



The Mirror Foundation Elderly In-Home Care Project

The Mirror Foundation In-Home Care Project {Day 1}

<http://www.themirrorfoundation.org/>

September 4, 2014

The Project Director's first name is 'Get'. I call her "My Boss." Get led volunteers through a case-by-case visit of individuals who are currently either family members of the extremely ill and suffering and also those in need of care themselves. The 'visits' are referred to by the foundation as [Cases]. A description of each is provided as follows:

Case 1: When I visited my first case, or rather, the first of five, was the home of a woman who lived with her 22-year-old son and his two children. It was a home built out of scrap wood and metal. The husband was injured when he fell from faulty scaffolding working construction in order to make a meager living. With his hands he toiled and labored to feed his family up until the fall left him with a severe head trauma. The home is a mere shanty and situated on a small piece of rented land surrounded by a make-shift dumping ground –but it is home. At present and long into the future. There is no income and they survive by a small and unlivable allowance from the government, the help of friends and neighbors, and The Mirror Foundation. I will not obtrude my outward observations for reasons you can easily see them in the pictures. Instead my particular description will be that of my personal accounting of experiences and emotions. Considering the poorest of the poor, a less than humble abode, we were met by a smiling and gracious host. She was the wife of the injured husband who lay in a hospital. The very same hospital as her grandmother. This woman; although exhausted from daily trips by bus and a long journey each and every day to see her husband and grandmother wore a pleasant expression, stoic, and sweet. Upon walking toward what would be considered her porch, I noticed she was desperately wiping a sitting table and chairs in order to greet her guests. Concerning this simple gesture left me feeling an ache in my heart, overt pride for this woman, and considering her circumstances, I have not seen such eloquence from the most cultured or wealthy

individuals. We were invited inside her home. It was warm and welcoming but I could feel the lonesomeness. This was especially pertinent when the woman took time to show us the bed prepared for her husband when and if he ever returns home. A bed he would lay while his gentle wife cared for him. While her heart would be lighter even though he is very ill –because he was finally home.

Case 2: An elderly man who fell and struck his head hard on the cement causing brain damage. In respect to egotism there was none by a son and daughter who cared for their father. Care without question because this is the man who raised them with love and compassion. Sitting on the floor and facing the hospital bed donated by the foundation was his wife. She stared at her husband quietly. Her eyes shined but with a deep longing and sadness. As if she was remembering their first kiss when he courted her so many years before. The way it was and should be. His brain injury is worsening and the man refers to everyone as “Papa;” however, he remembers his only son. The care for him stretched the seams of empathy. Before leaving I took his hand in mine. He did not notice, but I did and felt the warmth that the memories and my wishes hanging suspended that his remaining days be peaceful and without pain.

Case 3: She also was bed-ridden, elderly, and her body burned with a throbbing pain. However today, when I held her soft hands in mine she spoke quickly and her mind was as altered as her beautiful eyes. A look of fire as if staring into the face of the sun she spoke to me in Thai which was a race to translate into English. Too many lovely words to recount, but she wept and pulled me close for me to kiss her face. Words describing her body hurt no longer on this day because I made the pain disappear. The woman spoke of “waiting for me” and I finally came. Far from deserving these compliments. Rather, those at the foundation; especially, Get, the head volunteer, who is the angel –not I. We fashioned an air mattress, another donation by The Mirror Foundation in order to give the woman some relief due to the fact her bed was hard and caused her more pain. My boss Get figured out how to actually use the air machine to blow it up...her nickname is now ‘Doctor/Engineer Get’. (Note: Once Get figured out the cap needed removing from the air hose, it was pure success after wards ... sorry Get! I had to tell!) We said our goodbyes, but before leaving I took the blessing yarn worn upon my wrist for nearly two months now since going to Temple. I tied it to the woman’s wrist as a remembrance of my promise to her: “She will dance a ballad with me when able to walk again”. Kissing her forehead, I say, “Chan rak khun” I Love You, in Thai and we leave. Pushing away the thoughts of never seeing her and remembering only her hands in mine, the soft kisses upon her cheeks, and the time spent never letting go while I knelt close to her bed – a true indication of a life worth living and sharing.

Case 4: A pretty woman who once sang beautifully to songs her brother, a famous Thai songwriter and musician who still writes. Her body twisted due to a brain illness, she struggled to move and can speak no longer. But her eyes played about and took in everything. Sparkled with

intelligence and hope. With one look you knew her care took delicate handling by her husband who sat close by. Gasping for breath and no doubt unable to understand the agonizing physical pain, her mental capabilities stayed sharp. Her expression that of pondering and that of an individual who has a lot of fight and light remaining.

Case 5: Tenderly I end my day with an elderly bed-stricken man who was quiet, reflective, and immediately took my hand the second I met him. We were mates from the onset. His shirt, a basketball jersey his kind wife bought at the market bore the word and number: "Slime 99." I loved it! I laid down next to him on his small foam mat and nearly fell asleep. My arm resting over his small frame it was difficult to keep my eyes open. This man was so much like me. His demeanor and facial expressions were that of a poet and dreamer. In his own private world where only the better side of any human being is allowed. Divinity stirred within him. We visited for one hour and never uttered a word until just before leaving. Only one, but it would be what brought the room to a roaring laughter and me almost to tears. In a small voice he spoke, "Tyler" and spoke not again. Kissing the top of his hand we leave.

For Get, my boss. You are the angel. Not me. She has been providing care of these people for years. A prisoner of compassion, but a slave to no world. Without her, I would have never experienced today. Within her there is no falseness of tomorrow –only the truth of today. Get is my trusted cloud and silent rain. Your deeds will never go unnoticed. Even after this heart of mine stops beating.

Milligan's special thanks and appreciation goes again to The Mirror Foundation. They are the true hearts. The battle worn angels of humanity. Our only hope for a better future. Khorb Khun Mark to all at The Mirror Foundation. <http://www.themirrorfoundation.org/>.

See below pages for a picture gallery from the day.

PICTURE GALLERY:



































































