Introducing Somsong Wale

Somsong is originally from Thailand, or as she calls it "the 'land of smiles". She has lived in Australia for three and a half years with her husband in Victor Harbor. Somsong began ESL classes at the Encounter Centre two years ago, after being referred to the program by a friend.

Somsong left school in Thailand when she was only 12 years old to work on a farm with her family, and consequently had little formal education. Since commencing the ESL program she has developed her English skills to a level where she feels confident and has become more actively involved in the community where she lives. She is learning to drive after successfully gaining her learners permit, and volunteers both in a local charity shop, and in the Encounter Centre kitchen. She is a happy and generous person who thinks of others and gives support and encouragement to her fellow students. Somsong is also one of the Encounter Centre’s strongest advocates, promoting the program to anyone she meets that may be a new migrant to the area.

In her own words, Somsong writes... "I came to English classes at Encounter Centre two years ago. I have learnt many things. English classes helped me very much. Now I use English in my daily life better. I never thought I could do it.

Now I understand people much better and I can speak English more clearly and I feel more comfortable. English classes are enjoyable, as is meeting the lovely people. Thank you for the great opportunity" – Somsong.

Somsong is determined to get her drivers’ license so that she can share the driving with her husband who has recently experienced some ill health. She loves the volunteer work that she does and will continue to do this - taking on more responsibility and learning new skills. She is now beginning to learn basic computer skills and plans to continue to develop her English language skills.