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07  Makha Bucha Day: Public Holiday
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15  Songkran: Public Holiday

May
01  National Labour Day
05  Coronation Day
07  Substitute holiday for Coronation Day

The Traidhos Three-Generation Community for Learning

Map to PTIS
Approximately 25 km NW from Chiang Mai and approximately 45 minutes’ driving time

The Traidhos Quarterly is produced four times each year.
All current families will receive one complimentary copy. If you would like additional copies or if you receive more than one copy please telephone Christopher Hall + 66 807 929 925.
As Head of Prem Tinsulanonda International School (PTIS) I am determined to see our students, teachers, parents and grandparents exposed to a variety of learning opportunities. PTIS has offered a series of free Public Seminars for the past two years and this year we collaborated with Think Global School to bring Dr Tony Wagner to PTIS as part of the seminar series.


An internationally-renowned education consultant and speaker, Dr Wagner has spent his career researching the most effective educational practices for the 21st century. Wagner’s other books have been translated into many languages, including Chinese. They include *The Global Achievement Gap, Change Leadership, How Schools Change, and Making the Grade*. He was the co-creator of the documentary film *The Finland Phenomenon: Inside the World’s Most Surprising School System*.

Dr Wagner outlined seven survival skills students need for the 21st century:

- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Collaboration across networks
- Agility and adaptability

To validate his theories, Wagner quoted business leaders, consultants to Fortune 200 companies and several CEOs:

“Test your assumptions, don’t take things at face value, don’t go in with preconceived ideas that you’re trying to prove,” said Ellen Kumata, consultant to Fortune 200 companies.

Clay Parker, President of Chemical Management Division of BOC Edwards comments “I can guarantee the job I hire someone to do will change or may not exist in the future, so this is why adaptability and learning skills are more important than technical skills.”

“There is so much information available that it is almost too much, and if people aren’t prepared to process the information effectively, it almost freezes them in their steps,” said Mike Summers, Vice President for Global Talent Management at Dell.

I hope you can use some of these critical survival skills to help prepare your children to be innovative designers of the 21st Century. We have certainly taken them on board at PTIS.
Let’s Go fly a Kite

Anyone who has watched the film or stage play Mary Poppins will be familiar with the advice given to the Banks children in the story:

With tuppence for paper and string,
You can have your own set of wings!
With your feet on the ground you’re a bird in flight,
With your fist holding tight to the string of your kite!

And so it was one sunny weekend in January that the Traidhos Three-Generation Cricket oval was filled with fluttering paper and running children of all ages, looking up and grasping the strings of their kites. Working with SanookSky and the Kite Couple, and urging nature to contribute just a little more wind, the sky above Traidhos became the stage for a variety of kites.

Colourful hyper kites dived and circled. Big novelty kites in the shape of snakes and fish brought gasps of delight from visitors. Eagle and owl kites hovered as if waiting for their prey and an elderly kite master, dressed in a costume dating back to Ayutthayan times, proudly displayed his Chula kite and explained the history of Thailand’s Chula and Papao kite competitions.

Kite Memories

On the ground, the strings and coloured paper evoked stories and memories from around the world. It was as if everyone had a kite memory, a happy experience they wanted to talk about. We heard of growing up in India and the fun of flying single-string kites, the strings covered in a glass-fragment paste allowing the flyer to conquer the kites of less-skilled neighbours. Stories were shared of memories of Sanaam Luang in Bangkok criss-crossed with strings in front of the Grand Palace. We heard of kites that became stuck in trees and their eventual retrieval, and tales of kite-flying on the beach in England and in the park in Australia, but wherever the country and whatever the story, the story-tellers were always smiling as they recalled their kite-flying memories.

PTIS Boarding student Tashi grew up in Bhutan where she had regularly made and flown kites as a young girl. She reflected on her feelings after being attached to her kite during the festival.

“When I saw the kites fly in the air at the festival, I felt like I was the one flying instead of the kite. They reminded me of my past. When I flew a kite I felt as if I was letting a part of me fly as well. When I saw some of the other children making and flying kites I was bursting with joy, and once I started to bond with the kite crew I felt as if we were all birds of the same feather. I learned that flying a kite is to love living. I am so thankful to all of you, for the great and wonderful feeling that you have opened up for me. Thank you from Tashi!”

