

**CYCLISTS WITH COMPASSION!**Visit us : [www.cyclistswithcompassion.com](http://www.cyclistswithcompassion.com)Email us: [contact4cwc@gmail.com](mailto:contact4cwc@gmail.com)

# CWC NEWS

## Something is missing!

Dear friends,

I hope you all had a great start of the year and on behalf of CWC I wish you a wonderful year ahead!

Usually - for the past three years - around this time I was getting excited, because one of the year's highlights always happened at the beginning of the year: The annual CWC ride! Now that we have changed the dates for the CWC rides towards the later part of a year and I (and you) have to go through this 18 months vacuum, I realise, how much these rides mean to me. I miss the daily challenge and the daily sense of achievement after a completed ride, I miss the feeling of well deserved physical fatigue in my legs after a particular hard climb, the thrill of the descent, yes, I even miss the Thai "Beng Beng" chocolate bars during the rest stops, the beautiful scenery, the warm smiles of the villagers and the waves of the school children, but mostly I miss the friendship and camaraderie of my fellow CWC riding buddies - a friendship and camaraderie those that have been together through the pains and joys of a physically and mentally challenging experience like a long-distance bicycle ride can relate to!

However, taking this break also had advantages as it allowed us to spend sufficient time and diligence to identify and select the CWC 2019 charities and to plan and confirm an exciting new route. Yes, I am confident that CWC 2019 will be our best ride ever - with your help!

Over the next editions of this newsletter, we will introduce our charities, their causes and the people behind in more detail - starting in this edition with the Asia Center Foundation.

Also, as far as scenery is concerned, the CWC 2019 route will be special. We will show case the sights of the daily routes in the next editions of the newsletter - day by day! The booking for the tour will open on April 1 and again will be limited to 25 riders. If you are interested, please register your interest early on our web site.

For now, best wishes, GOD Bless and safe cycling, always...

In the next three editions of CWC News we will introduce to you in more detail the chosen charities for CWC 2019. their causes and the people behind them.

### A CWC 2019 Beneficiary:

## The Asia Center Foundation (ACF) in Phuket



The Asia Center Foundation (ACF) was founded in 2002 by Roelien Muller as a childcare center with 26 children. It now boasts six different programs and helps yearly more than 250 children. ACF is

a Christian charity registered as a Non Government Organization (NGO) on Phuket. Their mission is to help disadvantaged children and children-at-risk by providing care, training and education so that they will fulfil their God-given potential.

ACF employs local Thai staff and also makes use of the help of local and international volunteers to engage and work with underprivileged, impoverished children and children-at-risk in Phuket.

Out of the 57 million primary-school-age children who are out of school around the world, 611,000 live in Thailand. The ACF started as a Christian charity, by responding to a need in the community for basic English teaching in Patong, one of the main tourist areas. Since then, ACF rented facilities to host its childcare centers in different parts of the island. By creating both educational and sports programs, ACF helps children to focus on



*My journey in Phuket started when I walked through Soi Namsea. The conditions were just terrible. I was not prepared for what I found in the slum while teaching English to adults working with tourists in Patong. Little did I know that my life would change completely when I saw the children's eager little faces when they joined their parents at the adult English class. I remember wondering, what do they do in a slum day after day? I wanted to do something that would give the families I met there, hope again. It was not a one-man journey. It is by God's grace and unmerited favour that I can thank many different people that played a role in bringing us this far.*

*Dr Danny Martin who believed in me, and introduced me to World Children's Fund (WCF) – thank you for being there for me. Dr Joseph Lam from WCF who took the risk, and provided the funding so I could get started – thank you for your tremendous support. It is with great expectation and excitement that I look towards the future and to reaching our goal of having our own facility.*

*All in God's time!*

**Mrs Roelien Muller**  
Director, Asia Center Foundation

their education and overall development. Despite the difficult and impoverished situations of the students, ACF aims to give them hope to believe in themselves for a brighter future.

With the help of a dedicated team of staff, board members, volunteers and donors, ACF has managed to make an impact on many children's lives.

