



ANNUAL
REPORT
2023



มูลนิธิเยาวชนสุขสวัสดิ์
Prosperous Youth Foundation

LETTER FROM THE FOUNDER

Adam Griffith



WHEN KRISTY AND I FIRST MOVED to Chiang Mai, we knew little about the systems and structures of institutional care that create an environment where a greater percentage of children and youth here grow up in facilities, rather than families, than anywhere else in the world outside of Haiti. We probably don't need to be that specific though, we knew little about basically anything here. But we'd heard our co-founder Anirut Rattanappamonsook's firsthand accounts of growing up in a youth home, and it was enough for us to commit to helping this demographic of youth. In our ignorance we used language when sharing our vision about creating a sustainable foundation that could both minister to the youth within this broken system while also pushing for systematic change. I miss those naive twentysomethings. We didn't fully understand the words we were saying, but the vision God had given us remains the same.

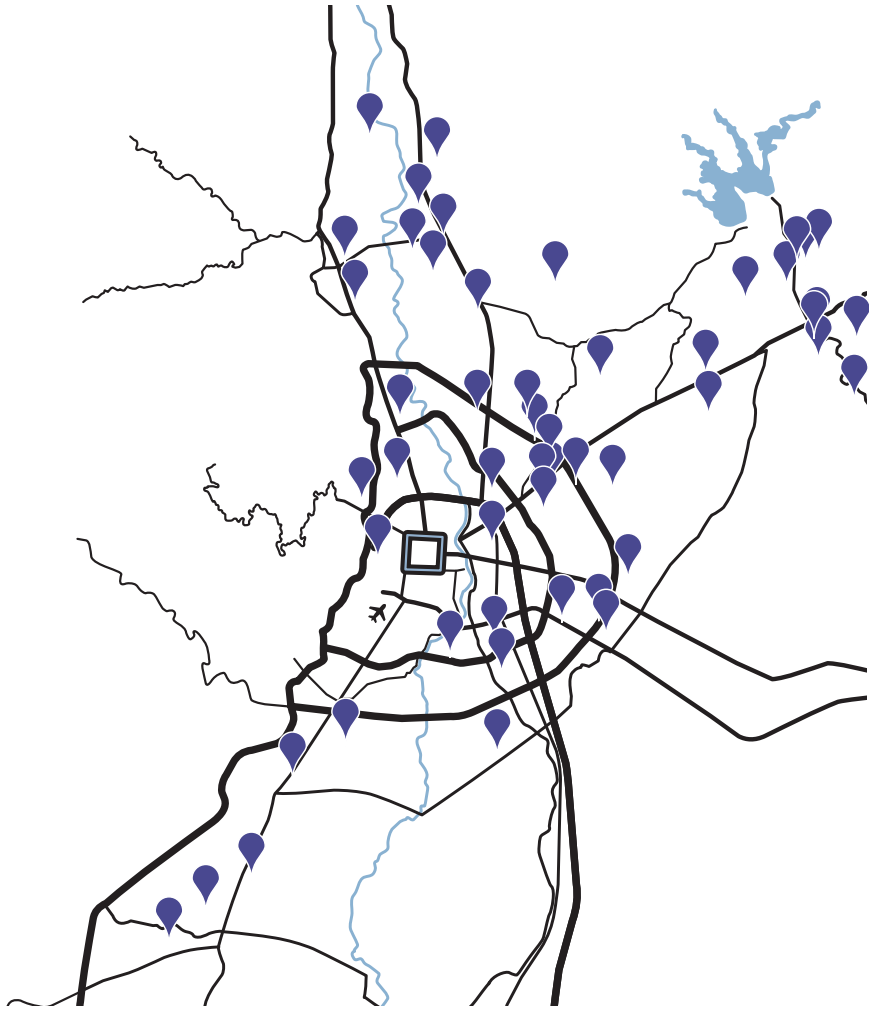
Focusing on leadership development, creating community for care leavers, and camps/special youth ministry programming we've excelled at ministering to youth growing up in youth homes in Chiang Mai. Hopefully the stories within this annual report in those areas will encourage you. We couldn't have done it without your support. As you read the stories related to areas of creating a sustainable foundation and creating large-scale change among the systems and structures that create an atmosphere where there are 170+ youth homes/orphanages in Chiang Mai, I hope you are challenged. It isn't that we haven't been addressing these fronts. We've made progress towards sustainability through opening a business as missions preschool that is profitable and is now PYF's largest monthly donor. The foundation continues to grow though, so we are probably only halfway to being financially sustainable