It is good to realize that amidst the sophistication of today’s technology and expensive gadgets, so much pleasure can still be had when your fist holds tight to the string of a kite.

Lynda Rolph
Chief Operating Officer
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IMI will be present on PTIS International School in November, watch out for details!
It was interesting to see how the flood waters in Bangkok had an impact throughout Thailand, and throughout the world. Supermarket shelves throughout the entire country ran out of drinking water, instant noodles and canned foods, because they are normally manufactured in a flood-affected area, couldn’t be transported due to flooded roads, or had been sent to aid flood refuges. Building works in Isaan cannot be finished because the materials and labourers were to have come from flooded areas. Car manufacturing in Asia and beyond had to stop, as the parts made in Thailand were not being produced. Even computer hard drives were low in stock, Thailand being one of the top five manufacturers in the world.

A sustainable future?

Think about the water in your cup now, and the computer you sat at today – where did they all come from? How much energy was used to get them to you? One step to being a more sustainability-minded Global Citizen is to consider the energy you use in your daily routines. Do an energy trace for your dinner: how much energy was used to get the rice from seed, to field, to your table? Consider what you can do to reduce the amount of energy needed for your daily life. You might be shocked at how far things have come, and how you might be affected when a natural disaster occurs somewhere far from your home.

The irony in all of this is the water itself. The thing causing the problem is the water. The thing people need to survive but could not get – water. The thing that was used to clean up after the flood – water. It is essential to our life, and as humans we often think we are in control of everything, even nature, but the drastic Thailand floods should remind how precious, and damaging, this resource really is.
Two Grade 11 students recently spent a very gratifying weekend helping professors and students from Mae Jo University survey the trees around Chiang Mai’s historic moat. The survey was conducted by Professor Tanakorn Latthirsuwan from the Department of Agro-forestry, Mae Jo University in Phrae Province, in order to review the original data he had studied ten years ago. The survey team, in addition to the PTIS students Alex and Lewis, consisted of Professor Tanakorn himself, three colleagues from Mae Jo University, three staff from The Regional Environment Office Chiang Mai, and Mr Kunakorn Boonsai (Yai) from the Triple-E Research and Facilitator Group.

With the original list of more than 2000 trees surveyed in 2002 and a total distance of six kilometres to be reviewed, Chiang Mai’s historic moat was divided into nineteen sections. Three survey teams were formed and assigned their parts of the survey task and were given the parameters which needed to be measured or estimated. These parameters included tree-mapping using GPS (Geographical Positioning System) devices, “gbh” (tree girth at breast height), trees’ height, their health score and the distance between trees. The most important parameter was the tree species, which were primarily identified by Professor Tanakorn and Mr Yai, enabling the students to learn the trees’ local and scientific names.

All the trees around the Chiang Mai moat are surrounded by busy traffic. The constant car fuel emissions are likely to have a major impact on their health, and human interference on the trees was also noted. Some trees had nails, metal and random bits of wire and string attached to them. One tree in particular was very close to a large street light - and the tree had warped its figure because of it, while another tree was used as the base of a heavy spotlight.

Apart from the ever-present buzzing and swooping of hundreds of motor bike riders, tuk tuks, taxis and trucks, Alex and Lewis had other adventures during the survey. They had to dodge the honey bees and their hives found in many trees, and they were attacked on several occasions by red ants.

The original solo census, a decade ago, had taken Professor Tanakorn six months to cover all the trees along the moat road, but with the assistance of his university colleagues, volunteers from local organisations and the PTIS students, this year the census took only three full days to complete.

The tree census collected scientific information about the trees themselves and will also be useful in planning proper urban tree management programs in the future. It helped demonstrate the importance taking extreme care of the environment: if we can take more care of the trees around our homes and around the world, then we stand a much better chance for the future of saving our natural resources. At present, some people are so careless and inconsiderate that they litter and pollute without thinking about the general effect that it will have on the trees and their ecosystem: for every cause there is an effect!
As an international school in northern Thailand, PTIS attracts children from all corners of the globe. Many come here because their parents live nearby or because their parents want a safe boarding environment for them. Some have come from countries where there is political unrest; others from places where local education may not be of international standards. Few, however, have come to the school to escape from earthquakes.

