ISSUE NO.35 / OCTOBER 2024

THE MANTA Pulse

THE UWC THAILAND COMMUNITY INTERACTIVE E-MAGAZINE

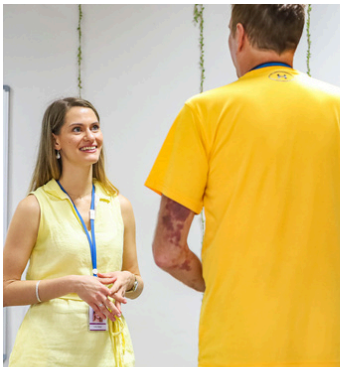


"Let us stand together to make of our world a sustainable source for our future as humanity on this planet."

Nelson Mandela, Late Honorary President, UWC

Learn more about UWC Thailand and follow us on social media









Science of Reading

by Caryl Medilo Crisostomo,
UWC Thailand Primary Literacy Coordinator and Grade 1 Teacher

We recently hosted a Science of Reading Coffee Morning, where parents of students from UWC Thailand's Primary School gathered to learn more about how their children develop essential reading skills. Led by Kru Caryl, our Primary Literacy Coordinator, and Kru Lucy, our Learning Leader for the Early Years, the session provided valuable insights into how young children learn to read and the science behind the process.

The workshop for Early Years parents focused on the foundational aspects of reading, exploring how phonics, decoding, and oral language development are critical in helping young children become confident readers.

For parents of grades 2-5 students, the second session offered hands-on guidance on nurturing a love for reading at home. Kru Chloe, our grade 4 teacher, Kru Bianca, who contributed as both a parent and a teacher, and Kru Caryl, shared practical tips to help children build fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary. The session provided examples of engaging activities that make reading fun and ways to encourage children to explore different types of texts.

They highlighted the latest research in the field and shared practical strategies that parents can easily implement at... **Read more.**

Celebrating Diversity in Early Childhood Classrooms

by Bianca Starck,
UWC Thailand Kindergarten Teacher

Teachers working with young students can explore books that foster kindness and acceptance of differences among people.

[UWC Thailand] recently organised a pride parade to celebrate diversity and the right of choice. All students and teachers were invited to wear colourful clothes and create posters to support the event. As an Early Years teacher, that led me to ask myself a few questions:

1. How could I discuss the theme of diversity and choice in a meaningful and age-appropriate way with students ranging from ages 4 to 6?
2. How could I ensure that the message my students would learn was about celebrating differences and not the colours of the rainbow?
3. What could I do to support my students in expressing joy and meaning through their clothes and posters for the event?

I had little time until the parade, so I had to act quickly... **Read more.**

*This article was published on **Edutopia.org**.*
You can read it in full here.







Banned Books Week









During Banned Books Week, our library teamed up with English teachers to champion the freedom to read and celebrate diverse literature. Grade 10 students led engaging presentations on censorship, inspiring meaningful discussions with grades 7 and 8 about the impact of restricting voices in literature.

Grade 12 students brought Ibsen's "A Doll's House" to life with a reader's theatre, examining authorial choices and their own interpretations.

These activities inspired students to think deeply about the importance of free expression and the powerful role that diverse perspectives play in shaping literature and our world as a whole.

Click here for more photos









BOOK CREATOR

Bringing Stories to Life

In the spirit of this month's literacy projects on campus, our English Language Acquisition Specialist, Cara Templeton, led an inspiring Middle Years Programme unit where students transformed their creative writing into picture books using **Book Creator**. This project ignited creativity and strengthened core ATL skills, enriching English language acquisition. Students practised creative thinking by adapting their stories for younger audiences with engaging language and illustrations. Communication skills grew as they simplified ideas and vocabulary, making their stories both entertaining and age-appropriate. Additionally, students enhanced their writing style through figurative language techniques.

"Instilling a love of reading and writing is one of the most important things we can do as educators. This unit not only fosters that love but also enables older students to share it with their younger counterparts, hopefully inspiring the next generation."

