

JOURNAL

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Dear godparents, friends and supporters of the School for Life,

We wish all of you a merry Christmas and great new year!

Also over here it's changing to winter and a Christmas feeling is in the air. The evenings are getting cooler and in the morning the children turn up to breakfast with gloves and hats. However during the daytime the temperature rises to comfortable 25 degrees Celsius, making it difficult to seriously call it winter.

I hope you enjoy reading this journal.

Mareike Potrykus

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1. Introduction

The adults at the School For Life



Rita Haberkorn

Rita Haberkorn is co-director of the Institute for the situational approach of the International Academy for Innovative Education, Psychology and Economy (INA gGmbH) at the Free University of Berlin. Currently she is involved with the curriculum-development for the school, and also supports the realization of the situational approach in the kindergarten.

Working for the Shaul and Hilde Robinsohn Foundation, Rita Haberkorn is responsible for relations with the sponsors and the co-operation with other foundations in Germany. She is also the contact person for new volunteers and the volunteers on site.



Mr. Chokchai Punudom, “Khru Boy”

Teacher Boy, as he called, has been with School For Life since the beginning. Before joining the school, he used to have a small restaurant near Payap University in Chiang Mai, which he gave up in order to live at School For Life and care for the children. He is responsible for the family department, which means for everything that is not directly related to school education. He also looks after guests and sponsors, when they visit the school.



Miss Palai Prasertrak, “Khru Mim”

Khru Mim has been working with School For Life since February 2007. Like Kru Boy, she also works in the family department and takes care of the children when they are not in class. Apart from this, she is the leader of the boy scouts as well as responsible for teaching ‘tourism’ in the afternoons.



Miss Theeranun Junter, “Khru Pop”

Khru Pop has been with the School since May 2006 and is currently teaching environment science. She is responsible for academic events, such as tests, exams and competitions with other schools.



Mr. Thongchai Boonmalert, “Khru Nong”

Khru Nong graduated in physical education, and has been with School For Life since May 2005, where he teaches different kinds of sports, including football, volleyball, ping pong, basketball and many more. He is also a staff-member of the family department, where he organizes extra-curricular sports activities.

2. Current affairs

Loy Krathong

by Mareike Potrykus

Loy Krathong, the festival of lights, is celebrated all over Thailand on the weekend of 24 November. During this festival, little boats, made from banana leaves, flowers, incense sticks and candles, are released into the rivers, in order to let go all worries and concerns. Another common practice, especially in Chiang Mai, is, to release paper-made light balloons to relief worries and to send wishes into the heavenly realms.



On Friday, the children created elaborated little boats.



fun.

In the evening, a group of 80 children along with their teachers and the volunteers went to the big river in Chaing Mai, and released their boats. With them their worries went down the river. At night, there a big firework was held in the city, just like at New Year’s Eve.

The younger children went to Pom Kum, a small village near the school, to release their boats into a small river. It was a wonderful evening for everyone, and especially the children had a lot of

2. Events and activities

Visiting my godchild Salah

by Anette Wendler-Krug (godparent)

Since November 2006, my sister and I have been sponsoring the now six-year old Rikkima Tharsorn, known as Salah. For the last three years my husband and I spent several exciting days with the children on the Farm in the north at the end of each of our Thailand-holidays. But this time there was a special encounter.

There she was, holding the hand of her best friend, Nam Som. She was standing shyly, listening to my English words, which were translated into Thai for her by a teacher. My Thai language skills are not yet sufficient enough to have a fluent conversation with anyone. Salah likes drawing, so as a little surprise I brought her color pencils and a pencil sharpener as a present. I knew beforehand that Salah was a quiet and introverted person, and our first meeting was somewhat distanced. But to my delight, her interest grew each day. The next day she even began to started a conversation with me by herself. She walked around with her sharpener, as if it was a little treasure. During the pickup-ride to the market and the visit to the mayor she observed me with great attention and got closer to me. Shopping with 20 baht, smiling of happiness, she showed me the contents of her bag, all of which she chose herself.



Never before I experienced an unexpected rain shower as heavy as when we rode back on the back of the pickup truck as. The many sessions of Uno, we played, were also an unforgettable experience.

I will never forget the days I spent with Salah. As a farewell present, she gave me a picture, which speaks so much and requires no explanation. She couldn't have given anything more beautiful. She expressed her happiness, about the fact that somebody cared just for her, by drawing herself as a princess standing between us - king and queen. She could have just drawn a tree or something else after all!

Please don't expect your godchild to run up into your open arms, with a glowing smile. Give the child a chance to get to know you slowly, and it will blossom like a flower, and both of you will have great fun together. We are already excited about our next vacation and the days on the farm.

Sports field inauguration

by Hannah Reckhaus (volunteer)

On 3 August the long anticipated inauguration of the new sports field (volleyball and basketball) took place.



Dr. Berndt Tausch, chairman and co-founder, of the Step Foundation in Freiburg, which financed the entire construction, flew in just for the occasion.

After a short speech from the principal and Dr. Tausch, the teachers and students of School For Life gave a 30-minute aerobic demonstration, however, soon all the guests joined in as well.

Afterwards the ribbon cutting ceremony took

place, and was followed by basketball and volleyball matches. Everybody had put together an own team: teachers, students, volunteers, workers and guests.

In the afternoon the winners were awarded with trophies, and the helpers were given huge cookie jars.

Since early August the children, teachers and volunteers are playing basketball, volleyball and football everyday after school. And every once in a while, the volleyball net gets used for badminton.



3. Everyday life

by Hannah Reckhaus

Work camp group from Germany

At the beginning of August, the School For Life was visited by a work camp group, consisting of 12 students from Germany and Austria.



They stayed in the bamboo huts in the youth camp for three weeks.

The girls helped out everywhere they could: they painted the bathrooms in the organic farming with many colors, laid new paths over the campus, and constructed a new campfire site.

One afternoon they took over the kitchen, and cooked pasta with sauce for everybody. Within just 15 minutes all the pots were eaten clean and the only thing that remained was a large pile of dirty dishes.

At the end of their stay, the group organized a special dress-up party with the kids. The cafeteria was decorated with many balloons. The children painted their faces as cats, butterflies or bears, and painted also other parts of their bodies. It was a fun experience for everyone, and a great way to celebrate the farewell for the visiting students.

Tourism group

In the tourism group, the children learn how to communicate with the international guests, and how to present their school to visitors. They act as tour guides, when the guests wish to do a jungle trekking tour, to visit the neighboring village or to go to the hot springs. The children have vast knowledge, especially about nature, and are therefore able to show the guests edible plants in the jungle to point out poisonous animals. The children enjoy wandering through the forest, just as they did before they entered the school, and feel very proud to show the visitors things from “their realm”.



In this field English language skills are very important. But not only the tourism program focuses on improving these skills in an applied manner.

The children may choose, which group they want to join in order to improve their English skills. One girl from the tourism group writes:



My name is Junu. My Nickname is Dia. I am 15 years old. My birthday is on 1st of January. I come from Chiang Rai. It is in the north of Thailand. I have one brother and one sister.

My favorite subject is English. In School for Life I am in Grad 8.

I come to School for Life because I want to learn many things and my mother has no money to send me to school. I choose to study in tourism group because I want to talk English very much. Later I like to be a guide for tourists.

My hobby is cleaning the room.