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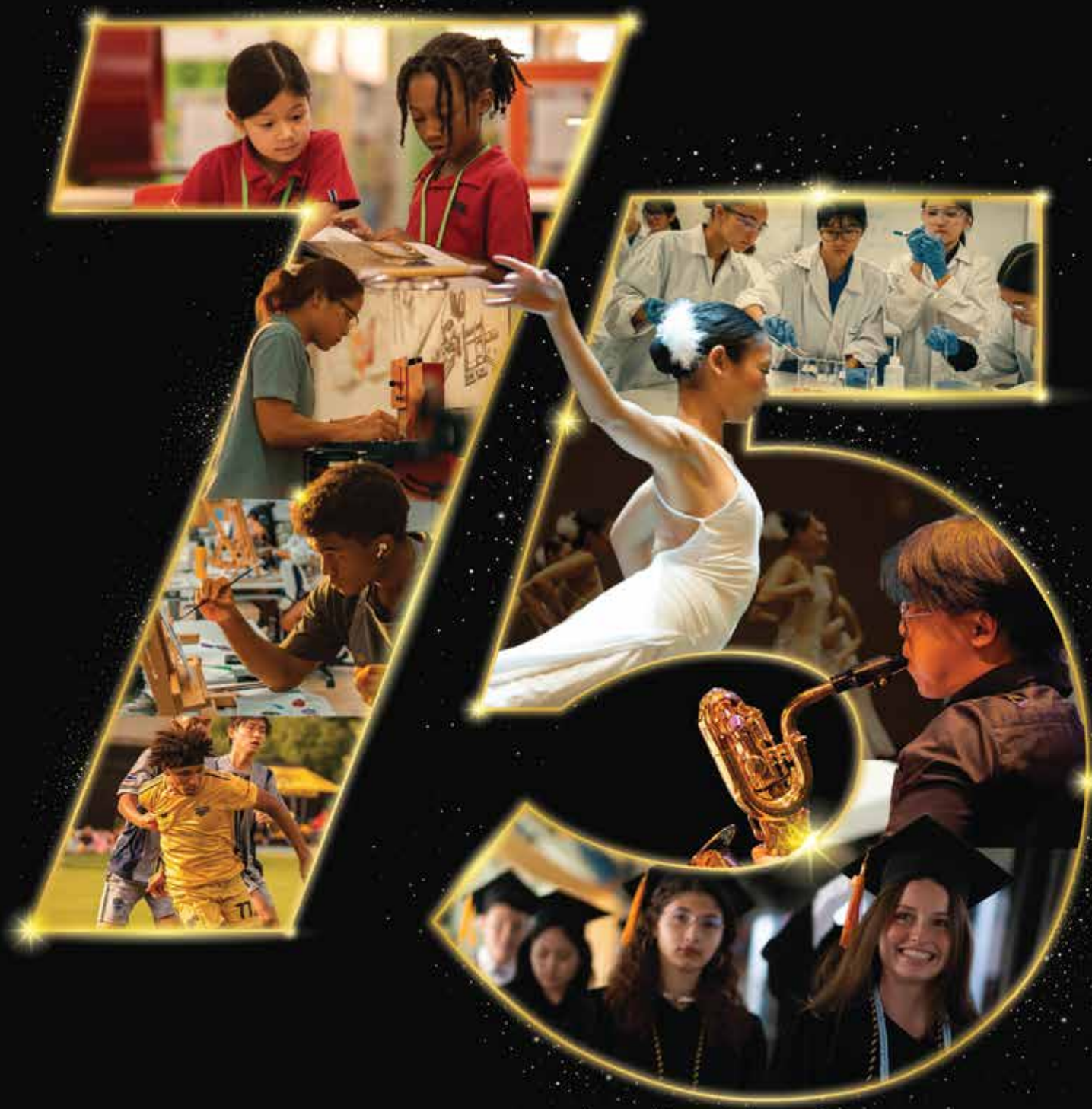
FINDING MAGIC IN EVERYDAY BANGKOK

JULY - AUGUST 2026

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A project of Childbirth and Breastfeeding Foundation of Thailand

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Welcome to **BAMBI**

**"Support and
friendship through
the common bond of
parenthood"**

- Mel Habanananda



We are a group offering support and companionship to families through the early years of parenting.

We offer prenatal and postnatal support, regular playgroups, fundraising for charities and more. If you wish to join, come to our New Members' Coffee Morning or any other regular BAMBI activities. To volunteer or serve on the committee, email vicechairwoman@bambiweb.org or visit bambiweb.org.

Follow us on social media:



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BAMBI is a project of the Childbirth & Breastfeeding Foundation of Thailand (CBFT).

Mission Statement

The CBFT is a non-profit networking and resource center dedicated to ensuring the best possible start in life for our babies. We believe that this can best be achieved through:

- Encouraging the appropriate use of technology and medication for all births.
- Promoting breastfeeding for every mother and baby in the community.
- Providing information and training to health professionals involved in maternity care.
- Supporting parents through the pregnancy, birth and postnatal period.

For more information on CBFT, contact:

English speaking, Tel 05-310-4573;

tanitmel@btinternet.com

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visit: www.cbfthai.org and www.facebook.com/pages/ChildbirthBreastfeeding-Foundation-of-Thailand

5 Committee Letter

6 Editor's Corner

On the Cover

26–28 The International School Paradox

30–35 Voices of Motherhood

44–45 Finding Magic in Everyday Bangkok

Special Features

8 Readers' Corner: Books to Inspire

10–12 Modeling Inclusion and Respect

14–16 Giving Back While Traveling

18–20 Dad Diaries: Why I've Given Up Exercise

22–24 Sandplay Therapy For Children

39 Fun Corner

40–42 The Power of Perspective

In Every Issue

36 How to Become a Member

37 BAMBI Member Benefits

38 Call for Volunteers

43 BAMBI Playgroups and Activities

46 BAMBI: The Team



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This month's theme connects deeply with my own life and values. Living in a comfortable and busy city like Bangkok, it takes a lot of care and purpose to raise kind, down-to-earth children. In our modern, convenient world, we truly need to show our kids how important it is to support others.

For me, the lesson of generosity comes directly from my father.

He is my greatest role model because he always taught me by doing, not just by telling. When my sisters and I were young, he took us to help build a school on a mountain far away from the city. We went there with his best friends, who became just like family to us. Over the years, we went to many schools and many villages. It became a beautiful routine for us to go back and support families in need.

My father also shared stories from his work travels that I will always hold close to my heart. Once, he saw a very poor couple sitting at a hospital food court, carefully counting their coins. It was clear they did not have enough money to buy a meal. Without a second thought, my father stepped in and treated them to lunch. Witnessing so many of these quiet, loving moments with my own eyes shaped who I am today. Because of him, helping others became a part of my soul.

Now, I am passing this legacy on to my five-year-old son. I am incredibly grateful to see a giving personality already growing inside him. To share what I love, I often bring him along with me to volunteer for our BAMBI community. I also see him helping others around him. He never hesitates to help, just like his grandfather.

Our children learn by watching our examples. Let's show them that true happiness comes from giving, not just getting, and build kind and caring hearts in our everyday lives.

I want to say a special thank you to my amazing volunteer team and their children. You are all doing a great job, always thinking of others and giving your time so beautifully. Thank you also to everyone in our community for your support. I hope we all find our own unique ways to lead by example, so our children grow up to be generous, thoughtful, and the very best human beings they can be.

Lynda Suchintabundid

BAMBI Executive Board Member





As I write my final editorial for BAMBI Magazine, I find myself reflecting on the many people, stories, and moments that have made this role such a privilege.

When I first became involved with BAMBI six and a half years ago, I never imagined how much it would come to mean to me. What began as an opportunity to contribute to a community publication became a chance to connect with extraordinary parents, volunteers, writers, and readers. The magazine has felt like a third child to me—the late nights spent chasing articles and proofreading pages after my own children were asleep, the occasional last-minute scramble before publication, the excitement of discovering a wonderful new contributor, and the monthly satisfaction of holding a finished issue. It became woven into

the fabric of my family life, growing alongside my children and accompanying me through so many seasons of motherhood. It has always been more than a publication for me, and being at the heart of it has been one of the greatest pleasures of my life.