Cara Templeton,
UWC Thailand English Language Acquisition Specialist













Click here for more photos

Phuket Model United Nations II

UWC Thailand recently hosted Phuket Model United Nations II, welcoming delegates from British International School Phuket, HeadStart International School, and Kajonkiet International School. Participants tackled global issues in committees such as the UNHRC, ECOFIN, WHO, and UNHCR, focusing on topics like human trafficking, climate refugees, and AI in healthcare.

We are proud to announce the awards recognising the exceptional contributions of our UWC Thailand students:

- **Nicolas, Grade 12 (France)**: Best Chair
- **Xiang (Eva), Grade 11 (China)**: Best Position Paper
- **Lazar, Grade 11 (Serbia)**: Best Delegate
- **Ahmed, Grade 12 (Libya)**: Best Delegate
- **Mehdi, Grade 11 (Morocco)**: Honourable Mention
- **Lara, Grade 11 (Croatia)**: Honourable Mention

Our students excelled in thoughtful discussions, making a meaningful impact during the conference.

A special shoutout to our student Yaoying (August), grade 9 (Taiwan) for being part of capturing these moments!

University Fair

It's that time of year when our grade 12 students start planning for their life after UWC graduation—some with clear paths ahead, others still exploring their options. To support them, UWC Thailand recently hosted a University Fair, featuring a range of institutions, including prestigious Ivy League representatives from Brown University, Princeton University, and the University of Pennsylvania.

The fair provided a valuable opportunity for students to explore bachelor's programmes, gain insights into campus life, admissions, and financial aid, and to make meaningful connections.

BROWN PRINCETON UNIVERSITY Penn University of Pennsylvania









Alum Spotlight - coming back home

After nearly seven years, we were thrilled to welcome Sei-Kashe M'PFUNYA (UWC Thailand '17) back to campus this month.

Part of our inaugural cohort, Sei-Kashe has since earned a Master's in Public Policy from Yale and now works with a healthcare NGO, living out the UWC mission in her career. During her visit, she reminisced about her time here, many memories of which we've captured in a short video available **here**.



The Manta Annual Fund

This year, we are aligning our fundraising efforts with the UWC theme **"Together We Change",** emphasising the power of collective action in driving meaningful impact.

The **Manta Annual Fund** is UWC Thailand's key annual giving programme, supporting three main areas this year: **Scholarships**, **Sustainability**, and **Areas of Greatest Need**.

Scholarships

Scholarships enable 50 new students each year to embark on a transformative two-year journey at UWC Thailand, preparing them to make a meaningful impact globally.

Be a part of fulfilling our mission.



Sustainability

Sustainability is key to our mission. This year, we're aiming to raise **THB 175,000** for a plastic chipper and moulding machine to reduce our environmental impact and empower students.

Be a part of the solution.



Areas of Greatest Need

These gifts allow us to stay flexible, addressing emerging projects and opportunities—from facility upgrades to new programmes—to meet our community's evolving needs.

Be a part of something bigger.



If you wish to discuss sponsorship opportunities here at UWC Thailand, please contact Nicki, our Director of Philanthropy and Strategic Initiatives: nicki.robertson@uwcthailand.ac.th or go to the support us page on our website.

UWC THAILAND



Our Grade 11 boarding cohort is now complete!

After months of planning, countless calls, letters, emails, and incredible teamwork from everyone involved, we were finally able to welcome our final two grade 11 students. Through immense effort, they made their way to Phuket all the way from Afghanistan.

Now, settled in their new home away from home, Raheel and Jalil are adjusting to their new routine, meeting their peers, and diving into their studies. They are also enjoying their hobbies, from football, debating, to triathlon, and getting involved in campus life, bringing their unique experiences and perspectives to our community.

> **Welcoming Raheel and Jalil to our grade 11 boarding cohort has been a tough yet rewarding journey for everyone involved. Seeing them settle in, embrace campus life, and bring their unique perspectives to our community truly reflects the spirit of UWC Thailand. Their journey from Afghanistan to Phuket is a testament to their resilience, and we are honoured to support them in this new chapter."**

Celeste Taylor,
UWC Thailand Boarding Student Care Coordinator







NOVEMBER MINDFULNESS THEME: GRATITUDE







Gratitude as a tool for managing stress

Francisco Vazquez,
UWC Thailand School Counsellor

A year ago, I started a series of posts on my blog called the 'Anti-Stress Alphabet', where I assigned each letter of the alphabet to a different strategy or tool for managing stress. When I reached the letter 'G', I chose the word 'gratitude' since this character trait and practice can have a positive impact on our well-being.

