



Rotary Club of Jomtien-Pattaya

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ROTARY SHARES

THE 2007 / 2008 CLEAN WATER PROJECT - A PERMANENT SOLUTION

On 25th October Rotary International was presented with the UN Association's Humanitarian 2007 Award for their "significant commitment and efforts to provide safe water and sanitation to sustainable developments world wide". A great honour indeed, and one all Rotarians can be justly proud of. However, receiving this Award does not in anyway mean the project is completed, because there are still many areas in the world that are still badly in need of access to safe drinking water. So the work must continue.

One such country is Thailand, because their piped or well water is not safe to drink without first being fully filtered. Whereas for example all ex-pats only drink, or use for cooking, pure bottled water, no school can afford to buy this in the quantities needed - very few Thais drink heated or boiled beverages such as tea and coffee etc, but consume a lot of water straight from a tap. As piped water is only normally available in dense residential areas the majority of schools, especially those in villages etc, rely on well water obtained by pump from a bore hole in their grounds. Because of lack of funds most schools drink this water without any purifying treatment whatsoever.

We want to fit as many filtration systems as possible, thus safeguarding the pupils, teachers and other staff from exposure to the many water borne infections and diseases that are prevalent in tropical countries. The bonus to this is that we are helping not just the schools, but many families as pupils are allowed to take some water for home use. Also the old adage - prevention is better than cure - takes on a whole new meaning here where adequate and affordable medical facilities are scarce and most people have to basically rely on their own efforts and traditional, often ineffectual, herbal treatment to overcome any sickness. Medical insurance is well beyond their means. Our aim is to raise the quality of life for some of Thailand's poorest people, to save them from a lot of pain and suffering and at times even save life itself. It is a sad fact that if the bread winner is incapacitated for a couple of months the family incurs a debt, just to exist, that can take years to repay. There is no State funded financial help for these people.

We have negotiated an "at cost" deal with an equipment supplier and can now install a comprehensive system for an average of 80,000 baht, including a five year maintenance contract. Depending on the exchange rate, this is approx \$2,300, 1,800 Euros or £1,200. (To give you some idea of the economic difference between Thailand and first world countries - 80,000 baht is more than many Thais earn per annum. And that's for a six-day working week, with probably one week's holiday.) Although we are of course very happy to receive contributions from any source, we do need overseas support so as to qualify for Rotary Foundation Matching Grants, thus increasing the number of schools we can help. Any assistance we receive is greatly appreciated, and donor's names are recorded on a plaque at the school(s) where their money is used.

A little about the very active 21 year old Club I am proud to have been a member of for five years, after spending 20 years in a UK Club, - The Rotary Club of Jomtien-Pattaya in District 3340. We are a truly international, English speaking Club and currently have 28 members, comprising eight different nationalities. Four Thais, two Americans and the others from various European countries. Most of our projects are very much "hands on" operations. For example, with the schools we will obtain work estimates, approve the appropriate one, then pay the invoices direct after satisfactory completion of the job. We monitor everything and NEVER just give money, so any donations are safeguarded and very wisely invested. We also keep our supporters up to date on progress, complete with photographs.

Our main local fundraiser this year is the 4th Cross Bay Swim, as explained elsewhere on this site, which has become an accepted annual event and the Pattaya City authorities are backing it as an approved local function.

If you want more information, have any queries or wish to make a donation please do not hesitate to contact me on swim@rotary-jomtien-pattaya.org , marking your e-mail for my attention. Thank you for reading this.

PP Cyril Gibbins
Clean Water Fund Co-ordinator