

LEADERSHIP MATTERS

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Without Expectation

I made a fleeting visit to Thailand a couple of weekends ago. I flew in on the Saturday and out on the Sunday morning. Filling out my immigration card on returning home I was tempted to put Singapore Airport when asked where did I spend most time.

Even though it was one of the shortest visits I have had I took more from that visit than most. I was introduced to seven new children who have joined us at the orphanage and heard their stories.

Stories which for me were equally as unsettling as any of the kids who have lived with us for several years now.

Five of the new kids were from the one family and Khun Rotjana had been alerted to their needs and dire situation.

You see the five kids tragically lost their father in the Tsunami. Their mother continued to look after them until it got too much for her. She left them on their own 18 months ago. Since that time they had been caring for themselves and the eldest child had assumed all

responsibility...she is ten years old.

Another one of the new arrivals, a girl who is 12 years of age was frightened and really uncomfortable. Her name is Ohn and she lost both her parents at the time of the Tsunami. She was born with a birth defect which sees her fingers and toes fused together.

She has never been to school and for the past five years she has lived on the street at the back of a temple receiving food from the monks. During

the day she would collect rubbish off the streets.

She now lives with our other children and we are hoping to have corrective surgery performed on her hands and feet.

The arrival of the new kids confirmed the need for us to continue to work as we do, knowing there will be more kids to come.

So when I arrived at Baan Tharn Namchai for my very brief visit, I was given a gift. I was presented with a cheque on behalf of the children of the orphanage which represented the money the children had raised for the victims of the Victorian Bushfires.

I previously wrote about this when the idea was first floated by Khun Rotjana several months ago.

The children committed themselves and didn't lose sight of what they wanted to achieve, just because it wasn't on the news anymore didn't mean they forgot about their commitment.

The very children that we are working to support, had themselves worked to support the people of Victoria who had lost so much. The children raised 100,000 Thai Baht, which is close to \$4000 AUD.

The children didn't forget their commitment they made back in February. Sometimes when you have so little but you find the capacity to give it means so much. So can you find some of your time to give to those in your life who would appreciate it most, but when you give do so without expectation of return.

"You have not lived a perfect day, unless you've done something for someone who will never be able to repay you."

Ruth Smeltzer

HANDS UPDATE

The work on the new community, education and health care centre will start as soon as the wet season ends in about two months time.

One of the objectives of the 2010 bike ride is to fund the final stages of construction and fit out with furniture and the associate needs. The centre will be built in Baan Nam Khem which sustained the greatest loss of life anywhere in Thailand.

There is a long road to recovery yet to travel and we will work to put in place some vocational training programs for a community which has around 50% unemployment.

Most are unskilled and earn their money fishing. However, when the season or winds prevent them earning an income, they simply don't have one. With just over 100 days until the ride starts we have just ticked over the \$100,000 mark raised so far. About a quarter of what I think we can achieve.