long-term. And, we've had some "wins" in creating a better system. We've coached two youth homes towards family-based care, and we've recruited a handful of Thai Christian families to begin officially fostering. We have a licensed social worker on staff and have paid for another Thai teammate to get her masters in counseling, who together are coaching two youth homes through the process of deinstitutionalizing. But the journey in both these areas is much longer and harder than we initially realized. We don't mind hard though. It is worth it to do it the right way, so that future generations of Thai youth inherit a more equitable system.

Turns out these first ten years are only the beginning. The foundation has been laid. We feel strategically and uniquely positioned to both minister to youth within this broken system while also pushing it towards family-based care. Will you continue with us in this journey? Please continue reading, be encouraged by the testimonies and challenged by the areas of need to consider how going forward together, we may be able to accomplish even more in 2024.

**Thanks again,
Adam Griffith**



**WE PARTNER WITH A
NETWORK OF**

**67
YOUTH HOMES
AROUND CHIANG MAI**



Blue is for Bloopers. Throughout this annual report we've included some complaints and blunders in these blue boxes. We didn't want you thinking we were braggards.



"You just eat with students."

The comment was meant to imply that we don't emphasize biblical teaching enough. Internally, we briefly considered using the times we're eating with students as the main discipleship metric for our student leadership program. We do relational youth ministry, with the belief that real change happens within community. Biblical truths need to be taught, but they are best received by students who know we care about them. In Thai culture, like most cultures around the world, you eat with those you are in close relationships with.



PROJECTS SUMMARY

Student Leadership Academy/Telos

Giving youth a platform where they can lead and a mentoring relationship to begin exploring what that means

- 41 attended leadership retreat
- 35 participated in a year-long mentoring program
- 55 made Kingdom Worker decisions at this year's camp

God First

Providing community for students exiting institutional care

- 41 number of students meeting monthly within 4 separate groups

Foster Care/Family-based care initiatives

Promoting promising practices within youth homes towards transitioning to family based care

- Provided coaching and social work services for two youth homes in the beginning stages of shift towards family-based care.
- Hosted a 5K Run/Walk awareness event attended by 105 local leaders

"WE TRUST THAT AS WE CONTINUE TO MODEL BEST PRACTICES, WE CAN GENTLY PULL THE SYSTEM TOWARDS MORE HOLISTIC CARE."

Respite

Programming for youth that provides Sabbath for youth home staff

- 19 one-day events at youth homes attended by 612 youth

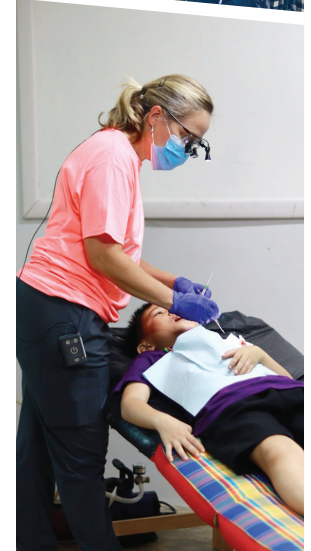
Camp

Immersive experience designed to help youth embrace their invitation into God's Family and to be a worker in His Kingdom

- 333 youth in attendance from 25 youth homes

"You can't do systematic change from within the system."

This statement assumes our close relationships with youth homes is a liability and that change must start with policy at a governmental level or from a large NGO that can put pressure on youth homes to change. Quality relationships can withstand conflict though, and we trust that as we continue to model best practices, we can gently pull the system towards more holistic care. As we grow, we know some of the projects we lead or changes we push for won't be initially embraced by everyone, but those most in need of major changes are going to be the slowest to change due to outside pressures and the most skeptical of outside voices.





