

Name: Ann-Marie Kennedy



Hometown: Garlands, St. James, Jamaica

Where I am interning abroad: I am interning at the Emergency Home for Women and Children in Don Muang, Bangkok, Thailand.

Major: Social Work

Favorite Foreign Food so far: Kao pad gung and mango-strawberry yogurt bingsu

Least favorite food: Durian

Quote about my experience abroad: Everyone should have the experience of visiting another country and have a diverse cultural experience at least once in his/her lifetime. It taught me to value what I have more, and to appreciate what others make of what they have. It is also challenging and interesting to experience sounds and try to form words I have never heard or spoken before.

Advice for future education abroad students: Try to arrange for contact between you and your placement agency before you go abroad. This will allow for communication of clear expectations before you get there. Enjoy the experience and the challenges – they are well worth the trip.

Favorite city/site visited while abroad so far: The Wat Pho Buddhist temple complex in the Phra Nakhon District, Bangkok, Thailand. It is on Rattanakosin Island, near the Grand Palace and was built by Rama I (founder of the Chakkri Dynasty).

I am completing my practicum requirement to complete the B.S. degree in Social Work. I am the department's first international placement, so I feel the pressures of making this internship a success. My placement location is the Emergency Home for Women and Children in Bangkok. It is a non-governmental agency that serves primarily women and children who have survived domestic abuse. However, the agency addresses other social concerns their clientele face, including HIV infection and teenage pregnancy. I wanted to work with women and children in an environment that focuses on their

education and empowerment. I also wanted to get a broader perspective on how gendered cultural norms impact women's access to education, job opportunities, and social position.

One of the most enjoyable aspects of my internship is the opportunity to interact with the clients at the emergency home, nursery, and children's home, who are all housed on one compound. The fact that there is an obvious difference in the languages we speak, makes for rather creative and interesting ways of communicating. Oftentimes, our conversations are characterized by nouns and adjectives with a few verbs thrown in. Despite the differences, we find ways to meaningfully communicate and learn about each other. I inevitably say the wrong thing because of the tonal nature of the Thai language, but this is usually joked about until I make the mistake again. At the point the laughter becomes louder, which helps the clients get their humor for the day, and I learn to laugh at myself, which is excellent therapy for me. I discovered that Thai people are generally positive in their approach to life and do not allow their difficult circumstances to dictate the tone of their day. This contributes to a good working environment with clients. The emergency home is in a peaceful and secluded area, surrounded by trees, water ponds, and a variety of wildlife, including large monitor lizards that wander across the roads and eat their catch of fish on the banks of the ponds.



Bangkok, Thailand is a very large city with towering high-rise buildings, contrasted with lush greenery and water bodies. There is a wide variety of fruits, food stalls, and markets across the city. Nights are usually quite busy as it is popular to eat outdoors in the evenings. My favorite foods so far are kao pad gung (fried rice and prawns) and bingsu (a Korean flaky ice milk dessert covered in fruits and served with sweetened condensed milk and fruit syrup). Interestingly, I have eaten quite a bit of Korean influenced food in Thailand. I am also amazed at the various types of meats and the popularity of white rice in the Thai diet. Of course, fish and other aquatic animals are major ingredients in their meals.

My most interesting trip was a visit to Wat Pho Temple. This temple has beautiful grounds and houses a huge golden reclining image of Buddha. The river journey there was an exciting one. The journey on the Chi River, Thailand's longest river that flows solely in this country, has beautiful views. I have never been on such a large river, and it was even more interesting to see the river boat attendants throwing the rope to secure the boat, then hop onboard while the boat is already on its way. Some of the boats for the citizens also have the caption, 'Hop on, hop off', which increased the exciting energy of the journey since this is taken literally while the boats are moving.