“My mother had chosen Christchurch because the people were friendly and the city was not too big – unlike Bangkok, where we had been going to school,” said Ince (Grade 7).

Ince and his Grade 4 brother, Encre, set out on their adventure in December 2010, when they were just twelve and nine years of age. It was particularly challenging for Encre who found the changes difficult. The boys were attending a leading independent school in Christchurch, where there were up to thirty boys in the larger dormitories, and where there was a very strict dress code. “At dinner times we had to place the dinner napkins on our laps, our ties had to be straight and our jackets buttoned up – we were being taught to be proper English gentlemen!”

European social etiquette was not the only new thing the young Thais had to learn. The fine art of Rugby Union football and the gentlemanly pursuit of cricket – both are followed almost religiously in New Zealand – were also on the timetable until disaster struck.

Around the world earthquakes cause immense damage and loss of life. The February 2011 force 6.3 earthquake that wreaked havoc on New Zealand’s beautiful city Christchurch caused damage to many buildings and the deaths of almost two hundred people.

The boys – and their school friends and teachers – were all safe. While the school suffered some damage, the historic centre of the city was severely damaged. “I was scared that buildings might fall on me,” said Encre, “and something – a basket I think – actually fell on my head during the earthquake.” The earthquake was reported world-wide and the boys’ parents, at that stage in Dubai, struggled to find out exactly what had happened. With the help of a Bangkok friend, details were gradually learned – but with even a small possibility of there being any more upheavals, the parents decided to relocate the boys to a safer environment – and one that was a little closer to home.

After researching their new project on the Internet, the family selected PTIS, and the boys entered as boarders in August 2011. Ince says, “Boarding here is very different from New Zealand, where my old school was boys-only. It is more relaxed here and we have made lots of friends. I still miss my school and friends in New Zealand, but we keep in touch by Facebook.”

The boys are now happily settled in Chiang Mai and at the school, and their English language skills are rapidly improving. Ann Gaillard, the Junior School ESOL specialist teacher, says that Encre is a very popular boy and one who always strives for distinction in his ESOL classes. Both boys are making a positive contribution to their classes and have made a great impact on their new school – a long, long way from the disaster they experienced just over twelve months ago.

1 Encre and Ince
2 Christchurch Cathedral
3 The big clean-up
My Country: Thailand

PTIS is located in northern Thailand and is home to many Thai students. Some live in Chiang Mai and others whose family homes are further away live in the school’s boarding apartments. This is their story.

Thailand is a magical place – it is like your own green world – with a great culture and a long and proud history. It is known as “The Land of Smiles” and even during the recent floods people were seen smiling as they all worked together to help each other out. About 700 years ago our capital city was Sukhothai, then it moved to Ayutthaya, and now it is Bangkok. In the south there are unique white-sand beaches and in the north the mountain ranges and everywhere there is wonderful food.

Food

Just about everyone’s favourite is sticky rice and mango, but here in the north another popular dish is khao soi – a chicken curry served with soft and hard noodles, and lots of side dishes to make it as sweet or as spicy as you want. Pad Thai, Tom Yung Goom (hot and sour shrimp soup), satays and fish cakes are also very popular and very tasty. Tropical fruits grow all over the country and range from durian - the king of fruits – to bananas, dragon fruit, peaches and nectarines in Thailand’s cooler northern regions, guavas, and of course coconuts, lychees, mangoes and mangosteens. And if that is not quite enough to make your fruit salad, there are also plums and pineapples and papaya. Thai food is not only delicious, but many herbs and spices are also used in traditional medicines.

Culture and festivals

Thai people love to have fun and they take every opportunity to take part in celebrations. It doesn’t matter if it is their own or borrowed from another country. Thailand has many festivals during the year, but our favourite is Songkran in April. At school we follow the tradition and greet our parents and teachers respectfully because the original meaning of this festival was to get clean and to purify everything and to start the New Year off with everything good and pure. Of course, the traditional part is important, but the huge water fights at school and in the streets of Chiang Mai are also a lot of fun!

