



# D.E.P.D.C.

*Development and Education Programme  
for Daughters and Communities Centre*

## DEPDC-NEWSLETTER

March 2007

### Sompop's Words



**SOMPOP JANTRAKA**

The end of the year has always been a time to reflect back on our challenges and successes and use these experiences to plan for the future at DEPDC. Now that I have been involved in trafficking prevention for 17 years, the time has also come to look at the impact our work is having throughout the Mekong region. Starting in 1989 with just 19 daughters, DEPDC has grown to include formal and non-formal education for at-risk people of all ages, as well as child rights and protection services and a new thrust to form an extensive grassroots regional network through Mekong Youth Net.

My daughters who have been with me from the first year of the program are now running DEPDC practically without me! My confidence in the staff and administrators at DEPDC and the pressing needs for trafficking prevention and protection programs in other Mekong countries lead me to a difficult but exciting decision – as of January 15, 2007, I have resigned as director of DEPDC in order to pursue anti-trafficking programs throughout the Greater Mekong Sub-region.

I leave DEPDC in the capable and experienced hands of Ms. Alinda Wettasin, a trusted and hardworking friend who has been with me for 17 years and knows the organization inside and out. As I try to expand the anti-trafficking work of DEPDC to Thailand's neighboring countries through the Mekong Youth Net, I will remain DEPDC's founder and a consultant to Ms. Alinda, continuing to be active at our centers. My decision to leave the directorship is not a break with DEPDC, but a chance to use these 17 years of experience in Thailand to help the daughters and sons of Laos, China, and Myanmar.

This is a very exciting time for the children, staff, and youth leaders at DEPDC. I ask for your continuing support and interest in anti-trafficking work during this time transition and expansion. DEPDC will continue its work to help children and women protect themselves from exploitation with the guidance of Ms. Alinda and support from our partners around the world.

Let me take this opportunity to thank and send my greetings to all the funding agencies, private donors, friends, media contacts, supporters, visitors, volunteers, academics, researchers, intern students, GO's, and other NGO's who have shared all the successes of DEPDC since 1989 until today. Thank you again.

Khun Sompop

### In Appreciation of Eileen Woliner

The children and staff of DEPDC would like to take this time to say a special thank you to Eileen Woliner, a Swedish/American volunteer, who left the center in December after two years of service. Eileen's dedication to her position, diligence, and superior work ethic continue to serve as the model for the remaining volunteers at the center. Eileen, thank you again for all you did for DEPDC . . . you will be missed!



## Athletic Development

Throughout the Thai winter in chilly Mae Sai, the children and staff of DEPDC could be seen wearing scarves, snow hats, and mittens while crowding around bonfires. However, the athletics programs at the Half Day School and DEPDC allowed the children to shed their layers and break a sweat. Tennis balls were flying around the courts, runners were adding up the kilometers run that week, the dancers were performing at the town center in front of cheering crowds, and the swimmers conquered the cold by diving into the deep end.



The athletics program was assisted in December when DEPDC was visited by David Nelson, a California resident, who raised a thousand dollars in his home community to purchase sporting goods for the center. He was able to provide the boys and girls running teams with new shoes, purchase multiple tennis and badminton rackets, ping-pong tables, jerseys, basketballs, and much more equipment the children continue to use on a daily basis. Moreover, Nelson spent a week at the center providing tennis lessons to both the Half Day School kids, as well as to the DEP children.



On February 10<sup>th</sup>, DEPDC's Mae Sai center hosted its annual "Sports Day", which joined the DEPDC children from Chiang Khong, MRICRH, BCPR, and the Half Day School together with the children in residence in Mae Sai. The children spent the week before the event building team spirit—cheers were created, songs were written, and the children were proudly sporting their team colors.



*DEPDC kids have participated in several races in the last three months, but in one day alone in early January, we collected 7 trophies and 11 medals!*

Sports day kicked off with a parade and opening ceremony, and led straight into individual and relay races and staff versus children soccer games. Its second year in the running, the event displayed a strong sense of competitive behavior amongst our children while showing an equal amount of good and positive sportsmanship.



*Running and dance are two of our extra curricular activities that now encourage participation from both boys and girls.*

Moreover, the boys' and girls' running team have recently been participating in several regional races and have collected quite a few medals and trophies among roughly 15 of them. Even those who do not earn medals remain determined to stay in shape or to get in better shape, feeling that the sport is more about self competition and self improvement than about winning prizes. We could not be more proud.