Through these pages, I have had the privilege of hearing your stories, sharing your experiences, and celebrating the joys, challenges, and countless surprises that accompany family life. I am deeply grateful to all who have given their time and expertise to create content that informs, supports, and inspires others month after month.

I am also grateful to my team for their hard work and dedication—with a special shoutout to Liz, Rachel, Anelia and Joe, the deputy editors who patiently rode out every storm with me. My sincere thanks to Gregers, Dao and Finn from our publishing partner, ScandMedia Corporation Limited, for their steadfast support and guidance.

To the wonderful ladies on BAMBI's managing committee, thank you for the confidence you have always placed in me and for your friendship. And last but not least, to our readers: thank you for allowing me to be a small part of your lives; it has been an honour.

Stepping away is bittersweet, but I do so with confidence, leaving the magazine in the capable hands of Kim Narrandes. With her at the helm and with our new deputy editor, Jeannie Kim, I have no doubt that the magazine will continue to flourish.

It would be remiss of me if I didn't introduce this month's theme, "Grounded in Giving/Beyond Privilege". This month our writers explore how families can raise grounded, empathetic and grateful children in communities of comfort and abundance like ours in Bangkok.

"Modeling Inclusion and Respect" by Laura Devos and "The International School Paradox" by Sheena Low explain that the key to preventing entitlement and nurturing gratitude in children is parents consciously modeling the values they hope their children will embrace.

In "The Power of Perspective", Claudia Gomes asserts that perspective is a powerful tool for personal growth, transforming the way we engage with the world around us. Jacquie Lennick tells us how travel can nurture empathy and global citizenship in "Giving Back While Traveling".

Readers' Corner by Kit Lang echoes similar themes of empathy, humility and perspective in this month's books, "Small Great Things" by Jodi Piccolt and "Those Shoes" by Maribeth Boelts.

In our non-thematic content, Berivan Birkan's "Finding Magic in Everyday Bangkok" celebrates simple family adventures and connecting with nature. Anatta (Anna) Zarchi's "Sandplay Therapy for Children" explores how play can offer insights into a child's inner world, while Joe Barker's "Why I've Given Up Exercise" reflects on trading fitness goals for the rewarding chaos of parenthood.

And a special feature this month in celebration of Thai Mothers' Day, "Voices of Motherhood", brings heartwarming reflections and learnings from mothers in our community.

As I turn the page and begin a new chapter, I do so with immense gratitude and many cherished memories. Though I am stepping away from the editor's desk, I will always remain a proud supporter of this remarkable community and wish all of its members continued growth, connection, and success in the years ahead.

Sanam Rahman
Editor



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SMALL GREAT THINGS

By Jodi Picoult

In *Small Great Things*, Jodi Picoult delivers a powerful and emotionally charged novel that explores race, bias, privilege, and the choices people make when confronted with injustice. The story follows Ruth Jefferson, an experienced nurse whose life changes dramatically after she is prevented from caring for the child of white supremacist parents. Through multiple perspectives, Picoult challenges readers to confront uncomfortable truths about the assumptions we carry and the systems we often move through without question.



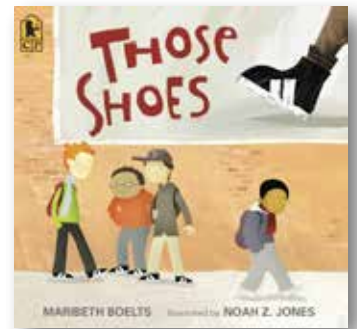
What makes this novel especially compelling is its ability to inspire reflection long after the final page. It encourages readers to consider how empathy is built not through grand gestures, but through listening, humility, and the willingness to see beyond one's own experience. For parents and families, *Small Great Things* opens meaningful conversations about respect, compassion, and how children learn values by watching the world around them.

Small Great Things by Jodi Picoult was published by Ballantine Books in 2016. Picoult is an internationally bestselling author known for tackling complex social issues through emotionally compelling fiction. A copy is available in the Neilson Hays Library fiction collection.

THOSE SHOES

Written by Maribeth Boelts and illustrated by Noah Z. Jones

In *Those Shoes*, Maribeth Boelts tells a simple yet deeply meaningful story about wanting to fit in, learning gratitude, and recognizing the needs of others. Jeremy longs for the trendy black shoes that everyone at school seems to own, but his grandmother reminds him that while they may not have everything they want, they do have everything they need. When Jeremy finally gets the shoes, he discovers that they are too small, forcing him to rethink what truly matters.



What makes *Those Shoes* so powerful is its quiet honesty. The story gently opens conversations about materialism, empathy, and the pressures children face to belong. Without being preachy, it encourages young readers to consider kindness, generosity, and perspective in everyday situations. For families, it is a wonderful reminder that character is shaped not by what we own, but by how we treat others and the choices we make when someone else may need something more than we do.

Those Shoes by Maribeth Boelts and illustrated by Noah Z. Jones was published by Candlewick Press in 2007. A copy is available in the Children's Corner of the Neilson Hays Library.



Prepared by Kit Lang (@mskitlang) for Neilson Hays Library, Thailand's premier English-language library. The Children's Program offers Saturday Story Time, a cozy Children's Corner, and special holiday events. Adult programs include concerts, art exhibitions, book club, and book sales. The library is located in a beautiful historic building with a garden and cafe on site: 195 Surawong Road, Bangkok 10500, Thailand. Follow the library on Instagram and Facebook.



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MODELING INCLUSION AND RESPECT

Forget the fear of raising spoiled children; the antidote to entitlement starts with how you greet the driver every morning. Laura explains how parents' attitudes and behavior towards those around them shape children's perspectives and inform their values.

Photo by Laura Ohlman on Unsplash



About the Author

Laura Devos is a certified Parent Educator, former teacher, mama of three, and founder of Extra Roots, where parents and teachers are empowered to gain greater connection with themselves and their child(ren) through workshops, online courses and parent circles. Learn more at www.extraroots.com or contact her at laura@extraroots.com



Photo by Rosalind Chang on Unsplash

Raising our children abroad comes with so many advantages: they get to learn new cultures and languages, travel, and have the opportunity to become little global citizens. Given the globalized world we live in today, we know that these are ways to gain the incredibly valuable skills of resilience and agility, and a cross-cultural perspective. At the same time, living somewhere more affordable than our home country—such as Thailand versus the United States or Europe—provides us with a financial advantage. We can afford more help than we could in our home country, and visiting home reminds us just how valuable that extra support is. What they say about raising a child is true: it takes a village. So when the grandparents, aunts, and cousins aren't around, cue the nannies, household help, and other forms of support.

As parents living abroad, we also know that with the privileges can come, well, the downsides. How do we ensure that our children also recognize that having help is a privilege? That we are lucky? That the help they are given should not be taken for granted? So many parents are scared about raising spoiled children—children who

expect to get everything they ask for, children that don't say please or thank you, and worst of all, children that talk down to the help and don't show respect to the adults around them. It's a fear that many expat parents have. And it makes sense. We want to give all that we can to our children, but we want them to be grateful too.

I'm here to bring you the good news. You don't need to worry. You don't need to let your help go and do the laundry yourself or wear yourself out trying to be everywhere all at once. You can keep things exactly as they are, and you can reassure yourself that your child will grow up practicing kindness, empathy, and respect towards others. So what's the magic tool to do this? You.

THREE STEPS

Let's break this down into three steps: what we want to achieve; why we want to achieve it; and how we're going to achieve it.

What: We want to instill the values of kindness, inclusion, and respect in our children.

Why: We want to ensure that a global lifestyle and the experience

of growing up abroad, supports them to be global citizens—giving back to their community, and the world at large. We want them to be connected to those around them, communicating respectfully with everyone no matter their role or position, and to be kind, non-judgmental, and grateful. The opposite of spoiled is grateful. To support our own positive mindset, let's work on helping our kids to express gratitude instead of putting energy towards making sure they are "not spoiled", which isn't a very pretty term in itself.

How: Now this is the big one. The how starts with you. You are the tool and the magic bullet. You set the stage.

MEET YOUR MIRROR NEURONS

Let's dive straight into the neuroscience. With awareness comes understanding. With understanding comes welcoming of new practices.

