

## Swa-dee-ka (Hello) from Chiang Mai, Thailand

Written by by Erin Johns

Tuesday, December 10, 2013 6:40 AM

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I'm not sure why, but each month I'm surprised at how completely different our ministry work looks like compared to what we thought we'd be doing. This month in Thailand, we worked with Lighthouse in Action, who is fervently working to end human trafficking (the sale of women and children for sex).



Each team in the world race had a different role (visiting slums, bar ministry, etc.), but ours involved working with the women in Zion Café, which offered yummy Thai food, coffee, smoothies, and desserts.

How could a simple coffeehouse help battle what is being called the worst form of slavery to date? Simple – they provide a choice, an option women do not know they have in most cases, to earn an honest income.

Honor and respect of family is HUGE in Thailand and in many parts of Asia, and this traditional thread and value runs especially through the villages, slums, and other local areas.

Young women want to provide for their parents so they hit the big city in hopes of finding a stellar job. Instead, they find broken promises and a life that leads to shame, guilt, and hopelessness. Some of the women at the cafe have come from this lifestyle and others come from other tough situations.

Our first week was a challenge – it took time for the ladies to warm up to us and trust us with simple tasks like peeling garlic. Soon, though, we began to joke and get a better guess at how we could help them due to the language barrier. Simple tasks like delivering food, cleaning tables, washing dishes, opening/closing, greeting customers, and playing card games when the shift was slow made all the difference.

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So how did this honestly help stop human trafficking? Each person on my team of five people: (myself, Jill, Heather, Jeanette, and Darcie) did our part. My role involved helping Zion Café, which had only been in their new location for a few short months with promotional materials such as flyers, postcards, coffee punch cards, social networking, etc. We were able to hand out discount coupons at the Franklin Graham Crusade that was visiting Chiang Mai while we were here, and some of those coupons have already made it back to the café.

Slowly as funds come in, Lighthouse in Action will be able to fulfill its vision of being a café, youth hostel, drop-in center for teens, teaching English classes, and providing job skills to women leaving a life of prostitution.

Our entire squad celebrated Thanksgiving together eating family style Thai food with lots of celebration and laughter.

Cambodia for Christmas – hard to believe we've made it to our halfway mark of the World Race. Our India visas have been approved and our tentative route for the rest of the race is Cambodia, Vietnam, India, Nepal, Zambia, and Malawi.

There is so much to be thankful for this Thanksgiving. Take a moment to hug your family or people dear to you.

I am just \$700 away from being fully funded for the World Race (deadline is Dec. 26). Please contact me at [erinjohns79@yahoo.com](mailto:erinjohns79@yahoo.com) if you would be interested in making a tax deductible donation, or check out my blog at [erinjohns.worldrace.org](http://erinjohns.worldrace.org).