Overall, the past few months have shown a growth in the athletic programs at DEPDC, and an increased interest in the children to partake in physical exercise. With the onset of the hot season many sports practices will have to be moved to the morning to avoid the stifling heat, but the staff and children are excited to continue strengthening these programs—and their muscles!

## THE FACES OF DEPDC

### Interview with a Staff Member

Ramjai Jaijoy is the head of the administration and finance department and has been with DEPDC since its beginnings in 1989. She has known Sompop for 17 years, as she became one of DEP's first "daughters." She and her younger sister were both at risk of falling victim to the human trafficking industry during their teenage years. At that time, DEP could only accept one sibling from her family so Ramjai sent her younger sister to live there, while Ramjai herself received food assistance and attended activities at the center. The following year, Ramjai was able to stay at DEP as well and she completed her secondary education while living as a DEP daughter.



After graduation, Ramjai began her work of developing DEP's programs and has had a wide variety of work experiences within the organization: youth leadership trainings, education, agriculture and production, and later finance and administration. Ramjai is one of the many successful daughters of DEPDC – when given education and an opportunity, she improved her own life and her community. She is now married to a community leader in Mae Sai, is herself a leader, and has a beautiful family of her own.

Working with children is by far Ramjai's favorite part of her role at the Mae Sai center. But she acknowledges that this can also be one of her greatest challenges, as most of the children that come to DEPDC have many problems that cannot be easily fixed. "The more problems the children have, the harder the staff must work to help them," she says. "I love children. I like talking with them and helping them. It is our duty and our challenge to teach children how to protect themselves."

Ramjai also invites those interested in the work of DEPDC to come visit. "This is not easy work. We are working with *lives*, with *minds*. Sometimes it is difficult and frustrating because we do not see positive results in the children in the first or second year. Money is not enough – we must also give our time and try to help the children's families, who can be both the source of a child's problems and a great support. For readers of this newsletter who are able, please come visit us. Together we can use our varying skills and expertise to continue to help children and develop DEPDC."

### Portrait of A Student

#### Samtwii

After spending only a short time with Samtwii, among the first things one may notice, after his infectious laughter, is his dedication to running. It is a subject and hobby of his which he talks about incessantly. Smug, smiling and short of breath, easily 100 yards in front of the rest of the running team at the end of a 12 kilometer practice run, he turns to his coach and asks, "So. Do you think I run fast for my age?"

Samtwii, a thirteen year old, fifth grader at DEPDC's Half Day School, comes from a family that was unable to afford the necessary documents to grant him Thai citizenship when he was born. Samtwii's mother works at home. His father is a salesman, and his twenty three year old brother is a carpenter. With the meager wages of the two men, the family cannot afford much beyond the bare necessities. Thus, when a generous donation of running shoes was given to DEPDC's running team from Mr. David Nelson, Samtwii said it was like a dream come true. If left to his family's own devices, he would never have been able to afford them.

Every Monday through Friday morning Samtwii catches the DEPDC bus to get to the Half Day School. His home is a bamboo hut perched on the side of a hill near the Thai/Burmese border about 5 kilometers away from the centre. Samtwii continues to demonstrate that he is a leader and role model for the younger kids both in the classroom and during extracurricular activities. Samtwii's energy, sense of humor, and dedication continue to serve as an inspiration for both his peers, as well as for the staff of DEPDC.

In school, he says his favorite subject is English. He hopes that someday if he achieves his dream of being a runner in the Asian Games, he can use this language skill to interact with people from all over the world. Perhaps he is on his way. After all he has already placed within the top three in several regional races in the last few months.



## A Welcome Return from The University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

The new year in Mae Sai kicked off from January 1<sup>st</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup>, with the coming of 17 students from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point (UWSP). In 2006, a joint program between DEPDC and UWSP was launched with the arrival of the first group of students who volunteered, simultaneously earning university credit, at the center for two weeks painting a large mural and decorating the classrooms with vivid paintings. This year, the talented university students revamped the entrance to the center by painting a colorful mural facing the road, which now cheerfully welcomes the children, staff, and visitors to DEPDC.



