

The Ayui Foundation is a non-religious, non-government organisation that provides a home, educational opportunities and future pathways for disadvantaged Akha hilltribe teenagers.

Ayui Foundation

NEWSLETTER



Sumalee Milne, OAM
Director

OCTOBER 2019

Chiang Rai, Thailand

FROM THE DIRECTOR



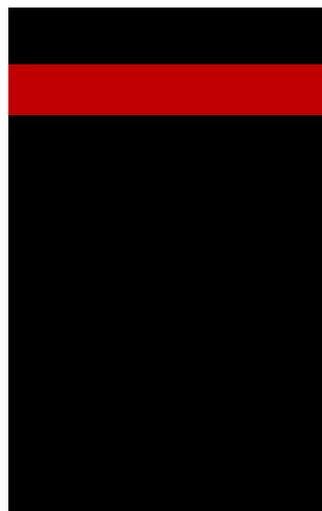
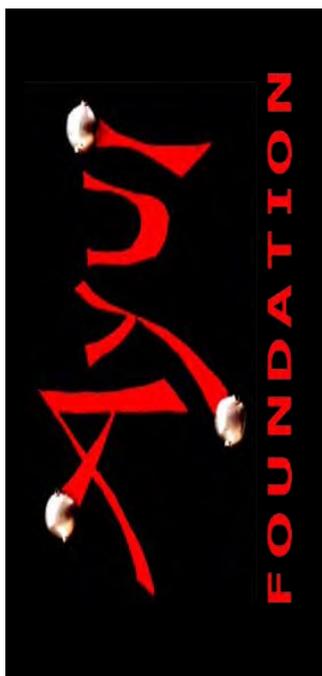
I am very pleased to announce that we have finally found a permanent housemother, after starting the school year without one. Our new housemother is Onwara Choekong, or Pim. One of her daughters goes to Kindergarten at the same school as the Ayui students so she lives with us, too, while her husband is taking care of his aged mother in the village. Pim has experience working as a housemother for a children's home in Pitsanuloke province, and she has fit into the Ayui family very well.

Once again, the Ayui children and staff attended the annual Akha Swing Festival held in Saam Yaek Akha village in Mae Salong every September. It is a celebration of Akha culture, with women from many villages performing Akha dances and selling traditional silver jewelry, clothes and food.



I recently visited Luang Prabang, Laos, which has 50 officially recognized ethnic groups. The Akha are found in the northern regions of Laos. I want to share some information from a display board at the Traditional Arts & Ethnology Centre (TAEC) titled '**Ethnicity, Identity and Change**' because it also applies to the Akha in Thailand:

"Economic development and modernization does not require abandoning one's traditions or ethnic identity. However, with changing livelihoods and lifestyles, upholding elements of ethnic identity such as language, clothing, religion and rituals is a challenge. Through learning and exchange, we can foster appreciation and preservation of Laos' multi-ethnic heritage while still looking towards the future." The Ayui Foundation is committed to helping disadvantaged Akha youth through this challenge.



OUR VOLUNTEERS

For the last week of September, the Tayton family from Melbourne, Australia - Paul, Sophie, Isobel (13), Evie (11) and Juliet (9) - returned for the second time as volunteers. Like their previous visit, they organized games, sports and craft activities, which all the Ayui kids enjoyed doing together with the family. The children were also treated to a *moo gata* (all-you-can-eat BBQ) dinner, which was really appreciated! On their final night, gifts were exchanged, including a beaded necklace and beaded belts hand-made by Pim.





“We had an amazing time again with everybody at the Ayui Foundation. It had been almost 2 years since our last visit, but we all connected again quickly, and got straight back into playing games and having fun together. We really enjoyed having the boys join in all of the activities this time. Once again, our time at the Foundation was the highlight of our trip. Isobel, Evie and Juliet had so much fun, and it was very hard to say goodbye. Thanks to the children for their great company, many laughs and enthusiasm throughout all of the activities. We also enjoyed the delicious dinners every night prepared by Pim”.

Sophie, Paul, Isobel and Evie

★ ★ ★ Thank You ★ ★ ★



A big thank you goes to long-time supporter and child sponsor in Singapore, **Kok Hiang Tan**, for purchasing new desktop computers to replace the two really old ones at the Girls Home. Also, for covering the annual cost of hiring a tutor, who comes to the Ayui Foundation 3 days a week to teach the older students English.

Thank you to Richard and Serena Hield for purchasing gardening equipment and seeds for us to start our seasonal vegetable garden, when the rainy season started.

We also want to thank committee members of the Chiang Mai Expat Club for coming to visit and meet the students, and discuss how they could help the Ayui Foundation.



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