



# Newsletter

Vol. 1 Issue 1

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## Official launch of the Friends of the Special Needs School, Samui

**A mentally or physically disabled child should enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child's active participation in the community.**

United Nations  
Convention on the  
Rights of the Child (1)  
Article 23.1

Many living here on Koh Samui are, sadly, unaware of this school (Founded in 2009) and the great work it carries out in helping and developing those children afflicted with conditions such as Autism, Down Syndrome and other general learning disabilities.

Whilst currently caring for approximately 10 to 12 children on a weekly basis (Monday to Friday) this, however, only represents approximately a third of those children living on the island, believed to be in need the specialized care being provided.

Receiving funding from the local authorities of just B150,000 per annum, the school has continually struggled to maintain suitable financing in order to meet their overheads and to provide the support that these so needy children require. Assistance has in the past come from the kindness and generosity



of local commerce, residents, visitors and tourists.

Now the school and the efforts of the staff have been fully recognized and since June 2012 they have been granted certification by "The Autistic Thai Foundation - Suratthani Branch" and become eligible for charity status. However this in itself does not mean additional, automatic funding!

Since April of last year many local individuals became fully aware of how much good work the Special

Needs School carries out and began efforts to organize fund raising efforts through the formation of "The Friends of the Special Needs School - Samui" Firstly the website [www.specialneedsschoolsamui.com](http://www.specialneedsschoolsamui.com)

was created, followed by very active fund raising, which to date has raised over THB225,000

Besides helping to meet the day today costs of the school, a major project has begun, with the aim of building the children their own purpose designed building here on Koh Samui.

## Meet some of the kids



Sunday 16 y.o.  
and Muay 15 y.o.



Nut 7 y.o.



Zoom 15 y.o.



Gaow 8 y.o.



Lallita 7 y.o.



## A great day out at Coco Splash in Lamai

Thanks to the kindness and generosity of Coco Splash in Lamai, M. D. Melanie Thieuland provided the children from the Special Needs School with the day out of a lifetime.



However in a short time everyone was enjoying themselves amongst the many different facilities available.



Arriving at Coco Splash they could only look and wonder at the wide array of different pools and water slides around them, all painted in a wide array of different colours, their little eyes near popping out of their heads!



After having their lunch, kindly provided to them along with their transport by the management and staff of The Silavadee Resort (Lamai) the plan was to return to Bangrak.



Whilst some of the children did not hesitate to change into their costumes and jump in, others were somewhat apprehensive, never having seen anything like this in their lives before.

However the children had other ideas and were soon back in the water!

Eventually they were driven back to the school, both happy and exhausted, no doubt to enjoy some wonderful memories.

**A big thank you to all the volunteer helpers who kindly gave their time.**

## This year's planned fundraising events

### Grand Treasure Hunt

An Island Treasure Hunt is currently being planned, further details will be made available when plans have been completed.



### Christmas Cards and Calendars



Ideas and designs to produce Christmas cards and a calendar are currently being explored and will be available in time



to purchase and send to your friends around the world before Christmas

### Samui Gay Pride



On behalf of the School we gratefully acknowledge a contribution of 6,500 baht made by Samui Gay Pride towards school funds.

## This year's planned fundraising events



After the great success of the Koh Samui Midnight Run, the Thai Hotel Association of Koh Samui is launching the very first Koh Samui Charity Soap Box Derby Music & Beer Festival. The date set for the 10 hour long race is Saturday 14th December 2013 and the venue is Chaweng Lake.

The Koh Samui Soapbox Derby Music & Beer Festival is organized by the THA and the staff working in the hotels on the island of Koh Samui and will be held every year in December to mark the end of a hard working season. The main event is a 10 hour soap box relay race which will draw in the whole community. There will be big crowds and various music concerts and parties. The organizers are also welcoming on board several beverage suppliers with a focus on beer, allowing visitors to try the different kinds of imported beers that can be found in Thailand.

Over 5,000 people are expected to gather for the occasion; numbers expected will equal those of the Koh Samui Midnight Run; these races will both be the largest party events organized on the island. Approximately 2000 hotel staff will be involved in the organization of the Soapbox Derby.

