

Introducing ~ Justin

New Project Officer for Phuket, Thailand

I am delighted to have the opportunity as Project Officer to make a contribution to World Families through the Thailand, Phuket Project.

I'm currently living in Hatyai, Southern Thailand, close to the Malaysian border. I've been living here approximately 18 months supporting my Thai fiancé, who is a Medical Doctor completing a 3 year Residency in the Neurology department, at the Prince of Songkhla University Hospital.

My affiliation with Thailand began 20 years ago when I developed a passion for Khmer architecture and archaeological sites. I've travelled extensively in Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Java and Bali exploring sites on my vacations. I know Phuket very well having visited some 20 times or more and on these visits I developed an understanding of Thai Buddhism, and importantly, a deep cultural understanding and sensitivity.

In Thailand I keep myself occupied with teaching English on a charity basis and learning the saxophone, Thai cooking, the Thai language and supporting my busy Thai fiancé. I'm immersed in the talented local Jazz community.

I look forward to communicating with the various participants in the Phuket project and being part of the World Families team.

Regards, Justin Langley



Justin Langley and

Dr. Thanakorn Khaosuwan

Good Shepherd School, Phuket, Thailand



Sister Lakana



Lunch prepared for the students

By Gemma Pilcher

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Phuket continues



On March 3 2023, I was able to visit the WFA project in Phuket, Thailand (self-funded). The Good Shepherd Sisters and staff run a school for a migrant child population of 344 children to year 4. Sr Lakana is not only the Phuket Project Manager but coordinates all of Good Shepherd's projects in Thailand, so she is a very busy lady. San San is the Program Manager, a teacher by profession and who runs the program at the school.

The school had humble beginnings started with a group of migrant children receiving tutoring in a fish factory whilst their parents worked and it grew, and grew to what it is today. These children have fled Myanmar with their families and whilst some are documented others are not. Thailand is not a signatory to the UN Refugee Convention and so it is even more important that Good Shepherd Sisters are able to provide education and a safe haven for children, as the State has no binding legal obligations towards refugees or displaced peoples. . The political climate in Myanmar means that the project has seen considerable growth in the number of children it serves and it fills a gap in support for displaced people, some of who may be considered refugees if they had the opportunity to seek protection through UNHCR.

The school offers a safe place for children up to year 4, to learn, be off the street and have a host of connected support. Support extends into outreach programs where parents and other family members are included and all the different programs to provide a holistic child safe focused environment for this group of children.

The school provides lunch, which is often the only meal of the day. The school assembly area converts to school lunch room every day to ensure the children have access to at least this meal for the day. The children also have access to first aid and a more thorough medical quarterly, which checks development milestones and screens for health issues. On our visit a Medical Student was on placement here providing much needed access to health care. Other volunteers were teaching music, IT, and vocational skills.

The school is hosting, and also in need of, volunteer teachers of various vocational skills for youth, who participate in programs to help skill them up for the workforce. Whilst they are too young to enter the workforce, they are too old for the school program that only targets lower primary, and therefore the vocational skills program offers safety off the streets whilst gaining useful skills for the future. Some of the students had been involved with a zoom lesson whilst we were there with the volunteer introducing them to this form of communication so when they are ready for job interviews etc. this will be familiar to them in the future. They also run an on-site café which provides training and skill development for youth.

World Families Australia's donors provide funds which have some flexibility to use as needed. Sr Lakana stressed the importance of having this type of funding because it allows them to respond to needs as they arise. The school is in the process of finalising the purchase of land which they have been using for many years as playground area, but did not own, after donors from other countries pulled together to fund the purchase.

If you would like to support this crucial work, please contact Justin Langley, our new Project Office for Thailand.

Bulbula Ethiopia Spinach Project



Sr Abeba Kidane



Fields being prepared

Sr Abeba Kidane is one of the Daughters of Charity and has a long-standing relationship with WFA and communicates regularly with project officers. She has dedicated her life to the poor. In 2022, Sr Abeba spoke a lot about some of the young local women, in Bulbula, who were giving birth to babies, with ailments, that would be easily avoided in Australia, with the use of folate.

