

FreeSchools

WORLD LITERACY

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FreeSchools World Literacy • 26 Brad St., Toronto ON CANADA M6P 1J6 • Phone 416-763-7337 • Fax 416-763-5335 • www.freeschools.org • info@freeschools.org

News from *Sue*

Few of us ever find a way as simple as Mark Bloomfield to share opportunity and hope with the world's undeserving poor. With 25 years of nomadic world travel under his belt, he knows the power of a tiny seed planted in good soil. Eleven years ago, he emptied his pockets to help Sister Crescence realize her dream – hire a teacher and offer free education to the desperately poor. Today under her supervision, 32 multifaith FreeSchools, with 3000 students, are thriving in Bihar, India.



In 2005, Mark defied the barriers of language, culture and terrain to pioneer the opening of FreeSchools in northern Thailand. Today 14 FreeSchools are empowering 350 Hill tribe and refugee children with life-changing Thai language skills.

Mark has moved on to Africa. He knows that even the tiniest investment does in fact empower people to help themselves. Based on this principle, he has given his life to planting seeds where ignorance and poverty prevail. When Mark tills the field of despair, opportunity does bloom. We thank him for his invaluable service to FreeSchools.

Sue Tennant
President

FreeSchools Volunteer of the Year!

Congratulations and heartfelt thanks to Merindi Swadling who through numerous volunteer hours has managed our data base with etapestry and donor relations. Merindi returns to Australia in September to take on the responsibilities of being treasurer for FSWL-Australia. Always competent, willing and gracious, she will be sorely missed!



A teacher named *Poy*

After three children died, Poy's family moved to Thailand from Burma to escape sexual abuse and enforced military labour. They eventually settled in Huay Chonu working the orange farms. The Tribal people don't speak Thai, but Poy was lucky and had the chance to go to the government school. With the kind mentoring of Pui who saw her potential, she became a FreeSchools teacher at age 19.

She's tiny and gifted with a deep powerful voice and a fierce ambition for bettering the lives of her family and village. Poy is fiercely proud of her Palong heritage and wears traditional dress once a week.

Join me in *Thailand!*

February 13 – 19, 2008. Here's an opportunity to join Sue to visit 8 FreeSchools over 3 nights in Fang and meet Ben, Jildou, and FreeSchools teachers & students. Value-priced, the tour begins and ends in Bangkok (so could be tagged on to a longer travel itinerary). It includes:

- return flights Bangkok/Chiang Rai,
- 12 passenger rental van,
- interpreter,
- tour 8 FreeSchools & learn about Hill tribe culture,
- mountain hike & gourmet lunch at Angkan Nature Resort,
- visit to local hot springs,
- 5-hour long-tail boat excursion visiting Tribal villages and elephants,
- 4 nights accommodations in Fang.

The last 2 nights will be in Chiang Rai with the option of value or 5-star accommodations, priced separately at \$18 or \$120/night. Cost: \$449 US/pp (with a 5-person minimum). For details please visit www.freeschools.org or call Sue at **1-416-763-7337**.



Meet *Ben and Jildou*

Ben Bowler and Jildou Brouwer work from Fang, a half hour from the Myanmar border. 14 FreeSchools are located in the hills in all directions, with some an hour away. For four months starting in June, monsoon rains turn dirt roads into dangerous mud slides. With two petrol friendly scooters and the back-up of a four-wheel drive truck, a survival gift from Jildou's parents, Ben and Jildou spend countless hours driving these roads to the schools. Theirs is a loving service to empower women and children, not a paid job.

Last March, this young couple volunteered to relieve Mark Bloomfield to coordinate the project. With great people skills and hearts of gold, they have won over teachers and students, and created new supporters in Fang.



Ben is an articulate and engaging Australian, with a background in business and sales. Jildou is an outgoing special needs teacher, originally from Holland. Upon arrival last March, she enrolled in Thai language classes. Together they monitor the needs of the teachers and students, keep records, purchase and deliver supplies, hire teachers, pay salaries, maintain email communications, and diligently submit monthly financials and Field reports to FSWL. Jildou well understands the emotional and developmental needs



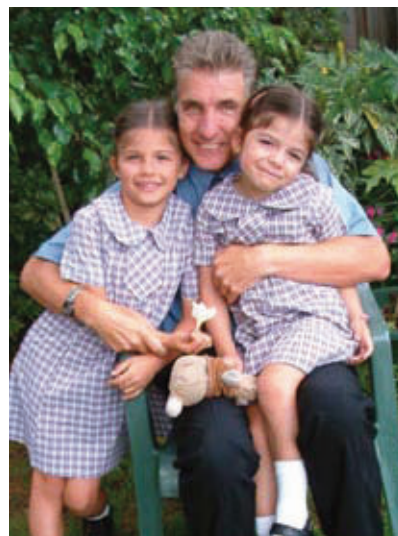
of children and both go the second mile to understand the linguistic and cultural barriers that Hill tribes face. Their sympathetic understanding and hands on engagement is allowing FreeSchools optimal function.

