

## Fountain of Life Update August 2017

Since the last update in April, 15 students have been involved in the jewellery project and their sales of their beautiful jewellery is booming as the tourist season hits Thailand.

This July, I was able to go out and visit the women who have benefited from the generous donations of Our Lady of Lourdes, Harpenden. It's wonderful to see and meet these amazing women who have been through so much, who turn to the centre for support and receive counselling, friendship and hope of a future. As you walk into the centre it radiates support as the words painted on the wall read "one person is of more value than the whole world".

Most of the women take the jewellery course alongside a language course so they can develop even more skills. I sat with a class of 6 who were making delicate earrings, and sparkling bracelets. The students tried to teach me how they make the jewellery, however, without the basic training from the teachers that your parish provided, I was left inadequate in comparison to the rest of the skilled women in the class!

***"One person is of more value than the whole world."***

As I spoke with them, I saw the friendships and support group they had built with each other. As I've said previously, this centre is a way for them to gain skills and eventually gain enough to leave a world of exploitation for good. What I noticed when I was there is that even on a day to day basis, this centre was a home, a sisterhood and a family where they were safe, relaxed and among women who understood and did not judge. Every time they are at this centre they are already escaping exploitation.

I later met the wonderful Sister Piyachat who runs the centre who I can only describe as one of the most understanding and kindest women I have ever had the honour of meeting. A notion that is shared amongst the students, staff and volunteers. She shared with me a story about one of their students that you have helped:



"Pad who has finished studying jewellery has recently gone back to her village. She was in the Chonburi Province for a few years and was bored with her life here in the city. She came to Women's Centre to first learn Hair Dressing. When we opened the Jewellery Course to more people as we could fund more teachers, she started learning how to make jewellery so she could go back home and spend time with her family. After 3 months, she went back to her village and

began teaching her children and other children in her village how to make jewellery. The children are able to sell the jewellery they made at their school. She is proud to teach the children and happy to spend time with her family too."