

## Lindsay Phillips, Canada

It has been a month since my volunteer experience at Elephantstay. How I miss my morning wake up of elephants moving about and the mahouts getting ready for work. The people, the village and the elephants were fabulous. The moment you arrive you become immersed with these amazing people that work in the program and they quickly become a family to you during your time in the village. Even though we worked hard every day I think I gained weight the food was so delicious! There were joyous times and sad times while I was there. And it was an experience I will never forget as it touched my soul in a way that no other place in the world could. When I started my volunteer position at Elephantstay I tried my best to prepare myself for the experience. But the moment I entered the kraal I realized that all that preparation was going out the window because the kraal went above and beyond my expectations. Within hours I was learning more about elephants and their relationship with their mahouts than I ever thought I would learn. I watched the babies in the nursery grow and discover new things. I connected and learned the personalities with all the elephants I worked with. And I learned just how brilliant elephants are. These beautiful creatures will never cease to amaze me. Even though the days were very hot and you were exhausted by the end of the day it did not matter.

I would, and have recommended this place to everyone. It is an experience of a lifetime that you will never forget. As many at the Kraal say the elephants get into your blood and they become part of your own family the way they touch people's hearts.

I hope everyone gets to experience this at least once in their lifetime.

