

News Release

Junior Selena Young Travels to Thailand to Work with Elephants

By *Sung-Ae Reed* on *Monday, September 25, 2017*

From Sung-Ae Reed, Director of Student Services, at admissions@loopabroad.com

This summer, Selena Young, 20, of Plymouth, Minnesota, spent three weeks in Thailand helping animals, discovering Thai culture, and learning hands-on what it's like to be a veterinarian. Traveling with study-abroad organization Loop Abroad, Selena was selected as part of a small team that volunteered giving care at a dog shelter and spent a week working directly with rescued elephants at an elephant sanctuary.

The Veterinary Service program brings students to Thailand for two weeks to volunteer alongside veterinarians from the US and Thailand. For one week, Selena and her team volunteered at the Elephant Nature Park in northern Thailand to work hands-on with the giant animals and learn about animal rescue and conservation on a larger scale. The Elephant Nature Park is home to over 60 elephants who have been rescued from trekking, logging, or forced breeding programs. Many of them had been abused and suffer from chronic injuries or blindness. At the Elephant Nature Park, they are cared for by volunteers from all over the world. Selena helped to feed, bathe, and care for elephants, as well as learn about their diagnoses alongside an elephant vet. The Elephant Nature Park is also home to over 1,000 animals, including cats, dogs, water buffalo, horses, and cows, and is sustained in huge part by the work of weekly volunteers like Selena.



For the other week, Selena volunteered at the Animal Rescue Kingdom dog shelter in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The shelter is home to over 100 dogs who have been rescued after being abandoned, beaten, or abused. While the dogs can be adopted, any who aren't will be cared for by the shelter for their whole lives.

While she studied under the veterinarians leading her group, Selena and her team made a difference in the lives of these dogs. By providing check-ups and cleanings, diagnosing and treating ear and eye problems, taking and testing blood, administering vaccines, cleaning and treating wounds, and helping with sterilization surgeries, the students were able to help support the health and well-being of these dogs.

Selena selected to add an additional week to her service project in Thailand so that she could have some time to explore Thai culture and wildlife more deeply. From learning to meditate with a Buddhist monk, to trekking through a hilltribe village in the mountains, to learning to cook Thai food on an organic farm, she had a true travel adventure.

Loop Abroad has animal science and veterinary programs for students and young adults age 14 to 30, and offers financial aid and fundraising help. Interested participants can inquire or apply at www.LoopAbroad.com. Admission to veterinary programs is selective and Selena was selected based on her transcript, admissions essay, and professional references.



By following a study abroad model instead of a voluntourism model, Loop focuses on educating its students so that they can contribute and serve in meaningful ways. It also works with locally run animal welfare organizations so that students contribute to long-term improvement on the ground in the countries they visit. With programs in Thailand, South Africa, and Australia, Loop Abroad is able to support animal welfare and conservation around the world because of its students and their dedication to helping animals in need.

The program's Managing Director Jane Stine says, "Our students are some of the most amazing people I have ever met. They are kind, compassionate, dedicated, hard-working individuals who have big goals and want to make a big impact. It's amazing to see how eager they are to learn and challenge themselves. Over the last eight years, we've seen them go on to do some wonderful things."

Of her trip, Selena says, "This program gave me a wide range of veterinary knowledge; I not only got to learn from veterinarians based in the US but also Thai veterinarians. A great cultural experience! "

Selena is a Junior at University of Minnesota Crookston, majoring in Equine Sciences: Pre-Vet.

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