

**PRAY** POSTED ON MARCH 14, 2018

**Pray for Kit Ripley helping tribal minority girls in Thailand who are victims and survivors of exploitation and abuse.**



BOB SANTILLI

Kit's primary ministry involvement is with the New Life Center Foundation (NLCF) in northern Thailand. The NLCF works with tribal minority girls who are survivors of labor exploitation, sexual abuse, domestic violence and/or human trafficking and girls who are at risk for exploitation and abuse. Kit's work there includes teaching therapeutic art classes, guest relations, staff development and training, report writing and administration. Additionally, Kit leads therapeutic art workshops and art and prayer retreats for Christian workers in Asia through the ministry of the Imago Art Studio.

Kit writes – **The room sparkled** with a tapestry of colors. People dressed in their finest outfits were chattering away in a variety of languages. All around us was heard a rich panoply of English, Thai, Lahu, Akha, Karen, and Burmese. Friends had come from Connecticut, Hawaii, Sweden, the Netherlands, England, Burma and Thailand. There were board members, donors, police, social workers, church pastors and representatives from our NGO (non-governmental organization) partners. New Life Center graduates and former staff came from near and far. We were there to celebrate the New Life Center’s 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

**We came together to celebrate the legacy** handed down to us by faithful and visionary leaders who laid the foundation for who the New Life Center is today. We also look forward with great anticipation to the unveiling of an exciting future.

**The vision of the New Life Center is “An exploitation-free society for tribal people throughout the Mekong Sub-Region”**, and in the last 30 years, we have seen great strides in Thailand toward that goal. We have seen improved access to education in rural areas. We have seen improvements in Thai anti-trafficking law. We have seen capable women moving into powerful leadership roles in all sectors of society. And the New Life Center has been honored to be invited to the table to collaborate with Royal Thai Government entities to influence Thai law related to human trafficking, citizenship and human rights. We have prevented exploitation and trafficking by promoting education and by conducting anti-trafficking campaigns throughout the Mekong Sub-Region, educating thousands of people.

We have provided comprehensive case management and rehabilitative care for thousands of survivors of sexual abuse, domestic violence, labor exploitation and trafficking in persons. The New Life Center is also known throughout the region for our greatest resources – our amazing, capable, and qualified staff and our excellent programs.

**All of these things happened** because God empowered a group of dedicated people to pour out their heart and soul to make it happen. This did not happen by accident. The improvements in tribal society that we see today exist because a lot of dedicated people invested to make it happen. And this progress is not something we claim to have done alone. We did it together, with the New Life Center staff, residents and graduates working in collaboration with government entities, other NGOs, churches, and financial supporters.

**Nevertheless, we still have a long way to go.** We have not yet reached our goal of “An exploitation free society for tribal people throughout the Mekong Sub-Region”. Tribal minorities still experience discrimination and forced labor in the workplace. Poverty, addiction, and domestic violence still plague villages. Girls and young women continue to be victimized for the sexual gratification of others. These things must end!

**As we head into the future**, the New Life Center is determined to redouble our efforts to be change agents in the region. We will continue to expand our prevention efforts by training leaders from throughout Thailand and neighboring countries to educate people in their own language groups about the risk factors for trafficking. We will continue to provide excellent aftercare services for survivors of trauma. We will advocate at the provincial and national levels for human rights and equal access to citizenship.