

Thok-Naath Cultural Program Report

July 29, 2019

The planned Cultural workshop planned for June 2019 was delayed till July and August, taking place on July 28-29, Aug 4-5 and Aug 11-12. Program leader and Rotarian Thomas Nyang met with parents and students of the South Sudanese community (participants in previous workshops) to on July 21st to plan/organize the program and to discuss funding and volunteer efforts specially to help provide transportation and snacks. Attendees were also given a progress reports on the children and schools in Torkiel and Puorbor in South Sudan. Unfortunately, the schools were damaged by storms later in the year.

The official program began on Sunday July 28th at the South Sudanese Community Center in San Diego who provided space for the program saving the cost of space rental and hopefully providing a venue for a continuing program with weekly meetings. I attended the workshop to film and meet the participants. Those who work with the community and those children attending sent their “thank-you” messages to our Rotary Club. The Thok-Naath teacher demonstrated language teaching with the students. I talked with several of the parents. One parent told me how fortunate they were to be in America especially because of the wars in Sudan but also because the outlook and positive attitude of Americans. He was concerned with his children growing up here with all the changes of both living in cities (having grown up in villages) and the rapid technological changes, causing the children to lose their grounding. His daughter was one of the students that was learning his native language along with the cultural ways of her parents.

Attendees were reminded that the purpose of the Thok-Naath workshops are to keep them connected to their homeland and relatives. Also, their responsibility to give back and help those less fortunate than them.

These workshops are the local efforts of the Jarweng Educational Development who have worked with the Encinitas Rotary Club to fund 2 schools in South Sudan.

--Dan Hazel, Past President (2017-18) East Escondido Rotary Club