Dear friends of Baan Unrak,

We are so happy to have you! We are so thankful for all your help and care. Thanks to you, we are here today.

Last year in 2012, we have been exploring with the children some very important and essential values. We have been experimenting a lot about the power of truth and the power of gratefulness. I am so thrilled with the insight I, and all of the Baan Unrak community have gained. The children were active participants in this quest, and they acquired strength and growth in self-confidence. Their personalities have bloomed in something more radiant and more beautiful than ever. We will continue in this year to discuss and experiment with the feeling of gratefulness and we will continue to honor the truth.

-Didi A Devamala

A message from the founder...

What’s New?  Theatre for Thought– By Mike Auger

Having been involved in performing arts since a young boy myself, I am aware of the hugely beneficial therapeutic qualities for children through drama and music. Together with my project partner and wife, Jennifer, who is also trained in the arts, we run drama based workshops to encourage team work and enhance creativity, communication and confidence. In September we were delighted to be invited to volunteer at Baan Unrak and we have been running singing, movement and drama classes with children of all ages at the home and in the school. This has been a wonderful opportunity to provide the children with support in a new and exciting format. Ultimately we look to increase self-awareness and individuality, aim to build social skills and strengthen friendships. We promote honesty, patience and hard work, while ensuring that the children have a ridiculous amount of fun!
**Sweet Dreams Success**

Thanks to our generous donors, past and present, we are pleased to announce that now every child at Baan Unrak has a bed, bedding and personal cabinet. The most recent fundraising campaign, Sweet Dreams, was a huge success and enabled us to complete the bed purchases in time to bring in the new year. Now each child at Baan Unrak can have a good night’s sleep and keep easier track of personal belongings. On behalf of the mothers and children at the Home, thank you for making a difference!

"It is so nice, I sleep so good" Oratai

"This is the first bed that is my own" Titisan

"They make our room tidy and clean" LoChoy

"It is so nice, I sleep so good" Oratai
Loy Kratong is one of the most beautiful festivals of the year and is celebrated annually throughout Thailand and parts of Laos and Burma. The name roughly translated means "Floating Crown" and comes from the tradition of making crowns which are then sent out into lake, rivers and seas under the Full Moon of the eleventh month.

This year on the evening of the 28th November the children of Baan Unrak, ventured down the hill at the back of the Home towards the Lake. their arms loaded with candle boats of many sizes and shapes that they had designed themselves.

The flickering candles in each of the floats lit up the children’s beaming faces as they sang songs and made wishes. A bonfire burning by the water’s edge created the perfect atmosphere and despite the heavens opening and rain thrashing down, the undefeated children and volunteers huddled under the canapé for shelter, singing and gazing at the flickering fire.

Loy Kratong reminds the children that to move forward in life, we can face the bad things that may have happened to us, look for forgiveness and then strive to be better throughout the next year.

“I was very happy that night because all my friends were around me and we all had pretty boats to put in the water”

Eiphyothu

Youth Camp in Krabi! by Stephanie Langley

Thanks to the generous support of individuals, Projects Abroad Thailand, Aquavision Diving Company and the rock climbing crew at Andaman Sky, the teenagers of Baan Unrak spent their October school holidays in the South of Thailand! The youth camp organized by Projects Abroad was jam-packed with fun, daily activities such as: beach clean ups, games, arts and crafts, swims in the ocean, walks through mangrove forests, visits to local temples and caves, and educational opportunities centered on the theme of coastal conservation.

The kids enjoyed swimming in the sea during their free time; for many of our teens this was the first time in their lives to see the ocean! The extra highlights included some adventure sport activities, rock climbing and introductory scuba diving! Our kids proved themselves to be natural spider monkeys on the limestone cliffs and determined divers. There are not enough words to thank all of the people who made this possible. Baan Unrak is really grateful for your support and we welcome our friends in Krabi to visit our home! A few individuals that deserve special thanks include Jason Russell-Smith from Aquavision, Ingrid Sprake and the staff & volunteers from Projects Abroad and the volunteers of Baan Unrak who made this trip logistically possible. We sincerely thank you to all that made so many dreams come true.
Mothers Take Over Chiang Mai!