Acknowledging what we enjoy in our lives and what we are thankful for is a healthy practice and a powerful resource to counteract stress and anxiety.

Gratitude means being able to identify and appreciate the positive aspects around us. When we intentionally concentrate on the things we are thankful for, we can shift our perspective and foster a sense of calm and reflection when things get tough. A consistent and intentional practice of gratitude can train our minds to pay more attention to those things that bring happiness to our lives. This doesn't mean ignoring our challenges and concerns but rather keeping a balance in our focus.

Scientific research has consistently highlighted the profound impact of gratitude on both mental and physical health. For instance, according to Robert A. Emmons, a professor of Psychology at UC Davis, practicing gratitude is associated with lower cortisol levels, which reduces the physiological markers of stress... **Read more.**









Student-Initiated Service Trips

During the October break, our grade 11 and 12 students embraced the spirit of the UWC mission through Student-Initiated Trips, immersing themselves in Thai culture and supporting local communities. Split into two groups, students spent nearly a week working with Earth Home in Chiang Mai and NatureMind-ED in Krabi. These experiences offered students the chance to live UWC's values of service, intercultural understanding, and environmental sustainability.

By collaborating with local organisations, students contributed support to community-led projects, from sustainable farming practices to educational initiatives. This hands-on experience allowed them to deepen their understanding of local issues, build cross-cultural connections, and reflect on their role in creating positive change.



> **"Thanks to Earth Home, our October break was truly amazing. Volunteering to assist this project and working with Khun Ohm and her family made us feel right at home, and the teamwork we shared created lasting memories."**

Laila, grade 12 (Western Sahara)



Click here for more photos





Vegetarian Festival at UWC Thailand



UWC Thailand recently celebrated the Vegetarian Festival, a tradition promoting health and peace of mind through vegetarianism. Thanks to the support and contributions from our parents, our campus was filled with delicious vegetarian dishes and vibrant decorations.







Our boarding students also visited the Jui Tui Shrine in Phuket Town, where they learned about the festival's cultural significance within the local Chinese community. They participated in traditional practices and enjoyed authentic cuisine, gaining a deeper appreciation for Phuket's rich cultural diversity.

Click here to learn more about Vegetarian Festival from Neo, grade 11 (Thailand)

Click here for more photos







Culture and Connection

A Busy Break at the Boarding House

During the October break, our boarding students stayed active and engaged! They visited Chalong Temple, learning about its cultural significance and immersing themselves in Thai traditions. A relaxing trip to Hideaway Café @ Saku provided the perfect setting for friends to connect and unwind together.

Click here for more photos





Manta Coral









by Katie Feather,
UWC Thailand Diploma Programme Coordinator

The Manta Coral Co-Curricular Programme at UWC Thailand has been at the forefront of marine conservation efforts in Phuket since 2018, focusing on biodiversity and coral bleaching levels on the reefs off Nai Yang Beach. Through hands-on learning and community engagement, students have monitored the health of local coral ecosystems, gaining an understanding of the delicate balance within marine environments. Their dedication to reef monitoring not only enhances their academic knowledge but also contributes to meaningful environmental action.

Recently, the programme expanded its scope by partnering with the University of Southampton, a global leader in marine research. The collaboration allows students to collect and contribute data on coral health and reef biodiversity, which will be used to assess the long-term impacts... **Read more.**



Congrats!

