

Phuket Has Been Good To Us

March 2013 Newsletter



Welcome to 2013 — From the Board

It's exam time – the pinnacle of our year, where we get to see the results of the hard work we put in, each and every day. Our teachers are passionate and give so much time and effort to ensure that the more than 900 children we teach achieve the best possible results.

The end of term exams signal the completion of months of hard work and this term also means that we say goodbye to many of the Matayom (high school) students, some of whom we have taught for years. We wish these students all the very best, and hope that everything they have learnt with us will benefit them in the future.

Of course, we could not continue our work with all our children if it was not for fundraising events and the support of the community. To all the sponsors of the recent Burns Supper at the Pullman Phuket Arcadia - *you made it possible for us to raise enough money to pay for a teacher for a year* – thank you! If you missed this event, our next one, Mystic Mirage, is on Friday 26th April at Bliss Beach Club. Make sure you save the date!

Wishing you all a fantastic start to 2013 and thank you for your continued support.

Sue Ultmann
Vice Chairperson, Board of Managers

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Save the date:
April 26th!



Improving the Economic Opportunities and Lives of Young People

Student Updates

This term has been as hectic as possible in the teacher's office. We have really experienced what it is to be a team and support each other through a very long year. Now that it's coming to the end, we have exams to mark and reports to write and then we all get to take a break.



Some of the highlights over the past couple of months have included:

A new School Director: We have said farewell to the previous Director and hello to Pho Or Wisan. We are working closely with him to further improve the English programme at school and he is very excited about this. We are also working much closer with the Thai staff at school which is extremely beneficial, as we are now getting more support from them!

Sports day: Sports day was held in January and we saw the blue team win. The children participated enthusiastically and had a great time. The teachers were also involved, but perhaps were not quite as enthusiastic on such a hot day.

Volunteers: A huge thank you to all the hard working reading group leaders and classroom assistants who make each and every day at school a little easier. Not only does it take the pressure off the teachers, but the children reap the rewards of the extra attention—especially the students whose English skills are limited.

Exam results: Again this term we have seen some excellent scores in our Prathom (primary) classes. It is a real reward for a teacher when a student scores 100%.



Ring the Bells

Bell is one of Teacher Gina's P1 students. She loves to swim, write and play with puzzles. During Coconut Club beach outings you can find her swimming on a boogie board with her friends.

Her favorite color is pink, but don't let that fool you into thinking she is only interested in "girly" activities! Bell likes to play pretend Muay Thai boxing with other Coconut Club children and build boxing rings with construction toys.

Although she is still young, Bell has thought about what she would like to be when she grows up. Her dream career? Being a teacher!

Coconut Club Updates

Message From the Coordinator

This term we have seen a record number of attendees - sometimes we have had up to 40 residential children attending a session of Coconut Club!!!! Luckily for me (and the other teachers), we have also had record numbers of volunteers. For example, in the month of February we had 24 people come in and help us out!

Coconut Club consists of some tried and true classes which are perennially popular: cooking, Uno, bingo, swimming as well as the occasional impromptu dress up day.

We are also very excited to bring some new activities to Coconut Club this term as well including: hip hop dancing, crochet, movie night, art and photography. We love new ideas/projects that stretch the minds and imaginations of our students. After all, it is all about them!

As always, I am eternally grateful for the people that so generously give up their time and energy to provide an extra bit of English language practice and joy to the lives of these children.

If you, or your friends, have a skill that could benefit our children – either by giving them a vocational skill or by encouraging them to use English language – I'd love to hear from you.

Yours in coconutting,
Angela



Happy Birthday to You

Every year, each person gets one special day that is all about them: their birthday! For most of the children in Coconut Club, though, their family is not able to help them celebrate.

That is where Phuket Has Been Good to Us comes in! Every couple of months, our team coordinates a birthday party, generously hosted by Bliss Beach Club. At the February 2nd birthday party, the children whose birthdays recently passed got to celebrate their special day. With the help of the staff at Bliss and some of our dedicated volunteers, these children spent a fun afternoon in the sun swimming, making pizza, learning to juggle and eating cake!

Along with Bliss, this special day could not have been possible without Watermark, TEZ Tour and Mid-Air Circus Arts. The children really enjoyed their party, and we look forward to the next one in May!

Major Events of 2013

Piping in the Haggis

Our first major fundraising event of 2013, the Burns Supper, was a huge success! Ninety guests paid homage to Scottish poet Robert Burns at the newly opened Pullman Phuket Arcadia, and enjoyed a taste of Scotland through five courses of Scottish food (including traditional haggis), whisky, a piper and entertaining speeches. The guests dressed in tartan and kilts provided an extra Scottish flair!

