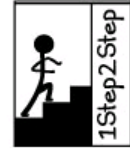




1Step2Step News...



Summer 2010

We are sorry for the delay on this. It has been a while since the last newsletter and so much has happened...

It seems a long time ago when swine flu was circulating the world and leaving many so worried. In the orphanage masks and hand sanitizer were the big thing.

Sadly volunteering had to be restricted in the government homes and the children were allowed out less and less. Nicola was without any volunteers in the orphanage from mid May 2009 and increasingly found this hard to manage. The progress in the ways things were done in the wards seemed at this point to make a turn for the worse with greater skin conditions, ill health and poor handling of the children but things seem better now. God is being faithful and supporting her to keep fighting on.



Nicola and many of the ward staff found those months physically challenging with many extra occasions that needed equipment moving and excessive cleaning done. Nicola has recently been having difficulties with back and shoulder pain. This is common for those in the care of the children on Nicola's ward as they have such severe disabilities and need more support when being positioned or moved. Nicola has been going for massage, used heat spray and a hot pack when stiff or aching. At New Year it was rather bad and Nicola received Ultrasound treatment from the orphanage physio which seemed to help. Nicola is aware of trying to make sure she looks after her own physical health as well as caring for the children.

At the beginning of the year Nicola was permitted to stay but advised that because the welfare department were not permitting new volunteers she would come across difficulty when her visa expired. Suddenly it seemed Nicola only had 6 months left in Thailand! This was a stressful time of uncertainty for 1Step2Step's work as Nicola is our primary worker. We wanted to use the little time left to make a lasting effect for the good of the children so considered inviting the Heads of the orphanages to England to see special needs services there. A ten-day trip was planned for end April and beginning of May, for a group of 6 to see schools, colleges, vocational projects, parent support networks etc. We had many meetings with VIP's sorted and even managed to get the director of welfare homes in Thailand to attend as well. Then the ash cloud over England caused the tour to be cancelled. It did not seem to be God's will for that timing.



Nicola was shattered from all the preparation so she came back to England, using her flight to take a needed break for a month, resting and socializing and returned to Thailand beginning of June. On her arrival, she was straightaway asked when we could reschedule the tour! This was encouraging and has actually in many ways gave the tour a greater impact on the Thai system. As a result and an extra blessing the tour was 12 days and they spent the extra two days in Northern Ireland seeing children who actually used to live in the homes which they manage and now are adopted. Our next newsletter will be all about the tour!

One of the children Nicola works with was seen by the doctor almost two years ago to be considered for treatment. Although we had a few cancellations he has had surgery to lengthen his groin and knee tendons back in August. After this he recovered well and improved greatly but with his hip still out of socket he needing the difference in his leg length compensated for. The doctor said that because he would get good recuperative care he would be willing to do the more major surgery on the hip bones. This took place end of June. Nicola visited him everyday (7 days first surgery and 11 days second surgery) and a few friends came to see him too.



He did well and went back at the orphanage. In both surgeries the doctor decided not to put him in casts. Although this left the orphanage confused about where was best for him to be cared for on his return home the ward staff managed his special situation well. This seems to be a new way they wish to deal with these surgeries so that muscle strength is not lost while the cast is on. Improvement has been up and down. He had to return to hospital when the screws in the metal plate came loose for unknown reasons. He was in traction over the weekend and then had treatment to fix this.

Following the arrival of our container of equipment we got news of another offer back in England. This load has been cleaned and fixed to look brand new and has waited till just recently for shipment. We have been truly blessed with not only special needs equipment but by kind donations of clothes and toys of all sizes and types as well as some pushchairs and two nebulisers. We are so excited to say we will soon have all this being used in the orphanages. One donation was an electric wheelchair, which would have cost £6000 new. We have added new batteries and hope this will change the life of someone out in Thailand very soon.

As Nicola continued her work on the wards and on these other projects the orphanage considered whether they were willing to process her application for visa and work permit extension. As the swine flu fears calmed and all children and staff had the vaccinations they started to realise they wanted Nicola to continue her work helping the orphanage. The head of the orphanage Nicola works in was leaving at this time and though the new one was still of the mindset of no volunteers, once she realised that included Nicola, the paper work was soon processed. Nicola now has a work permit for 2 years and year's visa was given in July.

The rest of the group are doing well. Many started to reach for toys and activate buttons on musical toys. Nicola feels that all the children in the group just seem easier to handle than before and to sit up stronger. Illness and pressure sores still are issues for some of the group and prayer would be a great help.



Another new head started in May. She is the third in less than two years. She is very nice and child focused saying she hopes to stay a long time. Nicola thinks she is more willing to have volunteers which is good as 1Step2step has a few people who have asked about volunteering and Nicola is hopeful that she will be able to get permission for them.



In 2009 the girls went to see all the princesses and in 2010 the boys went to see the adventures including the Incredibles. Two children focused and tracked the stars as they skated around working hard on the head control. One sang and giggled and another blushed when Mrs Incredible blew him a kiss.

We received a kind donation and were able to take 11 of the ward children to the cinema to see 'Midnight in the Museum 2'. The chosen children were ones who never get to go on trips because they struggle to sit or who are big. There were lazy boy reclining V.I.P seats in the private cinema theatre. The ward mums and dad enjoyed the luxury and noticed how happy the children were.

In the hot season we were able to swim once a week at the pool in the orphanage. One girl loves water as her family live by the sea. Nicola was able to take two or three each week and swim with them one at a time unless she had help. They all love this. Sadly now its rainy season swimming is not permitted as much. This year rainy season seems less rainy so there are some days they can swim but time was short as Nicola was visiting W daily in Bangkok hospital.



One girl went home to family back in August 2009, this was for 2 months but as yet they have not needed to bring her back. Nicola has visited her at home and she is doing really well and been swimming in the sea lots. 1Step2step was given a special needs stroller and Nicola was able to bring it on her flight back to Thailand. It will be given to her family to assist them in taking her out easier. They have already adapted their motorbike to have a side cart which she enjoys travelling in. Life for her seems to be going very well.

In England the committee works hard with the extra projects and basic running of the project giving of their time and effort generously on a voluntary basis. Committee welcomes three new members, Caroline Jackson, Bert Fullard and Gregor Smith who are all much appreciated. Three of the committee members have had babies and one member's partner is expecting. Congratulations to Sarah and Nigel, Suzie and Rob and Becca and Paul on the safe arrival of their boys.

If you are interested in anything in this letter or supporting this work financially, or if you would like to receive information on 1Step2Step, do contact us at info@1step2step.org