Our brains contain something called mirror neurons. Mirror neurons have been found to respond equally when we perform an act and when we witness someone else performing the same action. Have you ever noticed that you yawn when



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someone else yawns? That's the mirror neurons working their magic. It's said that mirror neurons support us in building greater empathy, as we can see ourselves in others. Ever seen your baby cry when another baby, across the room, starts crying? That's empathy calling out through the mirror neurons. It's the magic and beauty of the way we have been wired.

IT STARTS WITH YOU

So, what does this have to do with our children treating others respectfully? When we model respectful relationships and treat others with kindness and as equals, our children will too. As parents, we are our children's guide, their leader, their everything, really. They look to us to evaluate how they should react.

Have you ever seen the YouTube videos of the baby who stops crying when the parent leaves the room, and on cue, restarts when the parent is in sight? The child is testing the reactivity of their parent in that moment, testing whether they are being seen, whether they will get a reaction from their parent. The inverse of that is that a child

will often look at their parent when something happens for a cue of what to do. This means we set the emotional tone for our child's reactivity and show them how they should act, react and speak through how we act, react and speak.

THE SMALL MOMENTS MATTER THE MOST

When it comes to our help, whether it be the nanny, househelp, driver, cook, gardener, tutor, or school bus driver, the way that you, as a parent, treat them is the way that you can expect your child to treat them. Often so much of this modeling of relationships is subconscious. If your child sees you greet the driver with a friendly smile and a polite hello, then your child will probably greet them in the same way. If, on the other hand, you don't acknowledge the driver's presence, and ignore them while opening the car door and getting in, your child is likely to do the same.

If you think your child is not mirroring you as much as you'd like, or as quickly as you'd like, you can repeat what you want to hear. Imagine your nanny brings your son

his lunch, and he doesn't look up. You can sit next to him and say, "We say thank you" with a gentle tone and smile. Repeat this interaction, repeat the "please and thank you," and bring gratitude, overtly, into all your interactions. It will benefit both you and your child and set them up for success in their relationships with people everywhere—from school to the workplace.

PROGRESS OVER PERFECTION

If this is all new to you, it's okay. We're not perfect, we don't always show up the way that we thought we would. Life has its stressors and pressures, and sometimes they get in the way of us being as kind and respectful in our interactions as we would want. Doing these pulse checks is so important to check where we are at. It's part of the process, part of the journey. But know that change can happen at any moment. Each day is a new opportunity, and you can shift your ways and interactions, becoming who you want to be and modeling that to your child, as you support them along the way.



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GIVING BACK WHILE TRAVELING

The most meaningful journeys are not defined by the places we visit, but by the people we meet and the experiences we share. Jacquie explains how community-focused travel invites families to step beyond sightseeing and embrace connection, purpose, and personal growth.

Photo by BiZay Sunuwar from Pexels



About the Author

Jacquie Lenick is the founder of Volunteer To The World, a social enterprise focused on meaningful travel, cultural exchange, and community-based experiences around the world. Through her work and travels, she is passionate about encouraging more intentional, ethical, and human-centered approaches to travel. Learn more at volunteertotheworld.com or follow along on social platforms at: @volunteertotheworld



Photo by Skybluesrich from pixabay

When you think of the word “travel,” what is the first image that comes to mind?

For some, it may be white sandy beaches echoing peace and serenity. For others, it may be a thrill-seeking safari surrounded by wildlife, or a bustling train ride through a lush forest.

Travel means something different to everyone. But perhaps the more important question is: how can we transform travel into something meaningful?

Something that goes beyond the days marked on an itinerary, and leaves a lasting impact on the way we see the world, connect with others, and understand ourselves.

When I first began traveling, I had little understanding of what meaningful travel truly was. I knew that I wanted to learn and grow through my experiences, but I assumed that simply visiting more places would naturally change me.

Exploring new countries exposed me to unfamiliar cultures and perspectives. But over time, I began to realize that what stayed with me most was not necessarily the

number of places I visited, but the purpose and connection behind the experiences themselves.

I came to understand that meaningful travel is less about how many places we visit and more about the relationships, conversations, and cultural exchange we experience along the way.

One of the things that changed my perspective on travel most was witnessing how naturally human connection forms when people step outside of their everyday environments. No matter how different our backgrounds, cultures, or languages may be, there is almost always common ground to be found when we take the time to genuinely connect with one another.

Over time, I realized that I felt more fulfilled when my travels involved contributing to community initiatives or helping bring awareness to local projects, rather than simply moving from one destination to the next. I became more interested in experiencing places beyond the typical tourist itinerary—not only seeing new environments, but understanding the people, cultures, and stories connected to them.

Some of the experiences that impacted me most came from spending time with village community leaders in Kenya and visiting children’s homes in Myanmar where I had the opportunity to listen, learn, and better understand the realities and challenges different communities face. Those moments deepened my sense of empathy and reminded me that meaningful travel is often less about the places themselves and more about the human experiences shared within them.

In today’s fast-paced and highly digital world, many people are beginning to seek experiences that feel more personal, grounded, and connected to genuine human interaction. Meaningful travel creates opportunities to slow down, engage with people more intentionally, and experience cultures beyond what can be captured through a phone screen alone.

This is something I gradually came to realize through purposeful travel and volunteering. When I traveled with intention, I felt far more connected—not only to the places I visited, but also to the people within them. Instead of simply observing destinations as a traveler, I was able

to better understand the stories, cultures, and perspectives shared by local communities.

Meaningful travel is not always comfortable or predictable, but I believe that is part of what makes it so transformative. When we step outside of familiar environments, we often discover parts of ourselves that may have remained hidden within the routines of everyday life.

Some of the relationships I formed while volunteering and traveling have turned into lifelong friendships. When I first began volunteering in Kenya, I met a friend who shared a deep passion for education and community development. To this day, we still collaborate on community projects together. Sometimes I wonder whether our paths would have crossed at all without travel and cultural exchange.

I have also experienced this sense of connection within my own relationship. During an impact-focused trip to Nepal last April, my fiancé and I had the opportunity to engage with local communities and learn more about grassroots educational initiatives. Alongside these experiences, we were still able to explore beautiful landscapes, hike through the mountains, and immerse ourselves in the local culture. Rather than taking away from the experience, these deeper connections made the journey feel even more meaningful and memorable.

These experiences can be especially impactful for children and teenagers, who are often still developing their understanding of the world and their place within it. Exposure to different cultures, communities, and ways of life can encourage young people to become more empathetic, open-minded, and aware of challenges that may exist beyond their own daily experiences.

Community-focused travel also provides opportunities for families to learn and grow together. Rather than simply sharing a vacation, families can participate in meaningful activities, reflect on new experiences, and engage in conversations that



Photo by Dinesh kandel from Pexels

may not naturally arise at home. Whether through community activities, learning from local leaders, or immersing themselves in a different culture, these shared experiences can strengthen family bonds while providing valuable perspective on gratitude, resilience, and global citizenship.

For teenagers in particular, these experiences can help foster confidence, independence, and a greater appreciation for diverse perspectives. By stepping outside familiar environments and engaging directly with people from different backgrounds, young people often gain a deeper understanding of both the world around them and themselves.

I witnessed this firsthand during a community program in Nepal. At the beginning of the day, several young volunteers appeared hesitant and unsure of themselves when interacting with local students and participating in group activities. As the day progressed, however, they became increasingly engaged, contributing ideas, building connections, and taking initiative. By the end of the program, some were even creating and leading their own activities for the group. Watching their confidence grow in such a short period of time was a powerful reminder of how meaningful travel and cultural exchange can encourage young people to step outside their comfort zones, develop

new skills, and discover capabilities they may not have realized they had.

I believe this is one of the reasons meaningful travel can be especially valuable for families as well. Beyond visiting new places, these experiences often encourage people to become more present, open-minded, and connected to the world around them. Sometimes the moments that stay with us most are not the ones we planned for, but the ones rooted in genuine human interaction and shared experience. Maybe that is what meaningful travel really comes down to in the end. Not just the places we visit, but the people we meet, the perspectives we gain, and the moments of connection that stay with us long after we return home.

For me, some of the most meaningful experiences while traveling came from simply slowing down enough to truly engage with the people and communities around me. Those experiences changed the way I see the world, but also the way I understand connection, presence, and the value of learning from one another across cultures and backgrounds.

