

Press Release

November 25, 2009

Needy children of Thailand smile Thanks to V Australia and Accor hotels New air services bring unexpected bonus to local kids

November 22, 2009: The inaugural V Australia flight carried more than 350 excited Aussie tourists to Phuket this week and with them a massive “in-flight” fundraising effort between the crew and passengers, raising AUS\$4,050 (THB 123,600) from a mid-air auction (no-where to hide really).

This money was earmarked for a local Thailand charity “YIM Kids” (“yim” meaning smile in Thai) - that was launched in Phuket at the welcome cocktail party on arrival, with the presence of the Deputy Governor of Phuket, other dignitaries and celebrity guests.

Industry partners, Accor Hotels in Phuket and others, donated accommodation to go with flights for trips and other goodies, which were up for grabs mid-flight, with V Australia Executive General Manager, Scott Swift, handing the cheque to Paul Stevens, Accor’s Director of Operations for Thailand and a driving force behind the charity.

“The Virgin Blue Group traditionally holds a charity auction on each inaugural flight with proceeds going to a worthy charity at the new inbound destination – our guest passengers willingly got into the spirit,” said Scott Swift.

He added, “We think the YIM Kids charity is an ideal recipient for the funds and we hope it goes a long way to help bring a smile to the faces of some local Thai children.”

Yim Kids charity has been established by Accor to fund sustainable projects throughout Thailand, committed to improving educational opportunities and the health of children in the “Land of Smiles”. Children are the country’s future, yet, here in Thailand; many children are victims of poverty and are denied the opportunity of an education, basic nutrition and all too often, a safe place to call “home”.

The money will go towards assisting the funding of two projects in southern Thailand. One is to support the schools and the education of the poorest of the poor - sea gypsies and rubber tree tapper children, whose way of life was devastated by the Tsunami in 2004. The second project is to provide improvements to the fishing equipment for the villagers of Koh Lon Island, about 1.5km off the coast of Cape Panwa, Phuket,

which was also devastated by the Tsunami. In the long term, the increased revenue from the improved equipment will support the education and living conditions of the children of Koh Lon Island.

Paul Stevens was thrilled to receive the cheque from the Virgin Blue Group and it was particularly pertinent to receive it in Phuket. Yim Kid's first major fundraiser, the "Accor Race to Survive for Yim Kids Thailand", is being held in Phuket in March, next year. Over four days, teams from all corners of the world will be pushed to the limit, completing a course that involves swimming, mountain biking, kayaking and running, while camping during the night to include a truly local Thai island experience.

"Competitors come together for four days, shoulder to shoulder, racing through a challenging course in pretty uncomfortable conditions and raising serious money in the lead up to and during the event for a common purpose – to make a difference for the children of Thailand. The money raised from the event will also help fund the projects in southern Thailand and more. It is fantastic to work with a like-minded industry partner such as the Virgin Blue Group," said Paul Stevens.

Accor sponsors many orphanages and children's charities across Asia, and is a signatory to the Code of Conduct developed by ECPAT (End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes) and the WTO (World Tourism Organization) to fight child sex tourism by increasing awareness among its guests and by training its employee.

The Accor Hotels Network, is one of the founding members of IHEI (International Hotels Environment Initiatives), aimed to bring awareness amongst business and local communities to issues relating to the environment and education for underprivileged children.



The money raised for Yim Kids goes directly towards improving the future for the children of Thailand. All Accor's administration is given on a voluntary basis by the Accor team, business partners and friends with the same community desire to "make a difference" for the kids of Thailand that need a helping hand.

Accor, a major global group and the European leader in hotels, as well as the global leader in services to corporate clients and public institutions, operates in nearly 100 countries with 150,000 employees. It offers to its clients over 40 years of expertise in two core businesses:

- **Hotels, with the Sofitel, Pullman, MGallery, Novotel, Mercure, Suitehotel, Ibis, all seasons, Etap Hotel, Formule 1 and Motel 6 brands**, representing 4,000 hotels and nearly 500,000 rooms in 90 countries, as well as strategically related activities, such as **Lenôtre**;
- **Services**, with 32 million people in 40 countries benefiting from Accor Services products in employee and public benefits, rewards and motivation, and expense management.

YIM Kids ("yim" meaning smile in Thai) is a registered foundation that has been established to fund sustainable projects throughout Thailand, devoted to bring smiles to young children by enhancing educational opportunities, health care and the well being of children who are victims of poverty and are in need.

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