

The Summer OF Beautiful

**LETTER
FROM
THE PRESIDENT**

Mountains, tall trees, the sunset over broad desert landscapes, a painting by Klimt, and even a beautiful sculpture all inspire me. A perfect sentence that turns my mind inward, then out and around an issue in a book is a wonder to me. A smoothly executed move climbing steep rock, the turns made descending a steep couloir on skis, and the silence felt while paddling on a mountain lake with no wind are other forms of this sublime thing. My wife when she smiles and my daughters when they stand their ground in fierce goodness are yet other angles on what my soul screams: "beautiful, absolutely beautiful."

It may be my age. I'm 51. I've worked with refugees and displaced people for nearly 30 years. Through the different seasons of life I've felt the pull to originality, independence, and characteristics like fearlessness. But now, the thing that sets my soul on fire is beauty.

My work with refugees and displaced people has formed how people know me and even altered my sense of identity. My work has been my passion. But finally, I realize that what shapes my soul is not context. War, violence, and deprivation provoke a sense of injustice and motivate me to work for restorative change; but the deeper driver is the incredible fact of people's tenacity to thrive, to make the best out of what meager provision and resources are left to them, and to speckle the hard and terrible times with laughter and even joy.

Beauty is magnified when it grows out of the war torn Nineveh desert; it is enhanced when it appears in remote hiding places in Karen State, and it is more arresting when it smiles broad goodness in moments, even years of terrible crisis.



It's audacious. In the face of overwhelming violence and oppression, how can people be so courageous, so daringly wonderful, and so incredibly sacrificial? I'm finding answers to my deepest questions of faith not by reading yet another book on theology, but by observing a loving father teaching his son to make a toy of bamboo and rubber bands.

The refugees and displaced families our team serves are not cast in a victim mold. Though victimized, the majority of those I have met are strong, resilient, loving, and self-sacrificing. They fall in love on the run; through dangerous times they build a life, a family, and exploit what possibilities exist not merely to survive, but to live a full and joyous life.

Do you want to know what it means when we say "To Love is to Act"? Observe any displaced or refugee community. Do you wish to see beauty? Observe the poor with curious and hopeful eyes.

The collection of anecdotes and stories you hold has been assembled by our team to give you an inside look at what doing something beautiful looks like in the world of Partners Relief & Development. I'm proud to contribute to a work so congruous with what we are all about. We went to the battlefield to give, to help the displaced and poor stand against seemingly insurmountable odds. What we gained is a priceless gift. We have learned beauty and are attempting to live it out.

Your brother,

Steve Gumaer

Steve Gumaer
President, Partners Relief & Development



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2018 SNAPSHOT

Location: Thailand, Myanmar,
Bangladesh, Syria, Iraq,
Yemen



Making Beauty in Mae La

WORDS BY

Rachel Bruursema

IMAGES BY

Rachel Bruursema

A tangible hush fell over the church. Students at Mae La Refugee Camp sat, kneeled, legs crossed, belly-laid, inside the church and out; each given a plate with primary colored paint, a piece of art paper, a brush and a water cup. "Paint something that you feel is beautiful," Partners President and Founder, Steve Gumaer, told them. Quickly their thoughts spilled over onto paper. From time-to-time you could hear a giggle, or two friends whispering the secret stories contained in their developing masterpieces.



There were many paintings with farms and fields. They weren't imaginary places, they were real. Places they lived when they were small/smaller. A piece of land that they used to run on - where they helped their families plant and harvest. Countless pieces of artwork displayed the mountain ranges that they left behind. A father farming, a mother smiling. A bedroom with a bed (their bed), adorned with deep purple covers.

Despite, or in light of, the instructions, the paintbrush and bright colors led the children where it would; at times, not pausing for air or reasoning with the theme. The children were telling us hidden things. Reds and blacks, dark streaks and confusion. They were making something beautiful by reckoning with those hidden spaces. Their artwork told us that redemptive power was hard at work. It also revealed that some were looking for beauty somewhere between the charcoal trees and blood-soaked soil.

All things bright yellow, flowers, and purple blankets, these are beautiful. A light turned on, allowing a few more children with tattered memories and shredded families to console themselves with even their dark reds and blacks - these too can be beautiful.







"In my village, there is a waterfall. It is cold. The birds, sunrises, and clouds are beautiful. The buffalo drink from the river. My family's tent is near the field. My brother is still in the Karen village and he goes to the river to fish. The stones are very very big. The park is beautiful. I love my chair and use it to sit and enjoy the waterfall. This is beautiful for me. I want to go back. I want to fish the river."

