

The year in review!

December 2012

Season's Greetings!

A lot has been happening since our last newsletter. We have said goodbye to our Director of Education Carl, and welcome to two new full-time volunteers. You can read all about them later in the newsletter!

Our students continue to do well, with many of them excelling in their end of term exams in September. It is always pleasing to see them excelling, especially the ones we have seen grow over many years.

During October the children had holidays, but the office continued to work hard. There is ALWAYS something to do! Not long after the students returned to school we received a welcome delivery – our new car! Catlin Underwriters have very generously donated one to us. Read more about that later.

Coconut Club continues to be well attended by residential students. We have also been taking an active interest in the older residential students who often do not attend Coconut Club. These children have different interests and needs than the younger children. Keep reading to find out how we reach out to them.

Finally, it is drawing close to Christmas – where does the time go! Although we work through this time and school remains open, we at the foundation would like to wish all of our supporters a happy and safe holiday season. Thank you all for your support this past year, and we look forward to a prosperous year ahead with each and every one of you.



The team at Phuket Has Been Good To Us

A Message From Our Board

Learning English remains as important as ever and I am pleased to say that all of us here at Phuket Has Been Good To Us remain dedicated to making this happen. From the perspective of our Board it has been a great year with many accomplishments. Our children are progressing well, we continue to offer innovative and educational activities for residential students and we are always looking for ways to improve and expand what we do. We are now teaching English to over 900 students and we continue to increase the after school activities we run for the residential students at Kamala and older students in Kalim.

I am delighted that more and more people in the community are becoming aware of the amazing work of our teachers and volunteers. We are receiving more support than ever, with people from across the island wanting to contribute in some way.

On behalf of all Board members, I would like to wish all of you a safe and prosperous Christmas and New Year. Please accept our personal thanks for all your support throughout the year and know that you have made a lasting difference in the lives of these children.

Peter Hamilton, Vice Chairman, Board of Directors

Phuket Has Been Good To Us is an independent, not-for-profit, Thai registered charity that exists solely to provide educational opportunities for children.

We work to improve the economic opportunities and life chances of young people, by funding and implementing high quality, practical English language education in government schools.

We receive no government funding and rely on the generosity of the community to continue our work.



School updates

A teacher's life is never dull and this year has proven to be no exception. We have seen a multitude of changes in timetable and class numbers –the start of any term is always a test of teachers' patience and stamina!

All this plus: sports day preparation, a bunch of new volunteers, reading groups and an impending 5 yearly visit from the Primary Education Foundation.

In September, we said good-bye to our Director of Education, Carl, and this term further changes are afoot too, with the Kamala School expecting a new Thai Director soon.

No pressure!

Lucky for the Foundation, our teachers are multi-taskers who are taking all this in their strides. We are lucky with the team we have – all excellent, dedicated teachers who genuinely like their jobs and the students they teach.

The Benefits of Reading Groups

Reading Groups are one of our most popular helper activities. Adults come into the school and work alongside the teacher to improve Primary students' reading and comprehension of written texts. When used alongside phonics, this activity greatly improves children's ability to read and to understand the sounds and meanings of the words on a page. No small feat, when the script looks entirely foreign!



The helper takes a group of 6 students and reads a reading book with them. Sometimes this means reading word by word or sometimes the students can read whole pages with very little input from the adult. It all depends on the class.

People who help with Reading Groups are here for a long time. They need to be able to go to the same class every week – so as to choose appropriate level books. Plus, it is very rewarding to watch your students "grow up" in their reading abilities.

Obviously an ability to read and comprehend written language opens up many more doors for our students.

Should you wish to contribute to reading groups, we are always looking for long term helpers, or we have a list of reading titles you can purchase to provide a wider range of books for our students. Please contact Reading Group Coordinator, Gina Jayona, for more details.



Coconut Club

Reaching out to older resident students

As Coconut Club Coordinator this year, part of my job has been to organise fun activities for the residential students at Kamala School. While this is easy for the young ones – a colouring pen and some dress ups will keep them amused – my challenge lay with the older students. Let's face it, they have seen it all before- many of them have lived at school for their entire educational careers and frankly, they are not interested in hanging out with 7 year olds!

In addition to residential students being able practice their English language skills, I want to give our children some skills they can take out to the community with them after they leave school. Hence, more than one of the ideas we trialled this year had dual purposes. One such idea was Nail Technician classes. Khun Taan and her team from Gloss Nail Spa spent an afternoon a week teaching our girls the basics of nail care and manicuring. 10 of our older girls attended classes each week and thoroughly enjoyed themselves - and learnt an employable skill for their futures.

