



Ella
from
Palgrave
to
Thailand

“I have become a teacher at a local elementary school.”

Hello, it's me again! Greetings once more from Phanatnikhom, Thailand!

Three months have gone by, and they've gone by fast! Time really does fly when you're having fun. So many amazing things have happened in such a short amount of time.

Just a few days after I finished writing my first Beaver Tale, I went on my first trip. It was to Phu Kradueng Mountain. We spent a night in a hotel, and it was tons of fun! It was the first time I got to meet *every* exchange student in my district. The following day, we set off. It was a long hike up that mountain, and by the end of it, I was about ready to collapse. But even though my group was the last one up, all my friends gave me the support I needed to reach the top. Over the next two days, I proceeded to walk forty kilometres. It was so tough, but with the help of two of my closest friends, I did it!

My second trip took place over the span of ten days. We visited the north of Thailand, stopping in places such as Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai, Lampang, and Doi Inthanon. This trip was absolutely incredible! The bus ride there took around fourteen hours, and we drove overnight. It took a long time, but it was worth it. The first place we visited was an elephant sanctuary in Lampang. While we were there, we watched an elephant show and got to ride them. Riding on the back of one of the world's biggest creatures is something that you won't forget. Another highlight of my trip was to the highest point, where the temperature was around 4°C. I was shivering the whole time, despite having on two pairs of pants and three sweaters on.

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This year was my first Christmas away from home. The exchange students spent Christmas Eve together, and just before midnight, we went around wishing each other well. It was a beautiful moment, something I will look back on and smile. Christmas was very different from what it's like back home, but this one was extremely special. The bus had been decorated for us with themed ornaments, and we all wore our Santa hats as we sang Christmas carols. That night, we had a party where we exchanged gifts, danced, and got to make a new Christmas dinner for ourselves. It was a really great night.

In these last few months, I have taken part of two service projects. The first was to deliver water filters to a school and its community in the north. It was a lot of fun seeing the children perform as a way to say thank you to the Rotary. They did a Thai dance while dressed as the ASEAN countries. The second project that I was involved with was with my own Rotary club, the club of Panusnikhom, and we donated a machine to help cure kidney disease. While we were at the hospital, I got to meet Rotarians from Singapore who had taken part in this service project as well. Meeting Rotarians from different countries is something which helps me realize that this is a global organization, and I am proud to be a part of it, representing my country.

On top of school, I have also become a teacher at a local elementary school. I teach English twice a week to children from ages seven to twelve. This is a lot of fun, and is the highlight of my week. I get to teach them words, play fun games, and teach them camp songs that I learnt when I was in Girl Guides. It's also quite flattering hearing them call me beautiful as I walk by in the halls. Teaching here has helped me realize that I love doing this, and I may want to pursue it as my career.

I have also switched host families. I am on my second one, and they are wonderful. I am quite close with my host sisters. This host family is very big, and are always doing things together, which I am always eager to take part in. I am quite close with this host family, and I spend a lot of time with my host sisters at the mall or at the stadium.

These past few months have been some of the best of my life. They've gone by so fast, and I can hardly believe that I'm almost halfway through my exchange. These months have been amazing, and I would just like to say thank you to every person who helped make this possible.

Thank you, and see you next time!

Ella