Naw March, age 24



Tom Kha Gai Soup is beloved in Thailand. Because to love is to act and we surely love you, we think you should have this recipe. I made this version last week for my family and in a rare show of unity, all six children asked me to make it again. So I will, and now you can too. This is the perfect soup for a chilly summer or fall evening, light and creamy and healthy. You are welcome.

Love, Jenn



Tom Kha Gai

INGREDIENTS

1 1" piece ginger, peeled
10 kaffir lime leaves or 1 Tbsp. lime zest and ¼ cup lime juice
6 cups low-sodium chicken broth
1½ lb. skinless, boneless chicken thighs, cut into 1" pieces
8 oz. shiitake, oyster, or maitake mushrooms, stemmed, caps cut into bite-size pieces
1 13.5-oz. can coconut milk
2 Tbsp. fish sauce (such as nam pla or nuoc nam)
1 tsp. sugar
2 stalks fresh lemongrass, tough outer layers removed
Chili oil, cilantro leaves with tender stems, and lime wedges (for serving)

RECIPE PREPARATION

Using the back of a knife, lightly smash lemongrass and ginger; cut lemongrass into 4" pieces. Bring lemongrass, ginger, lime leaves, and broth to a boil in a large saucepan. Reduce heat and simmer until flavors are melded, 8–10 minutes. Strain broth into clean saucepan; discard solids.

Add chicken and return to a boil. Reduce heat, add mushrooms, and simmer, skimming occasionally, until chicken is cooked through and mushrooms are soft, 20–25 minutes. Mix in coconut milk, fish sauce, and sugar.

Divide soup among bowls. Serve with chili oil, cilantro, and lime wedges.

<https://www.bonappetit.com/recipe/tom-kha-gai-chicken-coconut-soup>

WORDS BY
Rachel Bruursema

IMAGES BY
Naw Hsa
Rachel Bruursema

Fruit



Naw Hsa, Hsa Ah, Saw Hny



A man's gratitude and his determination to do something beautiful with it.

Without & Within

Though Saw Ghay Ah Ah's life began somewhere in the late 80's, his encounter with Partners began when he was eleven. Adolescent and resolute, he made an exodus from a boarding house in Myanmar/Burma to the Mae La Refugee Camp located on the Thai-Myanmar border and supported by Partners for the last 20 years. This is where he met Pastor Arthur and his wife Clasper, leaders, teachers and surrogate parents to over 150 children in the camp of over 50,000.

Education - The Seed of Life

In their boarding house, Clasper taught English, while Arthur taught each child to read music; Saw Ghay was taught to play guitar and saxophone. He would eventually write a few more educational chapters, attending Pu Taw Memorial Junior College, specializing in Education, and completing a Cambridge Course. Along the way, he continued to work with Clasper and Arthur, and they never stopped caring for him, even purchasing a phone for him when he needed one for teacher meetings. Today he's teaching at Hsa Thoo Lei, Migrant Learning Center, and loves it.

Beautiful Fruit

"I got married. Yah. Her name is Naw Hsa," he said, his voice revealing a smile. She too lived in the Mae La camp with Arthur and Clasper, and like Saw Ghay Ah Ah, has chosen to go out of her way to make life beautiful for others. She now works for Partners and is the sweet mother to a tiny blossom named Hsa Ah, their fresh-faced infant baby girl.

Seed Makes Many Trees

"When I was really young, I had nothing. I got many things, like hygiene packs and food from Partners. Even when I didn't have money, I still had a chance to study. Everything was by the grace of God, I had everything I needed - right there. Love surrounded me. I will never forget a thing that Arthur and Clasper and Partners have done for me. Arthur always used to say, 'Even though we can not give our children cars, houses, things that belong on earth, it is ok; if we can give our children Jesus, they have everything.' After I grew up, I knew I wanted to give something back. Just like a tree, it grows, and the fruit falls. The seed makes many trees."



20 Years Ago

Saw Ghay's and Naw Hsa's life are bearing fruit because 20 years ago, donors sowed into Arthur's and Clasper's mission to provide a rigorous education and safe, loving care for kids in Mae La Refugee Camp.

Thank you!

