## Dear ACF Friends,

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Somehow November ran right out from under us! We had a wonderful, interesting month filled with visitors from different parts of the world and we made huge strides with all the work required for the registration process of our early childhood education center and the shelter. Christmas event dates have been set and the children are practicing. This year is definitely reaching its end at full speed!



As the sun rose over Bangwad Dam on November 16, painting the water in gold, runners gathered, shoes tied, and hearts ready. Not just for the kilometers ahead, but for something greater. Among them were our incredible staff, carrying the spirit of ACF with every step. Every stride taken a promise of opportunity, every drop of sweat a gift of hope, and every donation wrote a new story for children who deserve a brighter tomorrow. This was the Road to Give 2025. A marathon where compassion met action. At the finish line, there were no medals of gold, but brighter futures for children who will be receiving education, medical care and be looking at the future filled with new hope. Marriott's 'Road to Give' is an annual charity event series organized by Marriott International that involves walking, running, and cycling to raise funds for charities, with a primary focus on supporting children in need. This year ACF is one of the beneficiaries and we were delighted to participate in the event as well.



#### **UK : ACF RECONNECTION**

During this month I was able to visit our connections in the UK for the first time since Covid again. It was a cold, but meaningful time and we are blessed by a few people who stood by us through the years, confirming their trust in our work and their commitment to work alongside us to help us keep going. However, we still need to expand our support base in the UK further. I am most thankful to our UK Ambassador Adam Daubney and his family for hosting me.



#### A CROSS-CULTURAL VISIT

A group of students attending Kristians and Folkehøgskole School, all the way from Norway dropped in as part of 'an exposure visit'. This school focus on alternative learning opportunities for students studying Health, Psychology and Wellness. They travelled to Thailand to experience the food, Thai massage and a new culture in contrast to the Norwegian lifestyle. We treated the students to traditional Thai desert, shared more about our work in the community and found that we have the same slogan in common.



# CHRISTMAS COLLABORATION WITH ALL NATIONS CHURCH PHUKET

On December 13, our pre-school students will participate in a joint Christmas event with All Nations Church. It is our children's first opportunity to participate in a Christmas event in a public space such as Central Festival Shopping Mall. Our students will act out a Nativity play. We are getting ready for this huge event, praying that no one has stage fright on the night of the event! If you are in Phuket, we warmly invite you to join us and be part of the celebration event which will include performances by the All Nations choir.



#### **TOGETHER AGAINST VIOLENCE**

We attended a community event hosted by Good Shepard Foundation against violence against women and children. The event was attended by our local Prosecutor and the Vice Mayor of Phuket as well as other NGO leaders and community volunteer workers.







### Tony Shannon (left), David, and Mary with Angel

The Shannons were instrumental in ensuring we could build our dining room and kitchen building in 2018 and we wanted to show them how useful the building is to ACF. I spent the afternoon with them showing them a video clip in the nursing home where Tony is living now.

Mary and Tony become involved in Thailand years ago, but that first encounter with a charity organization caring for blind and orphaned children laid the foundation for the amazing gift they gave ACF. Mary recalled how that first visit touched her and she wrote a poem on the flight back which she read to us during my visit.

It was a special moment filled with emotion for everyone in the room since David, who introduced them to the charity, was also there with us.

The Shannons chose to see their legacy in action instead of leaving a legacy for one day through their will, and that choice enables us to feed children everyday.

Thank you Mary for sharing your penmanship with us.

# "ALTHOUGH THEY WERE POOR THEY HAD RICHES GALORE..."

#### A Sponsor's perspective

The blind who worked all day in the dark
Making intricate pieces with bright twines as their mark
With hands that were joined they sung with a smile

'You are my sunshine'
'you make me happy' - a
picture to file

The babies and infants who held up their hands So you would cuddle and love them in their far away land The handicapped so independent working so hard To learn English, electronics, computer skills, nothing was barred

And our lasting memory and what struck us most Was although they were poor they had riches galore

A heart full of love, arms stretched out for a hug And a smile that remained in our hearts deeply dug

So pray for them all, staff and orphans alike Be generous and sponsoring a child may be your delight For the joy it will bring you can be guaranteed For a small donation your pleasures will breed

(An excerpt from the poem of Mary Shannon, February 2009).

It is not only the work we do and the children we work with everyday that inspire us to keep going. It's also the amazing people we get to meet. The ones with warm and giving hearts, the ones who touch our lives and make what seems impossible, possible by giving when it's most needed. Thank you to all of you who bring the sunshine when it rains. You make us happy.

Roelien and Team