This October our care mothers got a very special treat; a well earned vacation! A group of care mothers and some of our smallest children spent one week traveling to the North of Thailand, enjoying the fine sites the cultural capital of Chiang Mai has to offer. For all of these women, this was the first opportunity given to them to travel freely within Thailand. Last year, thanks to new governing laws in the country, Baan Unrak was able to provide working passports to our Burmese migrant workers. These ‘red books’ allow them to enter freely in Thailand and travel domestically with their work permits. Once arrived in Chiang Mai, the mothers and children checked out the major tourist destinations: temples, botanical gardens, the Chiang Mai zoo, and the night markets the city is most famous for! This trip, aside from being a unique opportunity to see and discover new places, was sponsored in the hopes of supporting our mothers emotionally. Our care mothers have to work so hard, sometimes caring for 4-5 children at a time 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. So in return we hoped to do something special for them. Didi Devamala says “The mothers sacrifice their time to be 24 hours daily with us. For many of them it is not a sacrifice because they love the children. I like to let the people know that we also want to help the mother to develop and to feel happy so that the children will also be more happy.” This trip would not have been possible without the donations and support of friends of Baan Unrak.

What the mothers and children said about their trip:

Aye Aye Zan: “So happy to be there! Everything was so interesting! I felt very good in the flower garden; I felt so free!”

Noda: “I am so grateful and I will remember this trip for the rest of my life.”

Lar Lar: “I have never experienced anything like this before.”

Melek (far right): “Oh very nice! I want to go again. It made me forget every worry. I could really relax. I never thought I could get this experience in this life.”

Dokbua (right): “The best thing about Chiang Mai was Melek taking care of me. And we saw monkeys.”
Suk Pants Bring Praise to Baan Unrak Sewing Centre

In August of 2012, Baan Unrak Weaving Centre sent over 200 pairs of specially designed Thai fisherman pants to the famous high-style New York Fashion Week to be featured for sale and display at the Emmy’s Gift Lounge. The pants are called Suk Pants, which in Thai means happiness or ‘happy pants’ which best represents the happiness we can all receive from the children in Baan Unrak. The pants are the first in a series of items making up the Baan Unrak Conscious Collection, and the event was a huge success.

The project started with a design contest to modify the traditional Thai fisherman pants so that they fit in with the changing fashion tastes and trends of the western world. Two of our most dedicated sponsors, Christian and Stephanie Drapeau started the project with the aim of establishing the Baan Unrak Weaving Centre, which generates about 15% of the Home’s overall financial need. Aside from the income it generates, the weaving centre provides jobs for mothers, which allows them to stay with their children and have a decent life, thereby protecting the family unit.

For more information or to buy your pants online, just visit http://buconscious.com/

In addition to this, Baan Unrak’s Suk Pants will be featured at other venues next year! So, keep your eyes peeled and do what you can to spread the word.

Monthly Newsletters are also available on our Facebook Page!
Many people take water for granted. However, for millions of people around the world, fresh, clean water and sanitation is a public service they have never experienced. At Baan Unrak we know the value of our water, and we cherish it. Because of the continued effort of our sponsors we were able to make the life of our children more dignified. Now it is our land that is still suffering.

Baan Unrak is situated on a beautiful piece of land, and eventually, we would like to be able to grow most, if not all of our own fruits and vegetables to feed our children healthy, organic and safe foods. We do not use pesticides or fertilizers and it is our goal to develop purely organic self-sustainable agriculture.

In August 2012 we were thrilled to welcome Babu, who became our head farmer. His experience, passion and knowledge of agriculture and farming was such a valuable asset to the home. He said, “The children should eat organic food because it is good for their health which helps them in the future. Also the children learn how to make a farm. If the children grow up with this knowledge, they can take care of themselves.”

Now, in 2013, we are looking to Sow the Seeds Of Change for our children, for our care mothers and for the wider community so that Baan Unrak will become more self-sufficient and productive. Here is what we hope to do:

**Improving Water storage**

Baan Unrak is situated 500 meters from a huge lake. This is water which we could be harnessing to quench our land. To transport the water up the steep incline, we need to improve our pumping and storage systems so that water can be stored at the top of the hill, and using a series of pipes and sprinklers, it could be distributed quickly and easily over the crops, with little labour required. With a 4-5 month rainy season, followed by almost 6 months without, water storage is hugely important.
Our home wouldn’t be complete without a medical team. Recently, four of our older teenagers have expressed an interest in learning new skills and job training in the healthcare industry. Under the supervision of Ani and Saw Dwise Chit, our volunteer nurses, our new team manages wound care, treats illnesses, provides medical education to care mothers and children, and takes children to the hospital for routine check-ups and emergency medical care. They have also been educating the children on disease prevention and keeping good hygiene. With three different kinds of medical care available in the Baan Unrak clinic (Western, Burmese and homeopathic medicines) the children rarely need to go to the hospital for they are quite healthy.

