

SARNELLI HOUSE NEWSLETTER

Providing an Education for all

June 2010

Message from Fr Mike Shea



This is our first attempt at a quarterly newsletter from Sarnelli House (which takes in all 6 of our houses). This edition is coming out just as the new school year has opened and Kate will explain how the system works here.

Suffice it for me to give you the reaction of our staff as the kids prepared their school kits and boarded the truck for school "HAPPINESS AND RELIEF"! One more school vacation over with, and the weekdays free to do myriad other tasks, and not have to listen to kids demanding action. It is almost like an opera where the cast stands around, holding hands and singing "O what a friend we have in Jesus" as the trucks laden with runts pull out for school.

But this is not always the sentiments of the wee ones from the House of Hope. Nin Nate marched proudly to the truck and never cried. But the Baby Hippo and Nancy roared and howled and bawled all the way to school, together with the choir leader the Baby Buffalo, who is still at this in her second year. Once they get there and settle down they are fine. But the dawn of a new day brings new roars of rage and whimpering and sniffles.

We really appreciate those sponsoring children so that they can go to school and have a chance at a good education. This is all we can afford them for their future, thanks to you. All of our college graduates have jobs and that is a relief in these uncertain times.

God Bless you! We pray for you every evening.

Fr Mike Shea C.S.s.R



In May 2010, 4 new preschoolers NinNate, Chatchai, Nancy and Baby Hippo, from the House of Hope started at Rosario School. One new girl Joom, from Sarnelli House started junior high school in Nongkhai, two girls Mai and Nam Phon from Viengkhuuk graduated from Rosario and went on to study at JBAC (Business and Accounting College) in Nongkhai. Mae, now living at Sarnelli House and previously sick from HIV/AIDS resumed her studies at Rosario School after missing out on 2 years of schooling. Man, a boy from Jan and Oscar House and Gan from Nazareth House changed schools from Rosario to a closer government school. And the list goes on. Ensuring that the children living at Sarnelli House have access to education at all levels of their school lives and that it reflects where and what they want to study is essential to a successful future for them.

Individualising schooling needs for 165 children is



complicated and time consuming, yet the staff working in the office and the housemothers somehow co ordinate it, so that each child has the appropriate school uniform, lunch money, transport to and from school and supervision and assistance to complete their homework. Then there are the uniforms to be washed and

ironed, the school bags to be put away and the shoes to be cleaned every day and every week. The majority of the children attend Rosario School in Viengkuk. It is a large private Catholic school run by the Thai order of St Paul de Chartres Sisters. All the children started off at Rosario school as it was the only school that accepted kids with HIV/AIDS. The school has classes from Preschool to Year 9 or M3 in junior high school. The children learn the Thai curriculum which has subjects like math, science, history and culture, sport and music and the dreaded English classes. English is taught in all schools throughout Thailand but for most of the kids at Sarnelli it is not a well liked subject.

Uniforms



Attendance at Rosario School requires a set of 4 different school uniforms. The regular uniform must have the child's name and grade embroidered above the pocket at breast level. So each year as kids outgrow their school shirts the house mothers unpick the old names and embroider on the new names of the child coming up the ranks who will wear this year's hand me down. A scout's uniform is one of the extra uniforms that need to be purchased as well as a sports uniform. Regulation back packs and school shoes are also a requirement. The children take their shoes off before they go into a classroom as is a normal Thai custom. However some of the younger children somehow lose their shoes and

their socks in this process. Sarnelli House has taken to checking against the child's name that each child comes home with a pair of socks and shoes. This has helped to reduce the incidence of missing footwear by raising the kid's awareness, but for some kid's like Boy Lek at Sarnelli House his mind is obviously on other things.



A Long Day

The children's day starts early at all the houses. They are up at 5.30am and shower and dress for school, by then breakfast is ready and their stomachs are filled with sticky rice, egg or spicy sausage. The variety of breakfast changes every day. The Sarnelli House children, the boys from Jan and Oscar House and the girls from Nazareth House must also take their 6am Anti RetroViral (ARV) medications before breakfast. The children then have certain chores they have to do after breakfast such as washing their plates, sweeping and mopping the dining room floor and making sure their clothes are put away in their dormitories. Then they line up to be given their lunch money. Rosario School has a cafeteria where the children can purchase lunch and buy milk. For the Sarnelli kids and the Nazareth Girls everyone boards the school truck that leaves at 7.15am. The children from the House of Hope and the boys from St Patrick's and the Jan and Oscar House board their own school truck and leave at 7.15 also.

