

Thai Contest Winners Love NZ, Want to Return

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"I heard many times that New Zealand is a beautiful country. I wanted to see it with my own eyes" says Peach Tanunchai, a 17 year old student visiting from Thailand.

Peach is one of twelve Thai students who won the chance to brush up their English in New Zealand with Education New Zealand's "How Much Do You Know About New Zealand" competition. The competition was run through the New Zealand Educated web portal, www.newzealandeducated.com.

The contestants wrote short essays about New Zealand, and three winners were chosen from each of four regions around the country, representing the top three essays in each region.

Wellington's Campbell Institute hosted winners from northern Thailand. They won English tuition and a homestay with a local family for two to three weeks in October.

"New Zealand is completely different from Thailand" says Phanasa 'Nam' Tothan, 19. "The food, the culture, the lifestyle. There are lots of things to do, like shopping and extreme sports."

Nam is studying English at a Thai university, and hoping to become a teacher in her home country. For her, studying in Wellington has been inspiring.

"When I talk with my friends here from other non-English speaking countries, and their English is very good, it's motivation for me to improve" she says. Nam is hoping she can return to New Zealand after graduation, and study for a Master's degree here.

Natwadec 'Tem' Emsiranunt is also 19 years old. She visited New Zealand with her family as a child, but was thrilled at the chance to return for some studies.

"I wanted to visit again, not just to travel but to learn about the Kiwi lifestyle" she says. She is keen to return for a longer stay, and would encourage other Thai students to check out New Zealand. "I would recommend they study here because the education is good, it's safe for students, and compared to Europe the cost of living is lower. Also, it's a beautiful place."

The other contest winners were hosted around the country by Dominion English School, Edenz College, and Unique New Zealand language school.

Thai students have been coming to New Zealand for over a decade. In 2008, over 2,600 Thais studied in New Zealand, making it our country's seventh largest source of international students.

Ends

Photo Caption: L-R Peach Tanunchai, Phanasa 'Nam' Tothan & Natwadec 'Tem' Emsiranunt

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