The participants will race in teams and will need to create and decorate their own soapboxes and have them ready well before the race. The soapboxes must also meet the strict criteria of race officials.

The race will consist of a 2km long circuit along Chaweng Lake and will last for a gruelling 10 hours. It will start at midday on the 14th of December and finish at 10 PM at night. The participants will register in teams and will need to keep their soap box rolling along the buzzing, music-filled shores of Chaweng Lake. Concerts will be taking place throughout the race. The organizers are expecting a big crowd for this very first Koh Samui Soapbox Derby and hope to see the charity event become one of the most popular events on the island.

**Proceeds from the event will be donated to some very worthy causes: firstly, to Koh Samui's new School for Autistic Children (Special Needs School, Samui) and secondly to the Green Project supported by the Hotel Associations.**

The winning team as well the runner up and the third team will be awarded great prizes and trophies. Three additional prizes and trophies will be awarded to the most original & inventive soapboxes & teams. Every team member who crosses the finishing line will also receive a special commemorative medal.

The Mayor of Koh Samui Khun Ramnet Jaikwang, together with the presidents of the THA and the TAKS, along with Bangkok Airways' PR team and all the participating sponsors will be there to hand out trophies and awards to the winners.

Many spectators will turn up to cheer and join in the celebrations while the competitors race along the shores of Chaweng Lake and listen to the various concerts organized during the entire 10 hours. Definitely, this is an event not to be missed.

## How can I help?

Apart from a small monthly contribution from the Tessabaan, which barely covers the cost of current premises rental, the Special Needs School in Samui relies heavily on voluntary donations from commercial enterprises on the island such as the large Resort groups.

Whilst these donations are not only essential and greatly appreciated, there is still a large shortfall in the amount of money required to fund the school's expenses.

A regular contribution by way of a direct debit or even a one-off payment from you would be graciously acknowledged and accepted.

**There are two streams of funding available.**

The first is to assist in funding the day to day activities, buying school books, teachers salaries, lunches etc.

The second is to invest in a building fund which, in time, will attract sufficient funds to enable us to construct a purpose built school for the children.

Additionally you could arrange your own unique fund raising event locally, perhaps amongst local clubs, bars, friends etc. Old favourites such as Car Boot sales, Raffles, Guessing the weight of a cake etc.

Negotiations are currently underway to hopefully secure the gift of approximately 1 Rai of land from a local Thai benefactor.

### **School Expenses Daily Running Account**

Krungthai Bank Public Co. Ltd,  
Lamai Branch

**Account No:** 756-0-041523

**Account Name:**

Samui Learning Center for Special Needs

**Joint account holders:**

Mrs. Dalin Ruangaisoon

Mrs. Sannit Virriyanong

Mr. Phairat Chanchaem

### **School Building Fund Account**

Bangkok Bank -Koh Samui

**Account No:** 541-0-34040-9

**Account Name:**

Autistic Thai Foundation

Suratthani Branch

**Joint account holders:**

Mrs. Dalin Ruangaisoon

Mrs. Sannit Virriyanong

Mrs. Parinda Chunarong.

Due to the Thai banking system, we are unable to identify individual donations, therefore, would anyone requiring a receipt, kindly send a scanned copy of the paying in slip to – [pipparker274@gmail.com](mailto:pipparker274@gmail.com) (Treasurer) along with your email address. Thank you.

# Physical and intellectual Disability and Autism

Autistic children or children with special needs who are unable to develop fully their abilities both in physical growth as well as in the learning process. This lack can be manifested in the limitations of their body, mind, behaviours, emotions and social interactions. Given the deficiencies inherent in them, the particular kind of taking care is therefore much needed.

