ISSUE NO.36 / NOVEMBER 2024

THE MANTA Pulse

THE UWC THAILAND COMMUNITY

INTERACTIVE E-MAGAZINE



Loy Krathong

UWC Thailand Celebrates Thai Festival of Water

Green League

The First Phuket Sustainability Conference

Manta Sports

Sports and Activities Monthly Round-Up

Learn more about UWC Thailand and follow us on social media









Loy Krathong

Festival of water



by Hsinying (Amber), grade 9 (Taiwan)



On Friday, 15 November, UWC Thailand hosted a vibrant celebration for Loy Krathong (วันลอยกระทง), a festival deeply rooted in Thai culture and tradition. Loy Krathong is a time to express gratitude to Phra Mae Khongkha, the water goddess, for her life-sustaining gift of water throughout the year. Demonstrating UWC Thailand's commitment to environmental sustainability, students created their krathongs using eco-friendly materials such as banana stems, leaves, and wooden picks.

Kru Cara, UWC Thailand English Additional Language and Diploma Programme Language B Teacher, shared insights about the celebration, emphasising the mindfulness and community spirit of the event. "The event included a reflective moment where participants asked for forgiveness and made wishes for good fortune... **Read more.**



Click here for more photos









The Forgotten Link Between Core Strength and Children's Learning

by Merryn Atkins,
UWC Thailand Occupational Therapist

Globally, as family routines become more sedentary, it's important to recognize the potential impact this can have on core strength. Just as a tree relies on a strong trunk to support its branches, children need a strong core to navigate their world with energy and confidence. Core strength is the hidden power that enables kids to sit upright, move fluidly, and fully engage in both schoolwork and play.

These crucial muscles around the abdomen, pelvis, and back help maintain proper posture while sitting and standing. When a child's core is underdeveloped, they may struggle with fine motor skills like handwriting and gross motor activities like sports, leading to reduced motivation to explore, learn, and play.

Weak core muscles can cause children to divert their energy into maintaining balance, affecting their stability and coordination. This can result in poor posture during tasks like writing, leading to fatigue, discomfort, and diminished focus, ultimately hindering their learning.

Signs of Low Core Strength
The following are possible signs of low core strength:

- Slouching while writing and using the chair for full body support
- Holding their head up with their non-writing hand
- Leaning far into the table for support
- Moving around frequently in their seat, finding it hard to maintain attention
- Fatiguing easily and... **Read more.**

Honouring agency through play-based learning initiatives

by Bianca Starck, UWC Thailand Kindergarten Teacher and **Lucy Habel,** UWC Thailand Kindergarten Teacher

The IB Primary Years Programme curriculum values and promotes learner agency. Regardless of age, children (and adults!) possess an innate ability to wonder, inquire, and question as they make sense of the world.

But what does agency look like in a Kindergarten classroom? How are student voices, choices, and ownership celebrated?

While teachers engage with students individually and in small groups, children can choose from a variety of educational toys and resources, carefully selected to support purposeful and intentional exploration. Mini provocations, such as guiding questions and post-story discussions, inspire them to write books, draw, play games, colour, build, read, role-play, and more—unlocking endless possibilities through their... **Read more.**









Cozy Celebration



Pajama Day in Primary School

This student-led initiative turned a regular school day into a joyful celebration as our Early and Primary Years students and teachers traded uniforms for pyjamas. The highlight of Pyjama Day was a lively basketball performance by Grade 4 students, Kru Ali, and Kru Debbie, blending Physical Education and Dance. Their enthusiasm inspired the whole Primary School to join in and learn the moves, bringing the enthusiasm to its peaks. Throughout the day, learning, play, and collaboration thrived in a cozy, community-building atmosphere—making it a memorable experience for all!













Bald For a Cause

Our community came together for Bald For a Cause, an inspiring event organized by the UWC Thailand Red Crescent Society. Students showed remarkable bravery by shaving their heads or donating hair to support the Angel Hair Foundation, which creates wigs for cancer patients.

This event highlighted the power of unity and the difference we can make when we act together. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who participated, donated, and cheered.

Special thanks to Yaoying (August), Grade 9 (Taiwan), and Zhiqian (Lucas), Grade 11 (China), for helping capture these memorable moments!

