

# BARNHEM MUANG MAI

*Monday, July 13 through Monday, September 7, 2015*



*We wanted to write this letter last week, but decided to hold off until we could tell you about a truly amazing project that starts now! We obviously have lots of other news, given that it's been a while since our last letter, and as you know, there's always something happening here.*

We'll jump right in and explain why we wanted to hold off a bit on this letter.

It's happening – we are about to get a partially new and fully renovated Barnhem!

Today we saw the first sign that this project is indeed under way – they're measuring the site of the house-to-be.

This comprehensive project was initiated by our heroes, Barrie Buck and John Grendon, more than 1.5 years ago, and we cannot begin to describe the time and energy that they have spent on ensuring that our children will get a better and more secure home.

And now it's all happening, thanks to other heroes having joined the cause. The architectural firm Lerd drew up the blueprints without billing a single second of their time; Paresa Hotel have hosted and will continue to host fundraising dinners to benefit our new home; Amata Associates have offered to complete the renovation and new construction at-cost; Happy Child arranged *An Evening for Happy Child* last fall and earmarked the proceeds for our construction project; Nordea Finans donated money to our project in honor of a colleague; there's The Sam and Ruby Charity in England; and last but not least, Alba Care Foundation made it possible to start this project through their commitment. And hopefully our group of heroes will grow even

larger during the course of the project. We do want to thank each and every one who has contributed so far, even though we cannot name everyone.

All we have to do at Barnhem is to follow the construction and renovation work and move around a bit during the estimated six months or so of the project. Anyone who wants to follow this fantastic project can do so on our Facebook page, Barnhem Muang Mai. You can also contact us for details on the project.

And what else has happened since our last news? We've had a string of weeks filled with our regular and wonderful routines, and Hans and Sussi also took a trip to Sweden.

In Thailand we bid farewell to Alexandra on July 26, when she left after her second round of volunteering. This time she spent most of her vacation with us – thank you, Alexandra, for everything that you give us.

With Alexandra gone, Vilda was the only volunteer at Barnhem. In addition, Hans was already in Sweden and Sussi had left on the same day that Alexandra had left, and all we can say is that we were very fortunate that Vilda was the one holding down the fort in our absence. Vilda gets along beautifully with the staff members and the kids, and she's not afraid to do whatever needs to be done.

During our stay in Sweden we met our new volunteers, Susanne and Hanna Karlfeldt, before their scheduled departure for Thailand. As revealed by their last name, they're related; in fact, they're mother and daughter. Susanne's round of volunteering was scheduled to start on August 1 and Hanna was scheduled to follow in her mother's footsteps two weeks later, and hence it worked out well that we were able to get together before their departure.

We met over a cup of coffee in a park by the Stockholm Observatory and were joined by Huw and Celi, the owners of the Gecko School who had decided to visit Sweden while the school was closed, and also by our very own Calle. Thus, Susanne and Hanna got to meet several people in Sweden that they would later meet on site in Thailand.

While the days passed without a hitch at Barnhem – as you know, we're fortunate to have the world's best Wow and the world's best staff – we divided our days in Sweden between meetings with the distinguished board members of both Barnhem and Happy Child and visits with our friends and family members.

The two board meetings went very well and we thoroughly enjoyed being spoiled by everyone with whom we mostly stay in contact through e-mail and Skype. These wonderful people in Sweden give generously of their private time to enable us to do our work in Thailand.

Hans returned on August 12 and was therefore able to welcome Hanna when she arrived. And now we finally have three volunteers – Vilda, Susanne, and Hanna – and we're talking about three strong ladies.

It was Sussi's turn to return on August 27, and she had barely landed when everyone at Barnhem left for Paresa Hotel, where they were treated to wonderful food and lots of fun and games in the pool.

But it was not just a day of eating and playing; rather, on this day Paresa officially handed over 500,000 in Thai baht for the renovation. They had raised the funds during their charity dinner in October of last year.

On site were Dawid, Paresa's General Manager, our two heroes, Barrie and John, and all of our children. And Paresa continues their fantastic work on our behalf – thanks to Dawid, the next charity dinner has been scheduled for November.

This week those of our children who attend the Wat Muang Mai school are on break while their teachers are on field trips – hence, we'll take a break now to enjoy some time with our rascals.

*Warm and happy regards,*

Sussi and Hans



*Our youngest ones are doing their homework.*



*Those who are a bit older are also doing their homework.*



*But Bai-Tuy is apparently not too keen on her homework...*



*Who needs a gym when you can do some boxing with the kids?*



*En route to Paresa.*



*We were served lots of good food and Bai-Tuy even got some personal assistance.*



*The lovely meal was followed by ice cream...*



*...and these three guys do like ice cream.*



*Our heroes, Barrie and John, with their families.*



*Posing for the camera in the pool.*



*A smashing time of splashing!*



*Wet fun wets your appetite.*



*This is what our kids look like as they get ready for some water fun.*



*After having enjoyed food, candy and water fun, you can always switch to playing with cars.*



*Soap bubbles.*



*And now it's under way! For the next several months to come, this site probably won't be this calm.*