The proceeds of the event from tickets, raffle and auction prizes totalled to over 470,000 baht, helping us to pay for a teacher's salary for the coming school year. Thanks to the generosity of our sponsors, guests and dedicated volunteers, we are well on our way to reaching our fundraising goals for 2013!



Mystic Mirage

Picture yourself in a crowded market place, filled with tents shrouded in silk curtains, with the smell of spices wafting in the air. A belly dancer drifts by with a dozen eyes following her. You are in a Mystic Mirage, and the location is Bliss.

On April 26th, join us at Bliss Beach Club for Mystic Mirage, a night of Middle Eastern delights. There will be roving entertainment, free flow wine, themed food and dancing throughout the night. Come dressed in your best 'Desert Chic' and indulge your Arabian side.

Tickets are 2500 baht and can be purchased through our office.

Alternatively, email info@phukethasbeengoodtous.org or call 076 278 146.



How YOU Can Help

Sponsor a Child, Sponsor the Future

Phuket Has Been Good to Us impacts more than 900 children at two government schools in Kamala and Kalim. As we receive **no government funding**, our programme relies on the generosity of donors and sponsors to continue our important work.

An easy way to support the children in our programme is to sponsor one of them.



For less than \$1USD per day, you can help to educate a child and change their future.

Sponsoring a child ensures you are making a commitment to giving these children the best future possible. Learning English is vital in ensuring that local Thai children can look to the future with hope.

Running an English-language education programme for 900 students and after-school club for 130 resident children means that supplies do not last long.

In-kind donations help ensure we do not run out of supplies.

If you are interested in contributing in-kind to Phuket Has Been Good to Us, please take a look at our website's **wish list**! We are especially in need of exercise books for the children. You can also "**like**" our **Facebook page** to see current needs!

<http://facebook.com/phukethasbeengoodtous>



A Very Generous Holiday

Many people come to Phuket for a nice, relaxing holiday, filled with sunbathing, swimming, and scrumptious Thai food. These holiday makers experience just how good Phuket can be to them, and some wish to give back to the community through our organisation.

We have been very lucky during high season this year, receiving visits and donations from many visitors to Phuket. Reijo Talvitie is one of these incredibly giving visitors who, along with his family, support our charity through monetary donations. This Christmas, Reijo's son and his family (pictured) donated 30,000 baht! Their continued support of our work is greatly appreciated, and really helps with the various costs of running a charitable organization—such as supplies for the students!

Visitors from the UK, Europe, Australia, and North America have all stopped by our office to bring supplies for our students, teachers and administrative team. Some have even had the joy of spending an afternoon in Coconut Club! You can see pictures of many of these visits on our Facebook page.



Foundation Updates

Farewell to a Volunteer

At the end of February, our Communications Coordinator Joao (we all call him “J-WOW,” as we cannot emulate proper Portuguese accents!) ended his six month contract with the Foundation. He reflected upon his time here before heading back to cold, cold Portugal:



PHBG TU was the perfect place for me to develop skills transferable to a future job, whilst having the satisfaction of lending a hand to children in achieving opportunities that otherwise might not be there for them. The office has a relaxed environment, the team is closely knit and passionate about the work it does, and the team play is inspiring (and essential!). This was truly a delightful experience from beginning to end. The team was there to support and teach me, which made my mistakes fewer and bearable.

As for the children, they are the loveliest, funniest, naughtiest bunch you will ever meet! The residential children are a source of inspiration: not only because they keep beautiful smiles on their faces notwithstanding their life stories, but also because these are children that both study and live together, forming a community of tiny people that take care of each other. It makes me wonder why this can be achieved more easily by children than by adults.

All in all, volunteering for the PHBG TU Foundation has been the best thing that happened to me!

Donation from Island Technology

As a charity, we rely on the support of local businesses to continue our work. Island Technology have looked after all our IT needs since we began. When they heard we were in desperate need of a laptop, they came to the rescue by donating a brand new one to us!



“We support Phuket Has Been Good To Us as we share their vision of a better future for students in Phuket. From the beginning we have provided the Foundation with free IT support and are delighted to be able to provide a laptop for their office, as they do such important behind the scenes work, which donors often don’t think of.”

- Autcharawan Pratumwan, Managing Director

Thank you Island Technology!

On The Road

A quick update on our car! We recently had it decked out with logos – our logo and the logo of our donor the Catlin Group. Our car is now recognizable on the streets of Phuket, so make sure you keep an eye out for us.

Thank you Catlin!



Thank You, Burns Supper Sponsors!

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