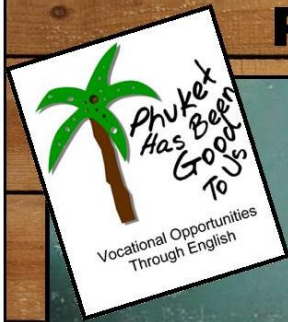


PHUKET HAS BEEN GOOD TO US



IMPROVING
THE ECONOMIC
OPPORTUNITIES
AND LIFE
CHANCES OF
YOUNG PEOPLE

NEWSLETTER - January 2015

Greetings from the Director

Looking back, 2014, was a busy year with great successes across all areas of teaching. We continue to be so proud of our students.

In August our English language programme at Baan Kalim school was highlighted as one of the best in Thailand. The Ministry of Education evaluated schools with less than 120 students throughout Thailand and selected ten high performing schools, with Baan Kalim School being chosen to represent Phuket. The selection was based on impressive test scores and the quality of its teaching methods. Baan Kalim school was the first school we taught in and we are so excited to see that our programme has made a difference.

We were also pleased to receive sponsorship from Phuket Condos & Homes for a teacher for a year! We were able to add a 7th teacher to our teaching team, giving our students access to more teachers and a higher quality of learning. Thank you to Phuket Condos & Homes.

Yet again we ran outstanding fundraising events together with Pullman Phuket Arcadia, Bliss Beach Club, Trisara, Outrigger and Anantara Vacation Club. A huge thank you to all our sponsors; a list of whom can be found at the end of this newsletter.

Wishing you and your family all the very best for 2015. On behalf of the students, teachers, staff and volunteers of Phuket Has Been Good To Us – **THANK YOU!**

Sincerely

Tina Hall
Director of Operations

In This Issue:

- **Coconut Club update**
- **Student Spotlight**
- **Saturday Swimming**
- **Fundraising events**
- **Kindergarten update**
- **World Record Attempt**

What?

Guinness World Record attempt to drive 1200km in a golf cart!

Who?

Graham & Mark on behalf of PHBTU

When?

Throughout March

Where?

From Pattaya to Phuket

Why?

To raise money for PHBGTU!

Read more inside!

What's new at school

An update from Senior Teacher Angela

Teaching over 1,000 children with 6 teachers is a massive undertaking and this semester I have been constantly impressed with our teaching team. They have really pulled together in order to give our children the best possible chance of success.

We work in difficult conditions, with no air conditioning, large class sizes and multiple disruptions to class schedules, yet our teachers do not complain. They work many Saturdays conducting extra reading classes and taking the residential students swimming. I am lucky to be surrounded by such hard working and dedicated professionals and I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank and acknowledge them.

Last November we welcomed a 7th teacher to our team who is being generously sponsored by Phuket Condos & Homes.

We are now well into exam preparations and I would like to wish all our students and teachers good luck.



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What's happening at school

Mathyom update with Teacher Shah

At Kamala school we teach all six Matayom levels, which is equivalent to high school. As the Matayom mid term exams are in mid-January, exam preparation has been our main focus. Matayom 3 and 6 students will be sitting for their O-Net exams in February. This O-Net exam is very important as it is the entrance test for the next level of their education. For Matayom 3, it is the entrance test for Matayom 4 (pre-university) or technical college and for Matayom 6, it is the entrance test for university admission.



In order to prepare for their exams, students have to do a lot of translation. They make use of the donated dictionaries to translate from Thai to English. They work together in groups to comprehend and translate English passages. Students write sentences to practice their grammar and sentence construction. Besides that, they sit for reading practices and assessments. They also practice using the past years O-Net exam papers to familiarise themselves with the format and style of the exams. This is made possible with the donated projector and screen.

Hopefully, the intensive revision will help prepare them well for their exams. Good luck to the Matayom students!



Student spotlight with Teacher Taylor

Meet Kasama from my P1/2 class! This little ninja here is such a gem among her classmates. She has made Star Student twice since being in English class as she understands and comprehends classroom work faster than her peers. Not only is she a bright little star, Kasama is always full of smiles, hugs, and peace signs. She's one of the many students who often keeps a smile on my face. Don't let all the cuteness fool you though, she's still quite the little prankster, hilarious none the less.

It amazes me with this being her first year in a classroom setting how well behaved she is. I can give her a task, use my little knowledge of "Thainglish" and she's finished before you know it. Kasama is going to be one of the students a teacher will have to challenge in the classroom. She's eager to learn, loves to help out her peers and teacher, and displays ample amounts of classroom leadership.

Outside of school

This semester there has been a huge numbers of after school activities - both in and out of Co-conut Club. We have been busy: making art activities using recycled and donated materials, learning to cook, practicing our numbers by using Bingo, doing yoga and playing sport. All the teachers are constantly coming up with new ideas to keep the club fresh and coconutty!