### **What is ACF doing to help disadvantaged children gain access to quality education?**

The Asia Center Foundation created many programs to help children and their parents deal with difficult situations for Thai and Burmese children from 3 to 18 years old. These include:

- The Patong Childcare Center for 3 to 6 year old children from Patong and Kathu area provides them a safe, secure environment where they can learn (many for the first time) to follow a set routine, to obey rules, to develop their creativity and to behave in a social environment with children of their age.
- Scholarship Program for children between 7 to 18 in the Phang Nga and Phuket provinces provides support and encouragement to families facing financial and social problems whose children benefit from the scholarship program.
- Full care in a "safe house" called Ban Sii Som for children whose home environments are not safe or suitable for children.
- Jumpstart Learning Center for Burmese children who come from at-risk and poor families and for various reasons, who cannot attend Thai government schools.
- The ACF Youth Program that focuses on Primary school students varying between the ages of 8 and 12 serves as a platform for life skills training, leadership and sports development.



Currently ACF is working towards an exciting new venture and is are trying to raise enough funds to help it realize. ACF is making plans to build their own pre-school and primary school. The plans also include a Community Center, Volunteers and Children's accommodation and a Sports field, all on one premises. With the help of Dr. Beng Kiang Tan from NUS (National University of Singapore) and her 4th year Architecture students, ACF now has the final layouts and designs for its School and Community Center Project which will be located in Kathu.

You can help making this and other ACF projects a reality by supporting the riders of CWC 2019 in their effort to raise money for ACF and the two other benefiting charities. Please visit our donation page at <https://www.cyclistswithcompassion.com/donate> to donate. Any amount - no matter how small - will make a difference to the live of a child or young person in need of your help!

For more information on the Asia Center Foundation and their projects, please visit their web site <http://www.asiacenterfoundation.org>

**An interview with a truly remarkable woman:****Mrs Roelien Muller, Director, Asia Center Foundation**

CWC: Please tell us a little bit about yourself!

*Roelien: I'm a South African and have been living in Thailand since 2000. My 8 year old son and I came to Thailand in 2000 because I made a commitment to work with Dr. Danny Martin, an American missionary, for one year as his assistant. I left SA to make a new start after a number of very difficult situations in my life. At a young age I realized that we are never sure how soon our time on earth will end. My main life focus is to make a difference to the lives of vulnerable people through how I live and spend the time I will be allowed to live in this world.*

*I have a degree in Communications (PR and Advertising) and Industrial Psychology and I have been involved in charity work in SA.*



CWC: How did you get involved with ACF?

*Roelien: One year became two, and halfway through 2002 Dr. Danny Martin decided to go back to the US instead of continuing his mission in Phuket. By then we have registered the ACF as a local NGO and charity organization but never used it. I was the only team member left, and decided to use the Asia Center Foundation to reach out to children in a slum area in Patong, (the main tourist area), where we were teaching English as a community project before. The unmet needs and lack of a safe day to day environment for children of women working in the bars in Patong and living in the slum, were something I found hard to deal with. I started a small childcare center in October 2002 in the slum and during the years I slowly build a team of Thai people to work with me. We have responded to the various other needs of the families we work with by starting different projects.*



CWC: What is your long term vision for ACF?

*Roelien: After the 2004 tsunami a piece of land was donated to ACF by a British family who lost a family member during the tsunami. This enabled me to think more long term and we decided to develop a permanent educational facility where children from disadvantaged or vulnerable families could have access to quality education and other opportunities to develop their potential.*

*We have started the building project in 2017 and we have so far completed the pre-school building, kitchen and multi purpose lunchroom as well as the first Safe House where some*

*children will be boarding. The additional buildings will include a primary school, Youth/Community Center, Volunteer accommodation as well as a sport field. Our vision is that the land that was donated*

*be developed into a safe place accessible to any disadvantaged or at-risk child in the community where they will have the opportunity to be educated and overall developed so they will reach their God given potential like everybody else.*

CWC: What are the biggest challenges for you personally and ACF in general?

Roelien:

*Personally:*

- *Being away from family and financial limitations of doing charity work*

*ACF:*

- *Finding funding to continue day to day operations and to complete the building project*
- *Finding qualified staff members who have the same vision and commitment than the rest of our team*

CWC: . What keeps you motivated?

*Roelien: My faith, and looking at the bigger picture, knowing that we are called to a higher purpose. Knowing that every small act of help can lead to a life changing experience for a child who struggles with many obstacles. The fact that many people reach out to help ACF whether in big or small ways are also very encouraging to me.*

CWC: What are the biggest success stories?