The biggest event we held for our teenagers was an Under Age Rage – Almost Famous. Hosted by Famous Nightclub, Jungceylon, this was a chance for our students to mix with teens from other schools, swim, listen to a top DJ, dance and eat as much as their stomachs could cope with – care of Outrigger Hotels. All this and a fire show!

The Famous Beach Club has cabanas and a pool on the roof! It's an amazing venue – the children's mouths definitely fell wide open when they arrived and saw they were having a party here!

Angela McNoe
Coconut Club Co-ordinator



Student Profile: Shampoo

Shampoo is in P4 this year and is a regular at Coconut Club. She enjoys cooking and dressing up and is a master with face painting.

Shampoo really enjoys swimming and is not afraid to go in the deep end and put her face under. She is currently learning to swim underwater which is just as well, because her favourite holiday destination is the beach!

Her favourite class is computing. She wants to be a nurse when she grows up and says that her aim in life is to make people happy. With her lovely smile and friendly demeanour, she always brightens our days.

Here she is, sporting her new haircut and enjoying a chocolaty treat with her friends Ploy and Ice.



Fundraising

Upcoming Events in 2013!

2013 is going to be a big year for our fundraising events, especially the first quarter of the year.

In January, we are hosting a Burns Supper. This event promises to gather the cream of Scottish (and English, Welsh and Irish!) society for an evening of fun and tradition. Guests will have the opportunity to bid on some fabulous auction prizes, while enjoying high end whisky and food that reminds them of home - such as haggis!

February sees the second annual Starlight Soirée to be held at the stunning amphitheatre of British International School. The evening will feature performances under the stars by professional opera singers and British International School students. A scrumptious menu and creative mocktails from Outrigger will accompany the performances, followed by cocktails and canapés at the after-party at Watermark.

Last year's Bliss Beach Party was a huge success, and so in 2013 we have a lot to live up to! Themed around 'Arabian Nights' our volunteer organising committee will be turning the venue into a magical wonderland of cushions, silk curtains and Turkish carpets. Chef Alex promises a customised souk inspired menu not to be missed.

We will also continue to have a host of other events throughout the year, so please visit us online to see what we are up to, and to find out how to get your tickets to these must attend events.



Save the date!

Burns Supper
25th January 2013

Starlight Soirée
22nd February 2013

Annual Bliss Event
26th April 2013


Vocational Opportunities
Through English

SMART Property & Lifestyle Expo, Phuket

The SMART Property & Lifestyle Expo, Phuket has generously chosen Phuket Has Been Good to Us as its official charity. This exciting event will take place from 27th - 30th December, 2012 at the Royal Phuket Marina. Participants will experience the many ways Phuket can be good to them through yachts and cruises, inspirational seminars by property and investment experts, and tastings. They will also have the opportunity to partake in showcases of cars and international properties, helicopter rides, and more. We are very excited to partner with the Expo, which offers free entrance and has graciously agreed to accept donations for the Foundation. As Hoi Cheung, Director of the Expo stated, "It is very fitting that we are supporting the Phuket Has Been Good To Us charity to remind ourselves of the privileges we have and to share the good life by helping local underprivileged kids." For more information on the event and attendance registration, please visit www.smartexpos.com/phuket.

SMART PROPERTY &
LIFESTYLE EXPO

Fundraising

Give the ultimate gift this Christmas – Sponsor a Child

This Christmas we are asking you to forget about giving socks, undies and the candy canes that never get eaten.

This Christmas we are asking you to give the gift that keeps on giving – [sponsoring a child](#).

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.

Without the work conducted by our charity, these children would not have the opportunity to learn English from a fluent English speaker. Learning English helps make a lasting difference and opens doors to them that would otherwise be closed.

Choosing to sponsor a child is a powerful experience and will help a child to realize their full potential. As a sponsor, you will receive school reports throughout the year on your child's progress, allowing you to see your gift in action. You will see the world through their eyes while becoming part of their journey.

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

It is only with support and generosity of people around the world that we can continue our work.



Donations in Lieu of Gifts

Earlier this year, Teacher Stephanie married the man of her dreams, Ellis. They got married in the beautiful setting of Twin Palms. However there was something different about this wedding – Stephanie asked for donations for us, instead of asking for a wedding gift.

Asking for donations in lieu of gifts at weddings is becoming more and more common, especially as many engaged couples often already live together and have everything they need.



Bree and James did something similar when they got married in Kamala. Many of their guests chose to make a donation to Phuket Has Been Good To Us because they knew that Bree had volunteered for us!

If you would like to ask for donations in lieu of gifts at your wedding, or even for your birthday, please let us know. We'd love to help you make it possible.

