

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

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Chiang Rai, Thailand

FROM THE DIRECTOR

This edition is dedicated to our long-time supporter Richard Hield, from Australia, who passed away in November 2021. Richard and his wife, Serena, sponsored Akha girls studying at both high school and university level, and always took an interest in their education.

The school year has finally ended here...and not a day too soon! With Covid still spreading in schools it has been hard work for the house-parents to keep track of who needs to be quarantined, tested, or stay at home, and for how long. Like last year, only parents were allowed to enter school grounds for graduation, but I was able to see our graduates after the event to congratulate them in person.



Thank you, again, to those who contributed to our Well Fund, especially Malcolm Burrows in the UK. The new well has been drilled and the water pump installed at the Boys Home, so they will now have water to use all through the year.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

Congratulations to our six high school graduates – Saifon (L to R) Sudarat, Nattarika, Nalinthip, Chompoonut and Yanisa.



In Thailand, after completing Grade 9, you have the option of continuing high school to complete Grade 12 or doing 3 years of Vocational College. All of our graduates will be staying on at Ayui and going to College. Thank you to all their sponsors for supporting them through high school.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

Unfortunately, Saifon was unable to attend her graduation because she needed emergency surgery after her appendix burst. Her surgery cost B20,000 and her mother had to borrow that amount before she was allowed to leave the hospital. Since Saifon does not have Thai citizenship yet (and her parents are semi-literate in Thai), she had never applied for the government's Gold Card which provides free health services. With her father recently out of jail and unemployed, her mother had no idea how she would repay the money. When her sponsor, Mayuree Sinthuchat in Chiang Rai, heard about this, she very kindly gave B20,000 to Saifon's mother to repay her loan. When presented with the money, she was so overcome with emotion, she could not speak. She stayed with Saifon at Ayui to look after her. Just in case - while she was recovering in hospital - our housefather did several trips up to her village, to the local health center and District Office to get all the documents and signatures needed, and secured Saifon a Gold Card in record time. Some days after the surgery, Saifon was experiencing complications and had to have another operation but, at least, it was free.

COLLEGE GRADUATION



L-R: Mon, Waraporn, Anchareeya, Kru Sue, Malissa, Ahmue

CONGRATULATIONS to our five Vocational College graduates!

I will really miss this group of girls because they have been at Ayui for many years and I have watched them all grow into confident young women. To show their gratitude, the girls presented me with a beautiful Akha bag that they all worked on together. Here are their stories:



*Monapha Chadu,
2018*

My name is **Monapha Chadu**. I am 19. There are 7 people in my family. I am the fourth child. My parents worked hard to put all my siblings through school but it was not enough for all of us, so that is why I applied at the Ayui Foundation. I moved in when I was 15 and starting grade 9. **I have lived here for 4 years.** As someone who couldn't cook, I had the chance to gradually learn how to cook. As someone who was shy to express themselves, I gradually became more confident because of being at the Ayui hostel. I decided to study Food and Nutrition because I have a dream to open my own café, and I will do what I can to make my dream come true.

COLLEGE GRADUATION

Living at the Ayui hostel gave me the chance to do things I have never done and see things I have never seen. I want to tell all the younger students to be good, don't disappoint your parents, and work hard to make your dreams come true. I want to thank Kru Sue for giving me the chance to live at Ayui, and my sponsors, **Don and Charlie Higgins**, for sponsoring me since I first came here. Thank you for supporting my education each year, and for the gifts and letters over the years. Thank you so much.

My name is Anchareeya Paechaeku. I am 19 years old. My parents divorced when I was little, so it's just been the 5 of us in the family for a long time. My mother had to put all of us through school. Before I lived at Ayui, I lived at another hostel but it didn't cover our educational costs so my mother looked for another hostel that can help with my school costs. I am happy to be here because this hostel only has Akha hilltribe students. I have learned a lot from **living here for the past 4 years**. As someone who didn't know how to cook, I learned how to cook and decided to study Food and Nutrition at college. I want to thank Kru Sue for giving me the opportunity to study, and to live at this hostel. Thank you to my sponsor, **Winnie Cain** in the US, for supporting me through to vocational college. I will stay on at Ayui to do my Higher Vocational College Certificate. I hope that all the students who live here are good to Kru Sue and the houseparents who take care of us. Every warning or scolding they give us is to teach us to become good people in society and to encourage us to study. Thank you for giving me the opportunity for many things. Thank you so much.



Anchareeya
Paechaeku, 2018

My name is Waraporn and I am 19 years old. I applied at the Ayui Foundation because I am the eldest of 6 children and my parents were not able to earn enough to cover all our school expenses. I came to stay at Ayui in 2016 when I started grade 7. The Ayui Foundation has helped me so much – whether it be with the cost of education, school supplies, personal items, and many other things. I feel so lucky to have lived here, and I learned how to do many things, like cooking, growing vegetables, and performing traditional Akha dances at various events, which was a new experience for me. At the hostel, we lived together with the housemother, like a family. Kru Sue looked after us all. This year, I am graduating from Vocational College, **after living at Ayui for 6 years**. Thank you to Kru Sue, for giving me the opportunity to live at this foundation, and to my Australian sponsors **Greg and Alison Rimes**, for supporting me since I first came to live here until I graduated from college. I really appreciate and thank you for everything that you have given me, especially the good memories and happiness for the past 6 years. Thank you so much.