Roelien:

- *The fact that children, who started with ACF in the slum area center at age 4 are now finishing high school or are at university and that they have successfully reached a higher level of education than their parents, which will enable them to help their families in the future. EX: A 4 year old boy who received a scholarship after the tsunami, completed his high school and vocational studies last year and now is working as a motorbike mechanic. His father has no education and is physically disabled and can only do small jobs to create an income for his family.*
- *Through ACF's intervention some care givers received urgent healthcare, which in some cases saved lives and increased the ability to continue to care and take responsibility for dependents.*
- *That we have been able to grow ACF and maintain our work for 18 years without having a major donor base.*
- *Sponsoring more than 430 children for on average between 5 -10 years of their academic careers.*
- *Having two annual fundraising events connected to ACF for ten years or more is a success story in its own.*
- *The different opportunities we have provided throughout the years for ex:*
  - o *Being awarded the IRB's 'Spirit of Rugby' award in 2008 in London for our work done after the tsunami through the ACF scholarship program and our youth rugby development program.*
  - o *Being invited to bring 10 children to participate in the 'Mayor of Manchester's' rugby week in 2009 - which created a first time experience of International travel and coaching for some of our rugby players.*

Click on the image on the right to see a video about the Asia Center Foundation and their work!



# The route and sights of CWC 2019

## DAY 1 (12 OCT 2019) : BANGKOK – PRAN BURI – KUIBURI

After a van transfer to leave behind the busy roads of Bangkok, the ride will start at a famous temple, the Wat Huay Mongkol near Hua Hin. This Buddhist temple is home to the world's largest statue of Luang Phor Thuad, a legendary southern Thai monk revered for his enlightenment and ability to perform miracles. Lang Phor Thuad was born in the late Ayutthaya period, in the southern province of Nakhon Si Thammarat. Like the stories about the fall of Ayutthaya, Luang Phor Thuad's story is imbued with legends and myths. The most famous story is about the miracle he performed while on a boat journey from Thailand's south to Ayutthaya, during which he turned seawater into fresh drinking water, saving the entire crew from dehydration. Other miraculous stories recount how he helped avert fatal accidents or fire.



Once we finished preparing our bikes, we will start on a nice and easy ride to work out any kinks in the bike settings or with our legs. We'll be on primarily flat terrain as we ride through the Thai countryside but there will be a few undulations on our way. We will have to cross a busy road but our driver will be there to help you safely cross. We then cycle through

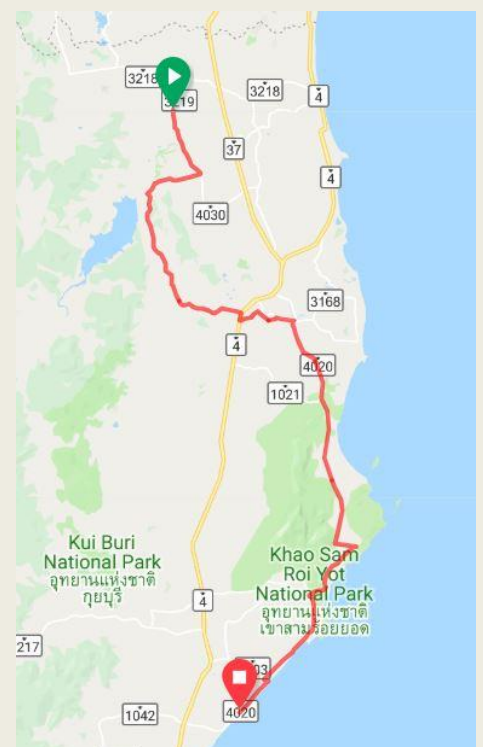


Khao Sam Roi Yot National Park. Khao Sam Roi Yot means "The mountain with three hundred peaks" and refers to a series of limestone hills along the Gulf of Thailand with highest one at 605m above the sea level. This



park has spectacular limestone formations and freshwater marshes in between the peaks. We ride on quiet back roads along the beach with the many stunning peaks as our background.

After the park we pass many small villages on the way to our beach resort and start to hug the coast just before arriving after 88 km at our hotel, the Vartika Resovilla.



## Our appeal for help from you!



Dear Friend!

**Cyclists With Compassion (CWC)** is a group of like-minded cycling enthusiasts and was started in 2015 with the goal to make a difference to underprivileged children and young people in Asia by raising money to better their education and life circumstances, which in turn will bring them hope and the foundation for a brighter future.

CWC plans and organises long-distance cycling tours to parts of Asia, raising awareness about the needs of children and young people in these areas. By raising money from corporate sponsors as well as donations from friends and family donated in recognition of our mental and physical efforts, we hope to contribute our little part of making their world a little better, a little brighter!

In October 2019, cyclists from around the world, I will be cycling over 750 km, starting near Bangkok and finishing in Phuket, where two of this year's three charities are based.