Loy Krathong, in October or November, is another special time of the year, where we set kratongs afloat on the river and send hot air balloons into the night skies taking with them our hopes and dreams for a better future.

Fathers’ Day is celebrated on the birthday of His Majesty the King, and Mothers’ Day on the Queen’s birthday. The King is the world’s longest-serving Monarch and is a role model for all Thais – especially when his work and his example in self-sufficient economy are considered. These are two special times in the year when we pay tribute to the King and the Queen – and to our own parents as well.

Sport

The most famous sport in Thailand is Muay Thai – or kick boxing – but Thai people also love football, volleyball and specialised games like the traditional wooden sword fights of Kraabi Krabong and Sepak Takraw – a sort of mixture of football and gymnastics and volleyball using a small bamboo ball. Riding elephants is one thing that many tourists do when they come to Thailand.

We are proud to be Thai and to share our country with visitors. Please come to our country!
1 Ayutthaya
2 Spicy Thai food
3 Traditional ways in Bangkok
4 Sukhothai
5 Thai Teacher JJ with Max K (Grade 1) making candle holders
Preparing students for a future — this is a big task for parents and educators alike. Many parents wish their children to have futures that include happiness and good health. What actions correlate to a better quality of life and living longer? Research shows it is when people are active, connected to people and society, engaged with natural places and eating healthy foods (Pretty, 2009).

Opportunities to engage with nature are in abundance at PTIS, with an organic farm and farm animals, a stream, pond, and a variety of trees, plants and wildlife. The farm and cooking school staff also collaborate closely with the school. Together they develop and offer learning experiences that engage students with nature and encourage healthy eating.

So, in addition to promoting active lifestyles through physical education classes and teaching children social skills, PTIS also provides children opportunities to engage with nature and eat healthy foods.

What does this look like? Students explore nature and healthy eating both as part of a yearlong ‘healthy living’ project in physical education classes and as part of their units of inquiry. 

**Healthy Living Project**

Students in Early Years through Grade 5 visit the on-campus farm monthly as part of their physical education classes. Beginning in January this year, each Junior School class is visiting the farm once a month and students have the opportunity to plant, attend to, harvest and cook healthy foods. The visits are planned in collaboration by physical education teacher Ajarn Dustin Yakoubian and farm coordinator Ajarn Chrissie Bleach.

The aim for younger children in the Early Years classes is to encourage them to eat fresh vegetables and challenge them to eat vegetables with their peel since that’s where many of the good nutrients are. Students in Grades 1-5 are introduced to healthy alternatives by making pizzas, granola instead of cookies, and fresh smoothies made using Traidhos’ bicycle blender instead of purchasing commercial drinks. By focusing on food and healthy eating, the students begin questioning their own diets. They compare what they are learning to their current lifestyles and think about change.

Ajarn Chrissie believes that providing students with opportunities to cut, blend, get sticky fingers and bake has many benefits. These include introducing students to the life skill and enjoyment of preparing food rather than relying on convenience foods or others to cook for them. Also, experiencing where their food comes from allows students to discover the labour that is involved in growing food.

**Methods of Farming**

In addition to visiting the farm as part of the Healthy Living Project, students have learning experiences at the farm related to their grade level units of inquiry. For example, in Grade 1 during the unit Where we are in place and time, students look at different methods of farming. They discuss the pros and cons of traditional and conventional farming, and students follow the discussion by planting corn in a traditional way. Afterwards, students visit the farm periodically to check the progress of the corn they planted.
Another example is the Grade 5 visits to the farm during their Sharing the planet unit. One of the recent visits began with meeting Buddy, a newborn kid (goat), who had been orphaned and needed to be hand-fed and -raised. Students learned how to feed him using a bottle of milk. Students also met a new puppy, Barry. The students then rotated through three activities to learn about water quality and organic farming practices: planting sunflowers to attract bees, making organic pesticide and testing water quality at the farm. The most fun was had by the risk-takers who overcame their mud inhibitions and ventured into the irrigation canal to search for macro-invertebrates in the water.

**Additional Benefits**

Exploring nature and healthy eating lend themselves to experiential learning, or learning from direct experiences. This type of learning is active and generally engages most children. For many children, a visit to the farm is a highlight of their day. Joe, who is in Grade 2, shares, “I like learning how to eat healthy foods. I really like making smoothies.” Kai, a PTIS Early Years 2 student, says “I love the baby animals. I really like the black goat. Goats need grass and water.”

