



CONTRIBUTING TO THE THAI COMMUNITY

Although our motto Expats Helping Expats was the initial goal of the Club when it was formed, it has grown into much more than that. As Expats, we have chosen Thailand as our home for whatever reason. For many of us, it was because we had formed a special attachment to our Thai spouse or partner. For others, it may be the beaches, sun, low cost, and generally friendly people. So, the Club not only helps Expats, it also tries to give back to the Thai community in appreciation of Thailand's hospitality to us Expats. Here are some of the ways we are doing that:



Banglamung District Cross Culture Volunteer Group

This group was formed a several years ago when the Club was approached about helping Thai government employees improve their English conversation skills. Former Club Chairman and current Board Member Richard Smith took the lead role in getting volunteers to devote two nights a week of their time to meet and converse with Thais. By working under the official auspices of the Banglamung District government, volunteers are not required to obtain a work permit that otherwise would be required, even for unpaid volunteer work.

Since its inception, the conversation classes have expanded and for periodic regular sessions accept any Thais that are interested in improving their language skills. Further, in response to specific requests, the Group conducts sessions for governmental and private organizations. The Club's members conducting the sessions volunteer their time and participants are not charged. Classes have been provided for personnel of the Royal Thai Navy at Sattahip Navy Base - a few kilometers South of Pattaya; the staff of the Amari Orchard Resort and Tower (who provide our regular weekly meeting facility); students at a local Pattaya school; and Pattaya City staff.



These classes are not your teacher - student type of arrangement. Instead, the volunteers engage in conversations with the Thais attending the classes; thus helping them to improve their ability to converse in the English language. The Group is always in need of volunteers to help with the teaching - so if you, or a friend, are interested in participating in the program as a student or a Volunteer, please contact Richard Smith at our Sunday meetings or call him at 038-412-197, 089-244-95323, or email rick2mail@gmail.com for more information.

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[Friend of Youth Group](#)

This Group assists the Friends of Youth organization, which undertakes events to better the lives of Thai youth in Pattaya. This is done by periodic outings such as fishing trips, shopping trips, and other events.

If you are interested in joining the group and participating in their activities, contact Jerry Dean at 083 115 8475 or email ncrusso1@gmail.com,

The following links are to some recent articles on the Friends of Youth activities: [Christmas shopping](#) and [fishing trip](#).



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Member Supported Charities

Many individual members of the Club participate in activities to assist charitable organizations. Although the Club does not officially sponsor charities, our members may choose to assist in soliciting donations for worthy causes. In such cases we do publicize their efforts as well as announcing fund raising events. The club encourages its members to be active in supporting charitable organizations. Recognized charitable organizations may also make fundraising announcements during the Club's Sunday meeting (Open Forum period) and can make arrangements to set up a table for donations/event tickets. Some of the activities are:

Pattaya Orphanage and Mercy Center

At Christmas time, member Judith Edmonds is usually collecting donations for the benefit of Pattaya Orphanage and for the Mercy Center. For the past few years, Khun Toy with the Orphanage has arranged for the Children's Choir to entertain us during the Club's annual Christmas Program in December. Judith arranges for Jolly Ol' Saint Nick to hand out presents to the children choir and for Khun Toy take gifts back for the other children at the orphanage. Likewise, Judith arranges for gifts to be given to the children at the Mercy Center.



Mae Tao Clinic in Mae Sot Needs Medicines

Nathan Russo collects medicines in USA and Thailand to donate to this clinic. He notes the clinic has been in existence for over 20 years and is self supporting relying totally on funds and medicines donated by others.. When Nathan is collecting medicines, we publicize it in the Club's Newsletter.

Eye Glasses for Needy People

Member Dave Anderson has been collecting eyeglasses and frames for re-cycling and distributing to needy people in Thailand and Pattaya. He recently brought 2000 frames and lenses for distribution in Thailand through the Pattaya YWCA, City Hall, and his connection with a country wide program.

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Representing the Expat Community at Government Sponsored Events



The Club is often requested by Thai officials to participate in planned events at the local, District, and Provincial level. The Photo Gallery shows our members enjoying these events. However, here is a brief description of a few of the events:

- **Chonburi Songkran Festival** - The Banglamung District Chief (Nai Amphor) has invited the Club to join a group of Thais from the District to participate in this event's parade to reflect that Banglamung District has a large Expat community that is part of the District (Pattaya is located within Banglamung District). The District provided "Thai" costumes for the members to wear in the Parade.
- **Aqua Aerobics Event for Guinness Book of World Records** - This event was planned by City and Provincial Officials. Organizers invited the Club to participate. Club members joined the other 2,047 people in the water to set the record.
- **Chonburi Culture Night** - The Provincial Governor invited the Club to send representatives to this event. Provided with "Thai outfits" members Jim Jones and Marjorie Blisset two joined in the festivities of the evening.



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Friends of PDA Group (a success story)

At the October 19, 2008, Khun Mechai Viravaidya, the Founder and Chairman of the Population and Community Development Association (PDA), was the guest speaker. The PDA is one of Thailand's largest and most successful private, non-profit organizations. The previous year PDA gained world-wide recognition by winning the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's *Gates Award for Public Health*. Khun Mechai brought a very important message to the Club with his presentation on Corporate Social Responsibility and how it can help to eradicate poverty through village development partnerships.



Inspired by Khun Mechai's talk, members Stuart Saunders and David Garmaise formed a group to explore whether they could act as a sponsor to help a Thai village overcome the wheel of poverty. They contacted Khun Mechai and he invited them and several of our Club members to visit their operations in Eastern Thailand to see for themselves the successes of the PDA's program.

Very impressed by their visit, the Group opted to solicit donations to provide the seed money required of a sponsor. David gave a presentation on their visit at the Sunday meeting on February 8, 2009.



The Group raised the necessary funds/pledges to partner with a Thai village. The latest report from the PDA is that the partnership was a success and the Village is well on its way to achieving its goal of becoming self sufficient. More information about PDA can be found here: <http://www.pda.or.th/eng/>

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