



# DEPDC

## Development and Education Programme for Daughters and Communities Centre

Newsletter June 2008

### MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

During the long summer break, many children passed their free time in internet shops playin computergames. Many of these games are very violent. By using violent computer games the risk of sexual abuse increases, not only for girls, but also for boys. Boys join together in criminal and drug gangs, putting their lives at risk with motorbike races and the position of weapons. The gaps in the families widen. The parents who go to work all day don't have time anymore to talk and take care of their children. The children feel misunderstood and don't want to go home anymore. Many children get lost. I am very worried about this. We have to protect our children and youth. Please, take care of your family and neighbors. Give your child love and attention.



**Ms. Alinda Wettasin**

### DEPDC's Founder and First Director Honored as Humanitarian in Michigan, U.S.A.

Each year, the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor awards the "Wallenberg Medal" to a man or woman of extraordinary courage, with a vision for justice and human rights that inspires others. On March 13, 2008, at a ceremony on the university campus, the Wallenberg Executive Committee ("the Committee") recognized Sompop Jantraka, DEPDC's founder and first director, as the seventeenth Wallenberg medalist. Dr. John Godfrey, Chair of the Committee, wrote of Sompop in the



**Smiling daughters and sons are on the screen behind Sompop when he gives his lecture**

letter of invitation, "With few resources and many enemies, (Sompop) is a strong force in the fight against human trafficking" [11 Feb. 2008]. As medalist, Sompop was invited to give this year's Wallenberg Lecture. For those who could not be there, this newsletter article reflects on some of the meaning of the Wallenberg Medal and Lecture [ [www.wallenberg.umich.edu/medal.html](http://www.wallenberg.umich.edu/medal.html) ] and shares some of Sompop's week-long events on the University of Michigan campus.

Among other Wallenberg Medalists are His Holiness Tenzin Gyatso, the Dalai Lama of Tibet, Paul Rusesabagina in Rwanda, Kailash Satyarthi in India, Helen Suzman in South Africa, and Per Anger in Budapest. All of the "outstanding humanitarians" were, like Sompop, selected "because their contributions ... honor and perpetuate (Raoul) Wallenberg's own extraordinary accomplishments and human values ... on behalf of Jews in Nazioccupied Europe." [Web Ibid., "Recipients of the Medal"]

The Committee's criteria for selecting medal recipients are notable here. Those who know of the founding of DEP -- the Daughters Education Programme -- in 1989 and the growth of DEPDC from Mae Sai into the wider Mekong sub-region, have long seen these qualities\*\* in Sompop:

- unmatched heroism, courage, and self-sacrifice in the protection and rescue of the persecuted;
- the ability to reach out to the hungry, the helpless, the powerless, and the persecuted by providing sanctuary;
- embodiments of the idea that "one person can make a difference" in the struggle for a better world; symbols of stamina, hope and faith in the goodness of one's fellow human beings."