Life lessons are learned too. Emmy, a PTIS Grade 2 student: “I like that there are animals and I learned that when animals are old you still have to be careful as they die. It’s sad when they die because you’re still there and they’re not.” Additional benefits related to exploring nature include a strong increase in respect and appreciation for nature. Other qualitative outcomes include reports of increases in compassion, wisdom, guidance, and inner peace. Seeing the positive effects of nature are strongest in middle childhood, ages 6-12 (Davis, 2004), PTIS is continuing to look at ways to enhance outdoor learning experiences for Junior School students.

Bibliography


Photography by Stefani Driscoll and others

By Karrie Dietz

*Junior School Principal*
Boarding at PTIS has a reputation second to none. This has been made possible by those who have gone before us, setting a high standard and being proud to take a leading role in a continually-developing school and community.

A Learning Mentor, as a selected leader, is expected to use his or her initiative, to think ahead, and to be prepared to try different and new things without having to be asked to do so. It is important as a Learning Mentor that we are aware of the mood of the children within the boarding clusters. We are there for them to talk to, have fun with and of course to teach them life lessons.

Our daily duties as Learning Mentors within the boarding department at PTIS start early morning and carry on through to late at night when all of our students are fast asleep.
In the morning we wake the students, complete room inspections and ensure all students get a nutritious breakfast. One member of staff checks the students’ clothing before they leave the boarding cluster and once they leave their apartments our students are not allowed to return for items they may have forgotten. If any student has left their air-con or lights on, or their room is untidy we note the name of the student on the whiteboards in the clusters. After school these students will complete consequences.

There are three boarding staff on duty from 3.00 pm-11.00 pm and we have a nurse on call twenty-four hours a day. During the afternoon we spend time interacting with the boarding students, ensuring they are safe at all times. We supervise them with activities they wish to do, for example swimming, and we have one member of staff patrolling the campus.

The students attend dinner at 6.00 pm each evening, after which they do their homework. During this time we monitor the older students who are allowed to study in their apartments. After studying the students are able to socialize with their peers, be creative, play sport or relax.

This is their free time. We ensure all students are in their rooms and asleep at the appropriate time, and we deal with any issues that arise during this time.

Being flexible is important as a Learning Mentor. As individuals, we have all come to PTIS with valuable assets in terms of skill sets and experiences; however we have the opportunity to partake in subject areas, events and activities which are new to us. This year, for us at PTIS, is a huge learning process where we will discover new experiences, adventures and obstacles which we can take with us onto our next journey and of our future lives.

1 Christmas in Boarding
2 Simon Armitage
3 Jennifer Bleakley
4 Heather Thompson
5 Amy Finch with Irene J (Grade 7)
6 Agnieszka Kinga Wdowik (Agnes)

Photography by Agnieszka Kinga Wdowik
CHILLED OUT SUNDAY
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For the Three Generation Football Academy, 2012 promises to be a wonderful year, full of football fun and new activities for the players. The year will include four five-day football camps, which will attract players from all corners of South East Asia. Each player will benefit from the expertise and training methods of the English Football Association coaches at the academy.

In November we will offer an exciting tournament over two days for Under 8, Under 10, Under 12 and Under 14 players. This tournament will be held at Traidhos and is the first tournament of its kind to be held in Chiang Mai for many years.

Not wanting to leave out the adults and parents, the very first Traidhos tournament for open age and senior players (over thirty-five years old) will be offered in December. This tournament is 7-a-side and like the football camps, is likely to attract teams from Asia and beyond. The competition will be exciting, competitive and full of skill and enterprise.

We are also planning to run some leagues during the later part of 2012 and a tournament specifically for sixteen- and eighteen-year-old students.

If your passion is football then please put these dates in your diaries.

The current members of the football academy are enjoying training sessions five days a week now. This is for eight- to eighteen-year old children. The academy director is pleased that skill levels, technical development and understanding of the game have improved dramatically. Perhaps one of our players will soon be trotting out to play for his or her country in a future world cup. That’s the dream.

