

# **The Lionheart Society Sponsors a Project on Enhancing Psychosocial Support for Elderly Leprosy Patients at the Raj Pracha Samasai Institute**

## **Principle**

Raj Pracha Samasai Institute is home to many elderly leprosy patients; many of them abandoned, neglected and have spent most of their aging years in isolation. Due to the permanent and damaging effects of the disease, they are left with irreversible deformities, disfiguration and endure a life of suffering and helplessness. Although leprosy is now a disease which can be cured and avoided, the stigma and discrimination towards the victims remain prevalent in the society including the patient's own family and friends. Infected patients are usually brought in to the center, and eventually left to the care of hospital with barely any visits from relatives or contact with others. The general perception and understanding of leprosy may have improved now but the fact is that society still remains distant and fearful of the disease and its victims. As these patients grow older, due to their disabilities, they become more dependent on others, requiring more attention and assistance especially when performing daily living functions. Hence, the inability to help themselves combined with feeling of loneliness and abandonment has created a negative effect on the mental and emotional well-being of these poor elderly victims. The physical effects of the disease may be irreversible but the victims' attitude toward themselves must stay positive and encouraging in order for them to regain confidence, self-worth and continue living a happier life. The Thai government, under the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand of 2007, preserves the rights of persons with disabilities as stated on the Social Welfare Promotion Act of 2003, Persons with Disabilities Empowerment Act of 2007 and The Act on the Elderly of 2003. These laws emphasize the need to provide support, services and basic social needs to persons with special needs and disabilities including the elderly, enabling them to live more independently, fully accepting them in the society in order for them to gain self-respect and value as a human-being.

## **Objective**

1. To apply stress-reduction measures and therapy to influence the elderly leprosy patient's mental wellness and ability to function.
2. To enhance the psychosocial support for elderly leprosy patients in order to achieve positive long-term effects.
3. To help elderly leprosy patients achieve a better way of life.

## Target Group

- Elderly leprosy patients confined at Building 5 (Female) and Building 6 (Male): 30 patients

## Date, Time and Venue

- See and learn from field trips to Temples, parks and other interesting public recreational areas near the community. (Roundtrip 3x)

## Budget

- Sourced from the Handicap Foundation, Samut Prakan : 29,640 Baht

## Expenses

- 3 meals/day : 80 Baht/meal (3x) 24 persons 5,760 Baht
- 6 snacks/day : 30 Baht/meal (3x) 24 persons 5,040 Baht
- Transportation : 3 trips/year (R/T 6 trips) 1,800 Baht x2 vans 10,800 Baht
- Gasoline: 220 liter diesel (20 Baht/liter) x2 vans 5,940 Baht
- Toll way Fees : R/T(2x) 600 Baht
- Gifts and Souvenirs 1,500 Baht

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**29, 640 Baht**

## Expected Outcomes

1. Elderly leprosy patients can receive mental, physical and emotional support, reducing stress-related illnesses by uplifting their moral and optimism.
2. Elderly leprosy patients can obtain the long-term benefits of social support and interaction which has a positive effect on their mental health and general well-being.
3. Elderly leprosy patients can experience a much better way of life.

## Evaluation of Project

Elderly leprosy patients involved in the program have an indicator of happiness of 80%.

## Raj Pracha Samasai Institute





