

## **Dog Rescue Center Samui**

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Dear Animal Lovers!

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The Dog Rescue Center Samui celebrated its fourth anniversary on 1 April 2003. You can all be very proud of yourselves for helping to create quite unique work in Thailand, all possible through your financial support or your active help on site. It would surely not have been possible without the help of so many animal lovers from all over the world. Each one of you has provided an important contribution. On Koh Samui a lot can be done with even small amounts of money! Because of YOUR help there is a veterinarian and now even an animal sanctuary on Koh Samui! We have received many gifts in the past years, and animal lovers have helped to transport these gifts to Thailand. Without the help of animal friendly tourists it would not have been possible for us to catch the bitches for sterilization (removal of the ovaries and parts of the uterus) and to care for them afterwards at the beach. At the beach, Thai dogs are often scared of Thai people and therefore the helpers cannot catch the dogs without assistance. However, this is not the case at the villages, as the dogs here are living with the Thai people and they can be caught more easily. The dogs do not know that we have their best interests at heart, and often it is not easy to catch injured dogs or bitches for neutering. Meanwhile I am quite certain that you will continue to actively help making Koh Samui a dream island for dogs and cats and that you will continue to help catching dogs and cats! Without the assistance of so many animal lovers a project of this size would surely not have been possible. Silvana from Switzerland has donated the money for the land purchase (7200 square meters) in Bahn Taling Ngam where we have built the animal sanctuary. Without her, many things would not have been possible. Very many thanks Silvana! It would be taking things too far to list all the animal lovers who have actively helped. There have been very many! Thank you so much indeed to all of you!

If someone had told me four years ago that we would have approximately 170 dogs and almost 20 cats in April 2003, I would have called them crazy for sure! I was naive enough to believe that the dogs can be returned to the place where they came from after their neutering or medical treatments. But where should we put the puppies who could not take care of themselves? Back to the street? Back to the temple? Where should we put the poisoned dogs that could be saved through the help of Dr. Somsak? Back to the hotel resorts where they had just eaten the poison? Where should we put the dogs with the enormous bites? Where should we put the dogs with mange whose fur takes months to grow back? Where should we put the dogs that were nothing but skin and bone and that were hardly able to stay on their paws? Back to the street? To the temple? Back to the villages? To the beach? Almost everywhere dogs are not welcome!

Eventually we had over 120 dogs at our house - on 300 square meters. We could only take in the most seriously injured dogs because whenever it rained, not all of them found shelter and therefore we had to deal with biting accidents off and on.

My husband and I are early retired for health reasons and, of course, we cannot take too much physically and psychologically. We imagined our retirement on Koh Samui to be somewhat different. For sure not with so many dogs and endless work. But we could not have lived on Koh Samui forever without having a veterinarian. I could have never tolerated this endless animal misery, which did not show any signs of hope for change. And I could not have lived here. But since the foundation of DRCS was successful and the animals can be helped, we will probably stay on Koh Samui for a long time. Finally it is

finished! We can move many dogs from our house to the animal sanctuary. We are able to step out onto our patio for the first time in three years without being knocked over by 20 dogs. What more could you want? In the patio and the tiny garden we kept the intensive cases for nursing which are not being taken to the yard. Since the healthy dogs are almost all at the sanctuary now, there are no problems.

The animal sanctuary in Bahn Taling Ngam was ready for occupation on 1 April 2003. The house is finished. It is 19 meters long and 4 meters wide. It consists of two living rooms, one bathroom, one operating room, one storage room, and one large outdoor kitchen. In the kitchen we can inform animal lovers who want to visit the animal sanctuary on Koh Samui, about the DRCS.

Many healthy large dogs that have already been with us for a long time, are staying in the first enclosure (1400 square meters). It is difficult to integrate new dogs there. Bitches with their puppies and other young dogs have made the second enclosure (800 square meters) their home. We have put a wall around a third enclosure (800 square meters). This will be kept to accommodate dogs, which only have to stay temporarily at the sanctuary after castrations or other medical treatments. In each enclosure we built ten large doghouses and we distributed 120 bamboo benches within the 30 doghouses. Many palms and bananas are growing on the grounds, and the dogs have dug holes everywhere. Digging seems to be a very favorite activity for dogs. In our yard there was no possibility for digging holes.