“My English is getting worse!”

We love this complaint from our Thai staff. While we have a very cross-cultural team with American missionaries and Thai staff, some of which are from tribal people groups - which means we conduct meetings in Thai, use Thai in group chats, and Thai for informal office talk as well. We prioritize it as part of our long-term strategy to create a sustainable Thai foundation. It means our missionaries have to commit to a long process of language learning and for some of our Thai staff it means a small regression in their English skills.



Oversized is in. We got the memo late though. Each year the camp shirts are a big deal. Students love receiving them, and then they wear them all the time throughout the following year. We always design a new one based on the theme. People have strong opinions and that part can get complicated. Once the color and design are locked in, the ordering process is easy. We have last year’s shirt sizes, how many we ordered and how many were leftover, and we just make slight adjustments to match up with the number of students that have RSVP’d this year. That worked every other year, but apparently fashion changed and our formula didn’t. All of the girls wanted bigger sizes, so we ran out of large and extra large and had dozens of smalls and mediums left. In the end, everyone got a shirt, but we had to order extra. The colors were slightly off on the extras and some kids had to suffer through being stuck with a shirt that actually fit them.



One of the youth that we work with, moved three hours outside of town, to a different province to take care of her grandmother who is an amputee. Her grandmother then passed away, so we decided to drive the three hours to go and encourage her. The day started out with huge ominous dark clouds on the horizon and

rain quickly started pouring down as I soon realized the windshield wipers on my car definitely needed to be replaced. We pushed through, but two hours into the drive, we got a message from the youth. She said she had Covid and wouldn’t be able to meet with us. After my coworker, Faii, read the text out loud, we looked at each other and started laughing. It was too late to turn back now, so Faii and I drove up the mountain and went to the coffee shop anyway. What is normally a coffee shop with a beautiful view was transformed into a coffee shop floating in the clouds for just this day. You can’t plan a day like that, when the fog and clouds will come down to meet you – arguably better than the “beautiful” view. For three hours on the way there, Faii and I talked about everything and anything; her family problems, money issues, depression, how best to talk with youth. On the way home, I got in the car and turned on some music, thinking we had exhausted every single conversation topic. 10 minutes in, I turned the music down to hear her better, and never turned it back up. God had a better plan for the day than I ever could have imagined.

Going into 2023, we’d planned on continuing to operate a small residential home for young women who were experiencing domestic violence. We’d seen too many of the youth we serve struggling and we tried to formalize some informal mentoring and provision of care that some of our team members were providing. As we began to network with other organizations and handle cases as they were referred to us, we came to the conclusion that a physical space was not necessary and at times actually hindered young women from pursuing care from our team. Our social work team still receives calls and we help direct women experiencing trauma to places of safety, but we no longer staff or operate a care facility.

“GOD HAD A BETTER PLAN FOR THE DAY THAN I EVER COULD HAVE IMAGINED.”





Ten years of camp and we are still learning - learning how to communicate, get feedback, engage with everything around us, all in the proper Thai way. In previous years, we've had meetings with our camp counselors every night during camp to go over any issues or problems they might be having. It generally looks like 50 people in a room and no one really saying anything of substance until the meeting is over and they rush up to me to chat one-on-one. Thinking I'd be ahead of the problem this year

and create a more productive system, I decided to scrap camp counselor meetings in favor of checking in with them more individually. One small issue we had during camp was that we had so many instances of kids talking during the sermon or exiting the big room in friend groups, and we couldn't figure out what made this year different. We figured it might be because the main room was much hotter than normal and they wanted a break. Fast forward to the last day of camp, when I had all the

camp counselors write review cards of anything they wanted to say - good things, bad things, things we could improve on, etc. An overwhelming majority of them wrote something along the lines of, "Why weren't the kids sitting in their color rows in the big room like normal? Because they were sitting with their friends, it made it harder for them to pay attention." Normally, having the kids sit with their color groups is something our MC would already know, but this year we had new MCs.

I showed my Thai coworker and asked her, "Why didn't anybody say anything during camp? We could have easily fixed the problem." She said, "Thai people, especially someone younger than you, would never tell that to your face during the event, because they wouldn't want to make you feel bad or lose face." I was absolutely dumbfounded and reminded of how much my American mindset still very much affects my everyday work style.

