



### Editorial

As I think about what to include in this month's newsletter I am in awe of how many of you have come forward to help me in my efforts to support Karen People. Even as I write these words I realize that this is no longer about the work I do, but rather the work we do and our human compassion and willingness to reach out to others in need. At the request of some of the Karen people, some of whom who have been re-settled in Ottawa for more than three years, Mindy Woolcott and I are offering citizenship classes. This is proving to be more rewarding than I imagined. As I teach about our Canadian rights and responsibilities, I am reminded about who we are and what we represent. We are all free to pursue our dreams, we never worry that our children will starve, we have the opportunity to educate ourselves and improve our lives. Over the past years that I have worked with the Karen people I have learned so much and now, through teaching them, I am once again reminded of who we Canadians are.

### Kathleen McCourt

In January of 2008 a young, spirited Kathleen McCourt came to visit us in Chiang-mai. Kathleen travelled to the mountains with me and spent some time in Mah Wah



Kee Village learning about the Karen hill-tribe people. She particularly loved working with the children and planned to return to the mountains to teach and learn more about Karen traditions and way of life. Kathleen's adventurous spirit fit the mountains; I loved having her with me and looked forward to her return. Unfortunately Kathleen passed away on September 26th at the early age of 32. I had no idea just how much her experiences in the mountains had touched her until I arrived at the hospice in Cornwall where Kathleen spent her last days. Her family told me about her love of the Karen people and her longing to return. At the time of her passing Kathleen's parents, Pat and Jennine McCourt asked if I would accept donations in Kathleen's memory towards the work we are doing in

Thailand. I was humbled by their offer and thoughtfulness in the face of such overwhelming loss. The donations raised in Kathleen's memory will be used to support one of the students from Mah Wa Kee Village who is now living at Jen's House. I think Kathleen would like that, I am honoured that Kathleen's memory will continue through the life of this young Karen girl

### Letters from Jen's House

*The children at Jen's House have sent us some letters and I would like to share them with you. The verbs, tenses and words may not be quite right but I think their messages ring loud and clear. Even though they write to me, their words belong to all of us who are supporting them. Enjoy!*

"Hi...I want to thank you again for sponsor me. Because I am not know how to return. And I would say that even though I'm not a clever student, but I will make best. Thank you so much. God bless you." From Tongchai

"Hi Coleen, I miss you and I want to see you. How are you? When you come to Jen' House? I want learn English. With love...Suneesa."

*A group message from some of the Grade 7/8 students, they often work as a team.*

"How do you do? We are nice. We miss you so much. We are waiting you come here again. And teach us for English. Take-care" Sompon, Janjira, NutJunnan, Tat sa nee and Suchada"

This next one takes a little creative guessing, I think that "neck teacher chips" means "next teacher trip" I couldn't resist putting it in.

"Hello! (yes sir). neck teacher chips, hope that, might me fine, want to beg for thank neck teacher chips very much testify to support us in every side, want to give neck teacher can chip to come to Thailand again, come too often, good extremely, old all ready, take care the health well please (yes sir)" From Weera

### Book Sale 2010

Sally Mooney and friends have once again come through with this major fundraising effort. In 2005 I had the bright idea of having a book sale to raise money for Mah Wah Kee School. Little did I realize just how much work would be involved, and then along came Sally Mooney. Sally has spent some time along the Thai/Burma border working with the Karen people. She too fell in love with the Karen's gentle nature and amazing spirit to survive. Over the past 4 years Sally has taken over the duty of organizing the book donations, sorting them and selling on the day of our sale. For years Puzzles Restuarant hosted our book sale. However, with their closing we were on the hunt for a new location. Both Dovercourt Community Centre in Westboro and Quichua World Market on the main strip of Westboro's Richmond Rd. came forward to offer us free space for our fundraiser. I am thrilled to report that we raised a total of \$1959.65. Jill, the owner of Quichua has gone a step further in supporting us, she has offered to sell Karen bags and cards. All profits will be returned directly to us. Quichua World Market has unique gifts items, I hope you take the time to drop in. **Thank-you to all for your great book donations.**