Many little details are still missing, of course, and it will take a long time until everything will be to our taste. But everything is a matter of money. Since we have very high regular expenses (veterinary services of Dr. Somsak and food costs for approximately 250 dogs) and since we do not want to go into debt, of course, it is not feasible at the moment to set up a quarantine station. For the time being, all sick dogs are still taken to Dr. Somsak and to our house close to Laem Din Market and are being cared for there. When they are recuperated and if they cannot be brought back to the place where they came from, they are taken to the animal sanctuary. Olivia Stoffner from Switzerland, who volunteered for the DRCS daily for more than one year, will move to the animal sanctuary, together with her daughter. She will then feed the dogs daily and clean the enclosures. In the event that a dog becomes sick, we will take it back to our house for medical treatment. Olivia also stayed at our house during our Christmas holidays and took care of everything. I do not know what we would do without her. It is not easy to find a trustworthy helper. If I had employed a Thai helper to live there and look after the dogs, I would have to be prepared for all kinds of things according to my previous experiences in Thailand. I am very happy that Olivia has decided to live there and to take care of the animals.

On 1 April 1999 the DRCS was founded and now, exactly four years later, there is an animal sanctuary where stray dogs that would otherwise not have had a chance of survival, can find a home. The name "Dog Rescue Center Samui" is maybe somewhat misleading though, as we take care of the neutering of cats as well and when injured cats are brought to us, they will receive all possible medical treatments. I love cats more than anything (maybe even a little bit more than dogs!) and we already have had many cats neutered by Dr. Somsak. We do not want to lock up the "leftover cats" in a large cage or in an open-air enclosure (there is no more money left for that at the moment) but we want to let them roam around freely. There is still a lot of space (approximately 3000 square meters) around the house in Bahn Taling Ngam. The cats are sure to like it very much there. In case they do not like it there, it is not so bad if they run away since cats can manage easily on their own if they are neutered - there are huge numbers of mice and geckos on Koh Samui.

After an animal lover brought us an injured pregnant cat, we can now watch the nursing of seven enchanting kittens. Mona gave birth to six super cute babies on 3 March 2003. The seventh kitten was found in the middle of the main street. Magic is exactly the same size as the other six kittens. Mona immediately adopted him, and Magic rummages around the bunch of cats as if he had never known any different. He liked his new mother from the first moment on.

Before April 1999 there was no qualified veterinarian on the island and I honestly do not think that any veterinarian would have settled here, if the DRCS had not been founded. We could not have settled on Koh Samui without a veterinarian and closed our eyes to the animal misery. The government secretly poisoned hundreds of unwanted dogs in the cruelest manner and then removed them on trucks at night. Since only the strongest animals got enough poisoned meat, the others were half dead, half alive, and were thrown to the dead dogs on the truck. Tourists who happened to witness such actions in earlier years, were totally shocked and as a result never came back to Koh Samui. Of course they tried to execute these poisoning operations secretly, but they were not successful all the time. In Germany the headline "Murder of Dogs in Paradise" could be read in an animal magazine. Certainly such headlines are not supporting the tourism industry, since families do not want their children to be exposed to such cruel actions. This discourages tourists from choosing Koh Samui as their holiday destination. The government has stopped the mass poisoning for some time now. Due to the many sterilizations of female dogs undertaken by the DRCS, the multiplication has decreased so much, that the government does not have to take any further action. Unfortunately it does not prevent some hotel managers to run poisoning operations here and there in their resorts. The tourists are not as dumb as some hotel managers may think they are. They notice quite well in which resorts dogs keep disappearing without a trace and they will prefer to stay in an animal friendly resort for their next holiday on Koh Samui.

