

## **Work & Study Program Student (Name withheld)**

### **The Story of My Life, An Essay (translated from Thai)**

I am 16 years old. I live in Thai Muang District, in Phangnga Province. My family is composed of four siblings and I am the oldest child. When I was three years old I was sent to live with my maternal grandparents. Not long after I went to live with them, my grandfather passed away and I have lived with my grandmother and aunt ever since because my mother and father had three more children. Both my mother and father need to work very hard because they have a lot of children.

This is why I needed to move to live with my grandmother and aunt, even though their home is very poor also. My aunt also has her own family with one child; unfortunately, her child lost his life by drowning. Both my aunt and her boyfriend work in the local plywood plant and together they early only 145 baht (about \$4.00 USD) per day which is the minimum wage. At this time my aunt chooses not to work because currently work is so hard to find.

My grandmother is 62 years old and has no income at all; she cannot work because she is old and can hardly walk. Only my aunt provides me with some money to allow me to go to school. She gives me 220 baht per month for transportation money and 25 baht per day for snacks. I am trying to save as much as I can. If there is any food at home, I usually eat at home [before going to school.] I also bring my lunch to school from home so that I can save as much of my aunt's money as possible. If I do not save like this, I do not know what I would do if anything happened to my aunt. Since I do not know what the future holds; I think it best to save what I can.

It will be difficult for my family if I have to go back to live with my parents. They already have the responsibility of raising their many other children and I do not wish to add to their burden.

I am currently studying in the fourth secondary level [grade 11] . In the future I want to be able to study for by baccalaureate degree. When I graduate I want to repay the generosity given to me by my grandmother and my aunt. My goal is to study Education so that when I complete my studies I can become a good teacher. My dream has always been to be a professional teacher.

Finally, I wish to thank you for the generous assistance you have provided for me. I will use the money that I earn from your donations in the best way possible to be a benefit in my daily life. Thank you so much.