WORDS BY
David Hoppe

IMAGES BY
Ryan Roco
David Hoppe

UNINTENT



ERRUPTED





In 2010, our team featured an 11-year-old girl in a video. She said then that she wanted to be a nurse when she grew up. Remarkably, this spring we located that girl, now a young woman, and learned more of her story.

Her name is Naw Paw Tai Eh Moo which means 'Love of the Living Flower.' She was born in Karen State. She is the youngest in a large family. As a child studying in the village school, she remembers the Myanmar Army attacking her village and setting fire to the farms, the houses, and the school, destroying everything. Even back then the Karen had grown accustomed to such violence and, refusing to be chased from their own land, they would simply rebuild and start over. Naw Paw Tai Eh Moo says she has survived several of these attacks.

When Naw Paw Tai Eh Moo was very young, her brother stepped on a landmine. He survived, but his leg had to be removed and he could not walk without crutches. He was never the same. Once outgoing and cheerful, the boy became subdued and depressed.

Later, Naw Paw Tai Eh Moo's father also stepped on a landmine. He was carried to a clinic where they amputated his leg, just as they had done for his son before. The boy with one leg went off alone while his siblings waited for their parents to return. Naw Paw Tai Eh Moo heard an explosion and soon learned that her brother had gone out with a landmine and used it to take his own life. Then

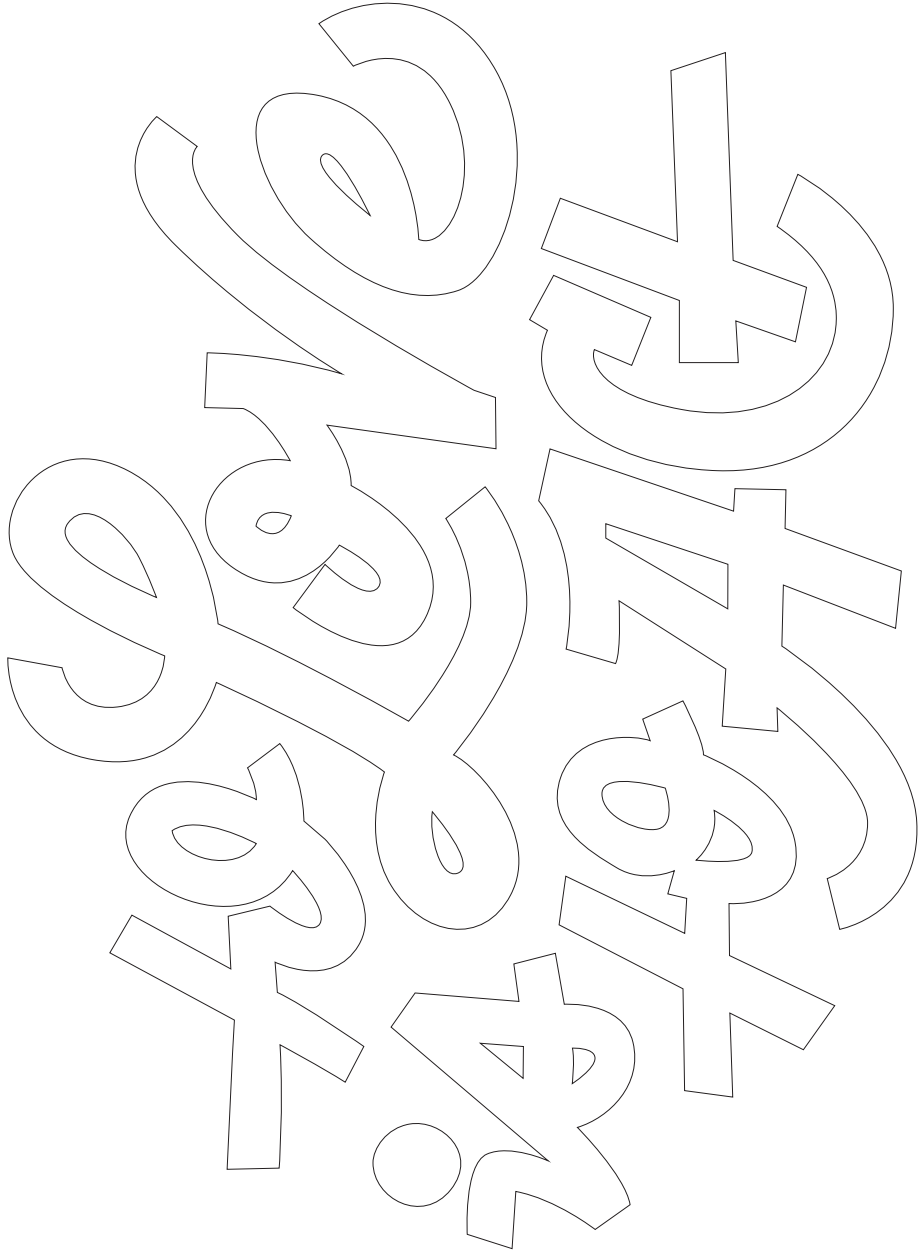
she found his note: "Sister, You must continue for yourself and finish your education. There is no hope for me anymore."

