

## Projects Abroad Thailand Official Newsletter




May 2014

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A close-up photograph of several vibrant pink Plumeria flowers with yellow centers, set against a blurred green background.

### Editor's note

Hello there!

Welcome to the month and warmth of May! ☺

Last month, Projects Abroad celebrated the Thai New Year and that we have shown our volunteers some cultural activities that Buddhists practice. This month, we also have one of the most important Buddhist days being Visak day. Visak Day is important as it is the day on which the lord Buddha was born, enlightened, and passed away. Therefore, Buddhists celebrate by making merit at the temple in the morning and in the evening, people gather in the temple to pray together and do the light waving rite which is a ritual of walking around the pagoda with a light in their hands. This helps with focusing their mind and also relaxing in a peaceful atmosphere.

Besides cultural activities, this month Projects Abroad has also contributed hugely to the local community by distributing signs written in both Thai and English on anti-coal power plants. Our volunteers made several signs about the danger of coal and the negative impacts on health and environment. The aim of this activity is to be a part of protecting our environment which affects the whole community. They also signed a petition against coal power plants. The efforts made by our volunteers will help make an impact on the local community in raising the voice of the people who do not want to trade beautiful beaches for dirty and dangerous coal. It is not worth it as the negative impacts are much heavier than the positives. We really hope that our help will be heard and that our efforts to help the locals will be successful. Next month there will be updates about the anti-coal campaign and pictures of our signs which are distributed to the local organizations. Let's hope that our effort in helping to protect the homeland of the Krabi people will inspire people and therefore we will have more people help to stop this project and keep our community clean and safe.

Cheers!

Parichart Chaipikul (Ant)

Country Director



### **A dream coming true**

How can I describe my experience? I would have to say that I got one of my dreams to come true. I have, ever since I was little, wanted to work voluntarily with disadvantaged children. Since I've spent a lot of time in Thailand before, I thought, now I do it, so I packed my bag and then it was off with me. I was not nervous as I have traveled alone many times before, but it was a different feeling that was in my stomach. A feeling that this experience will be one of the greatest!



When I finally arrived at my host family in Phuket, I was overwhelmed by their hospitality and love. They made me feel like it was my second home. Later I met the other volunteers I lived with, who were also very kind and are now my really good friends.

My first day at Ban Lung Pitak was fantastic. It's a child institution with approximately 50 children ages two to five-years-old. I never saw so much love at once. The children came running up to me, wanting to hug and kiss me. They are fantastic children who had a really tough start in life and still manage to have a huge joy for life and love. I did not know it was possible to love so many at once, which I have not known for very long, but it comes from the bottom of my heart when I say that I love them all! A normal day consisted of them singing the national song and other songs in the morning. Then I would teach some English and otherwise I would just play with them and comfort them when they were sad. The trust and love they had for me is indescribable. Then there was lunch where I helped some of them



to eat and until it was time to give them a bath which was followed by naptime, where I often stayed with them until they were asleep.

I would recommend everyone to do it. The children have a strong need for it. They do not get enough love and care and personally I have gotten a lot out of it. It is an experience of a lifetime and the feeling of having helped others is completely fantastic. The four months I spent in Thailand with the children, my Thai family and the other volunteers is definitely a memory for life and I will do it again, as soon as I have the chance.

So a big thank you, to my lovely host family Pi Jeed, Bang Wan and Mona for taking so good care of me, I couldn't have wished for a better host family. And thank you to Pi Jip, the coordinator, who is amazing. And to the other volunteers; we all had so much fun and good memories together!



“The ability to laugh together is love’s essence”

## First time volunteer teaching in Thailand by Kazuya Inoue 17, Japan



Before I came here to Thailand, I had no idea what to expect. It was my first time going to another country by myself and I honestly didn't know what I was doing. However, as I am typing this on my last few days of being here, I can say for sure that I am glad I came. I am only going to be here for two weeks, but I think I was able to grow as a person.

I must admit my first few days of being here was not so great. However, I eventually got used to the little inconveniences and started to look at the bigger picture. The big picture being that I am here to teach Thai children and that I should be honored to have this opportunity. Getting used to the Thai culture wasn't that hard for me, as some parts of it were similar to Japanese culture. For example in Japan, you would also bow at a person as a greeting. They say that Thai people are very nice and that very well was the case. The Projects Abroad members were especially nice. They give you a lot of freedom in your work and whenever you needed to ask a question, they are there for you. When I came here to teach the children, I thought I would only be assisting a teacher with handing out worksheets or something, but I was surprised that they actually let me be in front of the children to teach them. We played a bigger role in the classroom than I expected. We had to make a lesson plan for each lesson. Teaching the children proved to be quite a challenge. I knew that it was going to be tough getting through the language barrier, so I had to come up with new methods of explaining things. It was difficult, but definitely a worthwhile experience. The experience of teaching the children is something that will most definitely be useful for me in the future. Experience is the key word for my trip to Thailand. If I were to make a metaphor for my stay in Thailand with a video game, I would say that I gained experience and leveled up as a person. No matter how many times I read over this metaphor, it doesn't get any less corny or cheesier. Anyways, I would recommend anyone to take some time out to go to Thailand. One other thing about Thailand is that things seem to be a little bit loose. What I mean is that people in Thailand aren't as strict about time. You could be 10 minutes late for an appointment and people wouldn't really mind. So I would say that Thailand is a good place to go to take some time out to reflect on your life. Well that concludes my article on my stay here in Thailand.