In a world that often moves so quickly, I think there is something incredibly valuable about travel that encourages us to become more present, more open-minded, and more connected to the humanity we all share.



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Brighton College Bangkok Vibhavadi

Receives Public Choice Award for Innovative Facilities at the ASEAN School Awards 2026



Brighton College Bangkok Vibhavadi is proud to announce that it has been awarded the *Public Choice Award for Innovative Facilities* at the prestigious **ASEAN School Awards 2026**, recognising the College's outstanding commitment to creating future-ready educational environments that inspire curiosity, confidence, and kindness.



The ASEAN School Awards celebrate schools across the region that demonstrate excellence, innovation, and meaningful impact in education. Brighton College Bangkok Vibhavadi was selected through public voting,



reflecting strong support and confidence from families, educators, and the wider community across Southeast Asia.

Designed in partnership with Brighton College UK, the Vibhavadi campus was envisioned as far more than a school building. Every aspect of the campus was intentionally created to enhance learning, wellbeing, creativity, and collaboration; delivering a purpose-driven environment where pupils are inspired to thrive academically and personally.

The award recognises Brighton College Bangkok Vibhavadi's exceptional facilities, including its professional-standard Performing Arts Theatre, Science Labs, Innovation Hub, Sixth Form Centre, specialist Science and Design & Technology laboratories, rooftop swimming pool, competition-grade sports facilities, and thoughtfully



designed Early Years environment inspired by nature and play-based learning. Sustainability also forms an important part of the campus design, with solar energy systems integrated throughout the school buildings.



This recognition further strengthens Brighton College Bangkok Vibhavadi's position as one of the region's leading international schools, combining academic excellence with innovative, child-centred design inspired by the educational philosophy and values of Brighton College UK: nurturing pupils who are intellectually curious, confident, and kind.

For more information

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WHY I'VE GIVEN UP EXERCISE

Chasing his children is the only sport that matters now. How parenthood quietly retired Joe's ultramarathon and cycling ambitions, and why he's okay with that.



About the Author

Joe and his wife Diane moved to Thailand in 2018. Since the arrival of their son Martin in 2021 and with daughter Alice in 2024, Joe has been a stay-at-home father. The whole family enjoys BAMBI playgroups and Thai beach holidays. Find Joe on SubStack: BangkokDad bangkokdad.substack.com/

Six months ago, I cycled 1,200 km in seven days and my knees haven't stopped hurting since. This probably doesn't surprise anyone, after all, as an unfit and exhausted parent in his forties, I shouldn't be doing that kind of stupid thing. Yet I loved doing it, and while I was riding along the floodplains of Central Thailand, I felt like I was rediscovering a lost version of myself. Someone who loved nothing more than days of intense exercise, exploring new routes, and devouring improbable quantities of tasty snacks. Of course that feeling of personal rediscovery mainly came from the glorious freedom from the constraints of family life. Unfettered by young children, I once again had time for my own thoughts.

Those thoughts were mainly daydreams of more cycling in Thailand, epic hill days, and even running ultramarathons again. My legs were hurting, but what did I expect after days of continuous cycling? I'd let them recover and then I would cast-off years of sloth and get serious about exercise again.

These dreams lasted until I arrived home, exhausted and broken, and was immediately hit by little whirlwinds of energy who reminded me of the reality of exercise with children. While my legs were crying out for rest, Marty and Alice wanted to play chase and have piggyback rides. Then there were Marty's commutes to school and Alice's trips to the park. My knees and dreams of structured exercise never stood a chance.

That's not to say that I've entirely given up exercise, but my children do seem intent on sabotaging my rare forays into sport or fitness. If my wife and I try to play pickleball while Marty has a swimming lesson, he'll escape from the pool and come searching for us, and refuse to get back in the pool until I chase him down and throw him in—one memorable game then had to be abandoned as in my over-enthusiasm I threw myself in after him. Alice, being younger and sneakier, uses more subtle strategies: she'll

pretend to be happily playing by the court and then suddenly burst into action, stealing our ball and scurrying, giggling, away from us. This is at least less frustrating than when she was a baby and would wait until I'd reached match point before demanding milk at which point my wife would claim an undeserved draw as racquet sports are apparently impossible while breastfeeding.

If I appear in running kit, both children will immediately decide that they only want to play with me and will cluster round with clutching hands, loving hugs, and enticing invitations to stay home. They know it's hot outside, and that it won't take much to persuade a weak-willed daddy to unlace his shoes and come play; and that is how many runs finish before they've even begun.

Despite sabotaging my own efforts at exercise, my children are obviously concerned that I'm not fit enough and have appointed themselves my personal trainers. Now I enjoy chase more than your average adult, but ten minutes a day would be plenty for me, and the

20 meter circuit of our living room is not my favorite running route. While my children are giggling hysterically, my feet are hurting from the hard wooden floor and the constant cornering makes me dizzy. Crippled by nausea and foot pain I sink to the floor in surrender and am immediately jumped on by two triumphant children who demand we play again. Only, what seems like hours later, when they've exhausted themselves, can I collapse while the room spins around me.

Of course it's not just in the living room that I have to play chase; every trip to the park is an excuse to make daddy run. Marty will ignore the slides and swings in favor of forcing my stiff and aching knees into a shambling creaky run. It's a relief to have a larger circuit to run around, but at my age I really need to ease into exercise rather than suddenly finding myself sprinting after a four-year-old with energy to burn and ligaments that still enjoy sudden changes of direction. To rub salt into the wound, once Marty has exhausted me he'll claim to be too tired to walk and I'll be forced to carry 24 kg of a wriggling child home.



Alice isn't yet that heavy, so she insists that I carry her scooter as well as her, just to add a little weight to my training. Naturally she doesn't tell me that's why we're taking the scooter. She rides it quite happily until we're too far from home to return the scooter, then she decides she's had enough and sits and screams in the street until I pick her up.

Obviously all this exercise with the children is better than the alternative: overexcited and restless children running riot round the house. It is the thought of the terrible things that unexercised children do that makes me say yes every time Marty asks to go for a bike ride, and break into a groaning run when Alice starts running round the living room table. I may be an exhausted wreck but at least everyone else is relaxed and content.

Even when I'm not actively chasing them or carrying them, my children like to ensure that I don't get too much rest. Alice in particular doesn't want me to sit down for long. In fact, watching me stand up appears to be one of her favorite things as no matter how engrossed she is in playing, she's always listening for my involuntary sigh of contentment



at sinking into a comfortable seat at which point she'll contrive to bring me, creaking and groaning to my feet: milk needs fetching, balls retrieving, Duplo fixing. Pooping

can certainly never be done when I'm standing. Just as I've settled down, she'll come, preceded by an unmistakable odor, to demand a fresh nappy. Once I start to get light-headed from constantly leaping to my feet, I decide to remain standing, until, lulled by her independent play, I ease with a sigh into a chair, then the cries of, "Daddy, Daddy, Daddy", immediately ring out and it starts again.

So despite my love of long cycle rides and ultramarathons, I've had to abandon these two hobbies. I simply don't have the energy to play with my children and do the training that endurance sports require. If I was to try, then I would be constantly saying no to the games that I love to play and I'd be tired and grumpy with them when I want to be patient and present. A younger version of me would never believe that I'd so happily leave behind my favorite activities, but then he didn't know that playing with Martin and Alice is better than any hobby.

Photos courtesy of the author



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SANDPLAY THERAPY FOR CHILDREN

When children don't yet have the words for what they're feeling, sandplay therapy offers another way in. Anna explains what sandplay is, describes the different types of sandplay and shows how it can help children, and sometimes adults too!

Photo by Kosikova from Getty Images



About the Author

Anna works for New Counseling Service (NCS), an internationally recognized mental health center in Bangkok with a diverse team of licensed counselors. NCS has provided counseling services in Thailand and surrounding regions for over 20 years, with therapists specializing in a wide variety of issues such as anxiety, depression, work stress, relationships, and more. For more information visit ncsbkk.com/ncs/



Photo by Kássia Melo from Pexels

Learning how to verbally express yourself is something that slowly develops as you get older. This is mainly because your vocabulary and emotional understanding expands through new experiences and interactions. As a result, talk therapy for young children can sometimes be tricky: they might not yet know the words they need to express themselves, or don't have enough understanding of what is happening and what they're truly feeling. They might also not yet understand that something they're experiencing isn't right, such as bullying, and so they don't express it, even if it's causing them emotional turmoil. This isn't to say talk therapy isn't effective at all, but sometimes, other forms of therapy can be more suitable, or can help prompt children to say more about what they're experiencing.