Before the DRCS was founded four years ago, dogs with large maggoty wounds would run around everywhere and many tourists would be shocked by this. We constantly collect such injured dogs in order to medically treat them. They are still around, the dogs with the large bites on their necks! But now they do not bother the tourists any longer since they are cared for by us. But the problem is that we can almost never take these animals back to where they came from and therefore the number of dogs at our house has increased within the last years. I am receiving a lot of inquiries via e-mail about bungalow resorts where dogs are treated well. Being located on page one in many search pages in the internet, the DRCS homepage ([www.samuidog.org](http://www.samuidog.org)) has a lot of visitors - more than 1000 within the last month! We have already found sponsors for 100 of our dogs that are willing to pay 15 Euro for a dog that lives at the animal sanctuary. At the moment we have approximately 170 dogs and almost 20 cats!

The "sale of the wall" has been very successful so far. We have already sold almost 400 meters. In total we built 550 meters of wall! One meter of wall costs 25 Euro! We will put the first names, cities, and countries of the sponsors onto the wall. Of course, we will write any other text on the wall. I have already received some e-mails requesting inscriptions for the wall. Go ahead - tell me, what you want to read on "your" meter of wall - in Latin and Thai script. Don knows by now what he will be confronted with. Whoever will be on holiday on Koh Samui, is welcome to paint their own! It will surely take some time for the 550-meter-long wall to be painted and labeled. This sounds like good work for volunteers on Koh Samui. Open-air work amidst beautiful scenery! On Silvana's (from Switzerland) 50<sup>th</sup> birthday on 23 March, we spray painted 50 hearts onto the wall - of course we first painted the wall in a light blue colour (matching the house). It is an enormous job to paint the wall since it soaks up the paint instantly. We have not had the wall plastered out of financial reasons. You can look at pictures of the wall and the house in our homepage. Thanks a lot to all the "wall sponsors." Look up the homepage and check if you are listed correctly. We are still looking for many sponsors for the wall. When you wire the money and write down your name and "wall", the money will certainly get here.

We decided to paint the wall ourselves to ensure that the wall would be in uniform colour. Originally the workers who built the house, were supposed to paint the wall as well. But things turned out differently. When the house was finished and only the paint job was left to be done, the workers showed to us several half full cans of paint of different colours. They wanted to mix them all together, more or less, and then paint the house. We then agreed that we would purchase the paint and the workers would paint the inside and outside of the house. The inside colour was to be pale pink and the outside light blue. The

workers have mixed both paint colours together and since that was not enough, they added some white paint. The result was a gray-green colour in different shades. We bought some new paint again and the workers succeeded in painting the outside of the house light blue. However, they painted the inside of the house in different shades of light green and beige. The leftover cans of the pale pink paint had temporarily disappeared. After I had said that I wanted to keep our paint in our storage room, the cans of paint appeared again after two days. I think the supervisor is responsible for the right colour to be painted on the wall, at any rate. When the construction workers dismantled their shack and fetched all their equipment, the supervisor refused, at first, to remove the concrete slab of the wash-stands and the stand-up toilet. Just imagine, we would have had a 1.5 meter by 1.5 meter large concrete slab with a set-in stand-up toilet in the yard. I should have left the toilet and offered it as a "guest toilet". We could have planted a large bush in front of the toilet. Well, the toilet and the concrete slab are gone, and the supervisor is mad at me. We had problems with the colours beforehand and we could not decide what is prettier when it came to the tile jobs. Well, Thai style is as follows: The tiles are fixed in the way the worker happens to have the tile in his hand. That is the Thai's taste according to the supervisor. Being not a Thai, I wanted all the tiles fixed in one direction. This was very difficult for him to understand. The tiles almost turned out to be all set in one direction! These are stories you can only experience in Thailand.

With the completion of the animal sanctuary, some hotel managers on Koh Samui are now surmising that they only have to call and the DRCS will fetch the dogs and their personal dog problem is thereby solved. Unfortunately they do not realize that a dog needs something to eat, and they do not want to become sponsors for the animals. I would love to take in all unwanted dogs on Koh Samui, but that is not possible for financial reasons. There is no point in removing the dogs over and over again from the resort hotels, because new tourists are arriving constantly who love dogs and who feed them, of course. The tourists often do not care if the hotel allows feeding of the animals.