CURRENT YOUTH – TESTIMONY

Allison Duncan



Story shared with Naomi's permission and blessing

THE FIRST CONVERSATIONS I OFTEN HAVE WITH MANY YOUTH can be jarring. They skip all the small talk, all the pleasantries and go straight to, “I have to take care of my 16-year-old brother,” “Should I stop taking these antidepressants?”, or “My family never talks at the dinner table.”

I met Naomi in 2018 when she started coming to our first God First small group. She'd just graduated high school and knew she needed some motivation to stay on the right track. From then on, she has always been a faithful member of God First. I never really connected with her originally, until something in me broke for her, when she came to my door the day before I was leaving for America in 2020, said she didn't know who to go to, and showed me her fresh wounds of self-harm. That was two years after joining God First, when the loneliness of living in a dorm all by herself started to eat away at her and she started to abuse alcohol. It was the longest year of my life to be stuck in America during Covid, trusting God that He would place other people in her life to walk alongside her.

When I got back, we started going on walks together, then runs, and her coming over to watch the newest show on Netflix and eat spicy papaya salad. In the gaps and silences, we began talking about what hope looks like, who Jesus is, our motivations for the future, and what really terrifies her. In 2022, I invited her to come to church with me, so every Sunday morning, she'd ride her motorbike over to my house, generally 10 minutes

late, and we'd arrive to church 20 minutes late, but at least there. Every single Sunday she'd make fun of me for bringing a jacket, and every single Sunday when I passed it over to her because she was shivering, she'd begrudgingly thank me. Those Sunday mornings became special as we'd always stop for coffee after service and talk about the hard parts of life, the funny parts of life, and even the super depressing parts of life. Most Sundays she'd take a nap on my couch before returning to her dorm.

Even though I'd been seeing her at least a couple of times per week and taking her to church with me, in early 2023 we decided it would be best for her to move in with me for a little bit, because she was experiencing another rough patch of depression. During this time, I'd have her pay little in rent and use it as a time to help get her back on her feet and build good habits while studying for the immigration test to become an immigration officer, which has been her dream.

One day after she moved in, she looked up at me from my kitchen table and said in tears, “I really don't know if I'm gonna pass.” She'd been sitting at my kitchen table for months, Monday through Saturday, sometimes long before I woke up to well after I went to bed, reading, listening to classes, practicing, doing everything in her power to study for the annual immigration officer test.

Two months ago, she found out she didn't pass the test. I expected her to call me in tears again, but she said, “God must have a different plan.” Amen, I thought. Because for five years, we've been working on trust and hope and perseverance and I smiled to myself thinking of how she's made it. She didn't make the job but she's made so much more.

Continued





She ended up applying for a different job, teaching English and helping translate. A couple of summers in a row she helped translate for our intern teams from the US, so it seemed like a God ordained fit.

After her two-month stay with me turned into eight months, I came home to a dark, emptied out room and bawled my eyes out. She had finally done it. She was on her feet again and I couldn't be more proud. For a month she will be on her own in a condo, until one of her closest friends will move in with her next month. This is a friend she's made in our God First group. Naomi will tell you herself that she literally used to hate her. They never got along, she was too loud, etc, but they connected over God and hardships, and now they share everything with each other. I think this friend is just who Naomi needs to start off right in this new season of her life.