One such modality is sandplay therapy, a type of therapy which centers around a tray of sand and different toys and figurines. Think of it like this: what each child does within the tray is like an external manifestation of their inner world. Essentially, the child gets to express themselves through playing rather than through words, which helps the therapist to gain a glimpse into the child's inner world, including their thoughts, emotions, and experiences.

SANDPLAY THERAPY IN ACTION

Let's look at a made-up example: one girl's parents and teachers notice that she's suddenly become very withdrawn and fearful, appearing scared and nervous in interactions and always walking with her head down. She had always been quiet and independent, but until recently had never appeared scared and had always held her head up. When questioned, she said she didn't have any friends, but didn't reveal that anything was wrong. The parents brought her to see a sandplay therapist.

The therapist asked her to choose a few figurines to create whatever scenario she wanted. The child started playing a game in which she was a princess, using a Sylvanian Families rabbit in a dress to represent herself, fighting "bad guys", which she chose to represent with a witch and a vampire. The therapist asked what the bad guys had done, to which the child responded, "They are very mean." Suspecting that the "bad guys" might be representations of her classmates, the therapist then asked, "Are your friends at school mean too?" The child appeared reluctant to answer, and simply said, "Sometimes."

Over the next few sessions, as more trust was built, the child revealed the names of the bad guys, which corresponded with the names of certain classmates. As she did not want to talk about her classmates directly, the therapist asked her what kind of mean things the bad guys in her game had said or did, to which she replied, "They said horrible things to the princess and made everyone hate her." This prompted the therapist to ask if that meant the princess was all alone, and she said "Yes."

YOUR CHILD'S CONFIDENTIALITY IS IMPORTANT

Situations like this are quite common, and sandplay therapy can help children express things that they're scared to say, or, in other cases, simply don't know how to say. It's important to keep in mind that confidentiality applies with children and adolescents as much as adults, and therapists will not share any specific information shared by a child without their consent.

However, the therapist can give general updates on the child's well-being in order to guide parents and teachers—if the school is involved—on how to best care for the child. For example: "She's getting better at expressing herself now, I think it would be helpful to speak to her in a



more gentle tone both at home and at school,” or “He’s feeling a little down at school lately, if he brings it up, I’d recommend listening to him with an open mind and responding with understanding, as that will help him feel comfortable.”

Though it’s natural to want to know more, it’s good to remember that children have the right to their own thoughts and emotions, and respecting that can help them feel more comfortable.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT SAND

There are three types of sand commonly used in sandplay therapy, and each one can be helpful in different ways:

Dry sand: Soft and smooth, good for expressing ideas freely with little effort, and often used in creating a backdrop or scene for the playing to take place.

Wet sand: Mainly used for shaping and building things, such as some types of solid structure. It is often linked to issues of control, stability, or holding things in place. Wet sand is also suitable for expressing more intense emotions as it requires force.

Kinetic Sand: Soft and stretchy, which can help calm and soothe.

THE MEANING BEHIND THE MINIATURES

Aside from the types of sand, it’s also important to have a wide variety of figurines to choose from, so that the child can accurately choose something that represents their emotions. For example, there might be figurines representing different professions, human and non-human figurines, popular characters from media, figurines with emotional expressions, or figurines with different bodies, hair types, skin colors, and so on. The wider the variety, the more options there are for the child to express themselves.

As seen from the example above, the child attributes meanings to the figurines, so a different child might attribute different meanings to the same figurines. It’s not that each figurine is a direct representative of good or bad, rather, it is up to the therapist to explore what that choice means to each child. While the child in the example used a Sylvanian Families rabbit to represent herself and a witch and vampire to

represent her bullies, a different child might do the opposite. For someone else, a witch might be a good thing, and a gang of Sylvanian Families dolls could be something less positive.

Playing comes naturally to children, and sandplay therapy effectively utilizes this as a form of therapeutic support that feels natural and fun, as opposed to something that they do not understand which is being forced upon them. This can help reduce resistance, and make the process easier for children.

NOT JUST FOR KIDS

Finally, I’d like to conclude by saying that even though sandplay therapy is often associated with children, it can also be helpful for adults and adolescents who are looking for an alternative to talk therapy or who have trouble expressing their emotions through words—as is art therapy. So if you’re interested in non-talk therapy, you could always give this a try. We might primarily associate the word “play” with children, but play therapy can be for anyone, no matter how old they are.

Julia Gabriel



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THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL PARADOX

A parent's reflection on privilege, values, and the complicated business of raising socially aware kids in a bubble. Sheena shares how she intends to raise her daughter so that she recognizes and is grateful for the privileges that go with attending an international school.



Photo courtesy of the author

About the Author

Sheena Low is raising 5-year-old Augie while building Somnii, a maternal wellness brand creating supplements and connection games for mothers. She moved to Bangkok in 2019, heavily pregnant, for the full-time nanny help, five years later, she's still here and with no plans to return to Sydney. Before Somnii, she spent a decade building and exiting Super Fly Honey, a global pole activewear brand. www.feelsomnii.com | Instagram: @sheenainwonderland





Photo by Nicola Barts from Pexels

MMy daughter Augie just turned five. School applications are open, and so are approximately forty browser tabs and a husband conversation that has been running for three weeks without a conclusion. If you have a child in Bangkok, you know the drill. "Where does your kid go to school?" carries a weight here that tells you the answer matters far beyond academics. It determines which world your child lives in. In Bangkok, that world comes with a forty-acre campus, an Olympic pool, a performing arts centre, and a robotics lab. Fees to match: at the top end, over a million baht a year per child. The average Thai salary is around 15,900 baht a month (1). One year of school costs the equivalent of over five years of someone else's wages. That number sat funny with me the first time I saw it. It still does.

THE REAL TENSION

The World Bank's 2023 report, *Bridging the Gap*, ranks Thailand as the 13th most unequal country out of 63 measured by income, with over half the country's wealth held by the richest ten percent (2). A Credit Suisse report found that more than two-thirds of the country's assets are controlled by the richest one

percent (3). In Bangkok you can see it from the same corner: a gated school compound on one side, a street vendor cooking pad kra pao on a 10,000 baht motorbike on the other. When your child goes to school inside that compound, comes home to a condo with a nanny and a driver, and does this every single day for eighteen years, a very particular worldview can calcify: that this is just how life is.

A former elite school student in Singapore describes how her classmates were genuinely shocked to read in a textbook that most Singaporeans live in public housing. They had grown up in landed property, ferried by drivers, and had simply absorbed all of it as the standard version of a normal life.

Research published in the *British Journal of Educational Studies* (2022) found that institutions created to promote social harmony are, in practice, contributing to a growing educational gap between social groups (4). Two new international schools open somewhere in the world every single day. Thailand alone hosts over 250, growing at around ten percent annually, with wealthy Thai families now joining the customer base alongside expats.

WHAT PARENTS ARE ACTUALLY DIVIDED ON

Talk to enough expat parents and you find two camps, often sitting next to each other at the same school orientation.

Camp one: the internationalists. Research supports that Third Culture Kids develop genuine strengths: cultural adaptability, linguistic range, comfort with change, and a broader worldview than peers who grow up in one place. Adults who attended international schools in Asia consistently describe arriving at universities abroad already comfortable with difference, fluent in reading rooms full of people who don't look or think like them.

Camp two: the worried ones. Usually the same parents, on a different day, asking what happens when your child grows up never taking public transport, never cooking, never navigating anything without help. A teacher who has spent years in international schools in Thailand notes that even students whose families stretch every baht to pay the fees are still, in global terms, among the most privileged children in the world. Child development studies consistently find that

children shielded from difficulty and consequence are less resilient, less empathetic, and less equipped for adult life (5). A good school and a sheltered home can produce a child who arrives at adulthood with extraordinary credentials and no idea how most of the world actually works.

SO WHAT DO YOU ACTUALLY DO?

