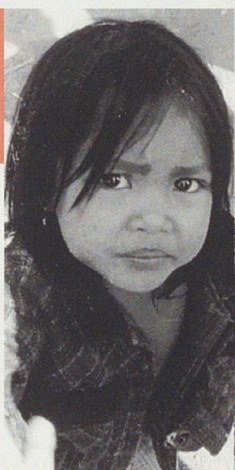




It's holiday time! Kimberly Bernie, 11, and Anna Hochgesang, 11, participate in their annual gingerbread house competition. Each year these few friends would gather to compete in making gingerbread houses and have fun with their good friends during the holiday season.

"I was really surprised when I got to the countries. They were definitely not what I expected. A lot of the villages were very high in poverty and I couldn't just sit and watch," said Amanda Soled, 11.



get by mand soled

q&a Aaron Slovin

q) What did you think of the warm weather during break and then getting all the snow in February?

a) It was great to have a rather warm start to winter especially during break. However, I was glad to see all the snow in February.

q) What were some activities you partook in on the snow days?

a) The first few snow days were great, I went sledding. The next few the snow wasn't right for sledding so I hung out, slept, and played some poker.

Using free time to make a difference

When some were out lying on the beach or shopping in New York over break, others were on the other side of the world making a difference in many people's lives. **Amanda Soled, 11**, went to Cambodia and Thailand with her family. When she saw how people lived and found out that the average Cambodian family lives on two American dollars per week, she knew she had to do something. She bought 240 woven bracelets for 19 cents apiece. She came home and sold them each for two dollars raising a total of \$500, which *The Cincinnati Enquirer* then matched to send to Cambodia. Soled sent this money so that water pumps could be bought for poverty-stricken villages.

Others also went to Thailand, however, they went on a mission trip with their church. **Mary Jiang, 10**, and **Elizabeth Wei, 11**, were members of Cincinnati Chinese Church, which is a sponsor of a children's hostel in Chiangmai (a province in northern Thailand). They were there for two weeks traveling around to remote villages and teaching young children in schools. It was a rewarding and learning experience for both, the people on the mission and the people they taught. Their church, along with a few others, had efforts to raise enough money to build another hostel so that more children from these villages can live closer to schools, in order for them to attend. Otherwise most of these kids lived too far to attend school at all.



Elizabeth Wei, 11, and Mary Jiang, 10, eat in Thailand on a church mission trip. These two, along with other teens, tutored young kids in northern Thailand. It greatly enhanced the experience of school for the kids.