

THAT OTHERS MIGHT BLOOM...

The Lotus Flower Foundation is soon to open a specialized training academy for care givers in Nontaburi. In her own words, the organization's founder Gabrielle von Reding explains the nature and scope of their approach

The initial vision of the Lotus Flower Foundation (LFF), a Swiss-Thai charity, was to open a small rehabilitation shelter for 30 orphans who had been neglected, trafficked and abused and give them an environmentally responsible home that provides them with education and healing.

In a subsequent meeting with the director of the Swiss Agency for Development of Humanitarian Coordination for Southeast Asia, it became clear that there was a great need for an international non-governmental organization (NGO) to assist Thai Social Welfare to jump-start social/humanitarian aid through training.

LFF took note and decided to reassess its original priorities. Rather than build a new shelter for 30 children, the foundation decided to expand the scope of its project and construct a training academy where caregivers from various government and NGO shelters throughout Thailand could come for specialist training. In doing this LFF would be able to indirectly benefit thousands of children, at the same time raising nationwide standards for shelters.

Statistics reveal that Thai shelters only successfully reintegrate 20 percent of their orphans back into society. A lack of funding is often cited as the reason for these failures, yet the real root cause has more to do with a lack of knowledge in trauma relief, education and healing methods. Implementing these child-centred caring techniques can greatly help children find their identity, build up



ASSESSING THE NEED WITH THE LOTUS FLOWER QUALITY PROGRAM

self-esteem and assist them as they search for their devotion in life.

The LFF Academy is now under construction in Nonthaburi and is due to open in mid-2009. Two special curriculums have been developed based on the expertise of child psychiatrists, trauma relief experts and senior caregivers. Both programs will be taught to approximately 100 caregivers and shelter managers in intense three-week programs every year.

In addition to the LFF Academy program, true to the goals of its original

inception LFF sees it as its mission to lend direct material support to the eradication of child abuse in Thailand. In support of this important goal LFF is developing synergies with various existing projects to lend them material support. **■**

For more information please visit www.thelotusflowerfoundation.org



Born to Thai and Swiss parents, Mom Rajawongsi Tajvarn Voravarn Saicheua and Baron Franz von Reding de Biberegg, I am entirely committed to the cause of LFF and firmly believe that, with the assistance of highly professional people from Thailand and across the world, we will be able to facilitate real and lasting change!