> **"What students have done is so beautiful, not just because of the hair, but because of the heart behind it."**
>
> **Bee Chotmaneepithak**, UWC Thailand Parent









Welcome to the Dragons Den

We couldn't be prouder of our Grade 10 students for showcasing their entrepreneurial talents during the Dragons Den simulation!

They tackled challenges with determination, worked as a team and improved their presentation skills. Each group brought unique ideas, demonstrating creativity and innovation in their financial plans.

A big thank you to the community professionals who served as Dragons and provided valuable feedback. Your guidance has helped our students refine their concepts and strategies for even greater success at the upcoming Festive Fair!

Click here for more photos

















The Parent-Alumni Career Exploration Network Fair

The Parent-Alumni Career Exploration Network (PACE) hosted a career fair for our grade 11 students. The event, organised in a casual table-talk format, provided students with the opportunity to engage in conversations with diverse community members about various professions. It gave students insight into diverse career paths and the realities of non-linear career journeys.

Thank you to all community members who participated in this fair and spent the morning inspiring our students and answering their career-related questions.

> **"The PACE Fair was a fantastic opportunity to connect with professionals and hear realistic perspectives from people actively working in those fields. I am truly grateful for the chance to engage in this fair and learn more about the career path I'm interested in pursuing."**

Raheel, grade 11 (Afghanistan)

Drama Days

Our Middle Years Programme and Diploma Programme students immersed themselves in the art of theatre during an inspiring week of workshops. From foundational concepts to characterisation exercises inspired by Roald Dahl's Revolting Rhymes, students explored a wide range of theatrical skills. Grade 10 and Diploma Programme students delved deeper, celebrating their identities through creative self-exploration and expressive movement activities.

Diploma Programme students also participated in Collaborative Theatre workshops, emphasizing teamwork and the power of storytelling. Ms. Lau's visit brought valuable insights and practical skills, enriching our students' understanding and appreciation of the performing arts. It was a week of creativity, connection, and growth!

For more insights about the Drama Days, click here to watch the video.







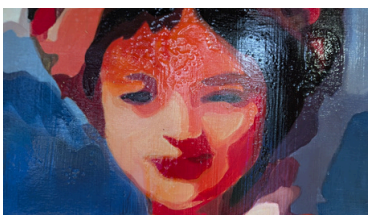


Click here for more photos

Celebrating Indigenous Cultures Through Art

Did you see the artwork displayed along the covered pitch? Grade 10 Visual Arts students have created a series of vibrant portraits to honour indigenous cultures. Through in-depth research and artistic exploration, they transformed photographs into simplified vector art and brought them to life with acrylic paints. Each piece reflects the rich traditions and histories of the cultures represented, offering a powerful visual tribute to their enduring legacies. Be sure to stop by and take a closer look at these thoughtful and skillful artworks!







Book Fair

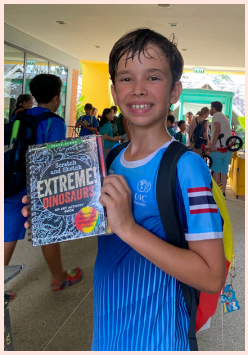


We were thrilled to host a three-day book fair in collaboration with Books53, bringing the joy of reading to our school community.

The fair provided an opportunity for students, parents, faculty, and staff to purchase holiday reads and thoughtful gifts, with special discounts for our community. Adding to the excitement, 10% of all sales supported our library's collection. **Thank you to everyone who participated!**









The First Phuket Green League Conference











UWC Thailand students took centre stage at the Phuket Green League Conference, a collaborative event where schools and organisations across Phuket came together to discuss sustainability and plastic waste reduction. Hosted by Plastic Free Phuket, a student-led initiative at UWC Thailand, the gathering showcased various sustainability-focused projects that are shaping a more sustainable future, both on campus and within the local community.

