

Zoom Meeting
American Baptist Women of Maine
February 8, 2022

On a Tuesday evening, seventeen women from Maine gathered around their home computers to meet Missionary, Jeni Pedzinski.

In 2013, Jeni met with a group of Maine women, in Scarborough. Jeni had been approved to go to the New Life Center, in Thailand.

In 2015, she was ready to fly to Bangkok, Thailand. Upon arrival she entered language school for a year. With two masters degrees: a Master of International Development and a Master of Divinity in hand, she became like a “four year old” learning a new language, with a new alphabet and tonal sounds. She received a good base but far from fluent. It took three years before she felt capable of speaking the Thai language.

Jeni’s ministry is with the New Life Center, in Chiang Mai. It is located in the northern part of the country, bordering Myanmar (Burma) and Laos. It is a very poor area with many different tribal groups.

The Center works with girls from these tribes who are at risk or survivors of forced labor, human trafficking and sexual abuse.

These tribal groups are in a rural mountainous area. They are a minority and migrants with different languages. They have no birth certificates; therefore, they are non-citizens, unable to own land or have a bank account.

Much of their work is with families, to make them understand the value of human life. To put a stop to trafficking, incest and sex trades. To have parents realize the value of an education.

At the New Life Center, she met Bee, a local lady from the Karen Tribe. Bee is a God called Leader and Director of the New Life Center.

Jeni is the senior administrator. Her duties include: support for Bee, write reports, public relations, teach workshops on finance and financial literacy, scholarship management for intelligent women in need of an education and Christian discipleship.

To lead these girls to a new life in Christ is their main goal. To increase their love and knowledge of God. To encourage them to grow strong in the Lord and remain faithful in their new life in Christ

The girls need counseling to aid in the adjustment from tribal life to a new way of life in a new town or city. To aid in the healing process, from a lifetime of abuse and the strength to not get lured back into sex trades.

They work with each girl to get her a birth certificate and then citizenship. It is not easy to accomplish.

Citizenship for the girls opens doors to the rights and privileges of citizenship, education and jobs.

Education, at all levels, is the key. Many children, of the hill country tribes, have never been to school. They also do not speak Thai. The center now has two home schools. Some students attend public school. Students have to leave the community for higher education.

But school is not free. Scholarships for all levels are needed. Because only elementary school is available in Chiang Mai, travel and boarding expenses are needed, in addition to tuition and book fees. Scholarships include all these expenses.

The center also has extensive training is using their art and craft skills. These girls produce exceptional hand crafted articles for sale. Jeni is preparing a list of school and craft needs that Maine churches and women can provide.

The New Life Center has a residential facility, for ages 11-22. Sixty dollars a month, will support one girl at the center, for one month. She receives shelter, food and the special care she needs.

Jeni also shared that after being on the field for five years, you are expected to come home for a year of home assignment. She requested to stay another year before home assignment. It was granted.

Enter Covid. Jeni stayed in Thailand for another year. She finally arrived in the United States last spring. She was quarantined until she had received all Covid vaccines. She has been granted 18 months of home assignment.

Her grandfather was diagnosed with a slow growing cancer. He was at home, with care from his wife and hospice, which lasted over a year. After being released from Covid restriction and a phone call with grandmother, she realized grandmother was depressed and lonely. She stayed with them from September until he passed on January 2. "The Lord planned for me to be home to aid my grandparents. I never expected to be a primary care giver, to my grandfather and then to aid my grandmother through her grief.

She is scheduled to travel visiting churches from March to December. She is penciled in to be at our summer conference, in August. If that fails, at least a Zoom Meeting.

She requested prayer for a close friend, from Thailand, who is very sick, in a Pennsylvania hospital, with no diagnosis.

"Question? Do they need a foreigner to work at The New life Center or can they function as a totally independent organization? Missionaries are to work themselves out of a job. I have a love and passion for the New Life Center, to empower them to be the best. I am deeply confident God has a work for me in the future. There is no replacement for me while I am here. I still do my job online. God prepared me for my job there."

"Love and Prayer, from others, has made a difference in my life."

Respectfully Submitted,

Martha L. Walker

P.S. If you go to the following computer address, you can listen to Jeni tell the story of the New Life Center. It is wonderful! <https://newlifecenterfoundation.org/about-us/>