1,515,000 baht raised by Traidhos Visiting Schools Program to aide Northern Thai hilltribe communities

Traidhos Visiting Schools Program (VSP) is an experiential activity program sharing a scenic green campus on the outskirts of Chiang Mai with Prem International School. While students at the school are studying hard in their classes, just next-door students from schools all over the world are experiencing new cultures, pushing comfort zones and creating lasting life experiences.

Somewhere between the adrenaline of white water rafting and the calming influences of learning Thai culture, many VSP groups find time to enjoy some physical community service work while donating valuable resources to remote communities in the Northern Thai hillsides. VSP students have worked with Red Karen, White Karen, Big Eared Karen, Lisu, Lahu, Akha, Hmong, DaraAng, Palong, Shan and local northern Thai communities during their community projects. Projects have supported elephant camps, reforestation projects, orphanages and temples as well as many local schools.

In the last twelve months VSP have hosted 2252 students from forty-two different schools from Asia, Africa, Australia, Middle East, America and Europe. Almost 75% of these schools decided to include a community service aspect to their trip. For some students they are gaining credits towards their future education, while for others, community service has become a focus of their trip for many months before they arrive in Thailand. Prior to their departure for Thailand, students take part in fundraising events, working to raise money to buy the materials that can serve the communities whom they will visit.

Many of the communities that VSP work with are based in rural, hard-to-reach villages where funding and external support is often slow to materialize due to the additional transportation costs, inaccessible roads or low numbers of low income hill-tribe families attending the schools. The work that is completed through the community service programs often provide a lifeline for these schools and give inspiration for students who may otherwise be given no incentive to study. Meeting foreign students is not only exciting for the Thai and hill-tribe students but also an eye-opening experience for the visiting school students too, many of whom have rarely had an opportunity to mix with smiley, enthusiastic young children who are living a simple life in a far-off secluded little village.

VSP are thrilled to announce that thanks to this international desire to help others, THB 1,515,000 has been donated through thirty-seven different community service group projects this year. VSP staff would like to send their sincere thanks to all the schools who have been involved in community service projects and who have worked determinedly through rain and shine to complete such wonderful projects and create wonderful memories for everyone involved. If you have been inspired and are thinking that you too may be able to find a group of students who could rise to the challenge and support a community service project then contact Michael Cumes michaelc@threegeneration.org or http://vsp.threegeneration.org/index.html.

Take a look at just a few of the projects that have been made possible in the last twelve months.
Garden International School from Malaysia built an exciting used-tyre playground and repainted a previously drab-looking classroom for Huay Fak Dap School in the Mae Taeng Valley.

An amazing one hundred and eighty students from Yew Chung International School Hong Kong descended on Chiang Mai in January for a whirlwind tour of northern Thailand. As part of their trip the group split up to support four different village schools in Thailand. One group worked with a Hmong community school in the Mae Saa Valley, donated and positioned two large water containers and built a sink area and a drainage canal to provide a place for children to brush their teeth and improve student hygiene. The other group worked at Baan Huay Pong putting their woodwork skills to the test while building new desks for the students and giving the classroom a lick of paint to brighten up the learning zone. A third group built a shower room at PhaTaek School, while a final group worked at Sop Khai to renovate a community meeting space. All this was possible with one united effort from all the dedicated students from Yew Chung School.
Yew Chung Shanghai Century Campus school also joined a VSP community service program where they spent two days giving a temple in Sop Khai some much-needed attention.

Think Global School spent three days at Mae Jon School in Chiang Dao area where they constructed a bamboo fence around the property, helped dig their sustainable farm and fishpond as well as building a new toilet block for the school. With a barely passable road in to the village, most vehicles can pass only as far as the stream at the foot of the village. Luckily our 4x4 managed to reach the school to deliver the tools and materials.
Camberwell Grammar School from Australia arrived at Huay Nam Haakschool in Chiang Dao area to finish an on-going project to build a new classroom and shady eating, playing and teaching space. It looked great and is a great asset to the school and local hilltop community.

Billanook College from Australia is another dedicated group of students who volunteer each year to complete a tough community service project. The College has loyally supported the House of Hope Orphanage in Mae Hon Song province – a home for many orphaned Burmese children – and has been able to build new accommodation blocks, new toilets and a common room area as well as donating clothes, fans, cupboards and games for the children. They now have a spacious, comfortable place to call home.