

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



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Director*

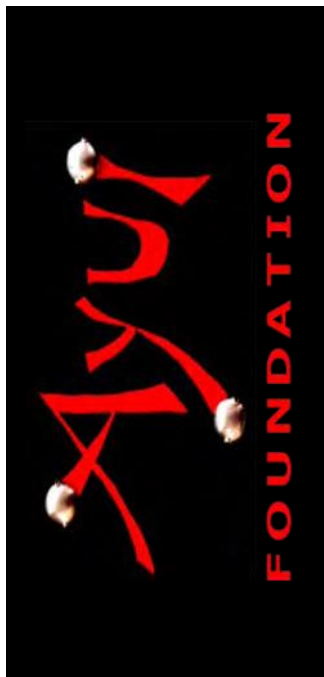
July 2024

Chiang Rai, Thailand

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Greetings from Chiang Rai, the Northernmost province of Thailand. We all made it through the summer heatwave - when some days reached 42 degrees Celsius - and the children returned to start the new school year mid-May. We have continued hiring a Thai tutor for the 4 or 5 students who are struggling with reading and spelling/writing Thai, which is their second language. We have accepted 4 new students this year, and they seem to be settling in well, even though none of them have lived at a hostel before. It sometimes takes time for new students to adjust to living with many others, sharing bedrooms and bathrooms and doing different chores each week. In this edition, we also celebrate a university graduation.

Here are all our students, ready for the 2024 school year. Can you recognize your sponsored child?



OUR NEW STUDENTS

We have accepted 4 new students for this school year. The youngest is Pawut in Grade 4. His father died and his mother remarried. He is the youngest of 3 children. Pawut's mother just left him with his aunt 5 years ago, so she is the one who raised him. Her aunt loves him but does not have time to take him or pick him up from school, and she finishes work late so he is often home alone (and for dinner), and she wants him to be with other boys and have a better life. He is being sponsored by Khun Karn and Khun Tai in Bangkok.

Next is Tatdao, in Grade 7, who comes from a farming family and has an alcoholic father. Her mother brought her to Ayui to help ease family expenses and so that she can be free to do hired work and take care of her younger children. She is sponsored by Annette Piloni and Bruce Millar in Australia.

Sasipim, in Grade 8, just joined us last week as an emergency case. Her family had been renting a room in town. Her sister is at Vocational College, her mother does hired labor and her father was a garbage collector with the local government office. Over the past two months, he has become addicted to drugs (heroin and amphetamines) and gambling (to support his habit), lost his job, and sold their pick-up truck and motorbike, leaving them with no transport. Sasipim, her mother and her sister had to rely on the kindness of friends to take them to school and work. Some days, she had to miss school simply because she had no transport, and the two girls have become afraid of their father. Her father often disappears for days at a time so one morning when he was away, Sasipim went to school as usual and her mother quickly packed up her things and dropped them off at Ayui before moving into a rented room with a friend so they are all safe from him for now. Sasipim is being sponsored by Khun Majuree in Chiang Rai.

Finally, we have a new, 1st Year Vocational College student, Sirikorn. Her mother is a single mother and she has a 2-year old son. Sirikorn really wanted to continue studying after graduating from Grade 9 but her mother cannot afford the related costs, and she almost gave up hope. Luckily, Sirikorn heard about the Ayui Foundation in time to get a sponsor and enrol at college. Her tertiary education is being sponsored by our long-time friend and supporter, Winnie Cain in the US.



L to R: Sirikorn, Sasipim, Tatdao and Pawut

OUR UNIVERSITY GRADUATE



Four years ago, we found a sponsor for a young woman who wanted to study Korean at university. She graduated last month, and wrote a short piece for the newsletter, translated below:

Hello, my name is Miss Jenjira Jupō. My nickname is Jane. The reason why I asked for the scholarship is because I want to study. I wanted to have more knowledge so I can have a better future. I was very happy to learn that I had received this scholarship because I needed it to help ease the burden at home since my family didn't have enough money to send me to school. Since receiving this scholarship, I have been able to study at university. But during the year 1 to year 2, I studied online due to the COVID outbreak situation, so I studied online for the first 2 years, without going to study at university. When I got to year 3, I finally went to study at the university. It was a fun and very exciting experience. I got to meet friends and professors who I learned a lot from, but I did my best and I also had friends who gave me advice, and advice about studying. During year 4, semester 2 I was able to go to practice what I had learned. I chose to intern at Chiang Rai Language School to teach Korean to people who would go

and legally work in Korea. I chose this place because I wanted to see if I was suitable for teaching, to know whether I liked teaching or not. At the internship, I met many different types of people. It made me learn many things, plus adjusting to the internship, positioning myself there. Finally, I have to thank Mr. Tan very much for giving me this scholarship. It means a lot to me. I will take what I have learned at university and use it to benefit my future as much as possible. Thank you very much.

With respect
Miss Jenjira Jupō

INTERVIEW WITH AN AKHA ELDER

This is part of a series of interviews our older students did during school break, asking Akha elders about their life story and the changes they have seen and experienced. The Akha people originated in Tibet, and many migrated south into China then into Burma to avoid war and famine. The Akha in Thailand migrated south again from Burma to escape prosecution and forced conscription by the Burmese Army.



Buper Suche, 76, female, lives in Mae Mon village

I was born in Burma. They [government soldiers] burned our village down to drive us out when I was 8 years old. We moved to another village, and I learned how to cut firewood, grow vegetables and forage in the forest. When I was 16 or 17, I started working in the fields. When I was 16, I started wearing proper Akha dress and started chewing betelnut. When I turned 18, I wore the 'front piece' on my skirt [to show coming of age] and when I turned 20, I started wearing the full Akha headdress. At 20, I moved to Pa Hin Taek village.

I got married when I was 22 and 5 years later had my first child. At that time, I worked in the fields. We grew rice, corn and opium. I migrated to Thailand when I was 39. I have lived in Mae Mon village for 37 years now. When I first came here, we grew rice and corn, and raised horses. We used them to carry our produce and things. Now, we grow coffee and use motorbikes instead of horses. We no longer hold the traditional Swing Festival, or do the pre-planting ceremony. At that time, we still believed in ancestor worship but now we have changed religion to Christianity so we no longer do them.

Things have gotten easier, according to progress. Our way of life has changed, it's not like it was before.

We now have make-up, modern clothes, telephones, cars and motorbikes.

I want the new generation of Akha youth to be determined to follow your dreams, have clear goals, and not go down the wrong path in life.

THANK YOU

To one of our high school graduates, Maliya Ahyi, for making a small donation for snacks and food for the children, via another former graduate, May.

Maliya lived at Ayui from 2014-2018, and is currently working in a factory in Taiwan. It is very touching when a former Ayui student remembers us and wants to give back.



Wanna and Nut accepting the donation from May

To the sponsors of our new students and to all our sponsors who renewed sponsorship of their students for the 2024 school year.

***If you would like to VISIT, FUNDRAISE OR DONATE
please email us at ayui.foundation@gmail.com***

Or visit www.ayuifoundation.org

See www.helpinghilltribekids.com to volunteer



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