

What A Difference It Has Made To Me - *By Beth Meadows*

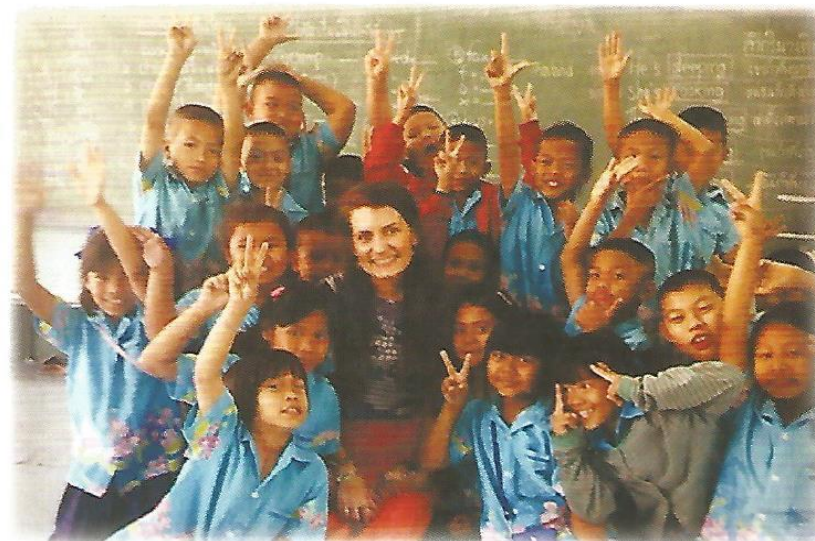
Phil Brown writes: Beth attended St Mary's, Astley, in Greater Manchester and is now studying English and History at Liverpool University. She and her family are parishioners at St Ambrose Barlow, Astley. Sarah was known to the President at that time, Jim Nester of Leigh Circle. Head Office made contact with Leigh Circle in Province 1 so that Beth could be presented with a cheque for £900 from the Bursary Fund. The presentation took place at Leigh Circle's meeting in March at St Richard's Social Club, Atherton.

Beth undertook a 12 month project in Thailand in her gap year with the Project Trust and the following is an extract from her talk to the Circle on her return to the UK. What struck the Brothers and wives was the difference the experience has made to Beth's life. All present felt that her explanation of the effect it has had on her life fully justifies the need for further contributions to be made to the Bursary Fund.

"In August 2013 I went to Thailand to start my 12 month placement with Project Trust and it was an incredible experience. I was living in Nakhan Sawan about three hours journey from Bangkok. The city was a balance of Thai and western cultures, there was even a Tesco store!

I was helping to teach, with the other volunteers on the project, English to a broad range of age groups. Amongst the groups we helped were novice Buddhist monks. However, primarily we worked in some of the poorest schools in the city and which are government funded. However, secondary education and above has to be paid for, so is limiting for poorer students. To help these students a man called Peter Robinson has created and runs the charity SET (Student Education Trust) which supports hundreds of students. I was so inspired by the work of the charity that I ran a 10k around the local park and raised, with donations from family and friends back home and local people, over £400 for Peter's charity. Such was my experience that I fully intend after my studies to return to Thailand to teach.

My experience in Thailand has made an amazing difference to my life back in the UK. I have stayed in touch with Project Trust and work for them by delivering talks to schools and colleges in the Lancashire and Merseyside area, encouraging others to take a gap year and work



abroad as I have done. I am also being trained to become a Global Citizen Ambassador, which will involve me in delivering workshops about international issues.

I am an active volunteer in my community as a member of the Help the Homeless society and through which I have volunteered to help The Whitechapel Centre for rough sleepers in Liverpool. I also am being trained with the charity, Silver Line involving making contact with vulnerable elderly people once a week.

My phenomenal experience in Thailand has taught me so much about myself and made clear to me what I want to do in my life. I realised in my time overseas that I want my future career path to be in human rights and charitable work. After completion of my undergraduate degree I want to study for a masters degree in Humanitarian Aid.

Without the beautiful generosity I received from the Catenians and others my experiences over the last year would not have been possible. I will forever be grateful to everyone who made my time in Thailand possible. It was truly a life changing experience.