



the Charlotte Jones Memorial Tsunami Fund

Char's Fund is a memorial tribute to 23 year old Charlotte Jones, beloved daughter of Alan and Liz Jones and sister to Vicki who so tragically succumbed to the Asian Tsunami on December 26th 2004. A memorial statue stands at the headland of Siam Bay beach on the island of Ko Racha Yai, Thailand and there is a memorial tree and garden in the grounds of the Cittaviveka Buddhist Monastery in West Sussex. We will never forget her.

## **NEWSLETTER**

**May 2010**

Welcome to *Char's Fund* 15<sup>th</sup> quarterly newsletter. The Charity now supports 15 students, aged 7-19, with long-term educational bursaries at Muang Phuket School, Phuket College, and Phuket Rajabhat University, Thailand. They each receive a monthly allowance of 2,000 baht (= @£40) to spend on school fees, books, travel, uniforms, etc and have so far received a total of £21,201. The tuition fees for the three female students at university have now also been paid in full for the 2010 academic year (48,000 baht). Some £107,305 in total (net) has now been raised (£130,946 gross).

### **March 2010 Trustee's visit to Thailand**

In March, two of our charity Trustees, Sarah and Becky, visited the students in Phuket. They were also accompanied by Josy Spooner, another of Char's close friends and a key member of the Onion Fest committee. They also visited the island of Ko Racha Yai (Raya Yai). Visiting Siam Bay was a poignant moment for all, especially for Becky. Here is a section from their report to Trustees, written by Sarah: *"In Chalong Bay, we had an evening meal with Gary and Mira from Raya Divers along with the two new children in the scheme, 'Golf', 'Pukky' and their mum 'Ma'. It was lovely to get to know Ma better and reassure her about her future and the support we can offer her children through the fund. The following morning Mira and Sarah opened a Thai bank account to help manage the monies going forwards. The lunchtime meal at Kan Eang@Pier was a fantastic afternoon for all. As it was school holiday, only 9 out of 15 children were able to be there. After lunch we were able to stay talking with the students for most of the afternoon and it was lovely to get to know them better with a relaxed atmosphere. They were very grateful and humble and really enjoyed meeting us. We all found it incredibly rewarding and, at times, emotional to find out more about the studies and their ambitions and to see exactly where and how our hard earned funds are being used. I felt overwhelmingly happy that we have made such a massive impact to these student's lives and they now have a much wider opportunity to study than they would have normally. The students gave us Thai nicknames during the meal: Rebecca is 'Rung' (pronounced Roo-ang) and means rainbow; Sarah is 'Mai' (pronounced Mi-ee) and is a luxury Thai silk; Josy is 'Kaew' (kay-ow) and is a Thai Flower and Mira is 'Ploy' which means gem (jewellery). We then traveled to Ko Racha Yai by long-tail boat. Although we all felt a deep sadness returning to the island, we also could now appreciate how beautiful and special the island is. We walked out to Charlotte's statue and took with us flower garlands and tributes and paid our respects. The statue is very weathered and we have made a suggestion to the students that they help to design a new statue as a project and which could be made over the next year. We were very sad to leave Thailand and would all like to extend a huge thanks to the other Trustees for enabling us to go on such a positively rewarding trip. We were so privileged to meet the students and get to know them better".* And this also from Josy: *"The trip was incredible and it was such an honour to meet such a wonderful group of young people. I'm so proud of the work that we have all done for Char's Fund and I know she would be too. It was a real inspiration and motivator to get to see the work happening on the ground and I hope that we are able to pass on these feelings to the rest of the committee and festival organisers."*

### **Other News**

Tsunami Support UK has at last been able to secure funding for a memorial for the UK victims of the Boxing Day 2004 tsunami and the Natural History Museum, London, has now agreed to give space in its gardens to accommodate it. It is intended that the design of the memorial will reflect the views and feelings of both survivors and bereaved families and there will be extensive discussion and consultation between those affected and the Design Team. And Char's Fund has won an award! Not really expected at all but Char's Fund was shortlisted in the Charity of the Year category of the 2010 Business and Community Awards, organised by *Life in Petersfield* magazine. But even more of a surprise was to hear Char's Fund's name being called out as the winner at the Awards ceremony on the evening of Friday 16th April at Petersfield Festival Hall. And on March 23rd four very tired runners completed the Reading Half Marathon in aid of the Fund and raised an incredible £6,000 in sponsorship. We would like to thank all our sponsors so very much. And also rapidly coming up is the South Downs College stand for Char's Fund at the Stansted Park show in June plus Onion Fest 2010 on Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> July, our 5<sup>th</sup> such 'boutique' music festival fundraiser.

*We are making a real difference to young lives in Thailand. Do please continue to support us. Thank you.*

**The Charlotte Jones Memorial Tsunami Fund. Charity Reg No: 1116217**

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