For the girls at Our Lady of Refuge Home for Girls school is directly across the road from their house, so they have a little more time to get ready and head on over for classes. The children arrive back home on the truck around 5pm. At Sarnelli House when the kids get off the

truck the noise is deafening, as everyone wants to tell the housemothers what happened to them at school; who did what to whom, who misbehaved, who didn't eat their lunch and the litany of school survival stories goes on. The kids then have to take off their socks to put in the washing machines and put their bags and shoes away. Dinner follows and a lovely silence descend as the children wolf their food down. After dinner it's time for a shower and then homework, and finally the long day draws to a close with a bed time snack and into bed by 7.30pm.

Helping Each Other

When the toddlers from House of Hope first start preschool at 3 years of age they wear the Rosario School Kindergarten uniform which is red shorts or skirts and a white shirt complete with a very big backpack and they travel to school with all the other big kids. This is where the sense of family really shows itself, as the older children help the younger ones. They get them on and off the truck, walk them to their class rooms and meet them at the end of the day to help them back on their journey home.



For the children whose gait has been affected by HIV/AIDS and can't walk properly, the other kids are there to help them. Soi, Kiat, ManU and now Baby Buffalo all need some assistance to climb the stairs to their classrooms or onto the truck. The older kids also help the little ones with their homework in the evenings and getting dressed in the mornings.

Mae's Story

Mae is a 13 year old girl who came to Sarnelli House in November 2009. She was diagnosed with HIV and TB. She has no living family and the doctors and nurses of the hospital she had been staying in for 2 months as she had no home, came and bought her to Sarnelli House themselves. Mae was thin and forlorn when she first arrived. She was held back from going to school with the other children as she was too sick. However in May 2010 with her health much improved, young Mae was taken into the uniform shop and kitted out with all the uniforms, shoes, and bag that she would require for school. To say she was excited was an understatement. She now looks just like



one of the kids, but what distinguishes Mae from them is her continued excitement at getting homework! She is keen to continue learning as she wants to be a doctor when she finishes school.

Rosario School Costs Annually

- Kindergarten: US\$400/child
- Grade School: US\$470/child
- Junior High School: US\$485/child

Joom's Chance

Joom was 15 years old when her grandmother first bought her to Sarnelli House in January 2009. She was thin and so sick and wanted to die. She had been diagnosed with HIV/AIDS and her grandmother who she was living with was poor and didn't know how to go about accessing the health care Joom needed. Joom had been in her final year at her school and was due to sit her exams. After 3 months of starting on her ARV medications and being cared for at Sarnelli House Joom started to improve. She couldn't go



back to her school as there were rumours that she had AIDS, but her teacher prepared her exams and gave them to her as a favour without Joom having to go back to the school. Now Joom attends a senior high school in

Nongkhai to study M4 or Year 10. She is strong and happy and will stay at Sarnelli House to finish her schooling. In the holidays she goes home to see her grandmother, who now also cares for 4 small grandchildren. Joom has been given a second chance at life and continuing her education is paramount to her future.

The annual CEBORIDE takes place in Wisconsin, USA on July 17th. It is a 125 mile bike ride for Cebo who lives at Nazareth House and friends. Many thanks to all those taking part this year, and good luck.

Postal Address: Sarnelli House PO Box 61, Nongkhai 43000 Thailand

If you would prefer to receive this and future quarterly newsletters by email, please email to kintrona@gmail.com

Our annual school budget is approximately US\$80,000 to send the children from the 6 houses and the Outreach Program to school. This does not include food, salaries or medical and health costs. The staff and the children are truly grateful for any help that you may be able to offer, so we can continue to provide a future for the children of Sarnelli House.

For donations by bank transfer

Bank: KRUNG THAI BANK PUBLIC COMPANY

LIMITED

Branch: THASADEJ

A/C No: 295-0-01542-5

Account: SAVING

A/C Name: MR.MICHAEL SHEA AND MS.

BOONCHAN LASA, MRS.WIMON THAMMAWONG

Swift Code: KRTHTHBK

Routing No. /CHIPS UID: 00785

More donation details are on the website www.sarnelliorphanage.org under Support