Unfortunately it is rarely possible to find a new home on Koh Samui for dogs that we had to take in the animal sanctuary after injuries or other ailments. Therefore it is very important that the animals like it there. Almost all of them will find their permanent home there since animal lovers on Koh Samui adopted only about ten dogs within the last three years.

Since the beginning of March we have a volunteer from Sweden for six months. Hanna is 25 years old, loves animals and is very hard-working. She is helping with all the work around the dogs and in the office, Monday through Friday (9.00 a.m. until 6.00 p.m.). I am very happy to have her here as Olivia is now moving to the animal sanctuary and therefore cannot help me as much as earlier with the office work. The Swedish government takes care of lodging costs, health insurance, and airfare for young people between 20 and 30 years old. They are supposed to get to know the culture, the country and people abroad. Well, in Thailand she will have unforgettable and quite unbelievable experiences. "Amazing Thailand." The helpers have not picked up any English so far. Why, after all? Hanna has good prospects to learn a little Thai. She likes very much to help at the DRCS and I do not even want to think about the time when she has to return to Sweden in summer.

Dr. Yiannis Thalassinos from Kos, an island in Greece, visited us and gave us helpful advice. He showed us how we can quickly neuter many dogs. He castrated five male dogs in the doghouse at our property within a very short period of time. The second dog was already anaesthetized and shaved, while the first dog was with the doctor and lying on the operation table. A helper was controlling the breathing of a third dog in recovery after surgery. Another helper was already catching another dog to be castrated and was weighing him so that the right amount of anesthetic could be calculated. On a sheet of paper was noted: Name of the dog, weight, amount of anesthetic, time when administered. Of course, the doctor has to be a professional in order to grasp the whole situation.

So far I have received some offers from veterinarians to help us. Now we have an operation room again, I hope, that many veterinarians from abroad will help us with neutering.

Since almost all of our dogs have the mange (this is a disease resulting in the complete loss of the dogs' fur caused by mites that live at the roots of the hair which they destroy), they have to be bathed regularly in a medical solution. We often have tourists helping us to bathe the dogs, but since we get more and more dogs, it is not that easy. Dr. Yiannis suggested that we buy a large tub and bathe the animals in that. We now own a large ice box which we fill with 120 liters of Amitraz solution. That way the bathing against mange can be done relatively quickly, and we can manage the task, even with 150 dogs. Furthermore, he suggested to purchase highly concentrated vitamin powder and to add it to the dry food. This works well and we can continue to buy the cheapest kind of dry food. No vitamins are added to this kind of food. We cannot afford Pedigree or other expensive brands. I get the impression that this diet agrees with the dogs as they became even more active and are playing together like crazy. It would have been quite difficult to cook chicken with rice for that many animals every day. Of course, the animals loved their rice meals very much. But having talked to many veterinarians, I think it is better to give them only dry food with the vitamins. The dogs have gotten used to it now. Originally the outdoor kitchen at the house at the animal sanctuary was intended for the cooking of dog food. Since this is no longer needed, we will change the kitchen to an information corner for visitors of the sanctuary. The construction workers were very creative and they built a very nice roofed anteroom in front of the outdoor kitchen, which we had never ordered. The anteroom cost an additional 1000 Euro. Due to health reasons we had to stay longer than planned in Germany over Christmas and therefore we could only supervise the construction in the final stage. The house cost 15000 Euro and it turned out to be very beautiful. It almost meets the construction plans.

