

Sister Joan Evans: Education – An Investment in Thailand’s Future

By Edward Dever

On an April morning, you’ll find Sister Joan Evans sitting on a bench at the Klong Toey market in Bangkok scribbling numbers in her notebook. Enduring temperatures in which many would wilt, she calmly collates the morning’s purchases. School uniforms for 45 children, shoes for 30, school bags for 15. Each amount she records represents an investment in Thailand’s future.

Sister Joan’s annual Education Project enables underprivileged children and young adults in Klong Toey and other slum communities in Bangkok to attend school or university. Students receiving assistance age between 3 (starting pre-school) and 22 (attending university) with the majority at primary or lower secondary school. Without Sister’s assistance, it is unlikely they would be able to gain an education.

Education is a core mission of Sister Joan. She believes there is a real need to help children and young adults to the point where they can help themselves. Her Education Project provides an opportunity for students to receive an education which is vital if they are to ultimately break out of the poverty cycle.

During April and May this year, Sister Joan



provided school uniforms, shoes, socks and bags for over 600 students at an average cost of Baht 685 (approx. A\$25) per student. On any particular day, Sister may outfit between 10 and 50 students. It’s an enormous task but also an important one. Getting these students into school and university is vital if they are to

achieve their potential. And if high grades on report cards and graduation ceremonies are a benchmark, then Sister’s work is indeed a success.

Special thanks to:

- DFAT and the Australian Embassy in Bangkok who donated Baht 100,000 from their Discretionary Fund towards this year’s Education Project.
- the Australian-New Zealand Women’s Group (ANZWG) who also donated Baht 100,000.

The remaining funds for this year’s Education Project were provided by donations from supporters of Sister Joan’s Presentation Slums Mission Bangkok.

How you can help

Sister Joan’s donation philosophy is simple – a little bit of money goes a long way. Donations can be made online (via PayPal), by cheque or by direct bank deposit – see www.sisterjoan.info for details. Offers of volunteer help are also welcome. ■

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Jesters Charity Drive in Pattaya

AustCham Thailand sponsored and paid for thirty children from the many more at the Camillian Centre in Pattaya to join the fun at the Jesters Care for Kids Charity Drive Fair in Pattaya on Sunday, 9 September 2007. All the children are orphans plus the double whammy of inheriting HIV. Thanks to the Camillian Centre, the children can live lives as near to normal as possible.

AustCham is proud to provide the Camillian Centre with donations and help. We thank our member TRSC International Lasik Centre for lending the putting game for our stall at the Fair. The game ensured that the next budding Tiger Woods has for sure got the bug! This was the first time we took part in the Fair: well done Tony Emmett, our ESB Coordinator, for suggesting it. ■