The event highlighted several key initiatives, including:

1. **The 10% Challenge:** A student-led project encouraging small, consistent actions to reduce electricity and water usage by 10% annually through collective action and advocacy.
2. **Sustainability Projects in Design and Technology:** Developing innovative solutions to tackle environmental challenges.
3. **Manta Coral, Phuket Elephant Nature Reserve, and Gibbon Rehabilitation Project:** Co-Curricular Programme initiatives focusing on coral restoration, elephant welfare, and gibbon rehabilitation.
4. **Sustainability Committee of the IB Diploma Programme Student Council:** Leading efforts to promote sustainability within the school... **Read more.**

Click here for the full article

How to Be an Ethical Tourist in Elephant Sanctuaries



First-hand insights from a volunteer



Raquel, Grade 12 (Guatemala)

Visiting elephant sanctuaries can be a meaningful way to support conservation efforts and learn more about these majestic animals. However, it is essential to understand what makes a sanctuary ethical and how tourists can contribute positively to the welfare of elephants. This guide outlines the red flags to look for in elephant sanctuaries and explains why activities such as bathing elephants should be avoided.



What is an Ethical Elephant Sanctuary?
An ethical elephant sanctuary prioritises the natural well-being of elephants. In Thailand alone, there are over 300 elephant sanctuaries, but more than half are involved in practices that are harmful to the animals. The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) estimates there are around 4,000 wild elephants in Thailand and approximately 3,800 living in captivity. A true sanctuary aims to provide an environment where elephants can live as naturally as possible, allowing visitors to observe them without physical interaction. The objective is to create a space where elephants can roam, socialise, and behave as they would in the wild.



What are some red flags in a Sanctuary?
Before visiting an elephant sanctuary, it is crucial to research their practices and look out for signs of unethical treatment:

- **Chains or restraints**: Elephants should not be kept chained or restricted in any way.
- **Bullhooks**: The use of bullhooks, long, sharp sticks used to control elephant behaviour, is a clear sign of unethical practices.
- **Physical interaction**: Activities such as bathing, riding, painting, or feeding elephants should be avoided. Genuine sanctuaries do not permit direct interaction with the animals.
- **Elephant entertainment**: Elephants performing tricks or engaging in unnatural acts are being exploited.
- **Large groups of tourists**: If a sanctuary frequently hosts large groups, this can lead to stress and discomfort for the elephants.



These red flags indicate practices that cause stress,... **Read more.**

Click here for the full article

Mindful Reading Week

This month, our community embraced Mindful Reading Week, exploring practices that enrich our connection with literature. Through techniques like present-moment awareness and focused reading, students discovered how mindfulness enhances comprehension and deepens engagement with the written word.

By staying fully present—feeling the book in their hands, noticing its scent, and reflecting on its content—participants unlocked a more profound understanding of their reading experience. This initiative highlighted the transformative power of mindful practices, fostering a deeper appreciation for literature within our community.

For a closer look at this activity, click here to watch the video.

Click here for more photos












An Evening Under the Stars

A wonderful Evening Under the Stars focused on mindfulness, led by the calming presence of Pema Yeshi, who guided us in the soothing practice of Himalayan Sound Art. Her expertise, combined with the sound bath led by our talented staff—Kru Celeste and Kru Sandra with their singing bowls, and Kru Chase's gentle flute melodies—created a serene atmosphere for meditation and reflection.

It was very special being invited to participate in our first 'Night Under the Stars'. The atmosphere was magical - a perfect blend of harmony, peacefulness and vitality.

Celeste Taylor, UWC Thailand Boarding Student Care Coordinator

The Wishing Tree

In honour of Michelle Wilson, we continue to support the Wishing Tree initiative this holiday season. Partnering with Good Shepherd Phuket Town, we aim to fulfil the Christmas wishes of 154 Burmese community students.

Take a star, purchase a small gift, and place it under the tree to make a child's wish come true. Thank you for brightening their holiday season!



Alum Spotlight - coming back home

Years after graduating, Susan Guo (UWC Thailand '17) made a meaningful return to UWC Thailand. Reflecting on her time at UWC Thailand, she shared how the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme and her swimming career shaped her academic journey and personal growth.

Susan's visit was made even more special as she inspired current students with her heartfelt message. **Click here** to watch the video and hear more about Susan's journey and reflections.