The property now has to be cleaned up. When everything is finished and the operation room is fully functioning, we will most probably hire our own veterinarian as Dr. Somsak has raised his prices considerably. We are very happy with his work but every month we have to pay him approximately 3000 Euro for medical services and medicine that we are buying from him for the treatment of our dogs. One neutering costs approximately 30 to 35 Euro. Dr. Somsak sterilizes two female dogs for the DRCS every day. We also have to pay a lot to Dr. Somsak for dogs that have to stay overnight with him receiving infusions. The infusion liquid costs close to nothing! Right there we could save a lot of money. We would have to pay 750 to 800 Euro in salary for an experienced veterinarian. No expensive medicine is needed for neutering. Antibiotics and anaesthetics are cheap and the material for the stitches was again donated from the company ETHICON. Thank you very much to Ms. Wormuth! The material for the stitches from ETHICON is not available in Thailand and it is very expensive. It is used in human medicine. I have been putting it at Dr. Somsak's disposal and in return we have been granted a small discount for the neutering. I estimate that a veterinarian can manage five to six castrations per day. It is now possible to catch the dogs and have them wait for their castration. That had not been possible so far and therefore I never thought about having our own veterinarian. I might offer a commission for catching animals (25 to 50 cents per animal) to the helpers so that the veterinarian is always occupied fully. If we can only neuter two dogs a day, we will probably never finish. Dr. Somsak is very busy with the dogs that have owners. He cannot manage more castrations and we could not afford more anyway. We received equipment for sterilizations from Germany (from Heike in Hannover) and a microscope from Switzerland (from the hospital of Prof. Dr. H. Lutz in Zürich). We are lacking hardly any more equipment for the operation room.

It is not decided at this point but it is not possible to pay 3000 Euro to Dr. Somsak every month. So, we have to find another solution. I have already talked to our President, Khun Sud, Silvana, and Khun Ying from Montien House, about the employment of our own veterinarian. Khun Sud and Khun Ying want to help me finding a suitable veterinarian. Khun Ying has offered reasonable (3000 Baht per month) lodging. In Thailand it is

customary to offer a place to stay. Dr. Somsak is a good veterinarian - but unfortunately too expensive. We not only have to pay Dr. Somsak, but the four Thai helpers as well (the helpers get between 150 and 175 Euro per month).

Furthermore we have to fill approximately 250 bellies and they increase in number every day. We supply dry food to some personnel housing of hotels and a few areas at Chaweng Beach where reliable animal lovers feed stray dogs. A poor, very animal friendly Thai family is living with 40 dogs and 10 cats in Santhi Thani. We supply dry food and rice for the animals. They are all neutered already.

On Silvana's birthday we had a litter of puppies at the property of the new animal sanctuary for the fourth time. We have not gotten around to take pictures of all of them. We collected an old bitch from the supermarket at Maenam. Of course, she was very skinny, had mange and a broken leg. Four of the puppies are black and four are white with black dots. They are all looking for sponsors - you can see them on our website [www.samuidog.org](http://www.samuidog.org) under "HOW TO HELP" and then under sponsors. Unfortunately we are experiencing problems with taking pictures at the moment, as the camera is broken. The lid for the battery compartment cannot be locked anymore. A few pictures can be taken with a lot of luck and a lot of adhesive tape. Gradually we will be putting the dogs on the internet that have already been with us for a long time and that found sponsors a long time ago. You can look at the photos under "Other dog stories" at the end of the sponsored dogs and you can show them to your friends. We are constantly working on the homepage and therefore it is worthwhile to check it out occasionally. But the work on the homepage has to be postponed for a while. The equipping of the animal sanctuary and the possible training of the veterinarian come first.

Since the assistance of the hotels on Koh Samui is very limited, (very many hotels do not even allow us to display information material about the DRCS at their reception areas), the dogs on Koh Samui are solely relying on the help of animal-friendly tourists. The hotels and businesses on Koh Samui supply only approximately 5 % of our monthly budget. Due to the war in Iraq it is feared that less tourists will visit Koh Samui and then less animal lovers will be here to donate money. It will not be easy to reach all set goals in the near future.

**Please do not forget the dogs and cats on Koh Samui!  
They rely solely on you!**

Since single money transfers to Thailand are expensive, I collect donations from Germany and other countries where we have not yet installed a collection account, at my account in Germany. By now, the DRCS has collection accounts in Switzerland, Austria, the Netherlands, England, Italy, Sweden, Finland, Canada, USA and Australia. If you visit Koh Samui, you can always inspect all money transactions.

Best wishes,

*Brigitte*

Further information for sponsors you'll find on page "How to help" of our homepage