



Regent's School – Pattaya, Thailand Olga Jablonski '14

On August 21, 2011 I arrived at Regent's School in Pattaya, Thailand. The weather was hot and the sun was shining. The boarding staff and everyone around me welcomed me warmly. I felt right at home the moment I arrived.

Since Regent's is an international school, there were a number of high school students from all over the world who were attending on scholarship. There were people of all nationalities such as Armenian, Estonian, British, Australian, Korean, Thai and more! Each person was unique and had so much to say about their country and experiences that having a conversation with the people there was engaging, entertaining and educational on top of it all.

The school was located not far from the beach and city centre and the campus was huge! There was a beautiful housing complex on campus for international families as well for staff members. A huge oval field welcomed everyone upon arrival through the gates. The field was used for all sporting activities and a track surrounded the playing field. Along with the track and field area, the school has many sports facilities such as a swimming pool, gymnasium, training room, dance rooms, tennis courts, another field next to the boys boarding house and more. Palm trees surrounded the whole area and the school was very open and spacious.

The Regent's School Pattaya participates in a very large sports competition, FOBISSEA, which takes place each year in a different Asian country. Mike Walton, the principal of the school is also the Chairman of FOBISSEA. This year, many of the best athletes and teams from the school are going to Malaysia to compete.

I have never seen a school like Regent's before in the sense that the students take each opportunity to get involved in Round Square activities and conferences. Regent's held a huge Round Square conference just this spring and it was a great opportunity for the school to further develop its Round Square connections. There are many after-school activities linked to Round Square projects as well. Almost every Tuesday, during assembly, there are new projects to be announced. Any student is welcome to get involved in conferences around the world by simply signing up. Everyone is encouraged to take part. All around the school, you can find murals and posters with human rights and Round Square slogans.

In Thailand, the main religion is Buddhism, but considering how international this school is, many different religions could be found. Many of the students were not full Thai but

half Thai, half British (for example). There were many kids with extremely interesting family backgrounds!

Being in Thailand, elements of Thai culture dominated the school. Many of the Thai festivals were celebrated just like Loy Krathong, on the full moon of the 12th month in the traditional Thai lunar calendar. Loy Krathong is a beautiful festival with oriental dress where paper lanterns are sent into the sky and krathongs are floated on the water. The whole school celebrates this festival and it is truly an amazing thing to witness.

The school is very united and makes a strong effort to connect students of all ages from grade school all the way to grade 13 in their IB programme. Mandatory activities are held each Monday and Thursday after school: sports, service work, creative arts, etc.

By the end my stay, I had made countless friends, making it very difficult to say goodbye. This exchange has changed me as a person, for the better, and I will never forget it. I am grateful for being able to have had a transformational experience like this. Without all the amazing people around me, I don't think it would have been as great as it was because it's the people that make up the school, not the concrete structure around it.