

WINTER 2016

karenaid news

Serving displaced people living near the Thai-Burmese border through healthcare, educational and welfare projects

On behalf of our beneficiaries we thank you for all your support this year and over the last 20 years.

Prayer points:

- ❖ Praise God for enabling this work over the last 20 years, bringing help and God's love to displaced people living near the border.
- ❖ Pray for Frank Green and his family as they work in Mae Sot and the refugee camps.
- ❖ Pray for safety and security of the refugees as they begin to go back to Burma.
- ❖ Pray for opportunities to develop the eye work within Burma.
- ❖ Thank God for Hilary Garven's work and pray for current and future trustees.
- ❖ Pray for Max and Fiona (trustees) visiting projects in Mae Sot and Sangklaburi in February and March (more in the next newsletter).
- ❖ For the new doctor at KRCH and her husband who will be helping the Safe House.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish you a very Happy Christmas.



For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son John 3:16



karenaid is 20 years old

We have so much to thank God for over that time, in guiding and enabling our work, and we pray his continued blessing for the future. Our focus has always been on helping the most vulnerable in an uncertain situation and that has not changed. We have witnessed God's enabling growth in a number of our projects, of which eye surgery remains our busiest. From a handful of operations in the early years, they now total over 2000 a year; this is mirrored in other fields which you can read about in this newsletter or on our website, karenaid.org.uk. While we welcome the recent moves towards democracy and developments within central Burma, the need along the border with Thailand remains great and we are so grateful for all your support in prayer and finance that makes our work possible.

I first visited the region in 1990, and on returning to the UK met up with Mary Bolster and Steve Neil, who had also witnessed the plight of the displaced people on the Thai-Burmese border. Mary was instrumental in establishing karenaid as a registered UK Charity, which has brought enormous benefits. Brian Church became our Treasurer, a key role currently delivered by John Stamp. After a full and healthy life lasting 91 years, Brian has recently died, and we thank God for his legacy, service and witness. We were later joined by Hilary Garven who, despite being much our senior, made regular visits, often alone and to remote areas inside Burma, with a particular focus on orphans and prisoners. Hilary continued in that role for many years until eventually it was no longer possible for her to travel. We thank God for her wonderful example and witness.

However, we are delighted to welcome Liz Tilson as our new Secretary. Liz visited Mae Sot this year to see the eye surgery her brother Frank Green is performing, and she brings a range of valuable qualities to karenaid, for which we thank God. This is an opportunity to thank my fellow Trustees, John and Margaret Stamp, Max & Fiona Derrick and Mark & Hazel Alder, all of whom work tirelessly for karenaid. Looking to the future, we welcome enquiries from anyone else who might like to join us as we trust God's providence to sustain the work as long as it has a role that fits His purpose and is to His glory.

Phillip Ambler

Sight restored Report by Frank Green

Most of our patients with cataract are adults, but from time to time we see children with cataracts. Some of these are congenital and others due to trauma. Because we have no access to general anaesthesia, all our operations are performed under local anaesthetic so we are not able to operate on very young children. However some children are extremely stoical like 13 year old Aye Nyein.

He lives in a village in Mon state in Burma and 4 months ago injured his left eye. He had bent down to pick up a pen and impaled his left eye on an upright piece of bamboo stake. This injury led to the rapid development of a dense cataract in his eye reducing the vision so that he could only just perceive light. Although his vision is good in his right eye he was very disturbed by this loss of vision in his left. His parents had heard of MaeTao Clinic from friends and took the 6 hour journey from inside Burma by hired truck.

After explaining that we could operate on his left eye using local anaesthetic which entailed 2 injections, the main one going behind his eye, he felt he would be brave enough to have the cataract removed. Last month he had the operation and "did not bat an eyelid!" The vision is now coming back nicely and he and his parents are very pleased. With his hopefully long life ahead the benefits of the surgery will be long lasting.



Education report by Philip Green (22yrs old)



"In August I joined my parents Frank and Ruth in Thailand to teach in the same school as my mum in Mae Sot. Since then I've been teaching Maths, Science, Literature and English to the students. Determined to maintain my independence from my parents, I've been living in the school for the last two months, which has been a good experience, if not a little different from what I'm used to. Living on a staple diet of rice served with a side of some more rice has not always been fun, but it's all part of the experience and has allowed me to build relationships with all the students. From teaching to eating, there have been some fun, weird and rewarding moments. It's been brilliant to see the students improve and come closer to being ready to sit their exams all while pronouncing their new vocabulary with Scottish twangs! Overall, the first few months have been excellent and I'm looking forward to the rest of my time here. Much to my delight I'll be moving into my parents' house in the next few days as the school relocates for the upcoming semester. Everything will be a lot easier, however, it'll be tough having a commute longer than 10 seconds!"

Political update There has been little change since our last newsletter. The peace talks continue and so do the armed conflicts with the Burma army in Kachin and Shan States. The Democratic Karen Buddhist Army has joined the Karen National Union (the largest ethnic Karen armed group). They received sustained assaults last month from the Burma Army and its allied Border Guard Force causing displacement of 4000 villagers in Karen State. Some proposed huge development projects are not necessarily welcomed as they lack consideration for the interests of the mass of ordinary people. Rules and regulations for a new investment law are expected to be released by the end of March next year.



A big thank you to the children of Grove Parish church. At Café Church they decorated paper plates with messages to the children at Tewado nursery for them to decorate their room and to remind them that they are not forgotten.



Fundraising

Many thanks to Anna for running the Crathes half marathon and raising money for eye work.

"After a foot injury prevented me from running last year, I decided on another attempt this year. I was hesitant in asking for sponsorship in case I had to drop out again. However, I reached the week of the run injury-free and thought I'd open a donation page online. Everyone was very generous and donated £365 over the space of 3 days! Race day was an uncharacteristically warm sunny day in Scotland, far too hot to be exercising! I don't think I'd realized how far 13.1 miles is, or I might not have volunteered! Anyway, what a great feeling it was to cross the finish line and collapse on the grass. I finished in 2 hrs, 2 mins and 50 secs so may need to do it again next year to try to get under the 2 hour mark."*

If you would like to help raise money for **karenaid** there are various ways of doing so, including:

easyfundraising
.org.uk

When you make an online purchase with one of the 2,700+ participating retailers, as a thank you for shopping, the retailer provides a donation for you to give to your chosen good cause. If you enter **karenaid** as the cause name then we will receive the donation. **But don't forget to check your privacy settings to prevent unwanted emails.** Retailers include Amazon, John Lewis and eBay.

mydonate
BT

If you would like to fundraise for **karenaid** through an organised event or your own challenge, you can create your own fundraising page. Go to www.btplc.com/mydonate or search btmydonate and follow the instructions. It is very easy. Alternatively, to donate online, choose "Donate to Charity" and enter "karenaid".