More information on website: football.threegeneration.org

Three-Generation Cricket Academy (TGCA) student, Jigme Dorji, was selected to play for the Bhutanese U-16 National Team in the ACC U-16 Asian Challenge Cup held in March.

The young 13-year-old cricketer, who attends the PTIS International School, will feel right at home joining his compatriots on TGCA’s home cricket grounds. Seven national teams representing Afghanistan, Bhutan, China, Maldives, Myanmar, Qatar, and UAE travelled to Thailand to compete for the trophy.

“I am thrilled and delighted that Jigme has been selected in his national side, following in the footsteps of other successful Bhutanese students, who were also previous students of both PTIS and TGCA,” says Coach David Buck.

Bowling them over

In January the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) and Cricket Association of Thailand conducted a Bowling and Cricket Coaching Seminar with Sri Lankan former pace bowler Rumesh Ratnayake and former Indian cricketer and bowling coach Venkatesh Prasad. The seminar was hosted by TGCA in Chiang Mai.

Ratnayake has been a national fast-bowling coach for Sri Lanka and was appointed head coach of the Sri Lankan national team for the tour of Australia in 2011. He is a Level III certified coach and has been a development officer with the Asian Cricket Council since 2001. One of India’s greatest pacers, Venkatesh Prasad, a right-armed medium-fast bowler is currently in Thailand as Asian Cricket Council (ACC) Development Officer.

The coaches worked with Thailand’s National Girls Under-19 Team, four TGCA students and twenty-two selected male and female cricketers from all over Thailand in the Under 16 division.

This seminar helped Thailand’s talented young cricketers by providing them an opportunity to learn from two cricketing “legends”. The training sessions included tactics and strategy, technique, and physical preparation.
No school for a week!  

Well ... at least there are no formal lessons in a classroom for a week during Camp Week ... but lessons of a very different sort still continue. Camps and excursions provide PTIS students with many opportunities to learn about themselves, others and their world. For this special week their teachers and “classrooms” are outside experts working in places far from the school gates.

The school camps enhance curriculum learning opportunities, they teach students to be responsible towards the environment, and they allow students to understand more about the people living in our neighbouring communities.

Camp Week – usually in the middle of Term 3 – is a time when all students from Grade 6 to Grade 11 are given opportunities to explore the wider world while the Grade 12 students are facing their own challenges in the International Baccalaureate Diploma “mock” examinations.

Chris Dickerson, Senior School Vice Principal and Camps Week Co-ordinator, says that while the camps are not arranged by levels of difficulty, the programs and the locations are designed to challenge the children more and more as they get older and more mature. “Grade 6 students, for example,” Mr Dickerson said, “spend their week quite close to the school and focus on camping and cooking skills, building personal relationships and exploring the local communities. Grade 11 students have a week living and working with selected hill tribe villages, giving much-needed assistance with teaching and building projects while also learning to live without their mobile telephones or iPads.”

This year the Grade 7 students will spend a week afloat on the Magic Eye barge near Bangkok, conducting environmental studies of the Chao Praya River. Grade 8 goes to Mae Kok, about four hours’ drive north of Chiang Mai, Grade 10 students have a week on the eastern coast near Rayong where they visit fishing villages, a turtle sanctuary and examine the ecosystems of mangrove swamps. For Grade 9 it is a week of hard physical challenge, with all students experiencing the rigours of an army assault course, a strenuous two-day trek in the hills and a white-water rafting experience.

“The camps allow new students and others who may have been experiencing difficulties socialising with their peers an opportunity to build friendships,” Mr Dickerson said. “Working and living with classmates twenty-four hours a day allows students to see different and positive sides of people they may not have really known before the camp.

“Most students come back from the camps with very positive attitudes, having seen how other people live and having found out about their own hidden strengths. Camps also allow many children to develop their own strong leadership talents.”

The time following Camp Week is almost as important as the outdoor experience itself. The teachers – who have also enjoyed sleeping in remote villages or hiking up mountain paths with their students – lead discussions where all participants reflect on what they did and what they learned from the experience. Students write about the week and evaluate their own learning.