Update: Stephanie and her husband Ellis welcomed their new baby Lochlin James Munro into the world on December 5th. Congratulations!

Fundraising

Thank you to Catlin Underwriting!



During August, a group of volunteers from throughout South East Asia came to Phuket on a corporate team building weekend and chose to spend some time with our students. The weekend was organized by UFIT, and the corporate volunteers were from Catlin Underwriting in Singapore, Hong Kong and China.

These volunteers spent a day with our children, doing running repairs at Coconut Club, spending time with the children doing a beach clean up and generally seeing how our residential students live. The children had a great day chatting and eating lunch with their new friends. These volunteers got a glimpse into the lives of these children and some of the difficulties we face when we do activities with them. After lunch, Mark Newman, CEO Asia Pacific, stood up and thanked all of us for the day and made an announcement – Catlin Underwriting were going to sponsor a car for us! They understood the difficulty we had with getting children, staff and volunteers around on the island and wanted to make our lives easier.



THANK YOU CATLIN UNDERWRITING!

Our new car has now arrived and we are in the process of producing stickers to show off Catlin's support. Stay tuned for photos over the coming months of the children with the car, and once again a huge thank you to Catlin and their team!

Follow us on Facebook!

Curious to see what we have been up to? What the children are learning? Why not 'Like' us on Facebook to keep up to date!

We regularly post photos from Coconut Club and our weekend activities. Plus, you can keep informed of any events that we have.

www.facebook.com/phukethasbeengoodtous

facebook

Fundraise for us!

By fundraising for Phuket Has Been Good To Us you too can help make a difference to the lives of underprivileged children living in Thailand.

It's easy. Last month Jody from The Termite Technology Management System and her friend Lindsay joined the Kamala Beer Garden in putting on fabulous Tropical party which was raised over 35,000 baht.

Plus, every month The Aussie Pub in Kamala and Sugar Reef in Chergntalay host pub quizzes which are great fun and raise much needed funds.

Visit our 'Donate' page online to find out more!

Volunteers

New volunteers!



Volunteers are part of the lifeblood of Phuket Has Been Good To Us. Recently we have welcomed two new volunteers into the fold – Joao and Lauren.

Joao (pronounced J-wow, we call him John!) comes to us from a land far away– Portugal! John has studied International Relations and is keen for a career in international politics. Until then he is happily helping us out and making a difference in whatever way he can. As the only male in the office, he is often called upon to lift

heavy things and do our IT jobs! He can be found begrudgingly looking after our resident cat, Bisquit!

Lauren recently landed in Phuket fresh from sunny California. She is very excited about helping out and spending time at Coconut Club. She has already mastered the art of scootering in Phuket and can be seen whizzing down the streets of Kamala on “Cookie”. Lauren and Joao join Tina, Mai, Hayley and Angela in the office, and will be helping out with the upcoming events.



Recently a Friend of the Foundation sent us a note about why she loves being involved with PHBGU...

When I moved to Phuket, with my husband, as part of his work relocation, I left a busy life back in England – work, family and volunteer work that was almost a full time job. So what to do? I was soon bored of sunbathing, lunches and socializing and needed some routine to my life again. I always enjoyed my work back in the UK with Girl Guiding UK and was directed by a friend to PHBGU.

I was welcomed by Tina and invited to join in with the Reading Groups, which I love – Thai school is SO different from any I have come across before! The children are a rowdy lot and it can be difficult to concentrate sitting in a corridor with children moving around between classrooms and lessons or drifting out from other classrooms. But it's worth it.

The children are so willing to try when the opportunity is given to them. Over time you see the rewards that helping here gives - the children who were once shy and scared to try become confident and willing to “go first” when the books appear.

I also help the office staff offering transport via pick-up truck for any big donated items that need moving. All charities need the administration side to make them successful, and PHBGU is no different than any other.

Good-bye from David Berman

What can I say! It's been 8 months since I arrived here and I am still doing my best to stay involved with the Foundation. That kinda says it all doesn't it? I came to Phuket, sight unseen, and couldn't have had a better group to introduce me to this new world.

I spent my time doing all the things that go along with working at a small charity: from getting coffee to putting on a fundraiser for 200 people. The best part about volunteering here is the interaction with the children. You can just see how much they are enjoying themselves. For these children, learning is still fun and exciting - an idea which is sometimes lost in the western world.

The staff at the foundation are terrific and the job they do is even better. All it takes is one trip to Coconut Club to know that all our volunteers and staff are having an impact. I just hope that I helped create more opportunities for the children. I will never forget my time here.

