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HELPING HAND

Grade 5 students reach out

A youth-run field day brings much happiness for all involved

KITTIMA SETHI



A wonderful day together. Astera Sathorn Hotel



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Over 260 youngsters from various orphanages and foundations in Bangkok recently attended a field day at KIS International School.

It was a day of friendship and fun, organised by children for

children.

"We tried to give the children in the orphanages what they really needed instead of just raising money or buying supplies," said one of KIS's Grade 5 students, host of the party.

Knowing what makes children tick, the KIS Grade 5 students treated their guests with a bouncy castle, a game of soccer, swimming, face-painting and plenty of other fun activities and games.

Some of the guests were disabled children. It was a moving moment for all to see the young hosts dancing with wheel-chair bound children, helping their young blind friends enjoy swimming, and playing soccer with disabled children.

The fun-filled day was the culmination of a four-month class project of the Grade 5 students aged 10 to 12 to learn about the needs of their

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orphaned and disabled peers.

During the project, they documented the lives of orphans and disabled children, composed songs, wrote poems, organised fund-raising activities, and put their heads together to find ways to help their unfortunate friends.

In March, they hosted a benefit dinner to raise funds and to show documentary videos on the daily lives of orphans and handicapped children. They succeeded in raising 150,000 baht.

They also wrote to corporations seeking support for the various orphanages in Bangkok.

As children, however, they knew that what their friends in the orphanage would really appreciate was a fun-filled day that created many happy memories.

Eight-year-old Sirikorn Piangdee from Rajawithee Orphanage for Girls could not hide her excitement. Her hands were full with various craftworks she made at the activity centres.

"This is a great day - even better than going to the beach. I made a lot of new friends," she said.

Grade 5 students Masahiro Akita, 11, and his classmates, Pinyawat Suphakon and Kaito Yamaguchi, said they were happy and proud to have finally hosted the Children's Day for their less fortunate peers.



Joining hands for a day of fun and friendship.



For him, it's a happy day to remember.

"Money is not everything," said a confident Masahiro. "We should give these underprivileged children love and attention. If they have no love and no good role models, they will not grow up to be good people."

"If we give them money, they will be happy for a short moment and forget, but from these kind of activities, they will gain good memories," added Kaito.

Pinyawat also feels that donating money has its limitations.

"I think just by visiting the less privileged kids who are our age makes a difference. Communicating with them is greater than just giving them money."

Gerald Campbell and Kari Twedt, both Grade 5 teachers, pointed out that the class project helped students recognise the impact that they can have on one another's lives, and that the attitude of supporting and helping others has been firmly implanted in their consciousness.

"We are overwhelmed and proud of their organisational skills, their ability to work and plan events independently, to challenge themselves with their learning, and to constantly think of ways in which they could take meaningful actions," said Campbell.

Details of the four-month class project are on display to the public at KIS International School until this Friday, June 13. For more information, contact KIS on 02-274-3444 or visit <http://www.kis.ac.th/>.

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HELP NEEDED

- **NEEDY CHILDREN:** utopiaThe new school term has already started but a large number of needy students do not have the necessary textbooks, stationery and uniforms. Chomrom Pantakit Pua Khon Pikarn, a charity group, is raising funds to buy stationery for some 20,000 poor students in 193 remote schools run by the Border Patrol Police. To help, call 02-729-8234 or 08-1207-1462.

- **VOLUNTEERS:** utopiaThe Children's Rights Protection Foundation is recruiting volunteers to help abused children recover from emotional trauma. Knowledge of social work and law is useful, but what counts most is your passion to help abused children and stop the violence. For more information, call 02-412-0738 or 02-864-3381. Alternately, email starttostop@gmail.com. More information in Thai is available at the following web site: www.thaichildrights.org/.

- **CYCLONE NARGIS:** utopiaThe victims of Cyclone Nargis in Burma still need a lot of help. The Sathirakoses-Nagaprateep Foundation and the Foundation for Children are helping to buy medicine, food, housing materials and other basic necessities for them.

Details of a bank account accepting donations are as follows: Account name: Sathirakoses-Nagaprateep Foundation, Siam Commercial Bank, Charoen Nakorn Branch, account number 024-2-59705-9.

To obtain a receipt, fax the copy of your money transfer to 02-860-1278.

For more information, call 02-438-9331, go to <http://review.semsikkha.org/doc/nagris.pdf/> or email burma@semsikkha.org.

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