

Dog Rescue Center Samui

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Dear animal friends,

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Advent - time for peace and reflection. That would be very nice indeed! But here on Koh Samui we are far from it. We are close to dropping dead with all the work caused by the many dogs and the construction of the animal home. Quite often we really do not know what to do first. But I am sure that for all of you this time of the year is stressful, since it is almost reduced to buying presents and everybody has to play this game, even if he does not want to.

Here is a small retrospection on new members of the DRCS. In January 2002 we received a most generous donation from Silvana from Switzerland enabling us to buy 7,200m² land in Ban Taling Ngam in the Southern part of the island. However, the contract was only settled in May because it took a long time to survey the land. All the people owning the adjoining land had to accept the borders. It took another four months until the construction could finally start because we had to wait for ages for the architect's design and also had to get offers from various constructors. But now it is all set. When the area had been cleaned and 30 felled palm trees removed the construction workers set up their huts on the land where the animal home is going to be constructed and they are now busy working. The construction of the wall to surround the animal home in Ban Taling Ngam has started smoothly. After one week only almost 100 meters were finished. By now we have found donators for about 150 m wall (the wall will be approximately 500 m long!) 1 m wall is 25 Euro. Who wants to donate 1 m? We will paint the first names, cities and countries of the donators in oil paint onto the wall. Also in Thai. That looks really nice! Already now we have quite a collection of names and cities from many different countries and I hope that many more animal friends will participate in the large "painting party". In case you are on the island you can add your name or whatever you feel like yourself! Help the dogs to construct the wall for their home! 1 m for 25 Euro! If you want to transfer 25 Euro on one of our donation accounts add key word "wall". I myself am from Berlin and the Western side of the wall was painted very nicely almost all over. Let us see if we cannot a similar piece of art eventually! We have listed all donators on our homepage. www.samuidog.org (check under animal home). Dear wall donators have a look, if your name is listed. We do not want to forget anybody! But there is no hurry. We will start painting in January only! We still haven't started drilling for water, but we have bought a 3.000 litre tank and also, there is a small rivulet on one side of the land, which now in the rainy season carries enough water. The construction workers connected the rivulet with the tank with a pipe and once some water has been collected in a small basin it is pumped into the tank and we do not need to have water delivered. All of the sudden things happened really fast and I am very happy indeed to be able to inform you that we have managed to move the first bunch of dogs to the land of the animal home in Ban Taling Ngam before our departure to Germany on the first of December. We are going to be in Germany from the second of December until the 10th of January. Until the 12th of December Olivia from Switzerland will stay in our house and take care of everything. She already did so during our last stay in Germany and things worked out just fine. Since the beginning of this year Olivia comes to our house from 09:00 h to 17:00 h every day and helps me to cope with the office work or we go to the beaches or villages together with the helpers in order to inject dogs or treat them against mange. I would not know how I would have dealt with all the office work on my own. Every day the DRCS receives about ten e-mails with various requests.

We have placed boards in the villages informing the people that the DRCS is paying for the castration of female dogs and cats. Since then we do not have a problem with taking at least two female dogs to Dr. Somsak every day. The Thai population is most helpful and glad to be able to help the animals. Dr. Somsak gets 25 to 30 Euro for the castration of a female dog. The monthly average salary of a Thai is between 100 and 150 Euro. Only very few have enough money to pay for a castration. The Thai government puts the rabies vaccine at our disposal free of charge. But it takes a lot of red tape (in Thai to top it all!) to keep the endless supply going. Don our "manager" got used to it very well and deals with it every time. After the tragic death of Poehm we had to employ a fourth helper because there simply was too much work for three helpers with the large number of dogs. His name is Pong and he is related to Sakda who has been working for us since a long time. He is from the South of Thailand and down there they have a very strong dialect. In the first few days I did not understand a word but now after a month it is improving. He is trying very hard to speak Bangkok Thai but it does not always work out and then again I do not understand a single thing. But even Dr. Somsak sometimes has problems to really understand Pong. That is reassuring. All four helpers do not speak any English and I have to practise my Thai every day. Don our "manager" speaks some English and is trying hard to learn more. But normally I speak Thai with him also, since his English is not good enough for an English communication. From the 13th of December Angela Goldmann from Germany will stay in our house and inform interested tourists on the DRCS. Furthermore she will watch the work the helpers do. Angela is a translator and has been translating all the English texts for the DRCS since a long time. She is already looking forward very much to her "holidays" in the DRCS. The helpers already know her and she also already learnt some Thai. Apart from that she speaks French fluently and can cope with Spanish and Italian. Olivia will of course continue to come every day and will help Angela, because Angela wants to have a bit of a holiday on Koh Samui also.

