

Message from the Director

"I can handle any crisis.....I have children"

Recently, I visited the Catholic school where many of our primary level children attended. The head mistress led me to the class in which Um, one of our boys was studying. Standing in front of the class, I was really embarrassed when a boy approached me and loudly started a "litany of accusations" against Um. "He is mean, he tells lies very often, and he likes to bully girls...." Poor Um just looked at me and gave a very broad smile as if he was proud of his heroic deed. He walked around me and smiled happily paying neither a bit of attention to his accusations nor trying to defend himself. At that moment, the word of wisdom quoted above struck me. Very often, I should take things easy and just smile when some people accuse me or our children. I should learn from Um i.e. after trying our very best, the rest to be done is just only smiling.

Fr. Michael Weera Phangrak
Director



16 football teams and their fans took part in the "Football Charity Tournament" organized by the Human Help Network Foundation Thailand (HHN) at the Pattaya Orphanage. Special thanks to HHN, Mr. Gerrit Niehaus, the owner of "Thai Garden Resort" Pattaya who funded the renovation of our football field, and Mr. Reiner Calmund, the former manager of Bayer Leverkusen for the full support to this tournament.



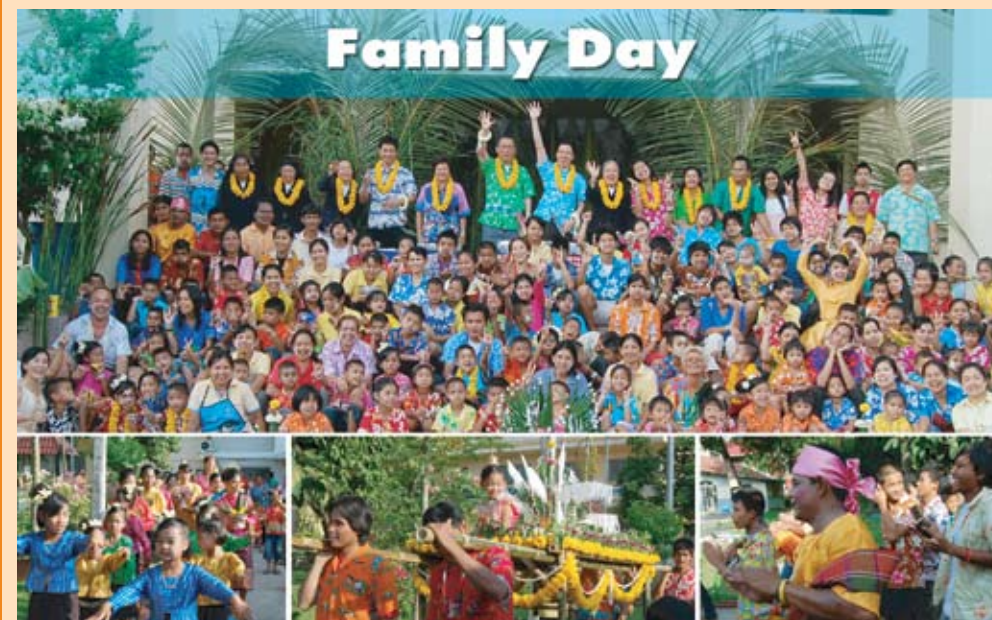
Graduation at the School for the Deaf.. 12 children who completed their level 3 of preschool education celebrated their great day amidst their parents, teachers, friends and juniors. Rev. Fr. Michael Weera Phangrak, Director of Sotpattana School for the Deaf, conferred certificates to the proud graduates. On the same occasion, students completing levels 1-3 with good academic achievement received their certificates. Following a lovely lunch, the graduates signed good-bye to their teachers, friends, and juniors. What a joyful day for all.



50 school-age children had a lot of new learning experiences from the annual Community Life Development Camping. Activities in promotion of companionship, unity, forgiveness, love, sacrifice, life skills in practice, and appreciation of nature among our valued children, fun-filled games, as well as cooking and cleaning were well enjoyed by all. Special thanks to the personnel of the Khao Mai Kaeo Sub-District Administration Organization.



