

# TO THE RESCUE

Towards the north of Thailand, not far from the university town of Pitsanulohk, there is a small school. Set among rice paddies, close to the stunning mountains of Chow Kor and Pookinlong Ka, it seems an idyllic place. Yet every year dreadful floods take their toll.

The school was built in 2497 (1954) by the local Government on land donated by a kind Thai family of Chinese decent named Yonpi. The building was made of wood on a raised platform but little maintenance has been carried out over the years. Every year, the flood waters reach halfway up the class room walls and water rushes into the nearby lake. The villagers build a bamboo wall to protect the children but there have been many accident and one child recently drowned.



**Wat Pluak Ngam School** Moo 5, Tambon Chompoo, Amper Nern Maprang, Pitsanulohk.

Now, 50 years later, the youthful headmaster, Locgai Silisilat, after fruitless appeals to the government to rebuild the school, turned to the same family for help. The grand-daughter, Khun Ammy, appealed to her family and friends, and earlier this year, for the children's safety, a brick wall was built round the lake and the area cleared of trees and shrubs. This still leaves the school itself, with its leaking roof and rotting floors.

Obviously a huge project, she asked her friends at the Lions Club of Jomtien, Chonburi, an English speaking branch of the Cosmopolitan Club of Bangkok if they could help. After contacting the Lions Club of Pitsanulohk, a visit was arranged. A minibus was hired and 4 members of the Jomtien club with husbands, wives, children and Khun Ammy, undertook the long journey 'up country'. Invited to the Pitsanulohk clubs annual installation party, the team, together with the Headmaster and two of his teachers, met with the other Lions and explained the problems. A good time was had by all and firm friendships were made. Full support will be given by the Pitsanulohk Lions Club. This will be most useful given the distance away of the project.



Showing the level the water reached at the last flood

Looking over the school, the team found the condition of the school very poor and the only solution was to rebuild, raising it above the flood level. There are some 160 pupils, aged 7 to 12 years old. With only 6 usable classrooms and 9 teachers, things are very difficult. Yet this school has an amazing academic record. Over 20% of the children have gone on to higher education and they have won 7 computers for the school in a television competition. The teachers are very motivated and the students keen to learn. Their parents, working mostly in farming or processing of farm produce also support the school and are very willing to help with school projects.

On their return home, the Jomtien Lions contacted engineers and architects. The government has a standard 'school plan'. A new building, with 10 classrooms and 2 offices will be built. The cost of this project is 2,250,000 Baht (34,000 Pounds Sterling, 450,000 Hong Kong dollars). Decoration and landscaping will be undertaken by the villagers themselves.

Now the only problem is to raise the money. Sponsorships, donations, matched funds and help from other countries is needed.



Some of the students

You can help these children to achieve their full potential. Not only will the children benefit, the future of the whole community will be enhanced.

Please contact us for details of how you can make a donation.



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Could you send your donation to our bank at:

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Any further information you may require, could you contact our branch President, Peter Smith, or Felicity & Graham Smith (directors of Club) E-mail, [grahamfoo@hotmail.com](mailto:grahamfoo@hotmail.com)