



**KWAH DAO**  
**ANNUAL REPORT May 1, 2013 – April 30, 2014**  
**Released June 1, 2014**



Kwah Dao

## Introduction

This is our first Annual Report disbursed in June! From now on, we will be following the Thai school year, updating you on our projects and activities from May to May. You can start looking forward to our reports on June 1<sup>st</sup> each year.

We are excited to report on the progress we have made in just the short time since our last Annual Report in January. Much has changed on the ground as we continue to improve our programs every day. Most importantly, our students are making huge strides at all levels – in the Banyan Center, our After School Program and in high school and university. As a team, we want to thank you again for your support. Without people like you, we would not be able to offer the essential assistance that enables these children and families to live a happier and healthier life.

## Projects and Developments

### *Name change*

In December we announced that we were changing our name from The Burmese Refugee Project to Kwah Dao, a Thai phrase meaning reach for the stars. The name change is now complete and we are registered as a non-profit organization in Thailand as well as in the US. As an official organization in both locations, we will be able to better share our work, raise awareness and fundraise. Over the coming years, Kwah Dao will still be referred to as Kwah Dao (formerly the Burmese Refugee Project) as non-profit databases are updated.

### *Banyan Center*

We are thrilled to report that the Banyan Center is off to a great start this school year! We reopened two weeks ago, welcoming back eight returning students and nine new students. The



staff worked round the clock to get the school ready for the children – preparing materials, decorating the classroom and designing lessons. Of the 17 students, seven are paying full-tuition and come from Thai, Canadian, British and Swiss backgrounds. Every paying student speaks Thai and/or English fluently, which makes us a truly bilingual school with multi-lingual staff and children. One student is paying a discounted tuition, as she suffers from Down Syndrome and comes from a half-Thai-Yai family, making her a special case. The remaining 9 students come from the

Burmese Shan communities nearby and attend for free. Our returning students have been doing a fantastic job of showing the new, younger students the school and teaching them our rules, songs and daily schedule. The kids all range in age from 2.5 to 5 years old, which gives us a great opportunity for children to teach each other and become role models. We are extremely proud of the diversity of language, ethnicity and age we have at the Banyan Center and think it is one of our greatest strengths as a learning community!

This new school year also marks a significant change at the Banyan Center as we now utilize a new curriculum donated by the Starfish



schools in Chiang Mai and Bangkok. Our teachers were recently trained in the research-supported English, Thai and math curricula and look forward to strengthening the education we offer at the school.

Many thanks to the LifePrep Foundation for making these improvements possible and to Kru Noi, Kru Portia and P'Ying for working so hard each day. We will continue to post pictures on our Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/BanyanSchool](http://www.facebook.com/BanyanSchool), if you would like to see our students in action.

#### *After School English and Arts Program*

The end of the school year in March saw two more of our students in Pai graduate from high school. Of the six who completed primary school one returned to Burma and four have moved up to high school. Students in Thailand have to test into high school and we are proud to report that one of our students, Gae, tested in as the number one student in the whole of the Pai area. The sixth student, Seng Ne, who has attended our classes weekly for four years, was unfortunately forced to leave school. Despite Kwah Dao workers' best efforts, due to family and financial pressures, Seng Ne (age 14), did not feel able to continue her studies and is now looking for work and planning to continue her education in evening school. She hopes to continue attending our English classes, which will be vital to her future employability without a high school education.