This nightmare goes on and on. Her mother is often sick and cannot work. Her father had a stroke and can no longer speak. A different brother with mental illness disappeared into the jungle. No one knows what became of him, including his wife and their four children.

I cannot begin to fathom the pain of such things, yet Naw Paw Tai Eh Moo has channeled her sorrow into an unwavering determination to continue her education. She moved to a boarding home supported by Partners, finished high school, and has been studying medicine at a clinic near her parent's village. She says that growing up around sickness and injury made her want to heal people.

In the years since we met her, that young girl has become the healer she dreamed of being. She is now a medic and plans to continue studying so she can serve her people on the front lines.

It is deeply inspiring to see such courage, but I am outraged at the circumstances that require it. I am dismayed by how Naw Paw Tai Eh Moo's story is similar to so many of her fellow Karen. The countless displacements, loss of life, separation of families - for many Karen these have been a daily reality for decades. There should be no part of the world where such a life is normal! Thoughts like this require action. They drive us to do what we do.



Because it's summer and you might have some time to doodle, here is your own coloring page! Post it on social media with the tag #toloveistoact and we'll repost!

GIVE.PARTNERS.NGO



A woman with dark hair and white powder on her face is holding a baby in a black hammock. The baby is wearing a red t-shirt with a graphic. The background is blurred, showing trees and a building.

PARTNERS
FORCHANGE

TO LOVE IS TO ACT, MONTH AFTER MONTH.

Supplies have a way of reliably running out even though the needs do not. Groceries are never a one-time purchase, are they? **Sign on to give month after month and we will deliver aid month after month wherever it is most needed.**

Join our marathon of love by giving at least \$35 monthly and we will send you a super-soft and gorgeous t-shirt with 'To love is to act' printed on the front and our small logo on the back as a thank you. Slow and steady wins this race and we need all the runners we can get.

CHANGE.PARTNERS.NGO

The **to Love**
is
to Act store



Children shouldn't suffer because the adults are fighting. EVER.

Nearly every day of the year our team goes to children affected by violence and oppression and reminds them that they matter and they are loved. To a malnourished baby, love is an infant nutrition pack. To children longing to learn, love is a school rebuilt, repainted, and reopened just for them. To parents in a refugee camp, love is being able to cook hot meals for their family, even in the rainy season when the wood is wet, because they have a brand new stove. We think words without action don't mean much. Everyone can do something. Do what you can; if it is done in love, it will be beautiful. \$5? Beautiful. A stove for \$125? Beautiful.

Buying things for others gives 'purchasing power' a whole new spin. This is redemptive consumerism, and we think it might just change the world.

VISIT [STORE.PARTNERS.NGO](https://store.partners.ngo)



Redemptive Consumerism

(v.) def. (according to us): The act of shopping at a store where nothing ever goes on sale and every item purchased is sent to someone the buyer has never met.

We asked a handful of people why in the world they engage in redemptive consumerism. This is what they said:

"These faces, these children and families deserve dignity, a smile, a caring and helping hand, but most of all food in their bellies and safe clean places to rest their heads. It is what we all deserve."

"Because God loves, we love. We are the hands and feet of God in this world."

"I give because it isn't right that I have and others do not have. We are all one in Christ."

"I love the store because it makes needs specific and meeting them simple. It is a gateway to one of the greatest commandments: to do for my neighbor what I want to be done for my own kids."

"What I want for my own kids I want for other children."

"They (refugees) are kids just like everyone once was. They deserve to have an amazing childhood."

VISIT [STORE.PARTNERS.NGO](https://store.partners.ngo)



REDEMPTIVE CONSUMERISM IS AN ACT OF LOVE.