Parents who feel most at peace with their international school choice treat the values work as their job, not the school's:

Give them chores, even with help at home: Experts are clear: removing all household responsibility sends the message that some work is beneath your child (6). Augie makes her bed and clears her plate. She is five and fully capable of both.

Let them be bored, frustrated, and wrong: One therapist put it plainly: "Let your child experience the consequence." Solving every problem with money trains children to expect exactly that.

Talk about money honestly, and early: Where it comes from, what effort it costs, why not everyone has the same amount. Research links genuine gratitude with lower entitlement and higher life satisfaction in children (7).

Get out of the compound, regularly: Take the BTS. Eat where there's no English menu. Let your child interact with people outside the expat world as a habit, not a lesson.



Model how you treat people who work for you: Children are watching how you speak to your nanny, your driver, the security guard downstairs. If those people are background characters to you, they will be to your children too.

Volunteer together, consistently: Often enough that your child understands giving back is not a school project.

THE QUESTION I KEEP COMING BACK TO

We want the best for our kids. That ambition and an awareness of their privilege can sit in the same person, in the same decision.

Two months ago we changed nannies. Augie adored the previous one and had always treated her with

respect. The new nanny is quieter, more gentle, and Augie started ordering her around, dismissive in the way five-year-olds can be when they sense they can get away with it. My first instinct was that the nanny needed to be firmer. Then the honest answer came up: I had been frustrated with the transition, and that frustration had been showing up in my tone, my body language, the way I spoke around the new nanny. Augie was watching all of it and took her cues from me.

The most powerful curriculum in your household is you. How you speak to the people who work in your home, whether you're tired or grateful, is what your child is actually absorbing. I am her biggest teacher, and that has nothing to do with which school she goes to.

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VOICES OF MOTHERHOOD

Motherhood is often described as a journey, but for every mother, the path is uniquely her own. It is filled with moments of joy and challenge, unexpected lessons, quiet triumphs, and connections that shape not only the lives of our children, but our own as well.

In celebration of Mother's Day, BAMBI Magazine invited mothers from across our community to reflect on the experiences that have defined their journey. We asked them to share what motherhood has taught them about themselves, the moments with their children they will cherish forever, and the message they would like to offer to mothers everywhere.



“

Motherhood helped me find a depth of love and self-esteem I never imagined I could feel. When my children call out for me, when their little arms wrap tightly around me, when they simply say that my presence makes their world brighter—those moments transform me. I've realized that being "Mom" is not just a role, but a source of profound meaning. Their unconditional love has lifted me from doubt, teaching me that I am enough, just as I am. Because of them, I have learned to embrace myself with tenderness, to see my own light reflected in their eyes, and to cherish the woman I have become.

Kanae Tsuyuki

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Motherhood taught me that I'm far more patient than I ever thought I could be. I considered myself a fairly patient person, but becoming a mom took it to a whole new level. It taught me how to stay calm in the middle of chaos, not get upset over little things, and be more accepting of different personalities. It has also made me more understanding and empathetic toward others. That's probably one of the biggest surprises motherhood has given me.

Erica Jeong

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If I could share one message with mothers everywhere this Mother's Day, it would be this: give yourself more grace. Motherhood is filled with beautiful moments, but it can also be messy, exhausting, and uncertain. We spend so much time wondering if we're doing enough, saying the right things, or making the right decisions. Yet our children don't need perfect mothers—they need mothers who love them, show up for them, and keep trying, even on the hard days. I've learned that some of the most meaningful moments aren't the big milestones. They're the everyday moments: reading one more story, sharing a meal together, holding a little hand, or hearing "Mama" called from another room. Those small moments are what make up a childhood. So, this Mother's Day, I hope every mother takes a moment to recognize just how much she is already doing and how deeply she is loved.

Eknam Kaur



Here I am!



The moments with my two sons that I will treasure forever are the bedtime cuddles, the never-ending storytelling throughout the day, and even more stories at bedtime. The way both of them ask me for hugs, warm cuddles, and a "1000 kisses", as they like to say, every night. They ask for alone time with me in their respective rooms, to share whatever comes to mind and their curious thoughts, their feelings, and even questions that I myself am not ready to answer such as "Mama, when you pass away, Babaji, our Guru, will show us the right way, right?" It means so much to me because I know that these days are limited and so precious—their stories, their inner world that I can be a part of because they've asked me—because I am still their person. Children grow up very fast, the days seem never ending but the years are short. I love that they still want me, my hugs, my kisses before bedtime. I love that they find me a safe space to share their inner world—which means the world to any mother. And honestly, I love knowing I'm still needed in their lives, because there will be a day when I am no longer needed as much. The stories will stop, the questions will lessen, the communication between us will be different and that's why this time with my kids matters so much to me.

Sneha Sethi



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One moment I'll always treasure is the quiet time I spent with my son when he was still a baby. I'd gently sway with him in my arms in a peaceful room, with soft sunlight coming through the window and the curtains moving gently in the breeze. As I listened to his little breaths, I'd lean down and smell his sweet baby hair. Those simple moments filled me with so much happiness. Children grow up so fast. I know that one day, when my son is older, I'll look back fondly on those happy days of holding him in my arms and gazing into his eyes. What felt like an ordinary moment has become one of my most precious memories. It was a peaceful and special time that won't ever come back.

Chiharu Watanabe

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Becoming Samantha's mum gave me something I didn't expect—the chance to rediscover myself. Motherhood has a way of blocking all the noise and showing you what actually matters. I used to think Motherhood was about having everything sorted perfectly. I was wrong. Samantha has taught me that life isn't about perfection. It's about showing up, even on the hard days. It's about laughing at the chaos, sitting with the uncertainty, and finding joy in the smallest moments you never thought you'd treasure. Every single day she teaches me something new about patience, about love, and about myself. She's not just my daughter; she's my greatest teacher.

Rosalia Chan Tung

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We are wonderful. Let us celebrate the unique qualities that make each of us special. Our children love us just as we love them. Cheers to all mothers!

Aoi Nakazawa

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You do not have to be perfect to be exactly what your child needs. In the middle of a move, a difficult season, or an overwhelming day, your child is not looking for a parent who never struggles. They are looking for a parent who stays, who shows up, and who reaches for connection before solutions. Your calm presence, your willingness to listen, and your ability to say, “I don’t have all the answers, but I am here,” are what safety feels like to a child. You are already more than enough.

Susan Saxtorph

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Motherhood taught me I’m stronger than I ever knew. Not in the loud, obvious ways—but in the quiet, relentless kind of strength that shows up at 3am, that loves fiercely even when you’re running on empty. Now, expecting my second child, I find myself returning to that strength again—a little more trusting of it this time. It’s the greatest gift motherhood has given me.

Barsha Saha

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One thing motherhood has taught me about myself that I never expected to learn is how strong I truly am. Becoming a mother showed me a strength I didn’t know I had, the strength to keep going through sleepless nights, challenges, and worries, while always putting my child first. It has taught me patience, sacrifice, and how to stay calm even when things feel overwhelming. Motherhood has also helped me appreciate the little things in life. A hug, a smile, or hearing my child laugh can turn an ordinary day into a special one. My child inspires me every day, and through motherhood I have discovered a stronger, more grateful version of myself.

Gracia Smith

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Motherhood is challenging. It is non-stop. It's a rollercoaster of emotion. If you're like me and prefer the teacups ride, twirling lazily around to uplifting music, well, it can be a ride that you don't feel you asked for. But with the storm comes the rainbows, the moments of overwhelming joy. Those tears of happiness that sting our eyes and pull on our heart strings. We often hear so much about the triggers, but these moments are the glimmers. They keep us going. They bring joy to our daily life, and they are the essence of our connection with our children, and with ourselves as mothers. So, when times are hard, I invite you to remember this quote "the days are long, but the years are short." An invitation to embrace the madness and lean into joy and laughter. *Carpe Diem.*

Laura Devos



Some of my favorite moments with my children are when they suddenly do a new skill or use a new word or concept for the first time. Especially when I had no idea they were close to doing the new thing, and it surprises me. My baby stacked some rings this morning and I had no idea she knew how to do that, and then I watched my three-year-old glide on her balance bike for the first time after many months of refusal. It's so much fun to watch them grow and learn things and make connections about the world. They fascinate me, and I could happily watch them do their thing all day long.

