

COLLINS FAMILY

MARCH MESSAGES

from
CHIANG MAI,
THAILAND
2015



On the Burmese border

Thanks to all

our friends, family, supporting churches and individuals, for enabling us to continue our life and work in Thailand.

In this issue, we highlight a trip taken by Andy and our younger son, Jonathan with the performing troupe of CCI (Christian Communications Institute), our partner ministry.

In June we will return to the USA for our "home assignment." We look forward to seeing some of you then!

*Andy, Ellen,
Christopher & Jonathan Collins*

Since I (Andy) began working with CCI in 2006, I have been able to enlist the help of sons Christopher and Jonathan on a number of projects. Christopher (now 19) has helped out as "camera man" and accompanied me for a week to film our team performing at a school in a town 140 miles east of Chiang Mai. Could I take Jonathan (13) on such a trip? Since last year's journey to the Burma border (see Feb. 2014 Newsletter), CCI had been planning to return. Would this be Jonathan's chance? We would be roughing it and he would miss about 10 days of school...

After a family discussion, we all decided that it would be a great learning experience for Jonathan (and his teachers agreed).

Here are some statistics that will give you an idea of the gist of the journey:

- 13 days on the road
- 5 villages visited along the border
- 6 times to set-up/break-down/pack up *likay* drama stage & equipment
- 2 performances of "Saul on the Road to Damascus" at 2 Sunday services
- 2 plays about "making wise choices" performed at local high schools.
- 900 miles travelled (sitting inside and in the back of the pickup truck balanced on a pile of equipment).



We also attended:

- 1 clinic opening (established to serve the local village and patients from across the border)
- 2 baptism ceremonies (held in small streams)
- 2 weddings

There was some time to relax...

- 3 waterfalls & a rafting trip
- 1 border crossing for a short walk into Burma

Taking my sons Christopher and Jonathan along on a work trip with me has been a great privilege. They have been able to be a part of what I do, but not only that, they have been able to see what a great witness the CCI team is in their ministry.



Christopher's Column

When I returned to Thailand from China before Christmas, I did a variety of things, including coaching my brother's basketball team, studying and teaching guitar, translating CCI dramas, and teaching English.



For the first time in my life, I took an academic course with my Mom. We learned how to teach English as a second language, and had a practicum teaching hospital staff how to speak English to foreign patients. It was a fantastic experience and equipped me for the next leg of my "gap year" -- returning to China to teach in Kunming.



I also spent time with my Dad and the CCI team, traveling to a nearby town where I translated a drama for high school students. The actors even brought us into the scene from time to time! A highlight of that trip was biking home with my Dad (125 miles). We went to another town right before I left again for China, where I'll be through May as I continue my "gap year."



JONATHAN'S JOTTINGS

During my trip to the villages with my dad there were some really fun experiences that I want to tell you about. One night in a village called Letongkou some of the guys from the CCI drama team and I went to the little stream to catch shrimp. It was midnight because that's the best time to catch shrimp. We used flashlights and nets because the shrimps' eyes glow when light

That was one fun nights of Another really did was go to It had some could jump off water. There little pool of water that



jump into so it was pretty risky. One of the CCI guys decided that it was a good idea to dive off that cliff. He scraped his face quite badly on a rock in the water.

This was one of the most exciting trips I've been on and I really hope I can do one like it again!

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Lek's New Life

"Lek" was tricked by her boyfriend and brought to Chiang Mai on a bus from her home three hours north. She was pregnant. He said he would marry her as long as she moved to his home town. But as soon as they reached the station in Chiang Mai, he disappeared, leaving her with no money, phone or address. As an ethnic minority village girl, Lek speaks Thai poorly, and was afraid to ask for help.

For a few days she stayed at the bus station, hoping her boyfriend would return for her. "But in my heart I knew I would never see him again," she says. Travelers gave her food or some change. Finally someone took her to the department of social welfare, where she was cared for until she gave birth. Lek was then referred to the Home of the Swallow, where I (Ellen) have been helping since 2013. This ministry reaches out to needy single mothers and their infants, offering a safe place to live, learn and start afresh.

Lek now has a new life. And she has a new baby -- one who will not be abandoned at an orphanage as so many children are here in Thailand. Both mother and child are being cared for and given opportunities. Thanks for the prayers and support that enables me to serve them in a very small way at the Home of the Swallow in Chiang Mai.