

SONGKRAN AL' ITALIANA



You'll never know what people are capable of until you throw them a challenge, along with an incentive! The children and women of the Emergency Home rose to the occasion, when we celebrated Songkran al' Italiana – the party which we hosted to show off the cumulative efforts of our creative art therapy classes. For the last three weeks, we've focused on designs made from recycled materials. So for the party, we had



all the participants sashay down the catwalk. They all did very well, stepping out of their normally-shy nature, and showed off their outfits with smiles, laughs – making them a joy to watch! The judges gave them all 100% for effort, while they were also judged on creativity and presentation.

Win or lose, everyone had fun. Like one of the contestants said: "It doesn't matter if I win or not, it was all fun getting to this point. We enjoyed making, & doing all this." Yes, they were all winners, but the eventual designs which received awards were those which creatively used things that we normally just throw away! In the children's section – the first prize winner had a cute design made from newspapers! Second prize went to an imaginative outfit which featured a skirt made from plastic bags. Third prize was for an outfit enhanced by the use of tinsel. In the women's section: The First prize went to an outfit



dressed up with tinsel, straws, foil and garden netting; while a close second featured similar materials plus some foil from chip bags, along with stringed-up footwear. Third prize was an outfit almost totally

made with black garden netting, with some tinsel for color. One of the consolation prize winners had an outfit enhanced with foil from snack bags. All the prize winners were rewarded

with cash prizes donated by the Italian Women's Association. The Teen girls added to the occasion with their own choreographed dance. They were pleasantly surprised when Simona also handed them little red packets of a small cash gift. As these residents of the home have no access to any income, they were most thankful for the cash gifts they received, which they will be able to use freely on their needs. Our party started off with a serving of chocolate yummys (prepared by Simona's six-year-old son, Jacopo), along with refreshing Crema ice-cream from Chomthana! While they enjoyed their morning snack, Khun Pano, from the Bangkok Wing Chun school demonstrated some basic self-defence. An upcoming course for all the residents, to increase their confidence and ability to handle any acts of aggression and violation against them. The major highlight of Songkran al' Italiana, besides the fashion show, was undoubtedly, the ITALIAN food!!!

Thanks to the Ingavat and Chamachot families, there was a generous spread of pizzas, chicken nuggets, fresh salad, pasta, breads, ice-cream,



drinkswow! It was a real treat! They were hosting the lunch to celebrate Narudee Ingavat's birthday. It was definitely a birthday to remember as Nadee was one of the judges for our most unusual fashion show! She also presented the prizes to the women. Her sister, Ply was on hand to give out the prizes for the children.

Simona added to the lunch with her homemade Italian tomato salad – yum! It was just soooooo amazing how everything was al' Italiana! Special Thanks also to Rachel & Tina from Hongkong who brought gifts for the kids & helped with the party!



Left:
Songkran fun with water balloons for old & young!



With rising temperatures in Bangkok up to 40 degrees C in May & local schools closed, the children at many of shelters and institutions we work with, were asking to go to the beach. On May 6th, we organized a trip for more than 30 kids, teens and caregivers from the Emergency Home, to the Hat Chao Samran beach in the province of Petchaburi, a few hours south of Bangkok. The following week, on May 13th, we organized another beach trip for the residents of the Rachawedee and the Thanksgiving Homes – this time a little closer, to the Bang Saen Beach in Chonburi.



FUN IN

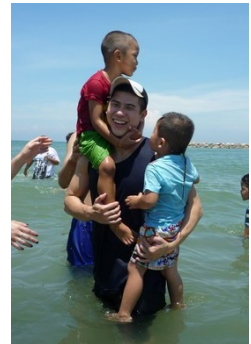


A Day of Firsts! For the group of kids and teens from the Emergency Shelter, it was a real special excursion to Chao Samran beach! For many of them, it was not only their first time to go to a beach, but they also got to go up into an airplane – and even sit in the cockpit! For the last two months, since schools closed for the summer holidays, the kids at the Emergency Shelter have had

just one wish – to go to the Beach! We realized this simple wish with an excursion for a total of 33 kids, teens and caregivers along with nine volunteers to the Chao Samran beach in Petchburi. Thanks to friends, we were able to cover the expenses for this trip, the bus and the food. We got a nice aircon, double-decked tour bus, with enough space for us all plus our beach gear & lots of food! By the time we got there, everyone was hungry & the teens/staff immediately got to work –mixing & making the ever-popular somtam while we dished out the sticky rice and chicken/ pork.



