

Irving, Texas Resident Marina Stana Returns from Thailand after Caring for Victims of Sexual Slavery

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Ms. Marina Stana, 19, a resident of Irving, has returned from 21 days of public service work in the regions of Chang Rai and Bangkok, Thailand. Ms. Stana tells the news that she worked with the Development and Education Programme for Daughters and Communities, whose founder, Sompap Jantraka, has twice been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. The Development and Education Programme for Daughters and Communities is a NGO (non-governmental organization) which prevents child exploitation and defends vulnerable minors and their rights.

Ms. Stana also worked with Pavena Hongsakul Foundation for Children and Women, a non-profit organization that cares for victims of the sex industry. Marina also participated in a conference sponsored by UNESCO, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, which addressed how human trafficking attacks the dignity of victims.

Ms. Stana, who aspires to be an Elementary School Teacher, will study at University of Texas at Arlington after her second year of service with Generation Peace Academy, the premier character education project of the Unification Church and Lovin' Life Ministries. During the 10-month program, participants spend at least 21 days doing relief work or public service in a developing country.

Marina graduated from Macarthur High School in 2010. Marina was involved in National Honors society, played on the Varsity Softball team for three years, ventured through 2 years studying abroad in Korea learning the language and culture there, and graduated with over 100 hours of volunteer. Instead of the normal pathway of college after high school, Marina deferred 2 years before college to offer her helping hand and to give back for all the blessing she feels she's grown up with in life. Mr. Dan and Mrs. Kimie Stana, the parents of Marina, are a major source of this inspiration for public service because of their example of serving no matter who or what the situation.

Marina says she credits her parents, those who have helped raise her to this point, and her church community for inspiring her to take time to serve all across the world. Marina says "I'll never forget the hearts and faces that I feel I've come to know like family in Thailand. I'm so grateful that we could do something to raise awareness about this problem of human trafficking that is subtly spreading around the world. I'll always keep in mind and be praying for my family in Thailand, hoping that not even one of them gets pulled into this nightmare of a life." Ms. Stana went on to say, "Everyone deserves to be great. There is so much that we can do for the ones around the world who don't have a voice, or don't have anything they can do about their situation. So if we know that our brothers and sisters from around the world are suffering, how can we go on and just live comfortably knowing we can do something about it? I realized in the three weeks I was in Thailand that we should always be ready to help our families around the world, not because we'll get a reward or any special recognition, but because we care and just because that's how the world is supposed to be."