

Grace in Action

Stories of God at work in and through the GIS community

Redirection

Eight years ago, Joe and Yumi Chongsiriwatana were happily living life in the Silicon Valley of California. Joe was fulfilled as an engineer, and Yumi—an occupational therapist—was enjoying her role as a full-time mom and homeschooler of their three children.

In 2009, Joe and Yumi's home church organized a short-term missions trip to Thailand—where Joe grew up—and the Chongsiriwatanas decided to participate, along with their kids. What started as a short visit, however, has turned into an ongoing, eight-year adventure of redirection.

When Joe and Yumi arrived to Thailand for full-time ministry, Joe took up his role in an organization that fought child trafficking. Although he is Thai, because he left Thailand when he was 16, Joe felt he needed to brush up on Thai culture. Translating the Gospel of Luke into Thai, Joe learned how to explain confusing theological concepts in a way that Thais could understand, since 99% percent of the 67 million Thai people have no knowledge of Christianity.

Once he finished the translation, Joe wondered, "What should I do with this?" He had seen a need for evangelistic materials in Thai, so he published his translation as a book. An artist developed a few Thai-style pictures to include with it, and Joe printed 8,500 copies of the book. Receiving positive and helpful feedback, Joe sensed God leading him to develop evangelistic materials full-time.

In the past two years, nearly 70,000 copies of Joe's book have been distributed all over Thailand through Thai churches with which Joe networks—at Christmas outreach events, to the sick in hospitals, and to flood victims. Along with packages of food and practical supplies, the book provides a meaningful gift that people feel compelled to read. In subsequent revisions, explanations of how to apply the teachings of Jesus to every-day life were added. Joe explains, "There are many good Bible translations in Thai, but this book has a single goal of introducing Jesus and Christianity to those with no Christian background."



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While Joe is busy with his work, Yumi and the kids are happily ensconced at GIS. In 2009 when Joe and Yumi felt God's nudging to make Thailand a long-term place of ministry, they say, "The fact that GIS existed took away one obstacle in our coming here. We see our kids are thriving spiritually and academically at GIS, and they are well prepared for college and life." Yumi adds, "The teachers at Grace are hand-picked by God, and for our kids to be taught by these people is a privilege." In 2010, Yumi answered the need for an occupational therapist at GIS, a field she did not think she would be able to work in once she left the U.S. Yumi feels blessed to be able to help kids fill in missing building blocks of their development.

For more information about the Chongsiriwatanas' ministry and materials, visit their website: thaiword.org. Or contact Joe at joechong@mac.com.



www.gisthailand.org

Grace International School exists to enable international Christian workers to remain in their field of service by providing for the educational needs of their children.