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



Grade 2 and 4 Outdoor Adventure

In November, our grade 2 and grade 4 students participated in enriching outdoor camps that provided unforgettable experiences and opportunities for personal growth.
Grade 2 students travelled to Sawasdee Lagoon in Phang Nga from 21-22 November, where they explored the natural surroundings through hiking and kayaking. The camp encouraged teamwork and resilience while fostering a deeper connection to nature.

Meanwhile, grade 4 students attended the Nature Mind:Ed camp in Krabi from 19-22 November, where they took on a range of exciting activities, including hiking, biking, kayaking, and climbing. The camp not only challenged their physical abilities but also helped them build confidence, foster teamwork, and appreciate the beauty of Krabi's landscapes.





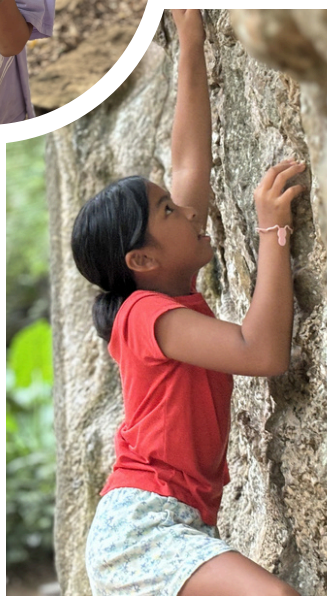
















Click here for more photos













Back to the jungle!

Our Kindergarten students had a wonderful time exploring nature during their Outdoor Learning session. They observed and documented patterns like dots, stripes, and shapes on jungle treasures such as butterflies, leaves, and spider webs, ending the day with a splash in the stream!

Through UWC Thailand's Outdoor Education programme, Early Years students build a strong connection with nature and deepen their understanding of the environment. With activities at places like Khao Phra Thaeo National Park and the UWC Thailand Outdoor Education Centre, they enjoy a wide range of enriching learning experiences.

It has been wonderful to see Kindergarten connecting with their natural environment through our Outdoor Learning experiences this year. When we slow down to observe and notice the natural wonders around us, we nurture curiosity, foster a sense of wonder, and deepen our appreciation for the world we share.

Lucy Habel, UWC Thailand Junior & Senior Kindergarten Teacher

Phuket O'pen Cup 2024

Our UWC Thailand Sailing Squad recently competed in the Phuket O'pen Cup 2024, held on 2–3 November. This thrilling two-day event challenged young sailors aged 9–14 with courses ranging from traditional windward-leeward to adventurous routes, showcasing their skills and passion for the sport.

The competition served as excellent preparation for the upcoming Phuket King's Cup Regatta, happening from 30 November to 6 December.

Our sailing program has grown immensely since 2019, starting with just four optimist dinghies and a handful of sailors. Today, it boasts a vibrant community of over 70 sailors training five days a week across multiple boat classes, supported by an incredible team of staff.

A special thanks to The Phuket News for featuring our squad—read the full article here!

For a closer look around our course on an 'average' evening, watch this video









SPORTS & ACTIVITIES ROUND-UP

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

Our Mantas have thrived in over 43 sporting contests this past month, both on and off the island! We've transitioned into the ASAC season for Junior Football and Senior Basketball, with championships scheduled for January 2025 in Cambodia.

Our teams travelled to Vietnam for volleyball, Bangkok for swimming, BISP for football, and Pattaya City for basketball.

These enriching experiences allow our students to compete against like-minded schools in the region and showcase their talents.

Co-Curricular Programme (CCP) - Rotation 1 in the books!

The first rotation of the Co-Curricular Programme (CCP) offered an impressive variety of activities across all grade levels, providing our Mantas with exciting opportunities to explore their interests and develop holistically:

- **KG to Grade 1: 24 offerings**
- **Grade 2 to Grade 5: 54 offerings**
- **Grade 6 to Grade 8: 51 offerings**
- **Grade 9 to Grade 12: 78 offerings**

These offerings were made possible thanks to the dedication of 90 staff members who delivered creative and engaging activities, six external service providers who brought fresh perspectives to campus, and over 25 student-led activities, which gave grade 11 and 12 students the chance to teach and inspire younger learners.

It has been incredible to see the energy, enthusiasm, and growth across our campus during this first rotation.