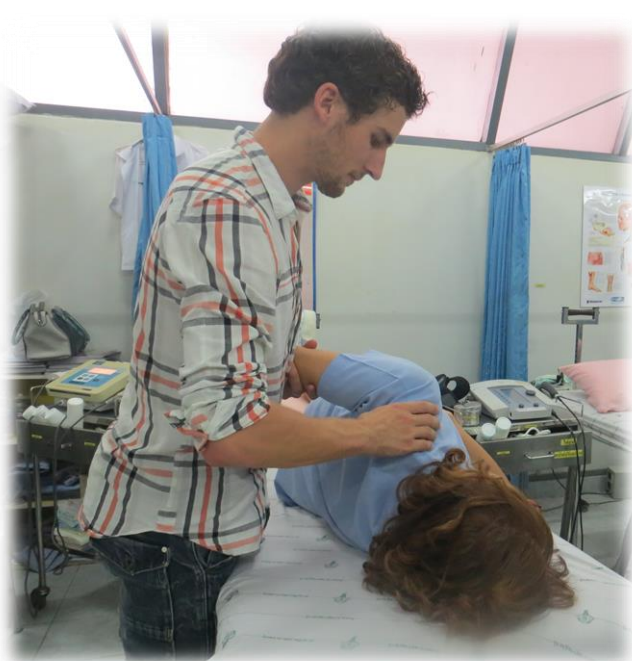


### World Red Cross Day (8 May 2014)

Today is the day we celebrate the birthday of Henry Dunant, the recipient of the first Nobel Peace Prize who founded Red Cross. The Red Cross foundation was established in 1863 which marks its 150th anniversary this year. Let's celebrate all together on the day of humanitarians with the network that helps support life and relieve pain and suffering of humans.

Projects Abroad is one of the leading volunteer companies in the world with projects that help support humanity around the world. In Thailand, we have had volunteers in medical and care projects that help contribute to the local community in the health sections. These are some photos we have gathered of our volunteers. Thank you all for all the work you have done for people. Thank you for your kind hearts that work for others without wanting anything in return.

*“Remember that the happiest people are not those getting more, but those giving more.”*  
— H. Jackson Brown Jr.







## World Turtle Day

### Phuket Marine Biological Center

Projects Abroad Thailand's conservation volunteers helped clean turtle tanks and turtles at the Phuket Marine Biological Center yesterday. We do this every month. These big turtles in the pictures were injured turtles that got caught in nets from long line fishing and the other smaller turtles were those hatched in the center. The Phuket Marine Biological Center, together with the Thai navy, collect turtle eggs from the beach and care for them until they hatch and turn one-years-old before releasing them back to the sea. This will help more turtles to survive from sharks and other sea animals that would eat them.

Last year there were 500 turtles released by the PMCB. Turtles have a long history in the world and also in Thailand. In the world, they have lived for 130 million years. There were five species found in Thailand before but now there are only four; the Green turtle, the Hawksbill turtle, the Olive Ridley turtle, and the Leatherback turtle. Factors that affect the decline of turtles are pollution especially littering, fishing, egg poaching, and habitat decline. Obviously, the trash problem is one of the main problems causing the decrease in turtle numbers. It is time for us all to help protect this species.



## **A Holy Spirit house**

San Phra Phum or a spirit house is a holy shrine to the Holy Spirit that protects the household and the area nearby. The legend of San Phra Phum began before the Buddhist era. A long time ago, Bodhisattva (before he became the Lord Buddha) was an ordained priest and sat under the banyan tree meditating and discovering Buddha teachings. One night, God Krungpali, the god protecting the landscape, was unsatisfied with the practice of Bodhisattva in his land. He appeared angry and extruded Bodhisattva. Bodhisattva, therefore, pleaded for three steps of land to perform meritorious acts. God Krungpali thought it was a tiny bit of land so he agreed to give it to Bodhisattva. Suddenly, Bodhisattva showed his supernatural power by making three steps but the steps were as big as all the land God Krungpali owned. Therefore God Krungpali had no land and was ousted to live nowhere. He could not tolerate the difficulties outside the human world, so he sent three of his servants to ask Bodhisattva for some land to live on. Bodhisattva allowed him to come back and also preached him not to hurt other people and also assigned him to look after humans and animals as well as protect them from harm. Since then people always worship God Krungpali for taking care of their lives and habitats. They also pray to God Krungpali to bless them to be successful, happy and prosperous.