It will of course take along time to finish the home for the dogs, but 1.400 m² are surrounded by a wall. A great double sluice door has been built also. That way the dogs cannot run away. 10 large huts have been constructed for the dogs and 60 bamboo benches have been set up for them. The first dogs have moved already and are running around like crazy on the huge piece of land. Until a very short time ago we had about 120 dogs on our premises. At least half of them are healthy by now and can eventually be moved to the animal home. There the dogs are fed every afternoon, it is checked, if all of them are healthy and of course everything is cleaned as good as possible. The food is still prepared here on our premises until the house down there is finished. But that will take some more months. In the last time it was very difficult for us to help the dogs, since due to a lack of space, only very badly injured dogs could be accepted. There was not enough shelter for all the dogs when it was raining and puppies catch a cold easily. That of course increased the expenses for medical treatment unnecessarily. But now the problem is solved and when we return to Koh Samui in January surely the second enclosure for the dogs will be finished. We cannot put all the dogs in one big enclosure, because some of the males will start fights over and over again. Here on our premises the dogs were divided into two groups also. All dogs still needing medical treatment are naturally not taken to Ban Taling Gnam, but stay here near our house until completely recovered.

Some will have to stay here forever, because they need daily intensive care. For example we have three blind dogs and three paralysed dogs, which will have to stay here forever. Dr. Somsak is castrating at least two female dogs for the DRCS every day and treats all emergencies we are informed about or which are taken to him directly. Dr. Somsak receives at least 2.500 Euro every month for castrations carried out and for other medical services. We also purchase a lot of drugs from him, because by now for many illnesses Dr. Somsak does not have to be consulted any more, since the helpers and myself by now have a lot of experience. Diseases of the skin are always treated the same way for example. Dogs with injuries (festered by lots of maggots always) are always treated by the helpers, since this is a most time consuming procedure and if treated by Dr. Somsak, would cost a horrendous amount of money. The helpers are by now absolute specialists in this field.

On the 22nd of September we went to Koh Phan Gan (KPG) in order to celebrate the first anniversary of the PAC (Phangan Animal Care). Dr. Somsak came along also. Dr. Shevaun Gallwey, an Irish vet, founded an organisation there similar to the DRCS. A year ago the DRCS supplied the PAC with a table for surgery, a sterilisator, all sorts of surgical instruments and a whole lot of drugs. Without this help by the DRCS the foundation of the PAC would not have been feasible. Since we are co-operating with Dr. Somsak we could supply Shevaun with everything necessary. After my very poor experiences with two own vets in 2000 it not scheduled for the near future to employ a vet for the DRCS. Within one year Shevaun has castrated more than 200 cats and dogs and treated an innumerable number of emergencies. In case you want to learn more about the PAC, just take a look at their homepage. www.pacthailand.org. Dr. Somsak and the DRCS are very happy that an organisation to protect animal was founded on Koh Phan Gan as well and that thanks to the help of many foreign vets so much could be achieved there. Shevaun herself is not always on the island but an experienced vet nurse is there all year round. I hope the fact that so much could be achieved on Koh Phan Gan due to the DRCS' help will please you too. Since all surgical instruments and the sterilisator were moved to KPG a year ago, we now have to purchase new equipment again, because in the house to be constructed on the premises of the new animal home, a room for surgery is scheduled. If foreign vets feel like helping us a bit during their vacation and feel like castrating some dogs, this is only possible if we have a room for surgery with all the necessary equipment. The DRCS has already received some offers by vets from all over the world for 2003. Since we are a member of the WSPA (World Society for the Protection of Animals) I had hoped that we would receive some financial support by the WSPA for the setting up of a room for surgery. I had asked for their help and unfortunately learnt that each year you have to fill in a very complicated application form in writing. Unfortunately we also did receive one of these forms neither for 2002 nor for 2003. But surely this is not the fault of the WSPA but to the Thai mail system. I hardly ever get any mail. I only received one letter from my Mother. She sent four! The application period for 2003 was terminated in September and for 2002 we would have had to send in the application form until September 2001. Trevor Wheeler from the WSPA told me that he will try to do something for us. But again the application time is over and there are no exceptions to the rule. Maybe it helps if you send him some "begging letters" In December 2001 and in January 2002 some WSPA representatives visited the DRCS and they checked our work. They were most satisfied but did not tell me that you have to send in an application form for every year. Last year we received 7.000 \$ from the WSPA without a written application! I honestly do not understand the system according to which money is handed over to organisations without a written application. I really counted on their help and am most disappointed. I do not know why we are members of the WSPA if we are not supported! The yearly checks are quite expensive and this money would be better spent on the animals. But the year is not over yet and I still have a bit of hope that the WSPA will help. Do write to Trevor! Mail address: WSPA, 89 Albert Embankment, London SE17TP. E-Mail: TrevorWheeler@wspa.org.uk