Ilana Cliffer





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Motherhood has taught me that love can exist alongside guilt, exhaustion, laughter, and complete chaos—all at the same time. Before becoming a mother, I thought being a good parent meant always being present, always being patient, and somehow having everything under control. Then Avira came along and completely changed my definition of motherhood. Somedays, I am juggling work calls, deadlines, and endless to-do lists. Yet in the middle of all that, a tiny voice saying, "Mumma, look at me!" instantly becomes the most important thing in the world. I've learned that children don't measure love by how many hours you spend with them. They measure it in the little moments—reading the same story for the tenth time, stopping to admire a butterfly, or listening to a very important story about a clay creation. One thing I never expected to learn about myself is how much joy I can find in slowing down. Avira has taught me to notice things I used to rush past—the excitement of spotting a butterfly, the pride of doing something independently, or the endless giggles that come from absolutely nothing. Motherhood has also taught me that perfection is overrated. Some days the house is messy, dinner is simple, and my to-do list remains unfinished. But if we end the day cuddled together, talking about our day and laughing at something silly, it feels like a success. The greatest lesson Avira has taught me is that children don't need perfect mothers. They need mothers who love them, show up for them, and keep trying every day. And that has been both the most humbling and the most beautiful discovery of my life.

Deshna Bhansali

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If there's one thing motherhood has taught me, it's that I am capable of much more than I ever gave myself credit for. It has pushed me beyond my comfort zone in ways I never expected and shown me strengths I didn't know I had. There have been moments of exhaustion, uncertainty, and self-doubt, but there have also been moments of incredible joy, pride, and love. Through it all, I've learned to trust myself more, to be kinder to myself when things don't go perfectly, and to appreciate the beauty in everyday moments. Motherhood isn't just about raising a child but it's also about discovering and growing into the person you're meant to be.

Angela Odel

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THE POWER OF PERSPECTIVE

Twenty years in Thailand has taught Claudia something about virtues we all aspire to emulate: empathy, humility, compassion. They're not simply a mindset you choose, but rather they're what happens when you gain perspective and build awareness.

Photo by Yohantha Gunawarna from Pexels



About the Author

Claudia Gomes is an expert in Emotional Intelligence and Intercultural Awareness, and an ICF-certified Level 2 Transformative Coach. With 20 years of international experience across Spain and Thailand, 17 of them based in Bangkok, she specializes in bridging cultures, strengthening human connections, and fostering meaningful global collaboration. Contact Claudia at: contact@claudiagomes.coach; [linkedin.com/in/claudiagomes-coach/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/claudiagomes-coach/)



Photo by Plato Terentev from Pexels

The power of perspective is woven into everything we do. Society has normalized the word “normal,” but what is normal? My normal may not be your normal. For example, to me, not drinking coffee is normal but for someone else not starting the day with a cup of coffee may be unimaginable.

Describing something as “normal” is often a way of bringing our ideas, habits, and beliefs into a place of acceptance. When someone challenges our normal, it can feel wrong and uncomfortable.

This is why the power of perspective is so important. It allows us to see the world through different lenses and accept that different people have different “normals”. It expands our minds and helps us explore the many layers of multicultural experiences and human behavior. Most importantly, it helps us see people differently.

Perspective helps us to develop empathy, gratitude, humility, and compassion. Living abroad is just one way of immersing ourselves in a new world, and so gaining a fresh perspective. Relationships,

education, leadership roles, community work, and many other life experiences also reveal new worlds to us, and if we explore them our perspective will expand.

PERSPECTIVE IS BUILT, NOT BORN

Perspective is shaped by our experiences. When you are open to them, those experiences will reveal parts of yourself that you may not have seen before—in both a “good” and “bad” way.

When you put yourself out there, you begin to notice the feelings and beliefs hidden in your subconscious mind. You may discover that you are judgmental toward some people, have a sense of entitlement, fear unknown people, or lack empathy in particular situations. Of course the opposite can also be true: you may discover an appreciation of strangers and new experiences, a warmth, empathy and generosity towards others that you didn’t know you had in you.

The point is that you learn more about yourself when you are exposed to different circumstances

and pay attention to your reactions. Your perspective expands when you learn what other people are thinking and feeling, when you hear their side of the story, and when you realize that no one is completely right or wrong. We all see situations through the lens of our life journeys which are unique to each individual, and so everyone’s response to the same experience will be unique. This is why people living in the same city often tell completely different stories about the same place.

Any interaction has a greater chance of going smoothly when we have a broader perspective and can display more emotional intelligence. It helps us avoid unconscious bias, become more self-aware, and respond rather than react.

Our ability to know ourselves is key to creating a life that feels meaningful and fulfilling.

EXPOSURE TO DIFFERENT REALITIES EXPANDS HUMANITY

Exposure to different realities can reshape the way we live our values. It can give us new priorities, improve our communication, deepen

our relationships, strengthen our leadership capacity, and expand our gratitude for life. People who navigate different realities well often become stronger community members and more humane leaders. People's versions of reality vary for an incredible number of reasons, but one of the most obvious is culture. For those of us who live abroad experiencing a new culture, we see every day that people do not think the same way, eat the same foods, communicate the same way, or even express love in the same way.

By being exposed to these different realities our perspective broadens and we become less reactive and more understanding. We replace assumptions with listening. Compassion becomes reality, not a theory. Our stereotypes and ways of thinking are challenged.

I can confidently say that twenty years of living in Thailand has reshaped the way I see the world. The opportunity to connect with people from so many different nationalities, not only through work, but also through my personal life and community involvement, has enhanced my self-awareness, patience, presence, and appreciation for human diversity.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PRIVILEGE AND AWARENESS

Perspective changes the way we see privilege. When we hear the word privilege, many of us immediately

think about financial circumstances. However, privilege can also mean emotional safety, supportive relationships, educational and career opportunities, stability, freedom, and simply being born with access to resources that others do not have.

Awareness of these privileges matters more than guilt. Because we are often focused on our daily lives and responsibilities, we do not always stop to recognize that our circumstances may be better than those of others: that we are privileged.

This is not about shaming ourselves. It is about developing a conscious and responsible mindset that recognizes our advantages and encourages us to act with awareness and compassion towards others.

This is not just about giving money. It can be about our presence, our willingness to listen, our understanding, mentorship, emotional support, or making people feel included. When a person feels they belong, half the path is already paved. Sometimes people simply need a safe space to reflect before they can move toward the next level of growth in their lives.

CHARACTER IS SHAPED THROUGH HUMILITY AND CONNECTION

When talking about ourselves, our ego plays a significant role in the

conversation. New perspectives help soften and balance our ego.

Real transformation happens when we stop believing that our experiences are the only truth. When we learn that we don't need to convince others that our way is better simply because it is familiar to us.

As we are exposed to different realities, we develop adaptability, resilience, and emotional maturity. Human connection becomes deeper when we begin to understand the complexity of people's experiences.

Through this understanding, we improve our communication. We become less judgmental because our understanding of ourselves becomes greater. Our patience grows, our connections deepen, and our ability to navigate conflict improves.

We begin to realize that strength is not superiority. True strength is the capacity to remain open, grounded, and connected, even during difficult situations.

EXPANDING PERSPECTIVE CHANGES THE WAY WE LIVE

Choosing to expand our perspective is choosing a journey that transforms our character and helps us become more conscious human beings. The more we understand others, the more compassion we develop for ourselves and for the world around us.

Perspective helps us become more authentic. It transforms both our inner and outer worlds. Humanity is inherently good. Sometimes we doubt that because of the challenges we see around us, but deep down we are wired for connection, kindness, and love. We were not created to be alone. We were created to share our humanity and who we are.

Understanding our perspectives, ourselves' perspectives, and the world can guide us toward a richer, more meaningful life. Perspective has the power to transform reality.



Photo by Helena Lopes from Pexels



PLAYGROUPS & ACTIVITIES

BAMBI holds regular playgroups and activities around Bangkok, open to both BAMBI members and non-members. BAMBI playgroups are characterized by both structured and free play, and the use of venues' toys and playgrounds. BAMBI Activities provide a wide range of opportunities for children aged one to six years old to develop their athletic, creative, and cognitive skills.