After discussions with WFA members a spinach project was started. The aim is to ensure the girls and women in Bulbula were educated about the importance of folate, and access was given to leafy greens at a very low cost. As the project evolved, Sr Abeba decided to approach some of the local women to manage the project and as a source of staff to cultivate to the grounds. A daily fee for tending to the gardens, is agreed upon and there is no shortage of willing workers.

Funds from the Judy Morris Bequest were used educating the locals on gardening and plant care, full time gardener to educate women and children, provision of gardening equipment, provision of seeds for the garden and provision of two large tanks for watering. Rain was counted on to fill the tanks but a drought induced hardship led to the need to purchase a generator and pump. With the support from Our Lady Star of the Sea in Ocean Grove, Victoria, and others in the community, funds were raised to complete the purchase and enable the project to thrive.



Left:

Sr Abeba with one of the babies born with a cleft palate, a hardship that can be caused by lack of folate in the diet.

Below:

Mothers learning the importance of dietary folate and a display of a balanced lunch.

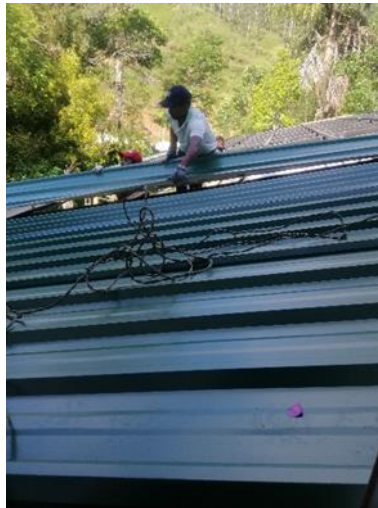


Judy Morris Bequest/WFA Funds

Shalom Children's Home - New Roof Project

Shalom Children's Home received \$5,000.00 from the Judy Morris Bequest to go towards a new roof for the home. The old roof was rusty and leaking in several places. The wooden roof trusses were also undersized and buckling. This was a major project and at the time not achievable from our regular sponsors. We also ran into some other very serious problems as Sri Lanka went into bankruptcy which caused high inflation and fuel & power shortages which they are still dealing with today. But thanks to the Judy Morris Bequest in spite of all these problems this project was able to go ahead. The new roof has a steel structure and new roof sheets that will last for the life of the home.

Shalom Children's Home is a girls home in the central highlands of Sri Lanka for orphaned, abused and abandoned girls. All the girls come into the home through the Probation and Child Service Department and over the years Shalom has gained a very good reputation with the Sri Lanka Government. The girls, staff and sponsors of Shalom are very grateful for the Judy Morris Bequest and World Families Australia for their support. The comfort and security of the girls and staff at Shalom Children's Home has been greatly improved.



Steve Hodgson, Project Officer for WFA, Shalom Children's Home, Sri Lanka

Project Officer needed for Sri Lankan Project

A Project Officer is needed for the Good Shepard Project just outside Colombo. The duties of the Project Officer is mainly to correspond with the project, provide a short annual report to the AGM and to liaise with the local co-ordinator in Sri Lanka. Time involved would be intermittent with the occasional short burst of attention. If you would consider this position, please contact the office on 8258 7909 on a Wednesday, between 9:30 & 2pm.

Bonga Housing, Ethiopia

The Bonga Housing project has funded homes for a number of families in situations of poverty and homelessness in the Bonga area of the last few years. Housing not only provides shelter and security but also the opportunity to grow food, have access to a latrine and improved hygiene, children to attend school and parents to start a small business.

I am currently seeking support to raise funds for seeking donations to build a home for Almaz, Tariku and their children. Donations are tax deductible.

I met Almaz and her little children in Bonga in November 2018. Almaz was a very young mother with a beautiful and constant smile, despite her devastating poverty and homelessness. I provided clothing, blankets and beanies that WFA supporters had donated for the children and soon found a sponsor for the family, yet their situation of insecure housing continued. They shared a home with another young single mother for a time, but COVID led to homelessness again, and Almaz sought work as a servant in other people's homes in exchange for shelter and food to try to survive.

