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Citi partners with Anantara to launch 'Citi Elephant Nursery' CSR Project

Chiang Rai — Citi Thailand is introducing its latest CSR effort by collaborating with Anantara Golden Triangle Elephant Camp & Resort in Chiang Rai province to launch the first Citi Elephant Nursery project. The aim is to raise awareness among the public, especially youngsters, about the elephant conservation and urge them to help improve the plight of Thailand's elephants. Many activities are introduced including taking students from Banjong school to learn the elephants' life at the elephant camp. Citi is also funding the construction of a new permanent shelter and a baby elephant nursery facility at the hotel, which is renowned for its Thai elephant conservation program.



Mr Darren Buckley, Country Head and Citi Country Officer, Citibank, N.A. said “Citi is committed to strengthen communities where we live and work around the globe. This is a part of our responsible finance core value. In Thailand, we have several main Citizenship programs to enable the progress of those who are less fortunate in the local communities. We also strive to seek for the opportunity to serve and create a positive impact to the society even when we do business. Our latest community outreach effort is the support of the Citi Elephant Nursery project. This initiative was created as Citi's enhanced role of being one of the key sponsors for the 12th King's Cup Elephant Polo tournament. It is our first project that we partner with Anantara Golden Triangle Asian Elephant Foundation (GTAEF) aiming to better the lives of elephants in Thailand.”

Having loyally served kings and commoners throughout Thailand's history — in warfare, as a means of transportation and for agricultural activities — this noble species is regarded as a symbol of prosperity and power. Thai people in fact have a long shared history with the elephant, and their skillful tradition of elephant training is highly regarded worldwide. Once the country's esteemed logging workforce, the elephant remains sacredly associated with royalty, and to this day take pride of place in parade festivities.



“Yet, despite the strong bond between Thai people and the nation's most genteel species, there are still a worrying number of elephants forced to walk the city streets to make their mahout a miserly living by begging from tourists. So this is where the Citi Elephant Nursery project came in,” Mr Buckley said.

The project is, not only aimed to offer well-being to the baby elephants being raised in a proper shelter at Anantara Golden Triangle's Elephant Camp in Chiangrai, it also opens opportunities for students from Banjong School, a local school in Chiangrai to spend a day with the elephants where they will learn about their interesting life and facts. They will learn how to take care of the huge friendly creature through many activities including elephant feeding and bathing, jungle trekking and learning basic mahout. This will be hopeful to encourage the children to love and want to protect the elephants in their community in the future.



Anantara's charitable wing, the Golden Triangle Asian Elephant Foundation (GTAEF), was set up in 2006 to improve the plight of Thailand's elephants, and has since been diversified to include welfare projects that incorporate broader philanthropic and cultural objectives with unprecedented success.

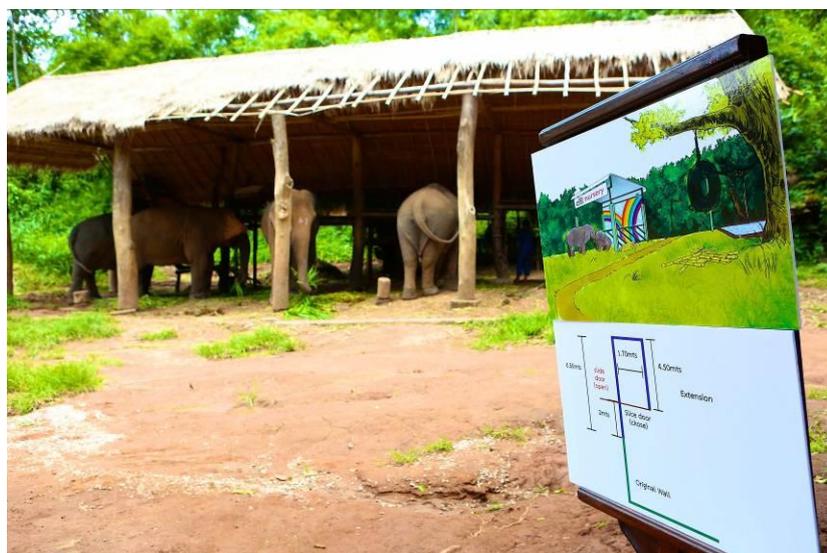
The GTAEF is overseen by John Roberts, Director of Elephants at Anantara Golden Triangle's on-site Elephant Camp. Under Roberts' passionate helm, 30 elephants have been rescued from Thailand's city streets, accompanied by their entire mahout family. English lessons are arranged for the mahouts and their wives, education is made available for their children, and a silk worm business provides the wives with 100% of the profits made from the sales of their wares at the resort boutique.



Mr Robert said that the common sight of elephants today in many large Thai cities is often a novelty at first for tourists, but the sad reality is that they are used for begging, are often not well fed and live in unsuitable conditions. Their uncomfortable and degrading lifestyle instigated a realization that an alternative could be offered to the mahouts, their families and elephants, giving birth to Anantara's Elephant Camp – a place

where the animals are rehabilitated in their native habitat and assured of medical care and sustenance, while the mahout and his entire family are also well taken care of.

"We are very proud & thankful to be working with Citi to build the world's first hybrid elephant nursery area, bringing together traditional wisdom and modern Zoo design to allow Boon Jaan's & all future babies to be raised and trained in an elephant friendly, mahout safe manner while avoiding the bad habits that are becoming apparent elsewhere and causing problems later in an elephant's modern life."



“The first and unique Baby Elephant Nursery initiative will be beneficial to the elephants in various fronts for example enabling positive reinforcement training, allowing the mahout to care for the elephant without ingraining dangerous behavior, offering the minimum of restraint of the mother elephant, 24 hour surveillance & veterinary care, baby elephants will be able to play and interact with other elephants without being a danger to itself or the public and the shelter will give safe and educational viewing by visitors.” Mr. Robert emphasized.

“Citi is pleased to support the first attempt to combine traditional and modern expertise in nurturing and training of the elephants at this shelter. We will encourage our customers and cardmembers to take part in this good cause through our upcoming marketing efforts such as Rewards points donation, merchandising items sellings to raise fund for supporting the shelter and the study that will be done in the Nursery. We also hope that some best practices found in the Nursery will be useful to share publicly for educational purpose.” Mr. Buckley concluded.

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