the holidays... Not much will be going on at the school, many children will not even be there. And how will it be for the godparent and the child to stand face to face? All these questions were running through our minds.



But the first visit was a positive experience. Even though the respective child was reluctant about the meeting (what else can you expect from a child?), but eventually this changed into a careful observation of the visitor - however still with distance.

After four days a very special relationship had developed between the two, even if it wasn't visible for everyone.

Giving the child the opportunity to find an older friend in his/her godparent, while still being in the familiar environment and not treated in a special way, is what we wish for this encounter.

Visit from Lung Kai

At the end of the school year the kids undertook a special exercise: an expert from the Red Cross Wolfenbuettel visited, in order to freshen up the children's first aid knowledge. They weren't beginners any more, as they had participated already twice in training classes held by Lung Kai (Lung Kai means 'uncle Kai', as he was called

by the children). The children were excited to take part in a workshop where they were allowed to practice their skills in reality-oriented role plays, bandaging wounds on elbows, fingers, hands and other places of the body. After the workshop the kids adopted the newly learned skills in their plays, treating the imagined wounds of their mates.

In School for Life it is very important for everyone to have first aid knowledge: every morning children stand in line at the Health Care Hut to be treated for injuries - and sometimes just to get a little attention.

Lung Kai's three-day workshop was special because of his way of working with the children, especially with the older boys, who often fight with each other. Now they engaged in bonding role-plays of treating each other's wounds - an effective way of preventing violence.



Susanne Strigel (Volunteer)

Stories of Everyday Life

Daily routine

The day begins at 6 am with sport activities for everybody: the boys do jogging, the girls aerobics with Khru Khet. From 6.30 to 7 am the children engage in community services, such as cleaning the campus: sweeping floors, collecting leaves, or whatever is required that day. After this, at 7 am, it is time to get ready for the day, to shower, to get dressed and to pack the school bags. At 7.30 it's breakfast-time.



Once everybody is fed and ready, at 8.30, all classes line up in rows in front of the Thai flag for the morning assembly and sing the Thai national anthem in honoring the King. The Monarch is loved and highly respected in Thailand, and refer to as "my" King by any Thai.

Classes start at 9 am.

Everyone takes a lunch break from 12 pm to 1pm, then they return to their class, in order to resume studies until school finishes at 4pm.

Sport activities and other clubs are held until 6 pm. Dinner is served at 6.30, which gives the children enough time to shower and clean up, in order to appear at the cafeteria neatly. Staying clean is an important element in Thai-culture. Anyone who comes to visit the farm will be asked at least once "Aap naam r yang?", which means "Have you showered yet?".

At 7.30 pm another assembly is held for meditation. After this the children return to their rooms. The little ones go to bed and the older ones have some time to themselves. In Thailand the sun sets between 6 pm to 7 pm, depending on the time of year, which means the kids can do activities in their room.

Introducing the Restaurant Team

One of the many possibilities for the children to learn from real-life situations is the restaurant. The restaurant at the school has become a classroom to the children of the restaurant team: they not only learn to cook here, but also everything else that is related to operating a restaurant. They learn mathematics, in order to be able to do the accounting or to shop for ingredients at the local market. Hygiene is held an important issue and English-studies are taken serious, as the children want to be able to communicate with the international guests.

The projects are part of the school's curriculum. 60% of it consists of the required curriculum for Thai schools, and 40% is work in project-form, which trains real life practical skills. This means many of the classes do not take place in a conventional classroom, but at various locations on the campus. The children can be found, for example, picking vegetables for cooking in the garden, planting new crops, or preparing the arrival of guests, by practicing how to present their school and their home in English.



Photo: Khru O is the leader of the restaurant group. L to R, back row: Kati (volunteer), Eddie, Khru O, Songyot and Od. Front row: Aom, Dtai, Mint, Vinus and Beer.

Family

The School for Life family consists of several smaller families whose “parents” are closely in touch with the children. One family is made up of one or two teachers or farmers and 5 children. The children can choose their families themselves. The adults are chosen based on personal values or the activities they offer. Within these families the children can bond more closely with each other, as they can in the overall school community. Here, they can be sure, there is always someone who is there for them. Cooking together, weekend activities or taking a quick trip to the nearby village, are among the activities that these families enjoy together.