WORDS BY
Carrie McKean

IMAGES BY
Carrie McKean

Almost EIGHT

We come into one family's courtyard and slip our shoes off at the door of a new hut. It has cement floors, thanks to recent funding from Partners, and the tops of the walls are an open lattice-work of bamboo to let the air circulate on hot days. It's a school, one of three we're visiting today. In total, 110 students between the ages of 5 and 12 are getting to attend school, most for the first time in their life. They are the children of Rohingya refugees who've slipped out of the camps and into society - and local children as well, many orphaned by fishing accidents. They are the most vulnerable in this small village, and they come to school every weekday morning to study Bengali, Math, and English. The youngest teacher is 16, one is in her early 20s, and the other is in her mid-30s. None of the teachers have had formal training, but they are kind and persistent and do their best to stretch meager resources into a basic education for each of their students. One of the schools has electricity and a coveted ceiling fan humming above the classroom. The newest school has no electricity and doesn't even have desks yet. Partners has plans to continue investing in these schools as the local leaders identify the most pressing needs.

As the kids recite their ABCs and sing nursery rhymes for us, we wander around the room, smiling and congratulating the children on their hard work and offering high-fives. One bright-eyed girl catches my attention. Her English is a little better than the others, and she's less shy than some of the girls. I ask her how old she is and I smile when she says, "Eight soon." Her answer makes me think of my own daughter, about the same age. It is a universal truth of 7-year-old girls, I've learned, to claim to be "almost 8" just as soon as they feel the scale of their year has justifiably shifted past the midpoint. >>

নৌনাহি, নৌনাহি
কোথা যাও নাচি নাচি
দাঁড়াও না একবার ভাই!

ওই ফুল কোটে বনে
যাই মধু আহরণে
দাঁড়ানোর সময় তো নাই!

হোট পাখি, হোট পাখি
কিচিমিচি ডাকি ডাকি
কোথা যাও, বলে যাও শুনি!

এখন না কুব কথা
জানিয়াছি তুংলতা
আপনার বাসা আগে বুনি।



স্বাদ্য
হয় পারে



I tell her I have a daughter about her age and pull out my phone to find a picture. The whole table of girls lean in close to get a glimpse of my daughter, her long blonde hair a novelty in contrast to their raven tresses. They giggle and smile and seem to understand when I tell them that if Cora were here with me, she'd like to be their friend. I ask the bright-eyed girl if I can take a picture of her with my daughter's photo, to show Cora when I go home. At first she's confused but soon realizes my meaning. She holds the phone close and smiles shyly and we snap the picture.

I'm looking at the picture a few days later on the other side of the world. My own almost-eight-year old is busy

beside me working on her science fair project. (Question: Is there real bacteria in my yogurt? Hypothesis: Yes. I'm a little worried she won't eat yogurt after she's finished.) She's curious about volcanoes and baking and she likes to read. She wants to be a dog groomer when she grows up. As I predicted, she's very interested in the life of this little girl on the other side of the world. She scrolls through all my pictures from the day, zooming in to catch details – the pretty dresses, the interesting alphabet – and notices how different her classroom is from the one in the picture.

In the small rectangle of the photo, the two girls are so similar in so many ways... bright, curious eyes.

But outside the square of the photo, these two almost-eight-year olds couldn't be more different. In Bangladesh, many girls their age don't get to go to school. In fact, children peer into the schools we visited through cracks in the wall, eager to participate in the lessons but finding there's no more room right now. According to the Girls Not Brides charity, nearly 60 percent of Bangladeshi girls are married by the age of 18 with nearly 22 percent married by 15. The girl with the bright eyes will be lucky to go to school past the age of 12. She'll also be in the minority for her country if she isn't married by her eighteenth birthday.

And I just can't shake the thought that she could be my daughter... my daughter could be her.

And as I look at this photo I'm struck by one stark reality: Potential may be equal but opportunity isn't.

My 7-year-old daughter deserves no more or no less than this 7-year-old daughter in Bangladesh. They both bear the *Imago Dei* in the curve of their nose and in their quiet smile. They are both eager to learn and eager to grow, eager to be eight. And yet... one will have endless opportunities to pursue her dreams, and one may not even know to dream.