This year we decided to hold our first ever summer camp for the students that attend our After School Program. The summer break in Thailand runs from March to May, the hottest time of the year. Usually most children would either accompany their parents to work or be left at home alone to watch TV over this period. Our summer camp was created with the dual aims of learning and fun and held 5 days a week at the Banyan Center, which was closed for the summer. We held daily English lessons in the morning split into 3 levels followed by activities then lunch. We changed up the activities day by day to appeal to everyone and encourage creativity, critical thinking and teamwork, including model making, building competitions, football, Taekwondo, painting, jewelry making and photography. After lunch everyday we held Shan literacy lessons taught by one of our scholarship students, Mo-a, who has recently graduated high school and will shortly be starting university. Most of the children we work with are not able to read and write their native language and very few of the older community members are able to read and write or have the time to pass this knowledge on. Mo-a learnt Shan letters as a child and we were delighted to be able to employ her for the duration of the camp as teacher and general assistant. She worked very hard and gained valuable work experience, as well as earning a fair salary. Over the six weeks of our camp numbers of students grew from roughly 25 a day at the beginning to around 40 by the end and we were at full capacity! The camp would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of our two volunteers, Khalil and Danny, who put in many extra hours to make sure each day ran smoothly. We saw a definite improvement in English and Shan language and new

friendships forged as we brought children from different communities together. As it was our first time organizing something like this we also learnt a lot ourselves and are looking forward to implementing summer camp with improvements next year.

### *Scholarship Program*

We have seen two of our scholarship students, Jab and Artit, graduate from high school this year. In addition two Kwah Dao students in Pai, Mo-a and Pai (named after the town!) graduated from high school and have been accepted into our scholarship program. We therefore have four students entering higher education over the next few months, which will take us to a total of six including Nuan and Tankee, who are both entering their second year of university. Jab is starting a degree in Chinese and Business at Mae Fah Luang University in Chiang Rai. Artit, who completed vocational study in electronics at his high school, is beginning a 2-year course which can then be turned into a degree if he wishes. Pai is studying early childhood education at Rajabhat University in Chiang Mai, and Mo-a is studying accounting at Mae Jo University, also in Chiang Mai. It is amazing that these students have come so far despite numerous personal obstacles and we will continue to support them and watch them progress in their university careers with pride.



### *Thai lessons*

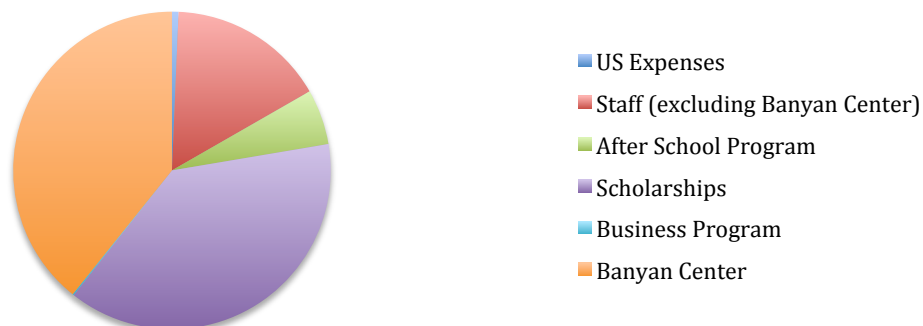
Our Thai lessons are now officially up and running! After some initial difficulties finding a teacher who was willing to teach Shan people, we now have two fantastic volunteer teachers, Su and Kiad, and 10-15 regular students with more coming in each week. Jab, one of our scholarship students, has also stepped in to help teach when we needed an extra hand. For adult community members who never had the opportunity to learn to read and write Thai, doing so can make a huge difference, from navigating their daily lives to becoming more employable and finding better jobs. Classes are held at the Banyan Center one evening a week at present and we hope to increase this if possible due to popular demand.

### **Financial Update**

From May 2013 to May 2014, we raised 41,925 USD through donations and grants.

Our total expenses for the year came to 53,644 USD, of which 324 USD was overhead in the form of bank and donation service charges. The remaining 53,320 USD went directly to on-site programming. We spent approximately 7,727 USD on salaries for our Executive Direction and part-time Program Assistant. These two positions are integral to program implementation through teaching and assisting students, so we do not consider them overhead costs.

