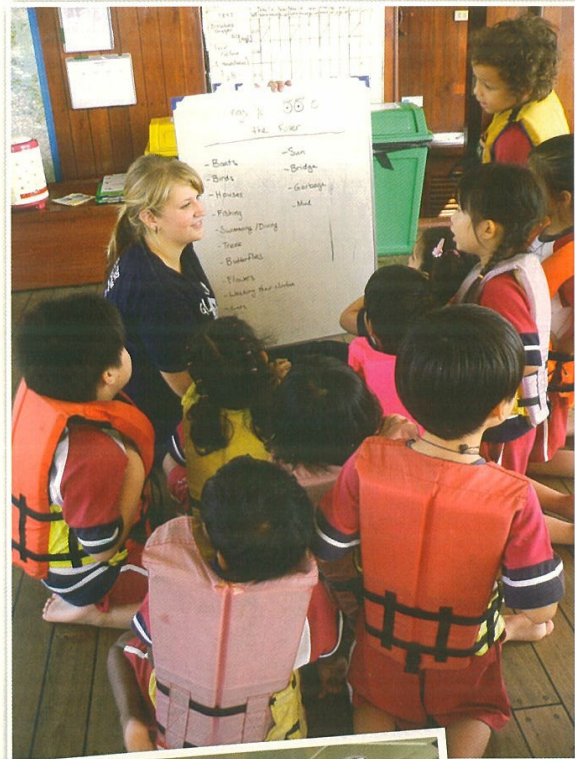


# CHAOPHRAYA: The River of Life



If asked to name three rivers, what comes to mind? Do you picture the grey of the River Thames as it passes through Westminster? Do you remember the Nile, and history lessons about Ancient Egypt? Or do you conjure up images of the mighty Amazon snaking through mysterious rainforests? Perhaps it is not surprising that the Chaophraya River is slow to be mentioned, even for people living in Bangkok. Our helter-skelter lives tend to focus on traffic jams in Sukhumvit and journeys on the Skytrain rather than Thailand's River of Kings.

Yet shaded not only by trees but by condominiums and factories, and encased in concrete retaining walls, the Chaophraya continues its centuries-old journey from Nakhon Sawan, through the former capital Ayutthaya, and on through Bangkok to the sea at Samut Prakarn, carrying with it stories and secrets, and even a part of our complicated urban lives.

Imagine the tears that those brown waters have carried over the centuries, the countless kratongs its currents have taken away, and the kings, warriors, merchants and fishermen who have used its waters. These are some of the stories that are unwrapped by the Prem Magic Eyes Barge Program as its barge travels between Bangkok and Ayutthaya. Contributing to the UN Decade for Education for Sustainability, the Barge Program empowers students to reflect on personal actions that they can take, to adjust their lives to reduce their impact on the watershed and contribute to a more sustainable way of living.

