

he last eighteen months have been a challenging journey for everyone. Thailand was able to contain the pandemic remarkably well for many months. Citizens cooperated with public health guidelines - and international travel into the country was severely restricted. People also made great efforts to minimize exposure, wore masks, and worked from home whenever possible. Due to these measures the country was able to contain minor outbreaks of the virus. However, within the last few months a fresh outbreak of the Delta variant has begun to spread aggressively throughout the country. We are now averaging about 20,000 new COVID cases per day and Thailand has suffered over 9,000 COVID fatalities. The pandemic has also taken a devastating economic toll on the country. Many people have lost jobs. Business owners have been forced to close businesses. And churches are distributing emergency food relief. Nevertheless, all of our NLCF staff and residents remain in good health, are safe and have enough to eat, thanks to the grace of God and the generosity of our ministry partners.

At the New Life Center, our students are engaged in virtual schooling this year. They remain confined to the residence in accordance with government recommendations. We have organized a schedule of supportive activities including handicrafts, baking, singing, and therapeutic arts. However, we have reluctantly been forced to suspend activities that normally take place off-site - such as day trips, etc. Staff are keeping up communications via email and zoom and developing curriculum for future community-based programming.

You may recall that I returned to the USA in March of 2020. Due to travel restrictions I was not able to return to Thailand for 11 months. During those months I kept in touch with NLC staff colleague, Rev. Jeni Pedzinski - who kept things running smoothly. Jeni left in July to return to the US for a year of US assignment.

Please know that your prayerful partnership makes a tangible difference in the lives of our NLCF residents and staff. The work of the NLCF is needed now more than ever. Abuse and exploitation prosper under conditions of secrecy and economic desperation. But the NLCF remains an anchor of hope, firmly embedded in our community and bearing witness to the love of God.

Thank you for your commitment to partnering with me in ministry through your prayers, friendship and financial support. You all remain in my thoughts and prayers.

In Christ's love,
Kit Ripley