Conquering New Heights

Harley's Journey up Mount Kilimanjaro

Congratulations to Harley, grade 11, for his incredible achievement of climbing Mount Kilimanjaro (5,895m), Africa's highest peak and the tallest free-standing mountain in the world. At just 16, Harley took on this formidable six-day journey, facing steep terrain, hours of hiking, and the intense effects of altitude sickness. **His accomplishment is a true testament to his resilience and determination—congratulations, Harley!**

> "It was the UWC values of resilience, outdoor education and my community that inspired me to take on this challenge. I'm deeply grateful to everyone who supported me along the way. This journey wasn't just about reaching the summit, but about growing through the challenges and becoming a stronger, more determined person."

Harley, grade 11 (China)

Exploring the Wild

Grade 3's Outdoor Adventure

Our grade 3 students recently embarked on an exciting outdoor adventure at Khao Sok National Park, immersing themselves in three days of nature and discovery. Through jungle walks, river studies, and hands-on activities like farming, shelter building, and night safaris, the students connected with the environment in meaningful ways. Evenings by the campfire provided quiet moments for reflection and the chance to build new friendships.

The experience left them with fresh skills, closer bonds, and a deepened appreciation for the natural world—memories and lessons they'll carry forward long after returning from the wild.













Click here for more photos

Middle Years Fun Run

The Middle Years Programme Fun Run was a resounding success! After a weather delay, students returned with even greater determination, showing fantastic energy and enthusiasm as they completed the campus route. Cheered on by classmates, teachers, staff, and parents, it was a fun and rewarding event for everyone—just in time for a well-deserved October break.

We couldn't be prouder of our Mantas!















Click here for more photos

SPORTS & ACTIVITIES ROUND-UP











by John (JP) Powell,
UWC Thailand Director of Sports, Activities and Camps

The Mantas have been unstoppable! Whether running, shooting, kicking, spiking, or swimming, our athletes have been giving their all. Despite a two-week October break, some dedicated players and coaches still came to campus for voluntary workouts—a true testament to their drive for improvement!

October saw 34 competitions across our programme, including highlights like the ASAC Junior Basketball Championship, PISAC Cross Country Championships for both Secondary and Primary, and the BISP Pentathlon in Swimming!

In preparation for our upcoming **Holiday Camp** hosted by Teems Global, we welcomed an in-person visit with their staff to gear up for learning that "thinks outside the book". Registrations are now open for **16-20 December** and **17-21 February 2025!** Led by founder Paul Rotherham, Teems Global brings a wealth of experience to these exciting and fun sessions. For more details, please visit our website.

The learning and fun continue—even on vacation!

ASAC Junior Basketball Championships

Led by Coach Ron and Coach Mick, 12 girls and 9 boys played 13 games over two and a half days! The Mantas demonstrated they can compete with the best in ASAC, growing together as a team over the past months. Sportsmanship and determination were front and centre for this group of middle school student-athletes!

The girls' team finished 4th out of 8 teams in the tournament, with a record of 3-3, making it all the way to the semifinals! The boys' team secured 6th place out of 10 teams with a record of 2-5, and three of their losses were by a combined total of only 10 points, proving the Mantas were always competitive and in the game!

Congratulations to Lexi, grade 7 (United States), and Kyle, grade 8 (Japan), for making the All-Tournament team!









Click here for more photos











Mindfulness Retreat

We recently organised a UWC Thailand staff mindfulness retreat at Thanyamundra Organic Resort, generously hosted by our founder, Klaus Hebben. Nestled near Khao Yai National Park, the retreat offered peaceful surroundings and delicious vegetarian meals. Led by Aaron Stryker from Dharma Gates, the focus was on Zen Buddhist practices, including sitting and walking meditation, mindful eating, and relational mindfulness through Circling.

Reflecting on how to bring these practices to our community, our staff proposed ideas like mindful mentors, transition time between classes, mindful eating tables, and quiet meditation spots across campus. This retreat continues our commitment to nurturing mindfulness within our staff and school. **Special thanks to Khun Klaus and Khun Aaron for this enriching experience!**

Teaching & Learning for a Sustainable World

In early October, UWC Thailand hosted the Compass Education certification workshop on our scenic Phuket campus. This two-day event gathered educators and leaders eager to integrate sustainability and systems thinking into their teaching. Through theoretical and hands-on sessions, participants learned strategies to enrich student learning and address global challenges.