Every weekend we go swimming at a local hotel - Thank you The Palms, Kamala Dreams, Absolute Sea Peal Patong and Royal Embassy Kamala for generously letting us have a great time in your pool! And a massive shout out to Thanyapura who give 12 lucky students swim lessons each week.



Saturday swimming with Teacher Martin

Saturday swimming is one of my favourite parts of the job. I love this time as this is when teachers get the opportunity to spend more time with the students and get to know them better by talking with them while they swim.

Swimming as a co-curricular activity is a big deal to these youngsters as many of them don't have the opportunity to swim very often. As well, it's good chance for them to socialize and practice English while doing a fun activity. Let's face it, what kids don't have fun in the water!

Starting Saturday swimming has immensely improved the bond with my students, both socially and professionally. This is when I get to really see the children smile; which doesn't always happen at school! It is evident by just looking at their faces that they are really enjoying it. I am really glad that we're making such an impact in the lives of these children, with the help of friends, volunteers, hotels that have helped make this happen.



Kindergarten and Kalim kids!

Kindergarten update with Teacher Alicia

Recently at the Kamala Childrens Development Centre we have had a number of things going on. Literally a number! Pre Anubaun is using hopping circles to count from 1 to 10. Each circle counts as a number and we have students hopping their way along the number line.

Anuban 1 is using their (very little) fingers and (very little) toes to count.

Anubaun 2 has mastered counting to 20! Which is our yearly goal! We've achieved Teachers Alicia's goal for us a few months early. Go Anuban 2!

Anubaun 3 is spelling out numbers 1-10 with their fantastic sounding-out skills. 'Two' starts with 't' and so does 'telephone'. Great connection Anubaun 3. That connection puts us one step closer to being able to read English books!



An update from Kalim with Teacher Agie

I recently had the chance to attend one of Sunshine Montessori's teacher training classes in Indonesia where I learned some new reading techniques and the importance of circle time with children. It feels really nice as a teacher to be able to learn new techniques and share them with students. Not only do I feel re-energised but the children are excited as well. One of the reading or storytelling techniques we've been doing is "Action Stories" where I tell the story and they repeat after me and together we do an action. The little ones do really get excited about this and it brings a lot of fun into class. Storytelling is now a popular activity, not only has it helped them increase their vocabulary quicker than I thought but also encouraged their imagination and sparked their interest in reading.

Circle time is now a regular activity we do in English class. We talk about our daily activities, do reading, tell stories, sing songs, and play games in the circle time. In circle time, the children are more attentive. When we talk about what they like and what they do every day it gives the children more confidence to speak in English.



How you can help

2014 was jam packed with events, with a large scale event every 2-3 months! This certainly kept us busy! Our final event of the year was Black Tie Muay Thai to celebrate the opening of the Similan Ballroom at Outrigger Laguna Phuket Beach Resort. More than 170 guests turned out for an evening of Muay Thai and fabulous food. Guests were treated to traditional Muay Thai demonstrations, a blindfold fight, a fat boy fight and ended the night with a real fight between a Thai and Australian fighter .

As we rounded off the year, we finished with our Christmas Tree campaign. Hotels around Phuket asked guests to write a message to our students on a wishing tag and hang it on the tree in exchange for a donation. Anantara Vacation Club went above and beyond, inviting their guests to purchase a teddy bear for our children, with both the bear and the donation coming to us. Such wonderful holiday spirit!

A shout out to a couple of our fabulous teachers, Alicia and Shah, who both conducted their own fundraising campaigns. Alicia collected donations in lieu of birthday presents this year, raising \$2500 USD and Shah is currently training in Muay Thai and will compete in March, with all proceeds coming to us. Thank you Alicia and Shah! You both see every day what a difference this money will make.



Guinness World Record challenge – a 1200km drive in electric golf cart

There isn't much that we won't do to raise money...including driving a golf cart for more than 1,200km! In March 2015, Graham Haslam and Mark Cameron will volunteer their time to drive a golf cart from Pat-taya to Phuket to attempt a new world record and raise money for Phuket Has Been Good To Us.

The journey is going to take approximately 24 days to complete and the intrepid cart drivers will raise funds by stopping in and visiting some of Thailand's most famous golf courses. The trip will conclude with a gala fundraising event at the Phuket Hard Rock Café where the drive will be recognised by Guinness World Records as a new world record. The actual golf cart used on the journey will then be auctioned off to raise even more money.

You can track their progress online via Facebook so stay tuned for more updates!

For more information or to sponsor this exciting world record attempt, please contact graham@phukethasbeengoodtous.org.

Thank you!

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