



To assist the children today to help themselves tomorrow.

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Greetings to all our generous and interested Friends.

It is a very long time since a newsletter went out from “Nano’s Place” here in Rong Muu! My apologies.

We’re close to the end of the first term of the 2005 academic year here in Thailand. Thanks to all our generous donors it was possible to assist at least 562 students with school uniforms. How wonderful that all these young people could join their school assembly lines on the first day of school looking “Spic and Span”, standing tall and feeling just as good as any of their more affluent companions. New uniforms (2 sets/student), shoes, socks (2 prs.) and a bag. Whatever else is provided a bag is the MUST! I was with a family this afternoon; the little-one has a bright blue bag almost as long as she is tall and, it was in very good nick! Clean too! If you could see the little hovel in which this family of four are living you’d be asking yourself “How? How can this be possible?”

Three of our long-term students graduated from high school in March and have now taken up university studies. Each is working P/T. The next four years will be a very hard road but each is determined to make it through to graduation.

Aart has worked with me during term breaks over the past three years. Mum has not been so well. His big worry at the moment is his house. Rebuilt after a fire through their community in August ’92, it is now crumbling due to termites munching their way through the timber! I was given a promise of roofing for the “new house” – when I told Aart he gave me one of the broadest smiles I’ve ever seen him wear!

Di’s dad Khun Jeen died two years ago. His one dream was to see her complete high school – sadly that was not to be. Her mum is almost blind through diabetes – we visited

her this afternoon with rice, oil, canned fish some fish sauce and a few fresh eggs. She was not well but refused to go to the Dr. “Di will take me” she told us.

Lek, the third member of this little team of determined students came into me at about 9.00pm last night. Straight from Uni to work and then into Nano’s Place for some help with meeting the cost of his “food and fares” for the week. This guy’s a character. He never wastes time. I get a four second phone call – “Are you home?” he asks and within about thirty minutes he’s at the door! He’s virtually on his own. Renting and sharing the cost of a slum room for 1,000 baht/month. Until last year he moved back and forth between spending time with his dad and then back to mum. Both have new partners. I met him when he was going into year 10. Aart brought him to me. They were in the same class at school. Lek had worked the term vacation, saved a little money and found it was not sufficient to pay his school fees! So, what did he do? What would you have done? He went to the money lender and borrowed 2,000 baht! Five weeks later he owed the money lender 4,000 baht – principal + interest! (interest rate in the slums runs at 20 baht on the 100/ week).

Many of you would remember Fai a cerebral palsy sufferer! Wonderful smile! Says she always tells me the truth and so she does! Life is tough if you grow up in the slums and it’s 100% worse if you happen to be handicapped as our gorgeous lady is! She’s back to selling artificial flowers each day on Soi Ekamai. Earns 30 baht for the day! How’s that for justice! But that’s it 30 baht! Hardly pays her bus fare. She comes for 50 baht each day plus a 3-1 Ovaltine pack. The young sister Naa comes for 22 baht and, the Ovaltine pack Monday to Friday – for rice before school + fares on the pick-up truck to and from school! Lunch is free and at her school they can go back for seconds! Lucky Kids! At some other schools it’s their good luck to receive the half of one serve!

Next Friday 16th September will be the final day of the current “Milk-Run” Project. I’m flying home to Perth just before midnight on that day. The new “Milk-Run” Project will be up and running God willing on 2nd November. This year we’ve operated from two venues - the Soi next to the community where I’m living and from the Suan Ooy Slum. Between the two venues approximately 160 babies are receiving baby formula every two weeks! What about breast feeding you ask? Some for health reasons are advised against it. Most of our mums are young! They are the rice-winners in the family. They’ll be back at their job within five days of giving birth to the new little-one! – selling food on the streets from a trolley or a bench, working in a factory. Maybe out there on the port lifting and heaving all sorts of everything on and off ships or in and out of containers! You name it and they’ll do it for a few extra baht! So, the grandmas look after the babies!

We’ve a very active team of volunteers many from the ANZWG who offer great assistance and support especially on the “Milk-Run” day but at other times too. Hopefully within the next couple of months we’ll have T-shirts for sale – another source of funding. These promise to be great!

Have you visited the up-graded website: www.sisterjoan.info? Natalie McCauley was the original website builder. This year Ben Moller came to our rescue by up-grading the site, revising details of costs, amounts and also Projects. It was through the website that we were able to advertise Megan's valiant effort to raise funds. Sponsorship of her for the "China Wall marathon" which she completed in good time has brought in funds that will help the mission to continue to support so many children and their families. Meg I'm most grateful and I thank you sincerely for all the effort you put into this venture to make it a success.

Sincere and grateful thanks to all, the donors young and old, Volunteers and the Presentation Sisters and the Associates. All of you who help to make this Mission in the Bangkok Slums possible through your prayers, support and donations!

Remember, every little bit helps

And even the smallest donation can be made to go a long way.

Love, prayers and many Blessings especially the Peace and the Joy
of the Lord.

Joan.