Ani also manages the medical side of relief work. Each month the health team heads out to deliver rice and beans to elderly people and also provide medication, physical assessments and education to the community. Many of our relief work beneficiaries are elderly and they suffer from illnesses such as high blood pressure, heart disease, joint problems, and stomach problems. One of our team, Namthan, says, “the relief work we do is important because if people get sick, no one else will take care of them. I like to go to bring the rice because it makes me feel satisfied to help older people and it will also do me good if I add good to the world.” The community benefits greatly from these services as most are either too far from the hospital or do not have enough money to go to the hospital. In the future we hope to expand our relief project to include more community education, provide transportation to and from the hospitals, and provide more medication.
**EDUCATION – The door to a child’s future**

Chucak, also known as ‘Bon’ or ‘Taraka Nat’ arrived at Baan Unrak when he was just 7 months old. He is now on his way to pursue higher studies with a very interesting career in mind. We spoke with him to find out more.

Hi Taraka Nat! How old are you?
I am 20 years old.

How long have you been at Baan Unrak?
All my life.

What is your best memory in life so far?
My best memory is from just last month when I went for the final exam camp for the military cadets. After 3 years of balancing military training with my academic studies, I passed! I enjoyed the hardship, the challenges for survival and the discipline in the training.

What does Baan Unrak mean to you?
Baan Unrak is the only place that I have in my life. It is not only a children’s home but much more than that. Baan Unrak taught me many things about how people can help each other. It also taught me about love and caring for humanity.

What do you want to do in the future?
I want to be fly planes. I want to continue my studies all the way through university and finish flight school as a pilot!

Wow! That’s an interesting dream! Why do you want to be a pilot?
I have always dreamed of flying. I know to be a pilot is almost an impossible dream because it is not easy and it is very expensive, however it is my true dream and I must make it come true! The word ‘pilot’ is short and easy to say, however the title is not easy to achieve. To be a pilot you have to study hard and I think I have the drive to commit to this work if given a chance!

What would be most helpful to you at this stage in your life?
I need financial support to study, as well as emotional support and encouragement to fight for my dream.

What is your biggest hope in life?
My biggest hope is to become a Captain. I need to get into a good university first! I also hope to help humanity and make a positive impact in our world by working for an organization like the U.N.

What do you wish for the other children here at Baan Unrak?
I wish that the other children continue to study hard for their futures. Life is not easy and the children should see how good life is at Baan Unrak. I wish for them to continue being good children and to try and stay out of trouble!
The importance of this project comes from the problems that we find in this community. Due to the large number of children and teenagers that come from Myanmar there are several social problems such as human trafficking (i.e. the selling of minors, who often end up in prostitution networks), child labour or organ trafficking. Although the Baan Unrak teenagers now find themselves in a safe place, through this project they are encouraged to openly talk about all the challenges that surround them in their society. Through group discussions and various activities, we are giving the teenagers the tools they need to recognize potentially dangerous situations allowing them to be in a better position to protect themselves, not only from strangers but also possible abuse in their families and community. In addition to this, we also run workshops for the care mothers and younger children. Sexual abuse themed workshops, using puppets, helps the younger children to learn about their own bodies, their rights as children and all the dangers connected to this subject. The main goal of this project is to improve the safety of vulnerable people in the community. By providing them with enough adequate and practical information relevant to their age-group, they can recognize and then defend themselves in a potentially harmful situation.

**Practical Skills for the Future**

At Baan Unrak we understand the value of learning practical skills for the children to use in the workplace in the future. The life experience the children gain from this type of training is invaluable and it can be a lot of fun for the kids too! We offer a variety of training programs that they can choose to suit their interests, many children even come to us asking for more hours in a particular area. The Baan Unrak Bakery is one example full of training opportunities where they can learn food preparation, baking, cleaning, waiting tables along with being given the chance to practice their English and customer service skills. Moemoe tells us, "I like to cook and learn many things. One day I finish study I can work by myself and make a shop for me, and make cakes and cook what I learnt when I was small."

Some children have volunteered to help run the Baan Unrak stall in the local weekly market. The excitement of setting up the stall, interacting with customers and handling money is something they look forward to each week.

Other training opportunities around the home include construction, farming, cooking, sewing, jewelry making and accounting. The future teachers at the home have jumped at the chance to get involved in education and assisting our teachers at the school and at the Home. They are taught translation skills, social skills, acquiring knowledge to educate their peers and younger children.
To Honour our Volunteers and Dedicated Staff

Over the years many friends of Baan Unrak have made lasting positive impacts in our home. All of our children thank you so much for your help, and your good intentions for us. One child has written a song in honor of all the people that came to work in our Baan Unrak.