Several of our educators earned their Compass Education Level 1 "Compass Practitioner" Certificate and connected with global professionals. We're proud to have hosted this impactful event, empowering educators with sustainability-focused tools to enhance their teaching.

> **"Using the Compass framework, I've learned to approach problem-solving with a more holistic view, considering the impacts on nature, economy, society, and well-being. This way of thinking is not only helping my students connect math to real-world issues but also empowering them to become more responsible and reflective global citizens."**

Tahar Benattia,
UWC Thailand Middle Years and Diploma Programme Mathematics teacher









Strengthening Community and Planning for the Future

October School Board Retreat

The UWC Thailand School Board held a retreat focused on enhancing support, engagement, and growth within the school community. The event began with inspiring presentations from staff and students, who shared their visions and plans for their respective areas of leadership. This retreat provided a valuable opportunity for the School Board to reflect on community needs and set a clear course forward to foster a vibrant, supportive environment.

The School Board is pleased to announce new leadership appointments:

- **Sonia Tay** - Chair, School Board
- **Len Peters** - Deputy Chair, School Board
- **Lister Hannah** - Member, Steering Committee

These appointments aim to further collaboration, transparency, and engagement within the community.



Key Focus Areas

- **Amplifying Voices:** The School Board is expanding staff and student representation in board committees to ensure decisions are informed by diverse perspectives across the school.
- **Safety & Wellbeing:** Ensuring a safe, supportive environment remains a priority. Len Peters will also serve as the board's safeguarding lead, and an external consultant will review the school's compensation and benefits (C&B) plans.
- **Governance & Engagement:** Strengthening governance structures, risk management, and partnerships with parents and alumni is a key focus to build a resilient school community.
- **Future Planning:** Strategic, master, and financial planning efforts are underway, with incoming Head of School David Griffiths to lead these initiatives next year.

The School Board proudly recognised team members with long-service awards, celebrating their invaluable contributions and years of dedication to UWC Thailand's mission.
A heartfelt thank you goes to each staff member for their hard work and commitment to helping our school community thrive.

5 Years of Service

Tan Khlaisuban, Head of Cleaner
Kurtis Peterson, Primary Principal
Chris Maclean, Secondary School Teacher
Mike Kelso, Secondary School Teacher
Rob Carmichael,
Director of Outdoor Experiential Education
Kan Ondam, Senior Admissions Manager
Oil Buachai, Learning Support Assistant
La La Puempool, Teaching Assistant
Kathy Mendis, Primary School Teacher
Silvana Vazquez, Secondary School Teacher
Pan Cheng, Senior HR Manager
Laura Neagos, Language Teacher
Jen Friske, PYP Coordinator
Emma Wilson, Primary School Teacher
Tiffany Eaton, Primary School Teacher
Na Na Pathan, Early Years Teaching Assistant
Kuew Chuchart, Cleaner

10 Years of Service

Len Peters, Head Counsellor
Jalal Tarazi, Teacher
Lek Julparn, Educational Assistant/Cover Teacher

15 Years of Service

Erica Lindberg, Primary Learning Support Teacher
Caryl Crisostomo,
Primary Literacy Coordinator and Teacher
Ore Kueasan, Teacher Assistant

Congratulations!

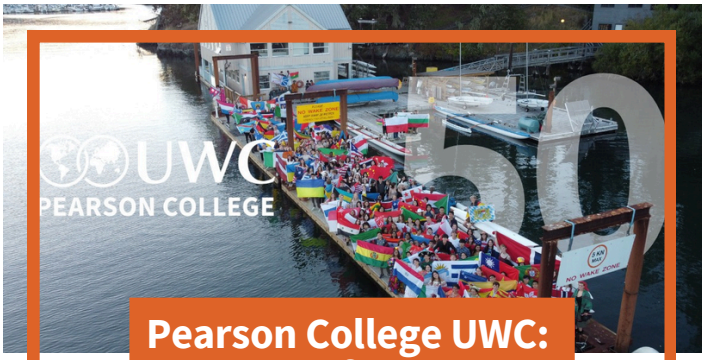
Big Milestones for UWC Schools Across the Movement

This year, we celebrate a number of significant anniversaries across the UWC network as schools around the world mark their dedication to education for a better future. These milestones highlight decades of impactful learning and community-building, with each school embodying the UWC values of peace, sustainability, and social change. Join us in congratulating UWC ISAK Japan, Pearson College UWC, UWC Dilijan, and UWC Robert Bosch College on these incredible achievements!