Ben and Jildou are giving a year of their lives to the FreeSchools project, mostly paying their own expenses and receiving no salary. With exorbitant petrol costs, expenses are running much higher than they thought. They plan to marry in Fang in January. Support for their vital work in Thailand is greatly appreciated. You can learn more about them by visiting www.benandjildou.blogspot.com.

Welcome *FSWL-Australia!*

After a visit with Sister Crescence 7 years ago, geology professor and author Robert Coenraads was sold! Over the years, he organized Australian support and a pen pal relationship with two young students. Ian Esmore of Melbourne also became interested in FreeSchools and took strong initiative this past year to incorporate FSWL-Australia. Robert is the first president. This group acts independently but in close collaboration with us. We welcome their determination and progress and thank them for their unflinching support from down under.

Board members: Robert Coenraads (president); Ben Bowler (vice-president); Delphine Swadling (secretary); Merindi Swadling (treasurer); Ian Esmore; Erica Light; Yvonne Hirt; Donna Cervantes; Kathleen Swadling.





Thank You

We gratefully acknowledge the continuing support of our donors.

Benefactors (over \$1,200)

Costas Diamantopoulos, Mind Body & Spirit Inc., John Lange, Rene & Caroline Hagenaaers, Michelle Klimesh, Gestion Charland Lessard Inc., 9088-1525 QUEBEC INC., 9098-9872 QUEBEC INC., Sue & Derek Tennant, Marta & Dave Elders, Lorraine & Neville Kirchman.

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Circle of Friendship (up to \$100)

Susan Ransbottom, Hollis Williams, Teresa Ransbottom, Suzanne Kelly, Dennis Appling, Julio Edwards, Larry & Elizabeth Jones, John & Jane Roper, Janelle Banicke, Richard Smith, Andrea Barnes, Arthur Van Haarlem, Cassandra Discher, Ewewyn Huedemaker, Marylyn Joel, Max Doutre, George Zuberbuehler, Chris Gravel, David & Marilynn Kulieke, Ron & Socorro Zebal, Vicky Morrison, Judy Nyland, Sylvia Finch, Helen Bull, Kathy George Moore, Wendy Sloan, Steve Law, Julie Feddes. Helen Luke, Wendy Rock, Els Shep, George Zuberbuehler, Eeva & Joel Rehnstrom, Chris Gravel, Ron & Sorocco Zebal.

Tribute Gifts

Two gifts of \$1000 in honour of the recent passing of Irene Sprunger and Lorne Archer were given anonymously.



Darrin

Brennan O'Connor is a professional photographer from Toronto who visited the Thai schools in June. Here he documents life for 12-year old Darrin from Nong Tao, a Lahu village, sick with TB but who works in the lychee fields, handles village and family chores, and is an eager student at FreeSchools. We are indebted to Brennan of Nomad for making his stunning photos available for our use.

Top left to bottom right:

Darrin goes to work, does chores, cares for siblings, and thanks to FreeSchools gets medical care and an education.



Hats off to *Saskia!*



\$20,655 Raised for FreeSchools

Last November Saskia Raevouri visited the FreeSchools with Sue and plans to visit again this October. While telling her story "FreeSchools – A Life Changing Experience" on line, she asked friends to support Sister Crescence and the FreeSchools in India. She raised \$20,655 - a stunning achievement involving 50 donors. Fred Harris and Paula Sutton of Mind. Body and Spirit Inc. in Florida provided matching funds and logistical support. We salute you Saskia for your wonderful initiative and thank all the generous donors who were touched by our cause. You can enjoy Saskia's vivid descriptions and pictures in 15 thrilling installments at www.squarecircles.com.

How to *Donate:*

In Asia, your money goes a long way. A monthly pledge, tribute gift, or one-time donation can help this work continue.

Please visit us online at www.freeschools.org or call our Toronto office at **416-763-7337**.

Inspiration from Near and Far

FreeSchools thrives because of generous acts of kindness!

TAMPA In response to the high cost of fuel and the great distances for Ben and Jildou to travel, Share and Bill Beasley sent them a year's petrol subsidy.

THAILAND Pui, a dedicated Thai teacher who takes only 5 vacation days per year, went to bat for 6 FreeSchools students, getting them enrolled in a government school in June.

AUSTRALIA Yvonne Hirt organized fellow employees to fill a piggy bank for FreeSchools. She hopes the idea spreads to others stores across Australia.

ST. PETERSBURG Joyce Lindstrom, teacher at St Petersburg High School, invited Sue and Derek to talk about FreeSchools. We hope "Adopt-a-School" can be developed in the International Baccalaureate program.

TORONTO Judy Davies launches the FreeSchools endowment fund in September as a tribute to her late husband Dr. Elgin McCutcheon. Elgin believed that empowering women can change the world.

THAILAND Yai Jansuwan, a Shan/Thai business woman made a 39 hour round bus trip to volunteer her invaluable interpreting services for FreeSchools in June.

OWEN SOUND Laura and Aden Seaman recently married and in lieu of favours for their guests, made a generous donation in their name to FreeSchools.



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Board of Directors:

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