



# Phuket Has Been Good To Us Foundation

## *Changing Children's Lives*

### Phuket Island, Thailand

volume 3

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## Program in King's Foundation School Enters Second Year

We have entered our second year of operating an English Program in the new Rachaprachanakroh 36 school in Kamala. The school is the 36<sup>th</sup> in Thailand to be built under the auspices of H.M. the King's Rachaprachanakroh Foundation, which can be translated as 'the King and the people helping each other.' Our Foundation's program, formerly provided for grade levels 1-3, has been expanded to levels 1-6, for a total of approximately 500 students. The English sections of the school now include classrooms, a library and an office for the growing staff.



The expansion of services has transformed the process of assessment into a major undertaking. The Foundation's first oral tests, at Kalim School, little more than two years ago, were conducted with 120 students. In contrast, 1500 oral tests will be carried out with 609 different students in the current school year. In addition, the Foundation carries out two written tests with each child every school year.

A small army of volunteer testers donate their time, in May, September and March of each year and the Foundation is always on the look-out for more native English-speaking adults who can help out. If you can spare a few hours, please get in touch with us!

## Behind The Scenes: Benchmark Testing

- All oral test papers are scrutinised twice and recorded on a spreadsheet, allowing the progress of each individual student to be tracked throughout their school career.
- Teachers are not allowed to carry out oral tests, or to see the papers.
- There is no selective teaching to raise the mark of the tests. Progress made is a natural step by step learning experience rather than exam-targeted vocabulary teaching.
- Targets are set for academic achievement, based on students' test scores.

The tests are based on a lexicon supplied by the Ministry of Education, so the words in the test are those the children should have learned. Students are asked questions based on pictures, which increase in difficulty with each section.

The test examines students' understanding in a number of different areas, including colour, size, quantity, object recognition and use. Two local Thai mothers gave their advice on the suitability of the images used and some minor changes were made to the existing benchmark test in May 2007, in response to feedback from testers. Please go to the Foundation website for full details of progress with each grade. Click on "Progress to Date"



## Test Results:

The Foundation carried out its sixth set of benchmark oral tests in March 2008.

The average increase in score at Kalim School was 8% and at Kamala School 18%

## *In This Issue:*

- **Teach to Reach – A video demonstrating our pedagogical approach**
- **Kate Cope discusses learning as it relates to the synapses in the brain**

## ABOUT US

The **Phuket Has Been Good To Us Foundation** works with local educators to improve the economic opportunities and life chances of young people, by funding and implementing high quality, practical English language education in government schools on Phuket Island. Founded in 2005, the Foundation focuses on primary school children.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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**Caroline Thoys**,  
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**Sarah Foster-Gross**,  
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**Ashley Nelson**,  
English Teacher Apprentice

**K. Kongsak Khoburi**,  
Educational Assistant

## Donor Profiles



### Nicos Coronis

Nicos Coronis is a Greek citizen born in Alexandria Egypt in 1947. He now resides in Athens, Greece, and is married with 3 children. He is the Managing Director of a medium size Greek shipping company operating bulk carriers and chemical tankers. Nicos and his family first came to Thailand about 15 years ago. They soon fell in love with the country, the people, the food and the weather, and have been coming quite often ever since. After the tsunami Nicos' daughter Chiana came to Phuket with many toys from various schools in Athens.

Together with Board member Kathy Paine, she distributed these, and other presents such as computers to children and schools affected by the tsunami. They are also sponsoring the education of 2 children whose parents died in the tsunami. Nicos Coronis' contributions to our Foundation have been a tremendous benefit to the current English programs in the Kalim and Kamala schools.

### Marissa Attard

On her first venture to the Thailand, Maltese painter and illustrator Marisa Attard was, in her own words "immediately struck by the beauty of the country and the special qualities of its people. Speaking to Thai people and watching them go about their daily lives left me spellbound with their courteous manner and their seemingly inner serenity."

After meeting up with Kate and Stephen Cope at the Phuket International Blues Festival, it soon occurred to her that it would be a good idea to hold an exhibition at home in Malta, and donate part of the proceeds to the Phuket Has Been Good To Us Foundation.

Going through the many photos she took, Ms. Attard realised that what impressed her most were the people - their faces, posture and expressions. She opened her exhibition of portrait paintings, "Faces of Thailand," at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in the nation's capital, Valetta, on 6th December. The exhibition featured a number of paintings of children from Kalim School.

### "Faces of Thailand"



## Help We Need

Beyond funding for our English language programs and teacher training programs, the Foundation currently seeks financial support for the following projects:

**Grade 1 Activity Book** - A companion to the textbook English is Good For Us, published by the Foundation in 2007, the activity book is a take-home resource for Grade 1 students.

**New Office Equipment & Supplies** - Computers, desks, tables, chairs, office machines, supplies and more to get us started in our new Kamala offices.

For more details on these and other funding needs please contact Tom Doherty at [tomd@phukethasbeengoodtous.org](mailto:tomd@phukethasbeengoodtous.org)

## Volunteer Nuala Cabral produces video for *Teach To Reach* programme

We will also soon begin our programme *Teach To Reach*, in which we will train Thai-speaking teachers of English in the two schools, and in other schools, in our approach to teaching. The course contains eight modules, and has been funded by the Rotary Clubs of Laguna Phuket, West Shore, Victoria in Canada, and Rotary International. The video, produced by Nuala during her stay in Phuket, will be used throughout the course to demonstrate our methods. The video uses various forms of non-verbal communication to put its message across, and places very little reliance on the spoken word.