### Program Expenses '13-'14



Our most expensive program was the Banyan Center, funded in part by the 12,048 USD brought in from tuition-paying students. The total expenses came to 22,455 USD. We have been awarded a grant for next year of approximately 24,000 USD to be used at the Banyan Center. We will be enrolling more free students and have a limited number of paying student spaces, so our income from tuition will be approximately 8,500 USD. The portion of this income not used this year will be put into a savings account for the future.

Our Scholarship Program was the next expensive at 19,362 USD. We envision this program becoming more expensive in the future as more of our students are hoping to pursue higher education. The donations brought in for this program are primarily from donors who have pledged to sponsor individual students. We are in the process of adjusting our scholarship system to make the organization more sustainable. Read more in the 'Scholarship' section under 'Plans and Projections.'

The After-School English and Arts Program cost approximately 3,713 USD, including our new Summer School offering and Teaching Intern stipend.

Our new Business Program cost only 62 USD in start-up fees for the purchase of materials. From now, it will be self-sustaining.

Our budget for next year comes to a total of 66,590 USD. We have already secured funding of 28,895 USD in donations, grants and tuition (excluding the pledges from sponsors of our individual scholarship students). We plan on saving any surplus funding from Banyan Center tuition in a savings account for future use. With increased staff and more of our students pursuing higher education, our budget has increased since last year. All funds raised, other than minimal donation and bank charges, goes directly to on-site programming in Thailand. We are able to maintain a lean budget by hiring dedicated volunteers, making use of every resource available and connecting with various individuals and organizations on the ground. Our staff works hard to make sure every dollar is spent as effectively as possible.

## **Plans and Projections**

### *Banyan Center*

The LifePrep Foundation, based in Bangkok and Chiang Mai, recently awarded the Banyan Center a grant of 900,000 THB (approximately 30,000 USD) to use between January 2014 and March 2015. Part of this covered expenses at the end of the last school year and the purchasing of new technology for the school. With the tuition from our 7 paying students, we budgeted for the school to just break even this year. Some of our expenses will be higher with the increased number of students and the additional offerings including health insurance and breakfast for all the students, so we accounted for this by budgeting less in other non-essential areas including craft materials. We are confident that at the end of this year we will be able to show great gains in literacy and math for all of our students, assuring LifePrep that we are successful and dedicated and hopefully securing their funding for an additional year.

### *After School English and Arts Program*

Our After School Program has expanded a lot over the last few years. We are at full capacity with our current resources so this year we plan to work on and improve all aspects of this program to make it as effective as possible. We will continue to hold after school English lessons in the communities, which are accessible to everyone and keeps us in touch with families and events. Using the Banyan Center space and mixing the different communities has proved very successful - it makes teaching much easier, gives us access to better resources, and means we can do a far wider range of activities. We would like to do this year round at the weekends however a major obstacle to this is transport. Local taxis are very expensive as they are geared towards tourists, and while we are normally able to borrow or cheaply rent open vehicles over the cold and hot seasons, this can be inconsistent and we cannot find anything covered for the 5 months of rainy season. In order to use the Banyan Center on weekends year round, we need enough money to buy a covered truck (Songtaew), about \$4-6000. Without a truck we will continue to hold weekend sessions in the communities and hopefully restart at the Banyan Center in November.

### *Scholarship Program*

This year we are making some fundamental changes to our Scholarship Program for new students. We started this program four years ago with one student, Nuan. Since then we have taken on new students each year and this year we will have eight students on full scholarships. This means that we pay for their fees and provide them with enough money to live on each month, as none of their families are able to support them living outside the home. We also now have more students in university, which means higher fees. Although many of our students have individual sponsors, we are expecting many more to apply in the future and have been looking at how best to fund this program. Starting this year, instead of awarding the entire scholarship amount to the student, we will be disbursing it as part grant and part loan. The scholarship will cover school fees and a reduced living allowance. The remaining optional living allowance will be a loan that students can choose to take or not if their families are able to help or they can find work. This loan will be repayable once they have graduated and are in steady

employment. As well as making this program more sustainable we also hope that this will encourage responsibility in students and their families.

