



4-8 July, 1999 XVI Seroptimist International Convention,
Helsinki, Finland

SIAM Project Ends By Doubling Target Goal!

by *Suzanne Harris, Anacortes Club, North Western Region, SIA*

SI Quadrennial Project Liaison, Mary Buchanan, reported today that our 1995-1999 SIAM Project has been a great success.

In partnership with the PDA, the objectives of the project were to prevent young women from entering the Commercial Sex Industry (CSI), to provide HIV/AIDS education, and to allocate formal and non-formal scholarships for young girls and women in the target group, ages 12-25.

Following a successful pilot project 10 villages, all with histories of sending young girls into the CSI, in Chang Rai Province in Northern Thailand were chosen. The challenge was to allow these young girls the best of health, to see their children grow up without being infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. At this time there were reported up to 1,000 deaths per year from HIV/AIDS in the Chang Rai Province.

Following the choice of participating villages came the implementation of the project. 1337 educational scholarships in total were given. HIV/AIDS information was provided to the target group as well as the entire village.

Youth camps were organized to teach Life Skills Training and HIV/AIDS education. Participants could then return to their villages to teach.

Contests were initiated like one for a winning slogan against the CSI. And information boards were posted in each village and kept current with applicable information to the SIAM project and its goals. Income-generating initiatives were instituted, and covered a wide variety -- from weaving and beekeeping to a success in the passion fruit growing.

A change in attitudes has now occurred. From the 10 participating SIAM villages, 98 girls entered the CSI in October 1995, in December 1998 only 9 girls entered the CSI.

The financial goal of the SIAM Project was 250,000 pounds, SI raised 499,614 pounds 96 pence!!!!!!! This run over has allowed an Endowment Fund to be established. The activities of SIAM will be continued. These will continue to be Educational Scholarships, Vocational Training, HIV /Aids Education and a Revolving Loan Fund.

Give yourselves a round of applause! And if you have time, Mary Buchanan asked that you stop by and her booth and add to the flip chart there and document what your club did to enable them to donate the SI 1995-1999 Quadrennial Project.