With registrations now open, we eagerly anticipate what Rotation 2 will bring for our Manta Community!







Silver in Football

Our Under 9 and Under 11 Boys Football teams competed in the PISAC Championships at BISP on Saturday, 9 November. It was a monumental moment for our youngest competitive team, as the Under 9 Boys secured 2nd place by going unbeaten, finishing just 1 point behind the winners.

The team was expertly guided by Coach Marco, a volunteer parent coach, alongside Coach Brian.

Basketball Tournament

The Mantas took 19 players to the FOBISIA Under 19 Basketball Invitational, hosted at Rugby School Thailand in Pattaya City. This tournament was a fantastic opportunity for our Senior teams to prepare for ASAC in January 2025. The Boys' team fought hard to secure an 8th-place finish out of 16 teams, while the Girls' team advanced to the Championship game, earning a well-deserved Silver medal!







ASAC Senior Volleyball Championships

Our 11 girls and 9 boys Mantas, showcased remarkable growth, resilience, and sportsmanship in the ASAC Senior Volleyball Championships. This trip was especially meaningful as we supported three 100% Scholarship National Committee students, providing them with an invaluable opportunity.

Congratulations to **Chuqiao (Katy), grade 12 (China), and Paolo, grade 12 (El Salvador),** were named to the All-Tournament Team in recognition of their outstanding contributions. We are incredibly proud of all our players and the memories created both on and off the court.

"Since joining the school, I've felt deeply connected to its mission and values, and this volleyball season and the ASAC tournament added a new dimension to my dedication to the sport.Thank you to the school and the student enrichment fund for making this experience possible."

Dimitar, grade 11 (North Macedonia)







Click here for more photos








Click here for more photos

ISB SwimFest

With 23 swimmers from grades 5 to 12, the Mantas navigated the waters at the International School of Bangkok against 850 competitors! Our dedicated athletes achieved:

- **77 Personal Best times,**
- **broke 8 UWC records,**
- **earned 14 medals, and**
- **secured 3 team trophies.**

Highlights included Overall Champions in the Girls 15 and Over age division, 3rd place in the 13-14 age group, and a 2nd place trophy for average points.

A huge congratulations to our swimmers and coaches!

"I'm incredibly proud of our Mantas' achievements. It's been amazing to see each swimmer push themselves to new limits—they've shown incredible growth and perseverance."

Coach Ali Wyatt,
UWC Thailand Physical Education Teacher and Experiential Learning Teacher

The Pulse Noticeboard

Stay informed and engaged with what is happening at UWC Thailand

MINDFULNESS

December theme: Empathy

In December we will be exploring the theme of Empathy —**"embracing the ability to understand and share the feelings of others, fostering deeper connections and kindness in our community".**

COMMUNITY

Kings Cup Sailing Regatta

The UWC Thailand Gold Sailing Squad will participate in Phuket's premier sailing regatta. **30 November - 5 December** at the Outdoor Education Centre!

Contact: Kru Rob

PRIMARY

Early Years Sport Day

Organised by our PE team, this event promotes physical activity and teamwork through fun and engaging activities. **2 December.**

Contact: Kru Ali

COMMUNITY

The Addams Family School Musical

Get ready for an evening of entertainment at our School Musical on **3-4 December**. Bring your family and friends for a spectacular evening.

Contact: Kru Hannah

SECONDARY

Winter Gala

Organised by students, students of Grades 10, 11 and 12 come together to enjoy an evening of dancing and performances in the MPH. **7 December.**

Contact: Kru Heidi

COMMUNITY

Sports Days

Join us for our Sports Days. Students will rotate playing sports, including basketball, football, volleyball, and floorball.
Primary: 9 December.
Secondary: 10 December.

Contact: Kru Mick

COMMUNITY

Festive Fair

Join us for a joyful celebration at our Festive Fair. Expect performances, market stalls, and delicious treats. All are welcome! **11 December.**

Contact: The Events Team

CAMPS

Student Initiated Trips

These adventures, driven by students' interests and ideas, offer unique opportunities for exploration, cultural exchange, and hands-on experiences. **13-21 December.**

Contact: Kru Heidi

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