

GPA Overseas In Chiang Mai, Thailand: Sincerity Moves Heaven

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02.24.24 The day of the service project that we were witnessing for finally arrived. We all awoke early to prepare for the three hour drive to the school we would do the service project at. In the culmination of our journey witnessing, we were able to bring about 15 or so people with us. We left at 6 a.m., picking up the college students at agreed locations, and started our long drive. It is actually quite amazing that these people came despite how early we had to leave. That is some serious commitment, and it shows the quality of heart Thai people have.

When we arrived at the school, we prepared the project site, which was a library. For our service project we painted the room, but not in one basic color, but we painted things like animals, planets, story characters, and more to make the room look beautiful. Although it was a simple, and seemingly not so important service project, the teachers and students were so inspired by our hard work. It was a long day of painting, about 7 hours, but we made sure to give our absolute best efforts, as one way to give back to Thailand for their outstanding hospitality. Our paintings will also be there for YEARS, so we were also investing for the future generations that would grow up with that library and, hopefully, be inspired by our work.

When we finished we all took time to appreciate our hard work, and the beauty we produced. For dinner, we ate at somebody's home, who used to live at the Chiang Mai center but moved away to start a family. We were in the countryside, so the house looked quite weird to an American's eye, but looking deeper, we had a deep down appreciation for the simplicity of their life, away from the materialistic worries that many of us in the modern world have.

We ended off our evening by going to a Buddhist temple once more, wearing traditional clothing, and offering our prayers for Thailand, and its future providence.

02.25.24 The day arrived at last where we would spend our last day in Chiang Mai. We spent our final day all together, enjoying the remaining day we had together. We started the morning watching the Bangkok Sunday Service on Zoom. After Sunday Service, we left to see the Umbrella Village, which is kind of like a museum where they make traditional umbrellas. It's actually amazing how skilled they are at painting the designs on the umbrellas with how detailed they are. After visiting the umbrella village we went to eat lunch at a Japanese cafe. This cafe was surrounded by beautiful Japanese inspired scenery and we had an amazing time together talking about ourselves and our experiences in Chiang Mai.

After our delicious Japanese meal, we headed back to the center to prepare for the farewell party. We created props and decorations, and we were blown away with how all out they went with the decorations. Even with dinner they went all out, preparing Thai barbecue, which is very similar to Korean barbecue, to paint a picture in your head. They prepared so much food for us to enjoy our last meal together, and we could really feel their love. After dinner, the farewell party commenced. First we had a fashion show, displaying our God given beauty, then we watched a recap video of our time in Chiang Mai, and had several performances. GPA also sang a song, but with a twist, we sang a few verses in Thai. We were so happy to be able to surprise them in this small way. Then we were surprised back and bombarded with gifts. It was actually crazy with how many gifts they got for us, and we were so moved by their love. Finally we ended the night with testimonies about our experiences. All of us were moved to tears with how much love we received throughout our time together.

Our time in Chiang Mai has been an unforgettable experience. Throughout the entire trip we were amazed at how sincere and friendly the Chiang Mai members were. We received so much in so many ways, whether it was food, gifts, genuine interest in us, and them wanting us to have the best experience possible, despite how much less they have than us. We were blown away with their kindness and sincerity so moving forward, we are so inspired to try to pass on the love we received in Chiang Mai to the rest of the GPA teams in Thailand, and back home in America too. The next morning we all woke up early to prepare for our departure, as well the Thai members. As we all got in the van, we took pictures and said our goodbyes. But as we were about to leave we were informed that there may be a surprise waiting for us at the airport, which made us all curious and excited for what that may be.

Thank you for tuning into the Chiang Mai blogs. That may be all from us but be sure to read about the end of our trip together as we wrap things up as a whole group!

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