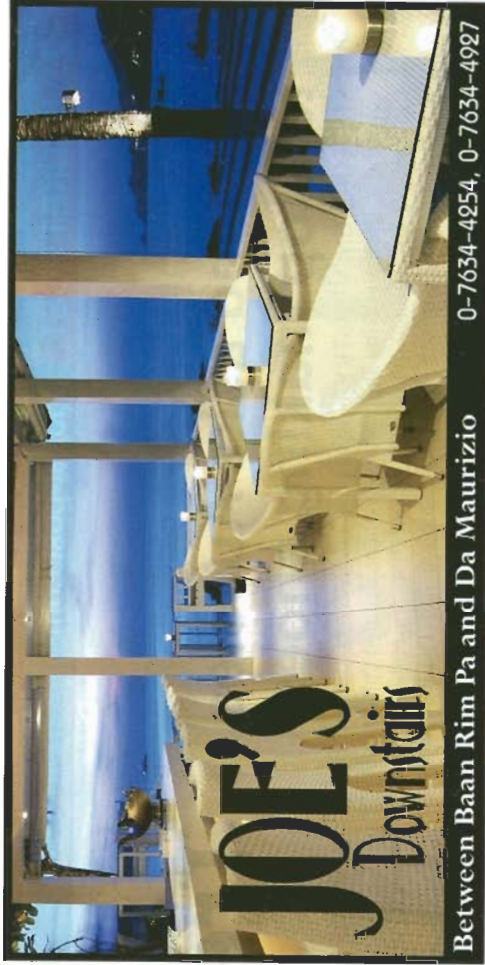


# Phuket POST

A different kind of newspaper



Between Baan Rim Pa and Da Maurizio

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# 60 YEARS

Phuket Post sends its most heartfelt congratulations to His Majesty on the sixtieth anniversary of his accession to the throne.

See page 8 for the first in a series of stories about the



## LOCAL NEWS

# Time to give back

"We want to give these kids a chance," he told *Phuket Post*. "Without English, many of them will have to leave the island to find work when they finish school. But we want to teach them the skills they need to work in the island's tourism industry. These children will have skills they can use for the rest of their lives."

The kids in question are a small group of 10-year-olds, who are musing over the English class's new kitchen and shop displays. Phuket Has Been Good to Us has financed the building of this display as part of its activity-based learning strategy, devised by course director Kate Cope. "The system is devised to stimulate a response," she explained. "The children sing and play and don't realise that they're learning at the same time."

Ms Cope is also in the process of creating a full set of culturally-applicable course books. "You won't find any blond astronauts in these," she smiled. "But there will be a Thai policeman."

While Ms Cope builds the study program, Fleur Birch-Atkinson is



Tom McNamara looks on as Kate Cope (left) and Fleur Birch-Atkinson show the Baan Kalim kids their new classroom.

Not another quick fix charity, the foundation's goals are for sustainable improvement in the quality of English being taught to the island's children. To this end, the foundation has established a pilot scheme at Baan Kalim School, just down the hill from Mr-McNamara's restaurants.

of restaurants in Patong - decided it was time to give something back to the island he calls home. With the help of his daughter, Fleur Birch-Atkinson, and his considerable network of friends and associates, Mr-McNamara has established the Phuket Has Been Good To Us Foundation

By Simon J Hand

**H**AVING ENJOYED LIFE to the fullest on Phuket for the past 17 years, Tom McNamara - the man behind the Baan Rim Pa group

busy finding interns from English and American universities to help spread the project to other schools around the island and, they hope, to the rest of Thailand in time. The foundations accredited fellowship program is already sparking interest, with the first teacher arriving from Ms Birch-Atkinson's own alma mater, Smith University, in just a few months time.

"There's a social obligation here," Mr McNamara said. "This isn't just about jobs; it's about benefiting the island in the long-term, about keeping families together. It's the best investment I've ever made."

*If you would like to learn more about the Phuket Has Been Good to Us Foundation, make sure you attend the next IBAP meeting at Phuja Nirvana, Central Festival on 9 June, where Tom McNamara will be on the panel and ready to answer your questions.*

*For more about the foundation, go to: [www.phukethasbeengoodto.us.org](http://www.phukethasbeengoodto.us.org)*

*With thanks to: [www.phuketpost.com](http://www.phuketpost.com)*