

Thai opener for traveller



Above: Gina Romanello and Michelle Bosward of Contours Endeavour Hills raised money for Thai orphans.

Left: Michelle and Malee, a child with HIV at Agape Home. Michelle went on a mission tour with Maranatha Christian College last year.

By Nicole Williams

MICHELLE Bosward had never been overseas when she left to volunteer to work with orphans in Thailand.

At the end of last year, the Contours Endeavour Hills employee went on the Thailand Mission Awareness tour with Maranatha Christian College.

“It was an amazing adventure,” she said.

“I worked to embrace and love the Thai kids, who had been neglected by their own culture and families.”

Ms Bosward joined 20 year 10 and 11 students and eight other adults on the 18-day mission, which visited orphanages, homes and worked with local communities.

Each member of the group spent three hours each day paired with a child at Agape House, an orphanage for children with HIV and AIDS, working and playing with them after school.

They also spent time at Zoe’s Home, a home for young people rescued from at risk situations; New Life Centre, a refuge and training facilities for exploited girls; Hope Home, a home for intellectually and physically impaired kids and McKean Rehabilitation Institute, a reformed leprosy hospi-

tal, which is now a general rehabilitation centre.

“I did not come back from there unchanged,” Ms Bosward said.

“It is a place of great beauty and yet deep poverty, a place with so much to offer, yet crying out for help.”

Ms Bosward said it was such an overwhelming and powerful experience, that she plans to go again this year.

Her employers at Contours Endeavour Hills and Contours Narre Warren South supported Ms Bosward on the volunteer mission, by raising \$600 for school supplies and art and craft materials for the children.

The money also allowed Ms Bosward and the group to take the children to movies and mini-golf – things they had never done.

“The ladies at Contours have been behind me 100 per cent and have offered continued support,” she said.

It was her work at Contours that gave Ms Bosward the idea to go on the volunteer tour.

“One of our founding members of Contours, Sue Cleeland, works for Maranatha Christian College and they’ve gone on two mission trips every year for eight years,” Ms Bosward said.