### **Student Profile: Pai**

Pai is 19 years old and graduated from high school in March 2014. She has been accepted into our Scholarship Program and is about to begin university.

Pai's parents have been in Thailand for about 20 years, so she was born not long after they arrived. Her father works as a day laborer in the construction industry. She says that he is getting older, he's not in good health and he drinks heavily, so he is not in regular work. Her mother makes sweets and desserts to sell in local shops, and also babysits to bring in some extra money. She is also not in good health and has diabetes. Pai's older brother is 23 and didn't progress beyond primary school. He spent his teens working in the construction industry and now works in a local restaurant. Both parents worked hard for many years collecting rocks from the river and laboring to save up enough money to build their house. This used up all their money and now that her father is working less there is only just enough to get by day to day. If Pai wants to continue her education her parents can no longer afford to support her.

Pai gained exemplary marks at school with a GPA of 3.15. Throughout the last 3 years, each day as soon as school finished she would go to work until 10pm, earning just 60 cents an hour. This left her little time for anything other than school or work, but she was driven by her determination to continue her education. She managed to save enough money to pay for university applications and exams, however after paying for these and the necessary transport and accommodation, she has nothing left to pay for her course or support herself. She says that if she was Thai she might be able to apply for loans like some of her school friends have, but as she is stateless this is not an option for her.

Pai sees education as a gateway to a better life for herself and her family, and is very aware of how it has opened her mind and introduced her to new ways of thinking. Having witnessed her determined attitude and commitment to education regardless of the obstacles she faces, Kwah Dao decided to support her throughout her undergraduate degree. She has just been accepted at Rajabhat University in Chiang Mai to do a study early childhood education. We are secretly excited that this may set her up to take a job at the Banyan Center when she graduates in 2019. She is currently preparing to leave for Chiang Mai, nervous at the prospect of starting a new life in a big city, but also excited about her future.

<b>Kwah Dao</b>	
<b>Financial Summary May 1, 2013 - April 30, 2014</b>	
	USD*
	2013-2014 Fiscal Year
<b>Starting balance</b>	10117.39
<b>INCOME</b>	
Donations	41925
Paying student tuition	12048
<b>Total Income BRP</b>	53973
<b>EXPENSES</b>	
<i>Bank Expenses</i>	
FirstIB charges	46
Donation charges	269
Bangkok Bank	9
<b>TOTAL</b>	324
<i>Staff</i>	
Staff	7727
<i>Banyan Center</i>	
Staff	15094
Grounds	2653
Food and drink	1540
School supplies	2619
Miscellaneous	549
<b>TOTAL</b>	22455
<i>Scholarships</i>	
School fees	5562
Living expenses	12634
Miscellaneous	1166
<b>TOTAL</b>	19362
<i>After School Program (ASP)</i>	
Materials	1524
Transport	162
Food and drink	182
Miscellaneous	458
Intern Stipend	547
Staff	303
<b>TOTAL</b>	3713
<i>Business Program</i>	
Materials	62
<b>TOTAL</b>	62
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	
	53644
<i>Ending Balance</i>	
	10447
*Exchange rate based on IRS yearly average 2014 = 32.02	



<b>Kwah Dao Budget May 1, 2014 - April 30, 2015</b>	
<b>Secured Income</b>	
Tuition	8531
Grants	20364
Donations	4875
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>28895</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	
<i>Staff</i>	8438
<i>Banyan Center</i>	
Staff	18187
Grounds	2943
Materials	190
Food/Drink	2820
Yearly miscellaneous expenses (insurance, visas, etc.)	1675
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25815</b>
<i>Scholarships</i>	
High school	5938
University	20344
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>26281</b>
<i>After School Program</i>	
Intern stipends	1000
Materials	2344
Food	469
Uniforms	319
Special events	375
Transport	300
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4806</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>65340</b>