**For Freedom International** aims to see the marginalized, vulnerable, and exploited set free from the injustice of oppression by combating human trafficking and sexual exploitation. FFI has begun their work in the province of Phuket, where they work to change conditions that allow exploitation to exist. FFI believes in a holistic approach so that their projects can give women and children the opportunity to be free from oppression before and after it occurs through prevention, intervention, and restoration programs. In partnership with the Royal Thai Police, the Thai Internet Crimes Against Children, the FBI, and the U.S. Homeland Security, FFI also runs the Child Advocacy Center Phuket, a safe and child-friendly place for young victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation.

The **Asia Center Foundation**'s mission since 2002 is to help disadvantaged children and children-at-risk by providing care, training and education. Creating both educational and sports programs, ACF helps children to focus on their education and overall development. Despite the difficult and impoverished situations of the students, ACF aims to give them hope to believe in themselves for a brighter future.

Our third charity for CWC 2019 is based in Pattaya: Founded in 1999 as a ministry of Project L.I.F.E. Foundation, **Tamar Center** is a part of Youth With A Mission Thailand (YWAM). Their mission is helping those trapped and working in the sex industry to find a new life, education and new jobs by reaching out, building relationships, offering shelter and housing, offering vocational training, counseling and providing Bible teaching. Tamar Center also runs a dedicated program for the children of sex workers. <https://www.globalgiving.org/projects/helping-children-from-ex-sex-workers-in-thailand>.

Our ambitious plans can only become reality with the help and support from private and corporate sponsors and I would like to ask your kind support by becoming a sponsor of the CWC ride 2019. No matter how big or small, your contribution matters and will be very much appreciated. Full details about the private sponsorship and the various options for Corporate Sponsorship can be found at the [Sponsorship page](#) on CWC's website [www.cyclistswithcompassion.com](http://www.cyclistswithcompassion.com).

You can donate using the "[Donate](#)" feature on <https://www.cyclistswithcompassion.com/donate>. On the payment page you will also have the possibility to name the cyclist, in whose honour you donate. All donations will be in USD. For other payment methods, please contact [us](#). In order to streamline the donations raised by the participants of the ride, the donations will be collected through the donation portal of FFI and distributed between the three charities. The cyclists pay all expenses for the tour themselves and the proceeds from private sponsors will go fully to the selected charity!

Thank you on behalf of all cyclists and organisers of the CWC 2019 ride and the many, many children and young people benefitting from your generosity!

God Bless!

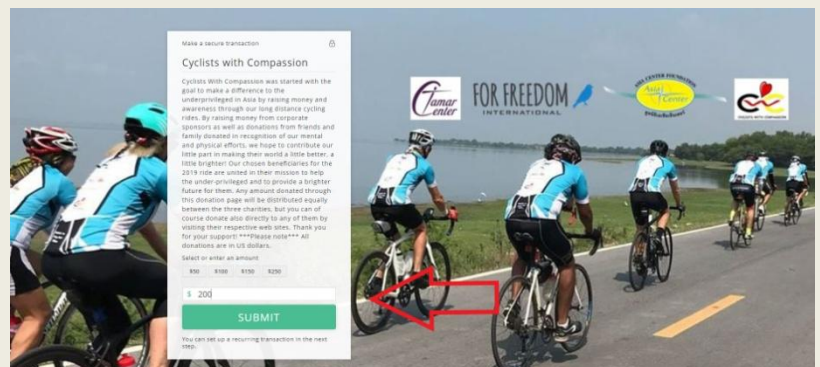
## How to donate?

We collect the donations through a CWC-specific donation portal on the web site for For Freedom International in order to streamline and simplify the donation process. All donations will be equally distributed between our three chosen charities after FFI deducts a small admin fee. Please note that all donations for now must be in USD, but we are hoping to have an option for other currencies in place at some time in the future. Donating to our cause is easy! Simply follow these three steps!

1. Go to <https://www.cyclistswithcompassion.com/donate> and press the "Donate" button!



2. Now select any of the pre-set amounts or other any amount in you want to donate and press "Submit". Remember, any amount - no matter how small - will make a difference and will be greatly appreciated!



3. Now put in the name of the cyclists in whose honour you donate, fill in your credit card details and your donation will be processed through FFI's secure payment portal. FFI will send you almost immediately an email acknowledging your donation and attaching a tax receipt. You can set up your own account to manage your donations by clicking on the "sign up here" link on the donation receipt.