Thank You

It is time to remember our time together
The days we spent at Baan Unrak will not be forgotten
The days that you spent with all of us here
Thank you for smiling
And everything you have done for us
Thank you for sacrificing your time
To stay with us in Baan Unrak

Even if it is only for a short time together
Baan Unrak thanks you for being so thoughtful
For your work in the house with no wish to be rewarded

We have only this smile to give you
Have only these words to say
Thank you all for coming
Baan Unrak thanks you with all of our heart

Tired but you have endured
Thank you for every favor
All the love that you have given us
We will keep it and we will cherish it
You are the heart of Baan Unrak.

For all of your dedication and help over the last year we give special thanks to Cat, Ken, Jaja, Prashanana, Ani, Saw Dwise Chit, Stephanie, Babu, Mike, Jen, ISV and Go Mad groups who gave their time and love to Baan Unrak.

The main areas in which we currently require assistance are;
• Teaching English and mat
• Agriculture
• Psychology
• Fundraising
• Child care
• Translation
• Civil engineering
Leadership for Excellence

“I love to be a part of the leadership group. We are very good friends with each other, and we try to do our best to help Didi take care of our home. There are so many small children, and only one Didi. She asked us to help, and of course we said yes!” (Faith, 15 years old.)

“The leadership meetings are good for us. We meet together every week and talk about problems in our home. Sometimes it is hard to teach the children how to behave, because they can be very naughty. Sometimes it is harder to teach them, because we are also children. We try our best, and Didi always helps us stay strong as a team.” (Thar Gyi, 16 years old.)

Our leadership group currently consists of 16 teenagers, ranging from ages 14-19 years old. The leadership group was borne out of the idea that the older teenagers need guidance to become positive and stronger role models for our children. The leadership meetings are also a small step to help better prepare our teenagers for life outside of Baan Unrak. They learn valuable teaching skills that may help them in their future careers someday. Our leadership team responsibilities include: guiding the kids in their daily chores, monitoring the rooms and hallways, organizing games days and educational activities for the smaller children during the weekends, light disciplining authority, and in return for their hard work, monthly dinners and team building excursions outside!

VISIT US ON OUR OPEN DAY

Make an appointment to visit us on our weekly Open Day for an opportunity to see Baan Unrak, meet some of the children and find out more about our work here in Sangkhlaburi. The Open Day times are:

*Wednesdays 5:00pm – 7:00pm*

To make an appointment, please speak to a member of staff at the Baan Unrak Bakery. Alternatively you can phone this number: +66 (0)83-1054223 or email us at emails@baununrak.org
Baan Unrak "Home of Joy", is a Children’s Home and community development project in Sangkhlaburi, Kanchanaburi Province, Thailand. The Baan Unrak Children’s Home was founded in 1991 by its current Director, Didi Devamala, in order to provide for one young girl in need of shelter, food, love and safety. One child quickly became two; two quickly became three, and so on. Today, Baan Unrak has grown to accommodate and care for more than 135 children that are orphaned (often from parents suffering from illnesses related to HIV and AIDS), sick and poverty stricken, many of them are Burmese refugees fleeing persecution. Most of the children at Baan Unrak are border children lacking legal papers claiming their national identity.

$5 a Month to Give a Life

Regular gifts are the only way that Baan Unrak can continue with its work. Having your committed support can be life changing; this is why...

A lot of our success does not happen overnight. With your committed support we can provide long term education and see lasting improvements. Governments are unpredictable and may pass new laws or alter regulations that directly affect our children without any warning, meaning we have to be prepared for any eventualities.

No one can predict when the next child will arrive at our doorstep, looking for help, sometimes needing life saving medical treatment. We must be prepared. At Baan Unrak we have the experience and commitment to be able to improve children’s lives and reignite hope daily, but only with your help.

With our commitment, and your regular gift, together we can be confident of Baan Unrak’s future. For more information on how to support us in the most effective way, please visit our website.

Give Love. Give a Life.
www.baanunrak.org

"An effort made for the happiness of others lifts us above ourselves."
– Mrs. Lydia Maria Child

We’re on the web
www.baanunrak.org

How Can I Send Help?

Paypal Account-
baanunrak_village@yahoo.com

Send Money Directly
Account Name: Baanunrak Childrens Home
Bank name: Siam Commercial Bank Sangkhlaburi
Account no: 679-214-7928
SWIFT code: SICOTHBK

To receive a receipt and inform us about which project you chose to sponsor, please contact us by email info@baanunrak.org

"These children cannot say what they need. We are their voice"