

Week 9

Our Volunteers Brad and Leah finally arrived here in Thailand during week 9. Myself and Tajma from Cradle went to meet them in Phuket airport with a little sign..... It took a long time for them to come out through the gate with their luggage so it was a huge relief when they finally did. Both Brad and Leah seemed very excited to be here and both of them have brought gifts for the students. Marbles, recorders and art stuff!



Volunteers' Day 1 - Thahan school

Every time someone new comes to Thahan school the kids get a bit nervous and reserved and this was the case today when Brad and Leah came for a visit as well. Luckily kids here are just shy for a few minutes and after our two hour class they all seemed to be best friends. Our workshop was a bit different to my normal class. We started with an introduction of Leah and Brad and showed on a little plastic globe where in the world they are from and what the British flag look like. Then we introduced more flags, Thailand (obviously), Sweden (for me), Bosnia Herzegovina (for Tajma), Mexico (Brad's mum is from Mexico), Ireland (for Cradle) and USA (for Obama). We then played music from each country and the students had to guess which music belongs to which flag. That's not an easy task if you've never heard music from outside of Thailand but the kids did quite considering. But now they've experienced Abba!

We also tried some completely new music games. The students were sitting in a big circle and we had two hats that were passed from head to head and as soon as we stopped the music the students with the hats on left the ring which got smaller and smaller. In the end we just had two students and one hat left and finally one winner. As a surprise we arranged a treasure hunt where the kids had to follow some maps around the school yard to find a big freezer box with ice cream.

Finally, Leah showed her impressive scrap book from her life in Birmingham, with pictures of her friends, pets, family, music - everything really. Brad showed some photos on his camera and played some songs on the guitar. A great day in Thahan but as it also was the last day for me it was a bit (read, very!) emotional. When we left the school the kids also left for their 8 week summer holiday.

As some students are leaving Thahan next year for a new school there was a farewell dinner in Takua Pa on Friday evening. We were invited and decided to go. We were served a very nice buffet/meal where you cook your food yourself at the table... I don't know what it's called but well worth a try. After a few hours of eating and talking we finally said goodbye to the Thahan crew and the students and left for a night in our jungle huts.



Volunteers' Day 2 - Building site at Pakklong school

Day 2 had construction work in Pakklong on the schedule and when we arrived at the school we were greeted by all students who'd just come to say hi, amazing! The task for the day was painting with rollers. We were putting the undercoat on the walls and it was not too hard work to start with but I'm sure everyone could feel it the day after. As there are five rooms and many walls to be painted outside as well this will take a few days. On the first day we managed to do two and a half rooms. Brad got big blisters on his hands but didn't complain; Leah seemed very experienced with the roller as well and painted like a pro. Tajma, myself and Noi also had a go with the brushes and rollers and I'd say we did more than well. Both Leah and Brad managed to grab some attention from the rest of the building crew. Pee Say, the foreman's wife, wanted Brad as her son in law and Pee Kao, one of the workers, got so amazed by Leah that he came into one of the rooms to paint next to her but got told off to leave her alone by the foreman after 30 seconds. Very amusing.

Volunteers' Day 3 - A day off

As day three was a Sunday we decided to give Brad and Leah their day. They were both a bit stiff in the shoulders after yesterday's painting so they liked this idea. Leah, Brad and I went on a day excursion by speedboat to the Phi Phi Islands for some snorkelling. It was fantastic, neither Leah nor Brad had tried snorkelling before but they loved it and stayed in the water for a long time, too long I think as their backs got a bit red in the end. On our trip we passed the beach from the movie "The Beach", we said hi to Leonardo, took some photos and headed off to monkey beach where we fed some of the inhabitants and then got served a great Thai buffet on another of the islands.

After a final stop on a very small tropical island we finally arrived back safe, happy and tired in Khao Lak at 6pm that evening.

Next week is my last week.