The course will demonstrate interactive and multi-sensory teaching methods, and show the benefit of learning by listening, speaking, seeing, movement and touch. It will contain real-life examples from the Foundation's current practice, which are used daily at Kamala and Kalim Schools. *Teach to Reach* will look at behaviour management, and present a variety of strategies for organising and controlling the class, to make full use of the lesson time available. Additionally, the course will focus on how to create a stimulating and welcoming learning environment, which liberates students' desire to learn, and where interesting materials are used to appeal to their natural curiosity.

Places in the course will be offered to Kamala's Child Development Centre, which teaches children under the age of five years, before they enter Rachaprachanakroh School, to make a truly 'upstream' investment in the English education of local children. The first course is due to begin this August.

## *How We Teach*

### Kate Cope discusses learning as it relates to synapses in the brain

If you have ever amused yourself by reading those messages that are miss-spelt, or with letters missing, you will know that humans are capable of recognizing a word when only seeing part of it. We can speed read or skim passages accurately as the signals pass through synapses in our brain. When thinking in this way, the synapses are like little sign posts. Young children have about 10 quadrillion synapses; but this number declines with age. Learning and memory formation are thought to involve structural changes in the brain, specifically at the synapses. So it is important to develop a young child's brain as well as possible at an early age.

We keep this in mind when we educate the children in our programs. A child learns the letter 'a,' then the letter 'n,' then the letter 'd.' Subsequently they learn that those three letters together make the word 'and.' A recall message sent through the synapse will retrieve the new combined information faster than going through three different directions to get back the three individual letters of 'a,' 'n,' 'd.' This is a powerful piece of learning. That's how we teach, like building bricks, using ways that quickly form meaningful patterns and bonds, to start those neurons firing and to utilize as many of those time limited synapses as we can.



## Peter Hamilton Joins Our Board of Directors

Peter Hamilton has joined the Foundation's Board of Directors and has become an active participant in the development of our donor base. Peter was educated in the UK obtaining his law degree from the University of Wales. After qualifying as a lawyer Peter joined Cable and Wireless and in 1987 moved to Hong Kong where he worked with Hong Kong Telecom in a number of senior positions. In 1995 Peter left Hong Kong Telecom to co found Chinadotcom. In 2001 Peter stepped down from the board of Chinadotcom and moved to Thailand in 2002.

Peter was one of developers of the Hong Kong Telecom Foundation - established to administer the charitable donations of the Hong Kong Telecom group and served on its board of advisors for several years. Peter looks forward to being an active member of Phuket Has Been Good To Us Board.

## Volunteer Profiles

### Joy Spencer

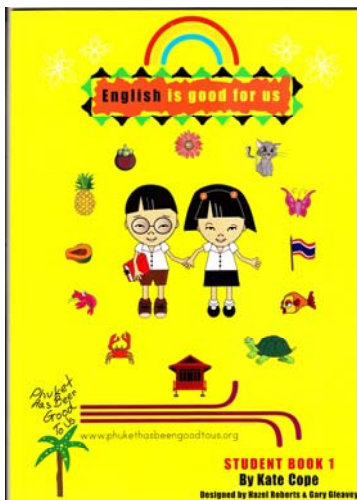
Joy Spencer is President and C.E.O. of the [Queen Alexandra Foundation](http://www.phukethasbeengoodtous.org), in Victoria, Canada. On her second trip to Thailand as a volunteer, Joy met the Foundation's Director of Education, Kate Cope, at a Rotary International meeting in Patong Beach. Joy observed and assisted Kate in the classroom at Kalim School and was impressed with her visionary model of service delivery for English.

She was invited to the Foundation's Board meeting where she met founder Tom McNamara, who adheres to the philanthropic vision espoused by Chuck Feeney: that you "give a hand-up, not a hand-out."

Joy writes, "A cornerstone of my profession is to give back to the industry. I had many mentors and it is my obligation to assist, in a volunteer capacity, other child and youth organisations that are at the beginning of their formation."



### Hazel Roberts and Gary Gleavey, graphic designers from the U.K.



The Foundation's first text book, *English is Good For You*, was designed by Hazel and Gary, who worked closely with author, Kate Cope. Hazel and Gary donated their free time over a six month period to produce the book, which contains over 400 drawings.

**Gary** is a designer for the Brindley Arts Centre in Runcorn. Educated in Fine Art, graphics and multi-media, Gary has been a desk top publisher of children's books, publicity material for children and young people. Gary is also an accomplished photographer in the field of education marketing covers. His other skills include website design and industrial photography he has produced CD and book and video production.

**Hazel** is a graphic designer for Warrington Collegiate, with a BA First Class in Fine Arts from the University of Wales. She began her career as a painter. A specialist in education marketing, Hazel has produced advertising material for cinemas and billboards. She has won the "FE First" and "Heist" design awards, for college prospectuses.



### Staff Profile: Caroline Thoyts

Caroline is a qualified kindergarten (NNEB) teacher, with more than 15 years experience of working with children of various age groups. She is a former school head, with Asquith Court Schools in the U.K., with a NEBS Certificate in Management. Caroline has been teaching English as a Foreign Language in Thailand for three years. She is TESOL certified and has a qualification in Teaching English to Young Learners. Caroline teaches at Rachaprachanakroh School in Kamala.



#### Welcome to New Staff!

**Tom Doherty**, Director of Administration & Development

**Sarah Foster-Gross & Ashley Nelson**,  
Apprentice English Teachers

**Kongsak Khoburi**,  
Educational Assistant

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