PLAYGROUPS

Name	Location
Wonderkids	Wonder Woods Kids Café & Co-Learning Space
Little Seeds	The Tiny Seeds International Pre-School
Kiddiezilla	Market Place Nanglinche (3rd Floor)
Kiddieville	Playville
Little Steps	Future Steps International School Bangkok
Little Panda	Nancy Language School
Little Treehouse	Little Treehouse Nursery
Saturday Nana	Storytime Preschool Bangkok
Little Tots	Tiny Tots International Learning Centre
Niko Niko	The Prestige 49 (Sukhumvit Soi 49)



ACTIVITIES

Name	Location
Toddler Music	Skyview Hotel Bangkok Sukhumvit24
Football	Noah Futsal
Little Athletes	Noah Futsal
Lego Construction STEM new!	Bricks4Kidz - K Village
Junior Tennis new!	The Lobb Club

SIGN UP TODAY!

For the latest information and further details on our playgroups and activities, scan the QR code on the right. Bookings are required to join playgroups and activities. Register today for unlimited fun and a welcoming community!



FINDING MAGIC IN EVERYDAY BANGKOK

Berivan tells us why her family prioritize the natural world and simple outdoor activities over Bangkok's more expensive attractions. Read on to discover her favorite places to explore nature in the big city.

Photo courtesy of the author



About the Author

Berivan Birkan is a mother of one and the author of the children's book 'Mia the Purple Dragon'. Through her writing, she shares the values she hopes to instill in her daughter—kindness, courage, self-belief, and imagination—while inspiring children everywhere with stories that encourage these qualities.



Photo by Jame_9bkk from Pexels

It has been nearly nine years since we moved to Bangkok and more than three years since we started exploring it with our daughter. The questions that keep coming from friends and family abroad, are "What do you do with a child in Thailand? Isn't it too hot? And what about the monsoon season?" Our answer is simple. The heat and rain are just part of everyday life, not obstacles.

As working parents, we've learned that family activities shouldn't feel like a burden with hours of preparation or ticket arrangements and advance bookings. So we choose easy things which often make the best memories. The easier activities are to organize, the more often we'll actually do them and love them.

While we've occasionally enjoyed indoor playgrounds like HarborLand or Kidzooona in the past, we've found that as our daughter grows we're choosing nature more and more often. Most afternoons after school, we just grab a water bottle, sunscreen, mosquito repellent, and head towards one of our favorite places: Benchasiri, Benjakitti, or Lumpini Park.

Our daughter can spend twenty minutes watching a squirrel jump from tree to tree or stop every few meters to inspect a dead leaf or a tiny snail. We've invented

stories about ants carrying giant crumbs back to their kingdoms and imagined where ladybugs might fly to. As a children's author, these little discoveries became the inspiration behind my book *Mia the Purple Dragon*. Seeing the world through my daughter's eyes has been an incredible inspiration.

And the monsoon season is actually one of our favorite times to be outdoors. It rarely rains all day long, so instead of cancelling our plans, we embrace the rain. Our daughter jumps into puddles, splashes through rainwater, discovers snails, and comes home happily covered in mud.

At the weekend, one of our favorite escapes is Bangkok's green lung: Bang Krachao. The adventure starts with a short boat ride across the Chao Phraya River from Phrom Phong pier. You can easily rent bicycles near the arrival pier and cycle through lush greenery. We usually begin early in the morning and stop by noon at Get Growing Community Farm or Sri Nakhon Khuean Khan Park, where our daughter can explore while we slow down and enjoy the lunch and peaceful surroundings.

Over the years, we've realized that children don't need elaborate entertainment. Sometimes all they need is a stick, a leaf, a bicycle, or

simply the time to discover the world at their own pace, with you.

Here are a few hidden gems we also love:

The Artist's House (Baan Silapin):

For canal-side walks, feeding fish, and traditional Thai puppet shows. Kids love it.

SEA LIFE Bangkok Ocean World

Annual Pass: This is surprisingly good value for Bangkok residents and perfect for little marine-life lovers.

Bangkok Planetarium & Science

Centre: Near BTS Ekkamai. It is underrated but so child-friendly. Our preference rather than Wow Park.

Forest school programmes: There are a few of these where kids can explore and learn about nature. Pak Khlong Talat Flower Market. It is a colorful scavenger hunt; whoever finds the pink flowers first wins the game.

After nearly a decade in Bangkok, we've discovered that the best family activities aren't necessarily the biggest attractions or the most expensive tickets. More often than that, they're simply the easiest ones, especially the ones that invite us to slow down, and see the city through our daughter's eyes.

BAMBI: THE TEAM

BAMBI is managed by an elected committee of volunteers and all BAMBI members are encouraged to volunteer. Vacancies can be found on the Call for Volunteers page in this magazine as well as on our website. You are welcome to contact vicechairwoman@bambiweb.org with inquiries.

FOUNDER

Mel Habanananda

HONORARY PRESIDENT

Simmi Rajkitkul | advisor@bambiweb.org

HONORARY MEMBERS

Paula Young
Anna Ingham (Bumps & Babies Founder)
Kathy Leslie
Ravit El-Bachar Daniel

VOTING POSITIONS

Chairwoman | VACANT
chairwoman@bambiweb.org

Executive Board | Frances / Lynda
vicechairwoman@bambiweb.org

Secretary | Shivangi
secretary@bambiweb.org

Treasurer | Ritika
treasurer@bambiweb.org

Activities Coordinator | Ririn
activities@bambiweb.org

Editor, BAMBI Magazine | Sanam
editor@bambiweb.org

Charities Coordinator | Lynda
charities@bambiweb.org

Database Coordinator | Sehee
database@bambiweb.org

Events Coordinator | Clarisse
events@bambiweb.org

New Members Coordinator | Nobu
newmembers@bambiweb.org

Playgroups Co-Coordinators | Hilda / Erica
playgroups@bambiweb.org

PR/Media Coordinator | Arisa
media@bambiweb.org

Website Coordinator |
Frances
websiteasst@bambiweb.org
website@bambiweb.org

VOTING/EX OFFICIO/BY INVITATION

Bumps & Babies Coordinator |
bumps@bambiweb.org

NON-VOTING POSITIONS

Me-Time Coordinators |
Aoi / Tomomi
me-time@bambiweb.org

Member Benefits Coordinator |
Sassy: benefits@bambiweb.org

Photography and Visuals Coordinator |
Jana: photoasst@bambiweb.org

BAMBI Photographers |
Lilly

Assistant Playgroups |
Deshna: playgroupassist@bambiweb.org
Kana: playgroupassist1@bambiweb.org

Playgroups Team |
Nana / Poppy / Nupur / Makiko / Nobu /
Chiharu / Kurumi / Yayoi / Nana E / Kana /
Kaho / Yoko M / Sayana / Azuna / Miki
M / Jeannie

Assistant Treasurers |
Saeko: treasurerasst2@bambiweb.org
Takako: treasurerasst6@bambiweb.org
Chiharu: treasurerasst4@bambiweb.org

Activities Team |
Rosie / Takako / Hideko / Nupur /
Airi / Ting / Aya

Bookkeeper | Phorn
bookkeeper@bambiweb.org

BAMBI Magazine - Deputy Editor |
Jeannie: depeditor@bambiweb.org

BAMBI Magazine - Feature Writers |
Sheena / Sara

BAMBI Magazine - Assistant Editors |
Monisha: assisted2@bambiweb.org
Natasha: assisted3@bambiweb.org
Nupur: assisted6@bambiweb.org

Database Team |
Yoko / Izumi

Events Team |
Kat / Kim
eventsasst2@bambiweb.org

Pop Up Playgroups & New Members Team |
Jeannie / Regina / Miki

Promotional Designer |
Atsuko / Fumika
design@bambiweb.org

Thai Coordinator | Lynda
thaicoordinator@bambiweb.org

Website Team |
Anshul

Assistant Charities Coordinator |
VACANT

Pop Up Playgroups and New Members
Assistant |
VACANT

Media Assistant |
Arisa Y | Barsha

Assistant Activities Coordinator |
Nana

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Advertising Inquiries to:

Finn Balslev
Phone: 02 943 7166-8 Ext. 116
Mobile: 081 866 2577
Fax: 02 943 6618
Email: finn.scandmedia@gmail.com

Artwork Inquiries to:

Scandinavian Publishing Co., Ltd. (Dao)
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