It has been said that camping is nothing more than the art of getting close to nature while getting further and further away from the nearest cold drink, hot shower and flush toilet. A wit once said about trekking that it is just an extended form of hiking in which students carry double the amount of gear they need for half the distance they planned to go in twice the time it should have taken.

Camp Week at PTIS may be about the absence of hot showers ... but it is also about discovering that the great outdoor classroom has so much to offer us all.
Chocolate Bomb

Head of Boys’ Boarding at PTIS, and Director of the Cricket Academy, David Buck is also an enthusiastic and passionate fusion chef.

For those of you who love chocolate, this dessert has such a lovely texture of crumbly and runny chocolate! My wife was a picture when I saw her face! Does the phrase ‘died and gone to heaven’ ring a bell? This is quick and so easy to make.

Work time: 15 minutes, cooking time 6 minutes

200 g plain dark chocolate
185 g butter + some for greasing ramekins
3 eggs
6 tablespoons castor sugar
3 teaspoons plain flour
Cocoa powder for dusting
Crème fraîche or Greek yogurt to serve

1. Break chocolate into pieces and place in heatproof saucepan and melt slowly. Add the butter and leave simmering until all is melted in
2. In your food processor add the eggs and sugar and pulse until it firms up, and then add the melted chocolate and butter mix. Now sieve in the flour and fold
3. Preheat your oven to 230°C
4. Divide your chocolate mix evenly into buttered individual ramekins. Try to leave a little space at the top as your bomb will expand a little
5. Place your ramekins on a baking tray and pop into the oven and bake for about 6 minutes. I like to keep watch, as you need the bomb to firm up a little but still be soft and not bubbling
6. Carefully remove desserts from the oven and then turn out gently on your serving plate. Spoon a little crème fraîche on the side and dust with cocoa powder
T HINK Global School offers students the opportunity for a life-changing journey, exploring the world, and studying in three new international cities each academic year. In recent years TGS has been located in Stockholm, Berlin, Beijing, Cuenca and Sydney. The school and its students and staff are currently in Chiang Mai, hosted by PTIS International School, experiencing new cultures, trying new delicacies, listening to and learning from the people they meet and their fellow students.

The school’s founder - mother, photographer and traveller Joann McPike - and her husband spent months researching different boarding schools in America, Europe, and Australia for their son. However, it was the suggestion to continue travelling and homeschooling him with a tutor that led to the idea of providing that experience to an entire school of children and to have this group of children share their journeys with other children all over the world.

“My son is fifteen years old and he has visited seventy-three countries,” Joann McPike said. “The lessons our travels have taught him go beyond anything he could have received in a classroom. He has touched, smelled, tasted, seen and felt a world that very few people get to experience. It has taught him independence, courage, empathy. It has taught him to converse with adults on a multitude of subjects, a child who is not afraid to offer his opinion, to be heard.

“Imagine a group of young adults who have really seen the world, have been educated by the world, have seen the joys and sorrows, the triumphs and failures of our generation. These children, if we allow them to think for themselves, will learn how to excel, to lead, and to make a difference.”

Hudson, Pema and Beny, three TGS students, say that the school means living in every way possible: socially, academically, mentally, physically, and emotionally. It is a place where students learn how to make a difference in the world. A key element of TGS is the fact that travelling teaches students a new way of learning: seeing pictures in textbooks is one thing, but TGS offers students the chance to see the real thing.
“Don’t teach me what to think, teach me how to think.”

These peculiar words are one of the core concepts of THINK Global School (TGS). THINK Global School is the first high school that incorporates trips to the Great Barrier Reef, the Amazon Rainforest and a trip to the Golden Triangle into the curriculum. Each year, students travel to three new countries. As one of the first generation of students, TGS has taken me to Sweden, Australia, China, Ecuador, and now the country I grew up in, Thailand. PTIS was our “home” away from home until the end of March. Some of us travelled further than others to the serene Chiang Mai campus. Although I didn’t travel very far this time, I remember my first semester with TGS like it was yesterday.

A frog or a horse…?

The icy Stockholm air followed me, weaving its way through every corner of the Swedish hostel and banging on every window. It was with that dramatic entrance that I walked tentatively towards the supposed “lounge area”. I was in an awful state. The winter chill had sunken into my bones and encaged me in shivers, and my eyes were red from lack of sunlight. My confusion was obvious and justified. I was neither of that country nor was I completely sure I wanted to face the people who awaited me. The digital world and real life are as different as a frog is to a horse; it scared me that I didn’t know these people, or the strange singsong language, or the winter chill.