Making Japanese style "Sushi" is one of the summer activities introduced to the children with the kind instructions of Sr. Mario Pattana Navaratana, religious member of the Lovers of the Cross Sisters, Chanthaburi. Interested course participants included not only the children of the Pattaya Orphanage, but also staff personnel, who had much fun in learning the recipe, and enjoying the colorful and nutritious food at the end. Who knows? The learned skills may be made profitable by some of the children in the future. Thank you, Sister, and see you next time.



All members of the Pattaya Orphanage joyously took part in the blessing ceremony on the occasions of Songkarn Festival and Annual Family Day, 19th April of each year. To preserve the Thai tradition and foster good relationship among the residents, a beautiful tomtom procession of trays with pedestals decorated with sacred thread, joined by over a hundred joyful members dressed in Thai and bright cotton costumes, marked the opening of the programme, followed by the remark from Father Director, two traditional performances, the blessing ceremony and a lovely Thai dinner in a family atmosphere. The cool fragrant water poured on the palms of the elders, the symbolic cotton thread tied around the wrists, and the sincere wishes given in return by the elders, made the afternoon very meaningful and all the participants felt refreshed, strengthened and united.



80 school-age children from the Pattaya Orphanage went on the annual outing for group recreation and rest at Rayong and Chanthaburi provinces. Along the way, they visited important places, i.e. Sunthorn Phoo Monument and Mangrove Forest Conservation Center. Apart from spending two nights at Chao Lao Beach Resort, playing beach games and bathing in the sea, the children enjoyed feeding numerous fish and swimming at the Phlio Waterfall. It was a joyful and impressive experience the children and all their carers shared together.



Participation in Religious Ceremonies: On Visakha Bucha Day, the most important day for Buddhists, the children learned the principles and practiced their religion by listening to the sermon, meditating, and reflectively walking 3 rounds around the temple with lighted candles and flowers in their hands in memory of the Buddha at Djittabhawan Temple. For Christian members, Easter this year was even more special as Khru Kesorn and Thum (Siam) were baptized and have become full members of the Catholic community in Pattaya.

Collections from School Bus



Episode 3: Why do people like to listen to his singing, although it is off-key?

Dear Readers, Thank you for following this column on "Collections from School Bus" and we do hope to have your continued interest.

During the two-month summer vacation of schools in Thailand, the School Bus of the Pattaya Orphanage had a good rest for about 4 weeks.

When all the children are at home in summer, their childishness sometimes causes disorder. Summer is the time children's sponsors and regular benefactors pay them a visit. Other visitors bring love, joy and fun by spending time with them, organizing games, making donation of necessities, hosting a meal, etc. Through their visits and donations, our benefactors wish to fill the emptiness that the children may have.

One day in early April, I suddenly heard someone reciting a poem or complaining with high and low pitched tones near the front reception hall. I thought to myself that maybe the person was singing, but it was very much off-key! I found Moo, one of our special children, who prefers to be called "Man", being surrounded by visitors. Man was singing a famous song about the life of a teenaged orphan, certainly off-key, while the small crowd was clapping as if trying to gear the artist towards the tempo of the original song. If it was a hint, Man neither understood nor cared about his mixed up tunes. He continued singing in the rhythm and music of his own version. After a while, the audience was clapping in union with Man's singing.

I noticed big smiles on the faces of our visitors. They were simply impressed by Man and had much fun cheering him to sing more songs by saying, "encore", "encore". Then came more songs and nobody seemed to be bored of the off-key singing. His transparent sincerity has won him fans, including myself. I thought, "there is something very special in his being a special child". What he did might be his expression of "thankfulness" for all the generous visitors.

All of us at the Pattaya Orphanage have to be thankful to Man and his special nature. He is able to make people happy whenever he sings. And now I have the answer to the question: Why do people like to listen to his singing, although it is off-key?

Kind regards,
Editor