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Faculty Member Dedicated to Tsunami Relief Effort, Raises Funds to Help Orphaned Children

David Maruyama, El Camino College Compton Center English Department faculty member, is inspired by the words of Eleanor Roosevelt, "You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face."

He decided to put these words of wisdom into action and decided to help those devastated by the 2004 tsunami in Thailand. From that initial step, Maruyama is now a board member of the Tsunami Children Foundation (TCF) of Thailand, a small Los Angeles-based nonprofit. His work puts him in direct contact with young survivors of the devastating 2004 Tsunami, many of whom lost their parents.

The TCF started when celebrity PBS Chef Tommy Tang wanted to find a way to care for these orphaned children. He teamed up with attorney Rosalyn Patamakanthin, healthcare specialist Napalai Choto, and psychologist Dr. Sunya Ratjatawan. They formed TCF in 2005 to serve the people of the Khao Lak region.

Professor Maruyama says that the TCF has reached its short term goals and they are now working to raise funds toward long term goals. Friends and colleagues from El Camino College Compton Center have been very generous in supporting this cause.

Initially, the foundation worked to address educational issues, as well as psychological traumas such as acute stress, post-trauma, and separation anxiety. To that end, the organization has been instrumental in setting up group therapy programs and training counselors. These programs focus on substance abuse and post-traumatic stress disorder. The partnership orphanage is run by the Duang Prateep Foundation, serving about 30 children orphaned by the tsunami. In addition, the organization also funds a kindergarten program at Khuk Khak School, serving 80 students.

Ultimately, the foundation's goal is to help children and adults recover, both emotionally and economically. The organization plans to implement educational opportunities and vocational training to aid the region's economic renewal.

For more information, visit www.tsunamicf.org.

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