The Dutch Foundation for Foreign Animal Shelters "Stichting Buitenlandsee" is supporting us since the foundation of the DRCS twice yearly with 1.300 Euro. Without any application or expensive checks. Many thanks to the Dutch Foundation!

The support from hotels and shops on Koh Samui is still very low. Evidently it is still much more convenient for many hotels to solve the dog problem by poisoning them instead of applying a more human way. However, I do hope that on the long run people will remember in which hotels dogs are poisoned again and again and that animal friends of course will not want to stay there anymore. The hotels and bungalow resorts in which dogs are poisoned are always the same ones.

However, there also are "animal friends" supporting the DRCS financially and not caring if the dogs are poisoned, provided they do not have to watch it. They always stay in the same hotels where dogs are not welcome although they do know that the dogs are killed there again and again in a most cruel way. It these people would have to watch the agony of a

poisoned dogs they would surely change the hotel! Many hotels do not even allow us to leave a flyer display in the reception. I always ask animal loving tourists if they could ask their hotel manager if we can leave our information. If the managers refuse, they often lose customers. And it really does not cost anything to display some information on the DRCS. We have placed the latest photos of the wall and the dog huts in our homepage www.samuidog.org in the section animal home. There are a lot of new dogs. But for animal friends not wanting to become a godparent it is surely interesting too to learn more about the dogs on Koh Samui. To become a godparent for a dog or a cat is 15 Euro a month. All of the animals have had many bad experiences before they were allowed to come to rest with us. Just have a look! We have found god parents for about 90 dogs and Don is very busy at the time being taking new pictures of all the dogs. Once in Germany in December we will send you the shots via e-mail. If you do not have an e-mail account you will of course get a picture also. But of course that takes more time and is much more expensive and I am not sure if I will manage in December. All the animals with godparents are doing fine. If an animal is sick I inform you as soon as possible. Unfortunately some of the dogs with a godparent ran away. But it is impossible to stop that because the dogs were born as strays and once they are well again of course they try to regain their freedom. Due to the lack of space it is impossible for us to install a double sluice door on our premises. About 30 dogs are still looking for a godparent. We will place these dogs onto our home age shortly. Take a look at them!

Before finishing this letter, I would like to thank all the animal friends that helped us energetically during their stay on Koh Samui. Some sacrifice many days of their holidays and helped us to wash the dogs suffering from mange, which really isn't a tempting job because the animals have to be washed with a highly poisonous smelly liquid. Without your help we would not have been able to help that many animals. Of course all financial donations not matter how large or small is most welcome any time, particularly now where we need so much money for the construction of the new animal home. For 6 Euro only we can buy 10 KGs of dry food! We are feeding about 250 dogs at different places of the island! It does not need a big amount to help a lot.

Without YOU there would be no DRCS and surely also no vet on Koh Samui!

A merry Christmas to all of you
and a good start in the New Year 2003!

Many kind regards

Brigitte



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