

## 2010 Scholarship for Outstanding Service Recipient Britt Brandon *of Austin*

Britt Brandon lives his life with the conviction that “those who have more than they need, should give back to [their] communities both locally and globally.” This is a high ideal for anyone to live by, but especially for a high school senior from Hyde Park Baptist High School.

As a founding member of the Austin Christian Leadership Academy, Britt initiated a project to match donors with 123 orphans and 75 displaced children in Chiang-Mai, Thailand. Donors provided toys, clothing and crafts for the children. Wanting to do more, Britt raised additional money to buy sports equipment for the village. He even went so far as to raise the \$1,400 needed to pay school tuition for seven orphaned children in Thailand.

It was during a two-week service trip to Thailand delivering the clothing, equipment and funds that Britt truly understood the difference he was making in the lives of children in Chiang-Mai. In his own words, “I was there to make a personal investment—to visit orphanages and hill tribal villages to meet some of the needs of impoverished and displaced children. I saw poverty like I had never seen before; I witnessed children living in boxes on the side of the road.”

Britt returned from his trip with a desire to be an advocate for those with no voice. During the past year, he has taken up the cause of Nat, an 11 year-old Thai boy who never received medical care that would enable him to walk. Recruiting classmates to help collect items, Britt and his fellow students held a garage sale that raised \$1,400 for Nat’s medical care.

Beyond his work for children in Thailand, Britt has found time to mentor fifth grade boys, volunteer with and coordinate volunteers for Candlelighter’s Childhood Cancer Organization, and serve as a youth facilitator with Education in Action’s summer leadership development camps.

“I used to be consumed in what I did not have”, says Britt. After his sophomore year, Britt’s family relocated so his father could take a new job after losing his job of 27 years. Leaving his lifelong friends, giving up his top ten percent class ranking and a 12 year swim career in the middle of high school is more than many teens could bounce back from. Then shortly after the move, Britt’s mother was diagnosed with stage 2 metastatic breast cancer. Rather than use these adversities as an excuse, Britt has used them as opportunities to grow and expand his view of the world beyond his own wants. “Life is bigger than my own little world and we all have a responsibility to give out of our own personal abundance.”