UWC ISAK Japan: 10 Years of Transformative Education

In August, UWC ISAK Japan marked its 10th anniversary, celebrating 521 graduates from 127 countries who embody the UWC mission. This milestone reflects the school's commitment to nurturing future changemakers.



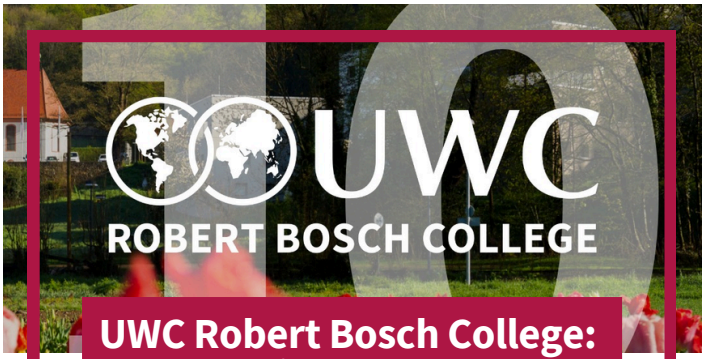
Pearson College UWC: 50 Years of Peace and Sustainability

In September, Pearson College UWC celebrated 50 years of fostering peace and sustainability, welcoming nearly 4,800 students from over 150 countries since its founding. Pearson continues to shape global advocates for a better world.



UWC Dilijan: A Decade of Leadership and Social Change in Armenia

October marked UWC Dilijan's 10th anniversary, a key player in Armenian education with 200 students from 80 countries. Celebrations included panels and alumni reunions, emphasising the school's dedication to social change.



UWC Robert Bosch College: A Unique Decade in Germany

As Germany's first UWC, UWC Robert Bosch College celebrated a decade of impact. Since 2014, 781 students have graduated, carrying the UWC mission forward with support from dedicated staff, donors, and community partners.

The Pulse Noticeboard

Stay informed and engaged with what is happening at UWC Thailand

MINDFULNESS

November theme: Gratitude

This month we will be exploring the theme of Gratitude—understood as **"choosing to appreciate the people and things in our lives".**

SECONDARY

PACE Fair

The Parent-Alumni Career Exploration Network offers our grade 11's the chance to learn about different career paths from diverse community members. **4 November, 10:00-11:10 am.**

Contact: Kru Rebecca

ATHLETICS

ASAC Season 2 Tryouts

Last chance to represent the Mantas in the Senior Basketball & Junior Football teams at ASAC. Grades 6-12. **4-7 November.**

Contact: Kru JP

COMMUNITY

An Evening Under the Stars

A serene evening of mindful listening and relaxation under the stars, featuring Pema Yeshi. **8 November, 6:00-7:00 pm**

Contact: The Events Team

PRIMARY

Pyjama Day

Organised by our Primary School, this initiative is designed to encourage community bonding in a relaxed environment. **11 November.**

Contact: Kru Jen

COMMUNITY

Loy Krathong Celebration

Join us for this Thai festival to give thanks to the water and release krathongs (floating baskets) for good luck and forgiveness. **15 November.**

Contact: The Events Team

COMMUNITY

Book Fair by Book53

Join us from **18-20 November** where students, families, and staff can explore a diverse selection of books and ignite a love for reading!

Contact: Kru Rebekka

SECONDARY

Coffee with the Counsellors

20 November. Meet the counsellors and join the conversation to understand our Social-Emotional Learning programming. All are welcome.

Contact: Kru Laurie

CAMPS

Holiday Camps

Our holiday camps with Teems Global are back! **16-20 December 2024 & 17-21 February 2025.** Keep an eye out for more information.

Contact: The Camps Team