

Rotary Duffy Boys Town Thailand – 2016

Dear Sponsors,

I couldn't be happier to have returned to Boys Town for the 3rd time, and this time with my children. We are visiting Boys Town for 8 weeks throughout December and January to help out and teach the boys some English. While I'm here I have the pleasure of writing the annual report for the sponsors. Each time I visit Boys Town, it is not only the boys that are growing, but my emotions and my attachment for the project are too. Every morning we wake to the sounds of the boys working hard doing their morning chores, or getting ready for school. I love seeing them all so smartly dressed in their uniforms. Without knowing where they have come from, people would assume that they are normal, happy, privileged children. This just goes to show how well the boys are doing in the Boys Town program. I can see that the boys are happy, and acknowledge and appreciate the opportunity they have been given.

Since my last visit in April 2016 I have noticed many more plants and fruit trees that have been planted. A whole row of guava fruit at the back of the guest house, and the lime trees have grown so big. I have noticed that new lime trees were being created by air layering propagation. What a simple and cost effective way of producing more plants without the need of fancy tools or rooting hormones. Just another small observation that shows just how resourceful and non wasteful Boys Town is. Being the growing boys that they are, all of the fruits and vegetables grown at Boys Town



Flowers that are sold at the market

are consumed by the boys, however beautiful flowers are also grown and sold at the market for 1-2 Baht each. The boys take care of the gardens themselves watering, composting, weeding and replanting. They even built the garden beds themselves.



Helping the boys to weed all the garden beds

In mid October 2016, 8 members of the Australian Rotary club of Joondalup came to visit Boys Town. They stayed for the weekend to visit the project and to see the boys that they provide support for. They were all so deeply moved by the project that they have promised to continue their support in the future. One of the members in particular has decided to sponsor a boy. This is great news for Boys Town, and it really highlights the importance of having visitors come to Boys Town to see for themselves what a large and small amount of money can do.



On the 9th of December it was the 27th birthday of Boys Town. To celebrate, some of the older boys will return to Boys Town on the night of the 29th December for a small party. Given that many of the alumni now have jobs such as Policemen, Doctors and Teachers, many of them cannot get the same time off, but hopefully a good number of them can still return for the evenings' celebration and to catch up with some of their 'brothers.'

Early in the new year, Boys Town will be visited by approximately 50 volunteers from the Khon Kaen University Dental Clinic, along with some hairdressing volunteers, and electrical volunteers. Rotary club of Khon Kaen has arranged for the volunteers to visit Boys Town to service the local community as well as the boys. The boys will be treated to dental check-ups, treatment, and haircuts. The property's electrical systems will be checked over and repaired.

During our stay it was my daughters 8th birthday. We celebrated with cake, some packets of chips and pepsi. I think the boys loved being treated to cake and junk food. They serenaded her with the guitar and a choral 'Happy Birthday' song before she blew out the candles. A couple of the boys spent the afternoon making cards and sketching a picture of her. She was quite surprised when they handed them to her. They made her feel so special. These kids really just melt my heart.



Later into the evening the guitar playing and singing continued and we sat around listening to them play and sing. It's moments like these, just sitting around with music, that are always my favourite times at Boys Town.

The team at Boys Town are the most dedicated, passionate, and selfless people I have ever met. Dr Anukul, the volunteer Director, is such a kind and gentle man and it's easy to see the influence he has on the young men that he is raising. The gentlemanliness that he talks about is clearly evident in the older boys, and is clearly developing well within the younger, more newer boys also. Between my visits from April to November I have noticed such changes in some of the boys, much more than just their stature. They are becoming the kind, gentle, hard working boys that Dr Anukul had intended. Pramote is also very kind, welcoming, and a very dedicated Assistant Director. He works very hard for Boys Town and is always busy organising something. Nop and Ta are the other 2 Assistants at Boys Town that I have gotten to know well. I can tell that the boys love spending time with Nop and Ta. These guys work incredibly hard ensuring that the facility is well kept and that the boys have everything they need. They play football together and spend a lot of their free time with the kids. They have a love in their hearts for the boys, much like an older brother has for his younger siblings. I couldn't imagine Boys Town being the same without Dr Anukul, Pramote, Nop, or Ta.

My only concern upon revisiting Boys Town, is that the number of boys has decreased yet again with only 34 boys currently residing at Boys Town this year, some of them still without sponsorship. The financial position of Boys Town in Thailand concerns me greatly, enough that I fear its closure in the coming years if they are unable to gain more financial support. Boys Town are in desperate need of more sponsorship for the boys or donations to assist in the running costs of the facility. Some of the boys, even though they are sponsored, do not receive any money or gifts from their parents or extended families. I have since found out that Dr Anukul himself gives his own money to the boys who do not receive anything from their families. Unfortunately, this happens to be many of them.

If you think that you might be able to help Boys Town further, perhaps by raising funds through an event or a raffle, or perhaps you know someone else who is as kind hearted as you, who may also be willing to sponsor one of the boys. Anything to help would be very much appreciated. Together we can make a difference to the future of Boys Town.

Regards,

Shell Read
Australian Volunteer