

A Heart For the Unwanted

GIS exists to support the hundreds of families who minister in SE Asia



David O with orphan

God delights in giving us the desires of our hearts, even if He waits 27 years to give us those desires! Connie Cummins knew from the age of 13 that she wanted to run an orphanage someday. Watching her today with her flock of little ones, it's clear that she is doing what she loves, and what God created her to do.

When Connie and her husband, Richard, first came to Thailand, an orphanage was never in the plans; Richard came to serve as business manager and treasurer for ministries in SE Asia. But when Connie, a former home schooling mom, sent her 5 children to Grace International School, she found herself with time on her hands, so she began to volunteer at an orphanage in Chiang Mai.

During her first few weeks at the orphanage, she noticed a very sick baby who

spent virtually all of her time lying on a mat, receiving very little care from the workers. At three months, little Tip weighed only four pounds and had miraculously survived an abortion. Connie's heart went out to Tip, and she asked the director of the orphanage if she could take Tip home and care for her there. It is likely Tip would have died shortly, had Connie not intervened. She nursed Tip back to health, but her heart was undeniably bonded with this precious baby. Nine years later, Tip is a vibrant, healthy girl and experiences the permanent joy of being adopted into the Cummins family.

But Connie's story does not end there... Shortly after nursing Tip back to health, the orphanage, amazed by Connie's love and care of Tip, asked her to care for more children. The director of the orphanage later told her, "When you came to help us, I knew there was something in your eyes, but I didn't know what it was." That something was Connie's selfless desire to care for these parent-less children, and not just the healthy ones—she specifically told them that she only wanted to care for the sick babies! She knew these children would never receive the care they needed, but she was willing to try.

Baby "M" was found abandoned in a bag on the side of a street. A passing man

found her and she was placed in Connie's care. Today, M's sweet round face and constant smile make her a joy to be around. "D", age 5, was extremely sick when Connie took her in. Without the medical intervention facilitated by Connie, the doctors have told her "D" would have died within days. Watching her today, you would never know that this beautiful, curious, strong-willed little girl was once a neglected baby.

Connie and her family and staff have loved and cared for over 26 children in the last few years. Each child is eventually

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adopted and placed in a loving home. While each adoption is welcomed joyously, it is also painful for Connie to let these precious children go after investing years of time—and love—into each child. She is convinced the sacrifice and tears are worth it. As Connie says, "We must be open to what God has planned for us. If we only have eyes for what we are "supposed" to be doing, we may miss the blessings of God's amazing, unexpected plans!"

A True Champion

A story from a GIS student

When speaking with her, you would never guess that behind GIS student Mallory W.'s sweet voice and winning smile lies a tough, determined, and skilled athlete. In a recent competition between other international school students from various SE Asian countries, Mallory easily placed first in the 400 m. race. Mallory is strong and fast. She plays every sport that Grace offers, and every team she has played on has won the league championship. There's no doubt that athletics are important to Mallory.

But she acknowledges that athletics is often a training ground for what is more important to her: her relationship with God.

This 16 year old student, who has lived overseas as an MK all of her life, attributes much of what she has learned about athletics and life to her coaches. Regarding one of her coaches, she comments, "He's amazing! He's done so much in his life, and he talks with us all the time about the lessons he's learned. He advises us about how to make wise decisions."

Striving for excellence, both athletically and spiritually, is something she has learned from her soccer coaches. "The coaches are involved in our lives. They pray for us and care about us personally," says Mallory. "They go beyond what is normally expected of a coach."

With only one more year left at Grace, Mallory is taking advantage of every opportunity for spiritual growth offered by GIS: prayer team, chapel team, Agape Home (orphanage), and after-school Bible studies with teachers. Her advice to other students: "If you love God and want to grow in your relationship with Him, there are lots of opportunities here at Grace. All you have to do is look for them... they'll come looking for you, too!"



Mallory wears her number 9 uniform