There was no time to ponder or to retrace my steps; I had to finish what I started! And so I still walked, and soon enough, a brown-skinned girl with huge eyes to match her huge afro came from the lounge. My mind flipped through the Facebook profiles, and my mouth found the one. “Beny!” Heart racing, all fear vanished from my face, and I rushed to hug her with great gaiety. It was okay that I couldn’t hear the birds singing.

It was okay that I might get lost in such a huge city. Right then and there, I knew I was home.

Maybe it’s part of being with each other 24/7, but the phenomenon of home has always been here. In a matter of months, we became a big family; something that all the students agree is bizarre. I found myself opening up to them more than I had with other people at any time in my life.

Our chance to change the future

When you travel, you see overlapping themes. Poverty. Child labour. Consumerism. It’s what links the world together in a time of division and power struggle, and it might be the only chance we, as the new generation, have to shake the sense out of these countries.

Through visiting speakers such as Harvard Professor Tony Wagner, TGS is dissecting the world to provide us with what we need to take on the burden. It’s such an immense responsibility.

TGS has the best of the best. Not only are its twenty-five kids talented; but they have that spark that seems to be lacking in so many these days.

The world puts so much pressure on children. There’s pressure to become rich, famous and successful. However, this world is a ticking bomb. We need to change the inner workings of the world in order to stop the earth from self-destruction. Through my experiences and thoughts, the first step has become clear to me: we must start by changing our own path and by chasing our own dreams. And for those dreams to come true, we must first jolt ourselves awake. The TGS experience is giving us all just that opportunity.
According to Libby Stephens, an internationally-recognised speaker specialising in students experiencing transition, TCKs are the fastest growing people group on the planet. So, who are TCKs?

TCK is an acronym standing for Third Culture Kid. According to David Pollock (TCK Profile seminar material, Interaction, Inc., 1989), a third culture kid is:

… a person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside the parents’ culture. The TCK frequently builds relationships to all of the culture, while not having full ownership in any.

Whether from a family whose parents are corporate executives, military, serving in non-governmental organisations, refugees, missionary kids or simply kids attending their elementary or high school years abroad, these individuals have a variety of challenges in common:

- They are careful in making friends, since in the transient world in which they live they will likely lose them quickly in the midst of job change, family decisions, war
- In new cultures, a TCK may commit unintentional faux pas, due to lack of understanding of cultural norms
- With a foot in several worlds, they may feel a lack of belonging to any one culture
- Where exactly is home?

Where is home?

A TCK may have very little connection with the passport country, and not be entirely invested in the residence country. The strongest connection is probably with other international students who understand the unique set of challenges and adventures facing a third culture kid. So, a Korean-born, German-educated American college TCK will identify more with an African-born, British-educated Australian TCK, rather than another Korean.

As a teacher in China, I find my TCK students to be globally interested, knowledgeable young people. They are not particularly sociable but act like they are. Many are mask-wearers, who often fool this teacher of twenty-four years into thinking they are a persona different than they truly are. These exotics have colourful backgrounds, know several languages and develop habits linked with the cultures where they have lived. Mature for their ages, I find my students are less likely to be racist, yet may be hypercritical of their own culture. Passionate during service trips, they tend to be more tolerant of other, in general, truly wanting to make a significant difference in the world.

My TCKs are cultural chameleons, cosmopolitan and laugh at the strangest things. They are independent, think outside the box and, if you get them to share, can participate in fascinating discussions. Many like to bridge the cultural gaps, and are born diplomats with lots of connections. They compare their frequent flyers mileage and are always missing something (people, places, language, food…).

When I observe the students under my care, their futures appear quite promising. What business could not benefit from a trilingual speaker used to flexibility and change, who is globally aware and culturally sensitive?

If in your journeys you have the experience of interacting with a third culture kid, dare to enter his or her world, help him/her feel part of yours. Friendship is a TCK’s greatest treasure, a rare stone, cut with time and faceted with care.
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