Almaz has now partnered with Tariku, a young man who is crippled (probably from polio) and walks on his hands. Almaz's oldest children Idiam (now about 8 years old) and Melaku (about 5 yrs old) have been living with a neighbour while Almaz was working as a servant. They continue to live there due to the poor condition of the mud and thatch hut that Almaz and Tariku are living in. Almaz's younger child Sintayehu (about 3 yrs old) and a new baby Tadele, aged about 9 months, live together. Photos and video sent to me show the strong connection that young Sintayehu has with Tariku. Government has now provided them with some land and we are hoping to build them a home so that Idiam and Melaku can re-join the household and start school, and the family can work toward a more secure future. I am grateful to their sponsor who continues to support the family which is a lifeline in such vulnerability. We will also provide Tariku with a wheelchair.

If you want to donate to **Bonga Housing (donations tax deductible)**, label your donation as **Bonga Housing (DOB-H)**. If you would like more information, please email Sandi at rspetersen@optusnet.com.au.

Sandi Petersen Project Officer for World Families Australia,

Ethiopia PO Box 116 Stirling 5152

Left: Mother Almaz with her children,
Idiam, Melaku & Sintayehu

Below, Top: Almaz & her family
enjoying the sunshine & neighbors

Below, Lower: The family gathered
on the Church porch





Speakers are available to tell groups about the work of W.F.A.

Please contact us through the office: (08) 8258 7909

LAST DAY FOR YOUR GIFT THIS QUARTER

1st September 2023

Please Note

Any articles for the next newsletter should reach the office by 2nd August 2023

PROJECT OFFICERS for WORLD FAMILIES AUSTRALIA

ETHIOPIA

DEKIA	Dee Lumsden
ADDIS-BGW	Morgan Smith
BULBULA	Kate Drogemuller
JIMMA DOL,DOC-B	Michelle Nethery
DOL-S	
JIMMA,LIWAN, BONGA, LALIBELA, SUPPORT FOR SIGHT IMPAIRED & MEDICAL OUTREACH	Sandi Petersen

BONGA Rural Emma Lewis

JIMMA-DOC BONGA Feeding, BONGA-BWDP	Christine Hoffman
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Neema	Liz Rankin
Testimony Homes	Dani Potter

PHILIPPINES Elaine & Bruce Smith

SRI LANKA

Shalom Children's Home	Steve Hodgson
Colombo	Office 08 8258 7909

THAILAND Justin Langley

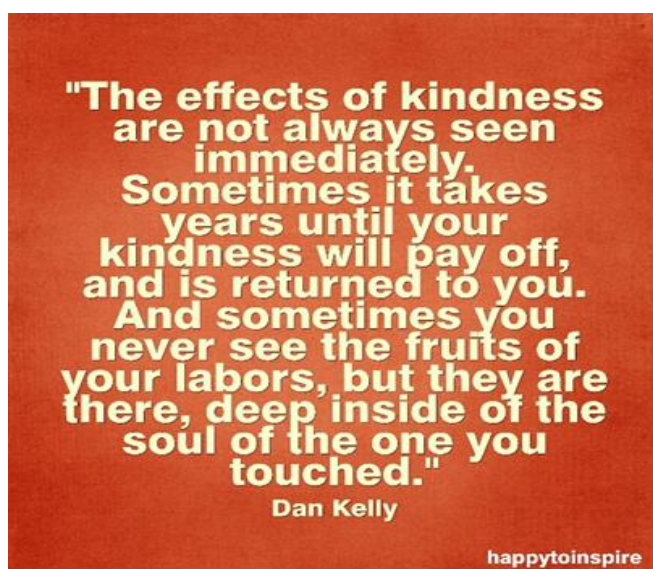
FINANCIAL/SPONSORSHIP ENQUIRIES:

Kerry Walker Sponsorship/Financial Officer
wfasponsorship@bigpond.com
 Emails monitored daily

Robyn Merritt Sponsorship/Financial Officer
wfafinance@bigpond.com

OFFICE HOURS: Some Tuesdays ~ Every Wednesday

Phone 08 8258 7909



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Editor: Diane Amato