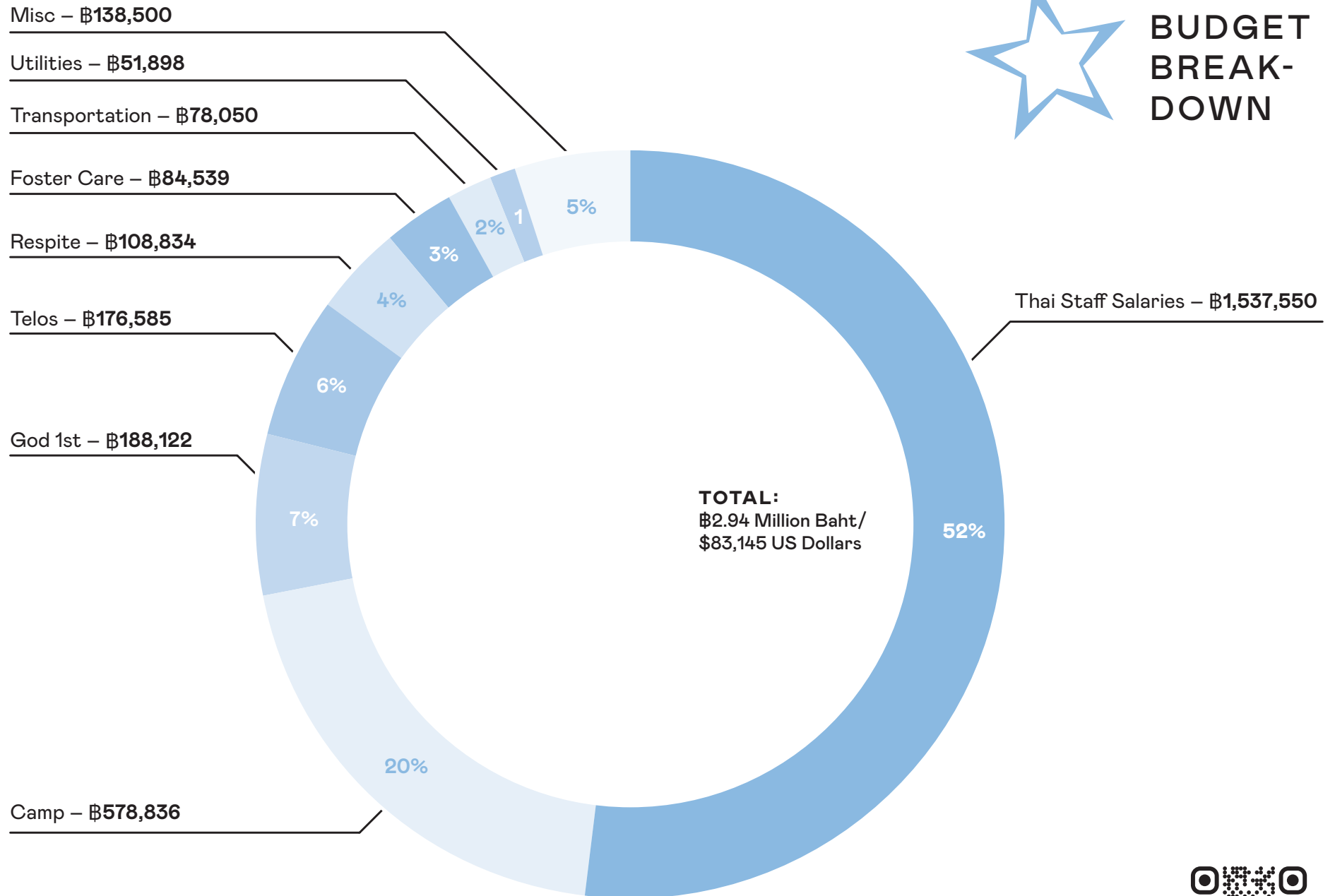
We had an emotional hour-long goodbye. She's moving 30 minutes down the road, but for Chiang Mai, that feels far. Before we left, she talked about wanting to still be involved with any God First event moving forward, despite being from the original 2018 group. I told her that sometimes she can be intimidating to the younger students, and she said, "I'm scary?!" I said, "No no no, but you have a job, your life is together, etc., and they're still figuring all that out." She said, "You know I wouldn't be like that if it weren't for God First and PYF, right? God First taught me how to grow up." I could barely get out "I'm proud of you" without getting choked up. We left it at that and promised to eat spicy papaya salad together on the floor of her new apartment soon.





"YOU KNOW I WOULDN'T BE LIKE THAT IF IT WEREN'T FOR GOD FIRST AND PYF, RIGHT? GOD FIRST TAUGHT ME HOW TO GROW UP."

2023 BUDGET BREAK- DOWN





Love, The PYF Team



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