

GPA Overseas: Chiang Mai, Thailand Blog #3: New Friendships Through Love

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Chiang Mai, Thailand

02.21.24 After a few days of break from witnessing, we started it back up again today and tomorrow. The main focus of the day was witnessing. We had two witnessing sessions today. One in the morning from 10 a.m. to lunch, and another session in the afternoon. Through these two witnessing sessions, we were able to get more familiar with the process of witnessing in Thailand. By the 2nd time around we even invited a guest named Birdy to the center. The people here are so open, so as an American, it's amazing to see a stranger we just met want to come to the center with us. We were able to shower him with love and we welcomed him with playing Uno all together. We could get to know him a little better over dinner too. He actually speaks three languages, Thai, English, and Japanese. We were so grateful that he was able to come to the center, and tried to give him the best experience possible. After dinner we ended our day by giving our testimonies on why we joined GPA, and what we learned. The Thai members felt so moved by our dedication and enthusiasm to grow our lives of faith and take this huge leap in our lives. Not only were the Thai members able to get to know us better but we were able to know each other a bit more also.

02.22.24 Today was our second day witnessing and we were able to bring substantial result this time around. We spent most of our morning helping to prepare poster boards for witnessing. It's for an open

house event tomorrow at a university. After preparing the poster boards we had lunch and a short break, and after that the main chunk of our day was witnessing. Today witnessing session was a huge improvement compared to the past few days. We were able to connect to the people even through we didn't speak the same language. We used different unique ways to connect such as with Google translate, playing card games, and snacks. By the end of the session we were able to bring back four guests. At the center we played card games and ate dinner with them. After dinner, since it was one of our last free evenings we enjoyed our time with each other with karaoke. Even though some of us are not so into singing, everyone gave their best effort, trying to give back to the Chiang Mai members. Yuki Asanum, the GPA staff with us during the first half of our stay said, returning their love for us was like scooping water out with a fork". How much they served us, and made sure to give us the best experience possible, made it feel like we were giving back like a fork scooping out water from a cup.

02.23.24 It was our last day witnessing, and today's witnessing day was quite different from previous days. We started off our morning going shopping for food. We went to a supermarket similar to Costco, and we were tasked with the mission of cooking lunch. We wanted to make something simple and unique for the Thai people, so we made spaghetti with a meat sauce. It actually turned out really good, and the Thai members really enjoyed it. After eating lunch we prepared our materials to go witnessing. We left at 3:00 to Chiang Mai University, which is like a 5 minute walk from our center, and shortly arrived at our booth. There was an open house-like event going on where different clubs would advertise what they do. Our group advertised for YSP, which stands for Youth and Students for Peace. It is a missionary program that is similar to GPA, but for full time for adults. When we arrived we set up our posters in our booth, then we went out witnessing for about 2 hours around campus, and then we all met at the booth and tried to attract people to our booth through various ways like singing, dancing, telling people to come over, and even by wearing a dinosaur costume. Even though it was pretty hectic and overwhelming with so much people and all the other booths trying to get people in their own unique ways, we could slowly get used to all the commotion going on at the same time. It was a unique experience to keep it short, but it also was fun once you embraced the chaos. N. Kawasaki, a second year captain shared her experience witnessing, "The past days of witnessing has been full of countless ups and downs and challenges to overcome. Because it was the last day of witnessing we had, I felt more earnest than ever. It was through moments like these that I began to experience first-hand Heavenly Parent's desperation for His own children to return back home to Him." - Noriko K. After the long afternoon, which turned into evening, we returned to the center, ate dinner, and reflected upon our experiences with our witnessing teams.

As our time here in Chiang Mai is running up, we only have one more blog after this one. Make sure to stay tuned to read about our last few days in Chiang Mai and our farewell to its members!