Waraporn
Saetuku, 2016

My name is Ahmue Biangcheku. My nickname is Fern and I'm 19 years old. There are 9 people in my family and I am the fourth child. We are a large family that has grown up with poverty and hardship, but with good, caring parents. As a child, I grew up in hostels because my family was poor and couldn't afford to put us all through school. When I started high school, my father got a kidney disease and mother had to become the sole breadwinner. At that time, my family had no way out and my two eldest sisters had no choice but to sacrifice their education and quit school to work and help support their younger siblings. When I got accepted at the foundation, I felt so happy. I felt like I had more hope in my life, and promised myself I would do my best at school. I appreciate the many opportunities I had here, and the Ayui Foundation is like a second home to me. The whole time I lived here, I was happy and I have many good memories. I did many activities, did traditional dance performances, 'spread kindness' by donating clothes in mountain villages, learned how to make desserts, and many more things I don't have space to list here. **I lived at the Foundation for 5 years**. I must thank my sponsor, **Winnie Cain** in the US, for sponsoring me for all 5 years. Thank you for the opportunity to study and complete college. I want to tell the other students at the Ayui Foundation to appreciate the time and opportunities they have there, listen to the housemother and Kru Sue, and study hard to have a better future. Opportunities only have value when we reach for them and make use of them.



Ahmue
Biangcheku,
2017

** Fern is currently looking for sponsorship to do a 4-year Bachelor of Arts (English Studies) degree at university. She has very good English skills and, since she studied Tourism at College, she plans to become a Tourist Police officer – a stable government job where she can use her skills and be a useful member of society. Sponsorship for the first year is to cover her term fees (B27,200) and dorm accommodation (B2,000 x 12months).*

COLLEGE GRADUATION



*Malissa Chermue,
2013*

My name is Malissa Chermue and I am 19 years old. I come from Mae Mon village. I have 3 siblings and I am the eldest. I **have lived at this hostel for 9 years** since I was 10 years old, in grade 4. I came here because my family is poor. When I first moved in, I wasn't used to living in town because I had only lived in the mountain village and I missed home a lot. But, after a while, it was fun living here. The hostel was really good for me. There are things here for our convenience, like computers to use for school. Being at this hostel taught me how to do many things because I lived here since I was a kid, such as washing my clothes, doing embroidery, cooking, and traditional Akha dances. It was exciting to do dance performances because I had never done that before. Sometimes, we went out for fun or educational trips. On Children's Day, we would go to events and get presents and play lots of games. In summer, we would go swim at the waterfalls. Volunteers would come and do activities with us, play games, give out snacks, and take us out for a farewell dinner.

This hostel is like my family now. I want to tell the younger students to listen to the houseparents and Kru Sue and always learn new skills. Don't stop learning. Keep improving yourself. Don't compare yourself to others but compare yourself to the future you and how far you will go. And I can never forget my sponsor, **Mr Kok Hiang Tan** in Singapore, who sponsored me for the past 9 years, as well as many other students. Thank you for all those years I grew up here, and for the gifts and visits. I sincerely thank you.

UNIVERSITY GRADUATION



*Suthida
Thawiaphiradimukda*

My name is Suthida Thawiaphiradimukda. I am the eldest of four children. I am just a girl who loves studying. But when I graduated from high school - expecting to study further - my parents could no longer support education for all four of us. People around me were suggesting I get a job to support my sibling's education. But I really wanted to keep studying so I looked into, and applied at, various organizations for support but didn't hear back from any of them. Just when I had given up, one of my friends told me about the Ayui Foundation, that supports education for Akha youth. So, I applied there, as my last hope. I got accepted as a scholarship student, and my sponsors were Richard and Serena Hield in Australia. When we heard this, my family and I were so happy, and I felt so thankful for being given the opportunity.

I applied at Rajabhat University for the 4-year Bachelor of Arts (English Studies - International Program). During my final year, I interned at the Chiang Rai International School, where I had many new experiences and learned a lot about teaching in English. It also made me realize that I still need to develop my English skills. I had originally planned to study for my Master's degree after graduation but when I found out it would mainly be done online due to Covid, I changed my mind because I don't think it's an effective method of study. Since borders were open again, I decided to borrow my grandmother's savings to study English in Australia for 1 year. Then I will return to Thailand to fulfill my goal of becoming an English teacher in my hometown. This is only possible because the Ayui Foundation gave me the opportunity for a promising future. I want to thank my sponsors, **Mr and Mrs Hield**, for enabling me to get a tertiary education, and all the others who support the work of the foundation. I hope that people continue to support the education of the children at the Ayui Foundation.



THANK YOU

Sponsor **Mayuree Sinthuchat** for covering the cost of emergency surgery for her sponsored girl, Saifon, after her appendix burst.



Sponsor **Kok Hiang Tan** for his donation to replace the old roof for the truck.



Ms Chamrieng Bunmanon, for donating meals and snacks for 1 week, as well as 100 Covid tests.

The Tayton family, in Australia, for sending Xmas gifts to their sponsored girl, and for the kind donations made by Juliet, Evie and Paul.



Ayui graduate, **Yohan**, for bringing the owner and staff of Gentleman barber shop, where he works, to give free haircuts to the Ayui boys. They also donated a sack of second-hand clothes.

*If you would like to VISIT, FUNDRAISE, VOLUNTEER or DONATE please email us at ayui.foundation@gmail.com
www.ayuifoundation.org*



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