

# BARNHEM MUANG MAI

*Monday, May 11 through Sunday, July, 2015*



*This letter was supposed to reach you some weeks ago, but with so much happening all the time, we simply haven't been able to find the time to sit down to write it.*

*We've welcomed several new family members; we've enjoyed many visits; we've celebrated grades and birthdays; some volunteers have joined us while others have left us; a few former, favorite volunteers have returned, and we have celebrated Midsummer.*

Our children started to return in early May and we welcomed several new family members – 9 children, actually, which means that we are currently housing 27 children.

Hence, much of our time has been spent on getting to know our new family members. Everyone has adapted very, very well and managed to find his/her spot within the group. In fact, the atmosphere is even better due to the presence of our new kids, since our old kids really enjoy getting new friends/siblings.

Unfortunately we had to bid farewell to Opar and Owen, who are moving back to Isan and their mother. But such is life at Barnhem; we're here for the children for as long as they need us.

Around the time that our new children moved in, Tommy Gustavsson from Happy Child paid us a visit. This was his very first visit, as he has recently joined the Board of Happy Child.

He therefore shared our very first days with our new children and saw how we were

extra nervous, bordering on ridiculous, in our eagerness to get to know our new children, all the while we didn't know their names.

During this same time period, we enjoyed a visit by Elsa Österlund, a former volunteer who had traveled around in Asia and chose to spend two of her weeks on Phuket – but who then spent her time at Barnhem, instead of on Phuket.

We have written this many times before – but it deserves to be mentioned again – we are so very grateful to our wonderful volunteers who choose to come back to visit us. And of course we're extra grateful to volunteers such as Elsa who show up to spend every day at Barnhem – not because they have to, but because they want to.

Unfortunately Elsa missed our party on May 22 when she caught a stomach bug and then had to continue on her journey the next day.

We threw a party to celebrate that everyone had returned and that we were together again. We also celebrated the children who had had a birthday since our last party, and last but not least, we celebrated our children's terrific grades. Practically everyone had raised their grades. All of the birthday kids received a gift and everyone who had excelled at school also received a gift in the form of some money. It gets expensive to house so many exemplary students – expensive and exciting!

Our wonderful Team stood out from her peers this time. Team could barely read and write and had very low self-esteem when she first arrived, but she has finally started to believe in herself and her own abilities, and what a difference this belief and hard work have made. But she hasn't done it all by herself; rather her best friend Fon has helped her along. Fon has believed in her and has managed to get Team to believe in herself. Fon has made Team understand how much she is worth and that she can manage if she wants to. Thus, Team and Fon were the stars of the evening – Team because of all of her hard work, and Fon because of her unwavering friendship.

Emil, who is visiting us for the fourth time, missed our party on May 22 since he arrived on June 4, but he was able to plan our Midsummer celebration, just like last year! Emil is undoubtedly a member of our wonderful family; that's what happens when you are willing to spend your time on our children year after year. This time Emil had to join us in learning several new names in a hurry.

But someone who did miss our Midsummer celebration was Jane, to whom we waved farewell on June 7 – fortunately she attended the party on May 22 and during her round of volunteering, she has been able to plan and attend various other celebrations.

And then our beloved Lann and Dee returned. And we are all very happy. Their mother chose to move back to Phuket to help their big sister, who is expecting a baby, and the best solution for the whole family was for the boys to move back in with us.

It was a joy to watch how happy the other children were when their old friends/siblings returned. Not to mention beloved Grandma's happiness – this time she shed tears of joy.

In other words, we had a big Midsummer crowd this year, and we played lots of fun games that Emil and Kajsa had arranged. It seems that Vilda also managed some Midsummer fun, since she had arrived the previous day.

Thus, for Vilda the celebration marked a fun start with us, and for Kajsa it was a fun party at the end of her stay. Vilda had come to replace Kajsa, and we had to bid farewell of her a week later, on June 28.

And on July 4 we welcomed back another former volunteer, since Alexandra had decided to do a second round. It was wonderful to have her with us, and for a few days we were lucky to have two veteran volunteers working alongside Vilda.

No joy lasts forever, but this one lasted for a few days – on July 7 we waved farewell to Emil and as we write this, Alexandra and Vilma are doing a terrific job, smoothly managing the tasks normally associated with four volunteers.

Now we're back to the regular tasks of homework and routines, but since today is Sunday and our children are school-free, I'm going to slip away to enjoy some time with them.

*Warmest regards,*

Sussi



*New and old cute little monkeys!*



*Two friends who enjoy playing masquerade and dress-up.*



*When in Rome or at Barnhem... Here's Tommy playing volleyball with the kids.*



*A group of little rascals.*





*Elsa dove straight into helping the kids with their homework.*



*She's growing, she's growing!!*



*So many do homework that it's difficult to capture all of them in one photo.*



*Nid takes care of the school hair-do.*



*Two masters at chess.*



*Best friends.*



*Fun in the pool.*



*Via puts on a show before bedtime.*





*Maeo uses the gong-gong he himself has made to help getting everyone up in the morning.*



*Not quite awake yet, but off to school.*



*Reviewing the Midsummer games.*



*Last but not least, the obligatory Midsummer photo.*