## Characteristics.

1. **Social Interactions:** less contact with others e.g. no eye contact, indifferent when greeted by others, unhappy playing with a group of friends as well as not working with anybody and prone to solitude.
2. **Communication:** underdeveloped in speaking skills, lack of cognitive abilities, little spoken or speechless in some cases, repetitive in questioning and answering, meaningless or monotonous when speaking and mimicking their favourite quotations or advertisement heard from somewhere or somebody.
3. **Behaviours:** some autistic people often make repetitive acts e.g. waving their hands, turning around or walking on their toes. They rarely change their routines and mainly focus on one specific activity which is not extended to the other ones.
4. **Emotions:** expressing irrational acts e.g. laughing or crying without any reason and getting angry as the reaction to the situations with which they find unfamiliar.

## Typical indications.

1. Virtually deaf
2. Not getting along well with other children
3. No eye contact
4. No fear when facing dangers
5. Seeing humans as objects, not people
6. Laughing without reason
7. Resistant to learning
8. Lack of concentration or occasionally inert
9. Afraid of bodily contactor sometimes too much attachment to people
10. Fetish to a particular object
11. Playing with repetitive manners
12. Destroying things around them
13. Introvert and resistant to change

## The Centre's Objectives.

1. Improving common attitude towards autistic children and those with physical or intellectual difficulties and encouraging their families
2. Supporting autistic children's incapacity and help develop their own suitable ways of living
3. Encouraging the learning process supportive to their cognitive development as well as providing a sustainable way of life in their every day life
4. Disseminating information regarding the benefit of these children for the betterment of their living and their right to access education.

## Friends of Special Needs School, Samui

### Samui Learning Centre for Special Needs Children

9/192 Moo 4, Bangrak Bophut, Koh Samui, Suratthani, Thailand.

Phone No. 081-170-8290

We're on the web:

[www.specialneedsschoolsamui.com](http://www.specialneedsschoolsamui.com)

## Committee Members

**Chairman:** David Wilkinson

Email: [chairman@specialneedsschoolsamui.com](mailto:chairman@specialneedsschoolsamui.com)

**Secretary:** Peter Breaks

Email: [secretary@specialneedsschoolsamui.com](mailto:secretary@specialneedsschoolsamui.com)

**Treasurer:** Philip Parker

**Special Projects:** Yvonne Roberts

**Public Relations:** Su Buchanan

**Committee:** Khun Matt Bunluesingha

Khun Dahlin Ruangaisoon

Connor O'Leary

Claudia Wilkinson

Jeffrey Martin

## History of the School



Mrs. Dalin Ruangaisoon who was born here on the island of Koh Samui has a family of three children, two of whom were diagnosed with slow learning disorder and Autism.

Difficulties arose when trying to enter the children into the conventional education system and her applications were so often refused.

However she nevertheless tried her best to ensure they received the care and support necessary for their development and to prevent further regression.

Her initial approach took her to Saranrom Hospital (Suratthani) and later as far afield as Bangkok, not itself an easy task with disabled children but with no major success.



It was at this stage Dalin decided to tackle the problem directly and was inspired to establish her own school for children with special needs like her own.

Early in 2009 Dalin met local teachers Emma and Pirat of the Samui Learning Center in Lamai, they subsequently introduced her to Mr. Choosak Chantayanon Chairman of the Autistic Thai Foundation of Thailand.

On the 4th of June 2009 they all met up with the head of the Koh Sai Municipality, in the presence of parents, themselves having children with special needs and also with doctors and medical staff from the Samui Hospital with the objective of creating a solution to assist disabled children living on the island.



มูลนิธิออทิสติกไทย จังหวัดสุราษฎร์ธานี  
Autistic Thai Foundation Suratthani Province Branch

As a direct result Dalin was supported to start up her own special needs class within The Samui Learning Center in Lamai. This entity served the community until the class grew to a point where there was the need to move to their own premises, thanks to "The Rainbow Room" community in Bangkok a fund raising event was held resulting in (฿160,000) being donated along with support from local sources, enabling Dalin and the children to move into their own building.

In June 2012 The school was official certificated as a branch of "The Thai Autistic Foundation" - Surat Thani branch, giving the school charitable status.

The school is now to be found at The Mayaburi Resort off the "ghost road" in Bangrak.

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