

Pedro Project report.

The Pedro project was initially the idea of Nicola's former colleague (at Sure Start and Skerton Community centre) Lou Andrews. She had contacts with people working with disabled children and families in the UK and they had equipment they wanted to recycle and make sure someone else got use out of the items. Lou approached Nicola and the idea was put to committee via Sally. The project got the nickname Pedro because we were going to receive specialist shoes, which are called Pedro boots, which help children and adults with disabilities take steps.

At first donations of smaller items were received from families through the One Voice project (organisation for children who use communication aids.) Lou heard of a special need's school which was closing down and they offered us all the equipment, so Lou and her husband Nick went in a van to collect it all.

As committee and Lou got their heads round all this and organised its collection and storage in Skerton Community centre's garage, Nicola started the conversations with the orphanage. At first they were timid about the work involved to get these items from England to Thailand and get them in without huge cost. After seeing an initial photo book of what we thought might be coming, they got excited about the benefits these items could have on the children's abilities. Lou, committee and some other helpful people got together, cleaned and took photos of the actual items. These photos were sent to Nicola in Thailand. The staff at



Bann Feung Farr and some contacts at the welfare department worked out what was the best way to get the equipment in free from tax as this was a concern for committee back in the UK.

In this time a few more items were received from other sources. These were added to the items stored in the garage, but as time went on and progress was continuing for permission and advice at the Thai end, difficulties arose in keeping the items in the garage as they needed the space back. We moved everything to a rented store in the White Lund estate.

Nicola returned to the UK for two months and was able to go and see the items in the store. This was very exciting for her. A few more items were added when Nicola was able to speak to contacts in Lancaster.

On returning to Thailand, Nicola was able to push ahead with real photos to show the equipment's value. The interest and enthusiasm grew. Nicola and head Physio went to meet the Department of Welfare at their warehouse. They were very helpful with information about how to present the paper work. It was decided that the equipment should be donated to the welfare department and then they would give it to Bann Feung Farr orphanage where Nicola works, to organise who got what in the welfare department's homes for children.



Nicola set to work writing all the documents to be submitted. The welfare department contacted the shipping agent and communication started from there. Emails went back and forth. Once this was accepted, the Head of the Welfare Department wrote a letter of acceptance and this went with the rest of the papers to the Department of Customs.

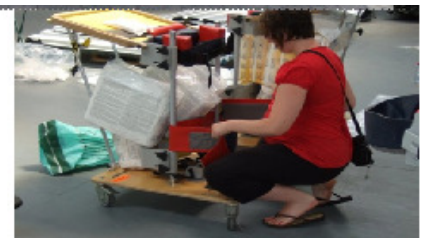


Sally Anderson organised with the UK shipping company all that was required paperwork wise in the UK and we learnt words like Bill of Lading and that we required a packing list. It seemed that the UK paperwork needed little detail, but that the customs this end needed lots of detail. A departure date was agreed and the container and truck booked.

The committee rallied a troupe of helpers to clean and pack all the equipment from the store and into our lovely container. The team did a great job of packing and got everything in with space to spare. All was tied down and the gel packs for moisture hung around the walls of the container and in the packing.



The container arrived... was filled...



and departed on it's big adventure.



The Bill of Lading and packing list were sent to Nicola in Thailand and she sent them on to the Thai shipping company. The name of the Ship was Hyundai Busan and Nicola was able to look it up online and track its progress across the seas. While it travelled, we had some difficulties with wording and values not matching on all the different papers for the container which gave us a last minute panic and scare, but with some alteration by Nicola and some by the Thai shipping company it was all ok.

When the container arrived it took about two weeks at the dockside to sort the paper work and go through customs. We had all the right papers for being exempt from tax and duty and the container was released without any of those costs.



On Saturday 8th August 2009 the container was transported to Bann Feung Farr. Nicola was waiting excitedly for it with the contact staff from the welfare department and a team from the shipping agency.

When it arrived the seal was cut off and the container opened. It was amusing when the shipping team first opened the doors of the container and looked at the contents. Many of them commented that it was going to be an OK job because it was not full. Nicola organised sweets for the workers to keep up the strength of those lifting and unpacking everything. Once the guys had got inside the container and started to undo all the ropes and lifting things down, they realised, as did Nicola, how much there was. Item after item was lifted down by hand and carried or wheeled into the open-air conference room for us to sort, clean and prepare for handing over on the Monday.



The contact from the welfare department looked on in interest as the equipment was brought out of the container piece after piece to the room. He was interested in the technical items like this blue hydraulic support chair particularly. On a few occasions, he said that he had not seen items like these because they don't make them in Thailand. He seemed to be impressed with the quality of the items that we were donating. Nicola had the checklist of everything but it was too challenging to work out what was what when it was still wrapped, so she waited to do that when cleaning and organising it all.



Next arrived the volunteer friends to help with the task of cleaning everything so it was a beautiful sight to be seen. We had Dettol and old cloths and the team worked hard while Nicola ticked everything off the list.





On the Monday the head Physio and Nicola looked at all the equipment and got a few of the physios of Bann Feung Farr to bring children down to the conference room to try out equipment and see if the pedro boots fitted them to aid their walking and standing. The children had loads of fun some with new-found freedom and others with better positions and new views of their surroundings.

Nicola went and got two of her boys too and they sat in some of the chairs. All were pleased with the items we had brought in.



After the children had tried things out a few more items were put the pile for Bann Feung Farr. The pile was split into two (keep and give away) and then the large items (give away) were sorted into a pile for each of the orphanages, Nonthapoom and Ratchwadee boys and girls. The official pictures were taken with the heads of Bann Feung Farr and the equipment. The Superintendent thanked Nicola greatly for bringing all this lovely equipment in and for all the effort it had taken. She advised that everything for Bann Feung Farr should be taken to the physio rooms and the ward, before inviting the physios from the other orphanages in.



The Bann Feung Farr head Physio called the physios for the other orphanages and before she had finished making the calls, they were turning up on bicycles and motorbikes. We did some more pictures with them and the items we were giving them. Nicola overheard one saying it was like Christmas. They called for the cars from their orphanages to come and pick up the equipment and they arrived in about 5 minutes. All the equipment was loaded into the pick-up trucks and gone within 45 minutes. Everyone was very grateful.



Rachawadee Girls staff



Nonthapoom home staff



Rachawadee Boys staff



We organised that I would go round at the end of the week and take pictures of the equipment in use at the different homes.

Rachawadee girls



Rachawadee boys



Nonthapoom home

Bann Feung Farr equipment was put to work straight away too. On the ward Nicola and CCD physios now use the standing frames continuously with a huge number of children.



The corner chairs are great for feeding as well as sitting in good positions for leaning activities and play.



Over in the physio block, children are using the walkers and standing frames and they just love it.



Nicola is really happy with the way the equipment has been accepted and used and seeing the children get loads out of the new resources is great. 1Step2Step has really made a difference in many, many lives with this wonderful donation.