Yummm.... Food just tastes better when you're in holiday mood, by the beach! Lunch went by oh-so quickly as everyone was eager to get to the beach and into the water! For more than half the kids who went, this was their **FIRST** time at a beach! They were delighted & many bravely ventured into the water, while adult caregivers and volunteers slowly eased the smaller tots into the sea, with fun splashes. Besides a game of monkey in the middle, there were a lot of fun floats, and sand toys to keep everyone happily occupied. We are very thankful for Khun Wiraiwan from the Paradise Resort who so kindly gave us use & access to her resort, providing a place of shelter for us to have lunch, shower facilities, changing room ..etc.. She also made available cold water, juices, and snacks! After the fun in the sun, everyone cooled down under some trees & enjoyed an array of snacks. After a nice shower at the Paradise, the kids calmly waited by the poolside, ready to head home...that is, till they were all invited to go up to Paradise's in-house airplane, which boasts of a large furnished double-bed room complete with bathroom. They eagerly lined up, took turns to go up - experiencing the feel of this life-size large airplane & the cockpit! What a day to remember! **Special thanks to: Gilbert Wong, Niva International School, Rachel, Tina from Hong Kong & other friends/volunteers for making this trip possible!**



THE SUN!



Fifteen-year-old Pat squealed as she ran into the waves cascading on the seashore on Bangsaen beach. Not long ago, her father walked out on her and her mother — This trip was an infusion of joy for both mother & daughter. This was Pat's first-ever experience at a beach. Along with almost 30 other children/teens and adults with the mental challenges/handicaps, autism & forms of Asperger's Syndrome, this beach excursion left an indelible impression of bonding, freedom, fun, discovery and so much more. The kids were mainly from both the Thanksgiving Home as well as the Rachawadee Home in Pakred which cares for almost 540 children. The Thanksgiving Home assists with more personal attention for 20 of the children. It was nice to see how the kids took delight in every little thing they found, as they were just fascinated with the little crabs, & other creatures peeping out of their shells, & coming out from under the sand. Several of them, like Pat, spent almost every minute in the water — relenting to just come up to the beach for some lunch as they relished the salty splash on their faces, bouncing with the waves and finding their balance on the banana boats. So much to enjoy, when you can appreciate everything from that first-time perspective. Special Thanks to our volunteers — especially Meg from Japan and Nina who were quickly attached to several of the kids. One afternoon of bonding and the kids were almost in tears when we had to part. What a precious experience for us all!



Meg (above) & Nina (with ball) with the kids



It was impressive to see how the older children were trained to help with meals, here skillfully making their own somtam!

For this project —

Special Thanks to:

**Niva International School
student government**

Didier Morales

Hester Chew



Behind the Scenes

For several weeks before the Songkran party, we had a series of creative art classes with Italian sculptor/artist Simona Ambrosini. With her and help from volunteers like Gianna, and students from the Bangkok University Communication Arts Department, the children were also able to learn how to create their styles from discarded materials.



In Appreciation

Being an essentially volunteer effort, we would not be able to take on many of these projects as well as cover the basic operating costs of running a centre. To this end, we would like to thank the many friends & corporate partners who have so kindly supported us with gifts, services and contributions. These include:

Angie Watt

Bouygues-Thai

D. Morales

Gilbert Wong

JJ Largent

Thai Air Asia

FIDA international

Golden Foods Siam

Hester Chew

Tong Garden

Kamthorn, Surachet, & Somsak

Fast Cheetahs (Singapore)

Playing Daddy!

For several of the orphaned boys at the Rangsit Babies' Home, Saturdays are special. That's when volunteer John Green takes his place as Daddy to these little guys and does what Daddies would do with kids on the weekend – teach 'em a little, play with them alot! John, a school teacher by profession here in Bangkok, and his Thai wife love kids and as they have none of their own, they have dedicated their Saturdays to being with these kids. Recently, they took the kids on an excursion to Dream World . In preparing them for adoption, John does spend some time teaching them English before he enjoys play-time with them. We could use more Daddies like John!! Any takers?



Making a Difference

Central Thailand Mission is one of the selected humanitarian aid projects working in partnership with the American human service agency – *Family Care Foundation* – which is an American, tax-exempt, non-profit, IRS-approved 501 (c) (3) public charity.

Based in Bangkok for the last 20 years, CTM works to help the disadvantaged in many ways.

♥ Being the bridge between people with the needs & those with the resources

♥ Supply of basic essentials of food, water, clothes as well for destitute communities

♥ Initiating the sponsorship of major needs & projects eg. Building a water supply for a school, education seminars & AV materials for schools

♥ Counseling & Encouragement for the handicapped, AIDs patients, abused women & children

♥ Services include: preparing orphans for adoption, laughing yoga at hospitals, therapy for abused women & teens

♥ Providing assistance to international volunteers who want to give of their time, talents or resources to help others.

♥ Giving God's love, spiritual strength & comfort to those who need & seek a purpose & direction for a meaningful life.

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CTM
Box 77, Sai Mai P.O, Bangkok 10224
Thailand

Email: centhai@gmail.com
Cell: 66 816971409
Skype: centhaibkk