Moreover, the UWSP students were able to fully integrate themselves into DEPDC's activities—conducting crafts, theater, music, dance, and other arts workshops for the children of both the Half Day School and DEP. In addition to the workshops, the students disc jockeyed on morning and evening English radio shows, taught English classes at the Half Day School and the Community Learning Center, participated in recreational activities like hiking and a bonfire, and even were able to join in a soccer game with the kids. This group of outstanding students took the program to a new level of excellence—raising the bar for the next group of students in 2008. DEPDC would like to send a special thank you to the university students and faculty for their outstanding performance and lasting contribution to the center!

## Volunteer Profile: Kelly Meister aka Pi Fa



This past November, DEPDC welcomed Kelly Meister, the last new volunteer for the year 2006. Kelly, also known as “Pi Fa,” quickly made her mark when she started a girls’ running team. Everyday at 5PM, she is out running and training the girls for 12 kilometer races – correcting their form, reminding them to breathe, and making them laugh during exhausting stretches of long and seemingly endless roads. When Kelly is not outside drilling the runners, her presence is not easily missed. Kelly’s voice echoes through the halls followed by shrills of laughter from her students as she teaches English to grades 1 thru 3 in the mornings, and then Intermediate English to novice monks and local community members in the evenings.

Kelly comes to us from the United States, specifically Cleveland, Ohio. In May 2006, Kelly graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree, double majoring in Philosophy and World Religions. In addition to her academic background, Kelly draws upon her experiences running cross country, cheerleading, and creative writing to help run educational and fun activities for the children here at DEPDC. When asked what she loves most about her work, Kelly says, “I love hearing the children laugh and knowing I played a role in making their lives happier and that much more fun.”

*DEPDC is always looking for volunteers. If you would like to join our International Volunteer team, please visit our website and complete an online application: [http://www.depdc.org/eng/volunteer/volunteer\\_form.html](http://www.depdc.org/eng/volunteer/volunteer_form.html)*

## Partners in Fighting Trafficking: Emancipation Network/TEN

DEPDC is very happy to announce a budding partnership between our production and handicrafts program and the Emancipation Network in the United States. The Emancipation Network helps survivors of human trafficking, and women and girls at high risk for being trafficked, by offering them a means for self-sufficiency and an economic alternative to further exploitation.



TEN Charities, a component of the Emancipation Network, partners with anti-trafficking organizations and women's craft collectives around the world, including Thailand, Cambodia, Nepal, and India. TEN buys gorgeous and unique handicraft products from its partners, and sells them at home Awareness parties, colleges, and community events across the US, raising awareness of this human rights crisis among Americans at the same time.

TEN Charities has ordered hundreds of handbags, scarves, greeting cards, and pillow covers, providing a steady market for the handmade items produced by at-risk children at DEPDC. TEN has also assisted DEPDC with the purchase of a new loom and hiring a full-time weaving expert to teach the children. For those interested in purchasing gifts, TEN has a special section on its website devoted to DEPDC products.

For more information, please see [www.madebysurvivors.com](http://www.madebysurvivors.com)

### How to Give to DEPDC

Here is how to donate to DEPDC:

(1) Directly to DEPDC in Thailand by transferring money directly to their Thai bank account.

DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION PROGRAMME  
FOR DAUGHTERS AND COMMUNITIES  
PO Box 10  
Mae Sai, Chiang Rai  
57130, Thailand

BANK:  
Bank of Ayudhya Public Company,  
Mae Sai, Thailand

NAME OF ACCOUNT:  
Development and Education Programme for  
Daughters and Communities  
ACCOUNT NR: 331- 1- 05358-6

The Bank of Ayudhya does not provide depositors' contact information, but we will gladly verify your donation and send an official thank-you letter if you choose to e-mail us with your information.

Alternatively please visit their website for details of how you can donate through PayPal.



### Donor Thank You

Global Giving, Ken Shizuoka, Ramesh Kukkad, Sohini Chakraborty, Tim Fletcher, Friends of Thai Daughters, St. Sebastian's School, Co-Operaid, David Arnold, Kathy Rueckert, Thai Life Foundation, Stefan Zelenka, Kate Coluccio, Sarah Symons, Sumon Dejavitlert, Terhi Uitti, World Childhood Foundation, MCC, Open Society Institute, Oxfam Novib, Julia Borkun, Susan Kazenel, Anesvad