

Scholars set for drama at Gala Ball

About 40 students currently studying under PIWC funded scholarships took part in the workshop entitled Articulating Drama, led by drama teacher and recent Canadian addition to the PIWC team of volunteers, Denise Bertrand.

Denise, who has a background in international theater and performance art, led the students in role plays and sketches to evaluate their potential for parts in a production for the gala ball.

For many of the students taking part in the workshop, this was the first time they had ever used English, as they read from short scripts and performed in front of the group.

"The idea of this workshop is to give the participants some basic English skills and build their confidence in public speaking. Today we have seen what they are capable of and over the next few weeks, they'll be practicing for a performance during the Gala Ball on November 24," said Denise.

"I enjoy watching the transformation in these young stars. It is not the end result that is so important but the transition along the way," she added.

Two former scholarship recipients, Ampha Jenprai, 23, and Issara Isaranirun, 24, have already completed four years of university studies in Ireland thanks to funding raised by the PIWC.

They helped co-ordinate the workshop, bridging the language

Members of Phuket International Women's Club (PIWC) held the first in a series of weekly drama workshops at Phuket Rajabhat University for PIWC scholarship students on Saturday October 6, in preparation for the upcoming PIWC Gala Ball in November.

Here Nick Davies looks into what the kids will gain from the experience – more articulate English, a confidence boost – and most importantly, show off what a PIWC scholarship can achieve.

gap between the organizers and participants.

K. Ampha and K. Issara both studied hospitality management at Dundalk Institute of Technology, Issara being the first male to receive a scholarship from the PIWC, which had only previously given scholarships to female students.

"K. Ampha and K. Issara are just two examples of the very thing we aim to achieve by helping dedicated young people with their education. With the generous support of the Phuket community, these individuals are now able to give something back to the community and inspire other students to realize their ambitions," said PIWC President Cindy Ratcliff.

Asked what they had gained from their studies in Ireland, K. Ampha and K. Issara both agreed that they now had much more confidence in their abilities and have learned to be independent and strive for what

they wanted in life.

"Before going to Ireland to study, I hadn't had much practice speaking English so I wasn't very confident. The experience has given me that confidence. It also taught me independence and how to integrate into other groups and cultures," said K. Ampha.

"One of the most important things I have learned from living abroad is that no matter what culture or country we come from, we are all very similar; sharing the same values and sense of community," said K. Issara.

K. Ampha and her family used to have a restaurant on Nai Yang beach, but it was swept away in the tsunami. They lost some family members and all their possessions.

Now there is hope for K. Ampha's family, who see a bright future for her with the PIWC's charity. "K. Ampha's resolve and determination to 'make the most of every opportunity' are the kind of winning qualities that the



Drama specialist Denise Bertrand (center) and PIWC members prepare scholarship students for a performance at the annual gala ball in November. Previous scholarship recipients, K Ampha (right) and K Issara (2nd from right) also contributed their skills.

PIWC looks for in the students we carefully evaluate for scholarships," said Cindy.

K. Ampha and K. Issara were recommended for scholarships by Phuket Rajabhat University professor Ajarn Pranee, who recognized their potential as high achievers if given the chance. Ajarn Pranee has been instrumental in evaluating scholarship candidates for the PIWC.

K. Issara comes from a farming family in Songkhla and had been studying and supporting himself through part-time work in Phuket for a year before he was recommended to the PIWC committee as a scholarship candidate.

Having successfully completed a bachelor's degree, K. Issara plans to eventually enter the medical industry, but he aims to study for a master's degree first.

With charitable contributions from individuals and businesses in the Phuket community, the PIWC has since 1989 helped more than 250 children with financing for their education, from kindergarten through to university.

The PIWC holds fund raising events throughout the year, the most significant being the annual Gala Ball, a much anticipated glitzy and glamorous evening of dinner, drinks, dancing and auc-

tioning of items donated by local individuals and businesses.

"If it were not for the generosity of local residents and businesses at the Gala Ball and at other PIWC fundraising events throughout the year, these students might never have had the support they need to help them achieve their life's ambitions," said the ball's coordinator Susan Arnulphy.

This year's Gala Ball with the theme, "Rhapsody in Blue" will be held on November 24 at Indigo Pearl Resort in Nai Yang and promises to be as spectacular as ever, with music and dance until late in the evening, plus live music from the 19-piece Lai Thai Orchestra.

Although the 350 tickets for the gala dinner were snapped up within a few days, After Dinner tickets are still available. After Dinner activities begin at 9.30 pm and include drinks, midnight snacks, casual seating in The Music Room, plus the chance to bid for items in the evening's open and closed auctions.

To reserve After Dinner tickets for the Gala Ball or contribute items to the auction, contact Joan at 087-2820422 or Sue at 087-2776948. Email: carol@aplusplussoftware.com For more information, visit: www.phuket.com/piwc