This isn't a story about how our life is better than theirs... for all I know my little Bangladeshi friend loves running down the alleys of her neighborhood to her friend's shop to buy a treat. She may enjoy the challenge of carrying jugs of water from her well to her home, and



she might laugh with friends over a game of kickball. This isn't a story about how we intrinsically have it better than they do. In many ways, especially when it comes to living in close-knit and interdependent community, much of the world has it far better than us. But it is a story about two little girls and the future we hope they both have. It is a story about me recognizing that while I can't "fix" the injustices of this world, I can care enough to help tip the scales. >>



অঙ্ক সংখ্যার সূত্রিকা

১	২	৩	৪	৫
৬	৭	৮	৯	১০
১১	১২	১৩	১৪	১৫
১৬	১৭	১৮	১৯	২০
২১	২২	২৩	২৪	২৫
২৬	২৭	২৮	২৯	৩০
৩১	৩২	৩৩	৩৪	৩৫
৩৬	৩৭	৩৮	৩৯	৪০
৪১	৪২	৪৩	৪৪	৪৫
৪৬	৪৭	৪৮	৪৯	৫০

After this trip, I find myself even more grateful for the work of Partners. They live up to their name by coming alongside local community leaders to provide concrete relief and invest in development in meaningful ways, like through supporting schools. They give you and me the opportunity to step into the other side of that equation. They give us virtual access to places we may never otherwise be able to go, effectively and efficiently leveraging the resources we have to give into addressing concrete needs of the people living there, all the while sharing the love of Jesus. Though they work in places and circumstances where the needs stretch into the millions of affected people, Partners isn't under an idealistic illusion that they can change the whole world for everyone. But as I saw reflected in the faces of the 110 children in their schools, Partners knows they can change the whole world for a few of them. And they do this faithfully and well.

Girls in Bangladesh may still get married far too young. Girls in Bangladesh may still find education ends at around 12 years old. These are hard, hard truths that sit like a rock in my stomach, especially as I look at the two 7-year-olds in the picture. It's tempting to throw our hands up and turn away. We can throw our hands up in despair,

feeling frustrated by how far something is from where we think it should be. And we can throw our hands up in despair, overwhelmed by the scale of the problem. Or we can throw our hands up in hallelujah, praising God for the opportunity to help a few more of His children understand their value and worth.

So here's the invitation before us: Live wide awake, eyes open to the depth of our privilege, the ache in the world, and the responsibility the gap in between calls us to. Live wide open, hands and heart ready to invest our blood, sweat, tears, and money into making His Kingdom Come in the lives of "the least of these." Live wide-eyed in wonder, praising God for how He's moving and asking Him to take us deeper on this journey with him.

Little by little, let's work towards a day when the two almost-eight-year-olds in the picture have the same possibility to dream, imagine, and achieve all that God intended when he knit them together with the same love and care in their mothers' wombs. One not more precious than the other... both Daughters of the King.

Carrie is from Midland, Texas and is a dear friend and valued supporter of Partners.

WORDS BY
Jenn Tendero

IMAGES BY
David Hoppe
Rachel Bruursema

12 EASY STEPS

DAYS FOR GIRLS 



Ma Let Let Win, sewing Days For Girls
More of her story on pg37...



1 Days for Girls contacts Partners and asks if we want to Partner with them to produce reusable feminine hygiene kits for refugee and internally-displaced girls and women who cannot afford or source disposable products. We say yes because girls cannot afford to miss a week of school every month. "I'd just stay home sick," one girl replied when we asked her how she managed her period in a refugee camp.

2 Partners team member Pranee runs a sewing training program in Thailand that trains women and girls like Naw Mimi who, after she was abandoned as a teenager, was invited to join the program. She said yes and found community and Jesus there.

3 Dorothy manages the Days for Girls program for migrant women like Naw Mimi who have gone through the sewing program. She pays them a fair wage to sew the kits. Naw Mimi is now earning income sewing Days for Girls drawstring bags. When she received her first paycheck she said, "Now I am so happy. I am earning some money by sewing."

4 Because there isn't a high demand for flannel in a tropical climate, Dorothy emails her teammate Jenn in Michigan and asks if she can source some flannel for her. "Yes!" Jenn writes back.

5 Jenn texts her friends Kristin and Abby to ask if they might be willing to make a donation of flannel to Partners for the kits. Happy to have a tangible way to contribute, the women go shopping and buy yards and yards of the prettiest flannel they can find at their local fabric store.

6 Kristin's husband, Tanner, a Partners staff member, has no clue that on his next trip to Thailand he will not only carry a suitcase full of floral flannel but will also have to explain to Customs and Immigration in Chiang Mai that the flannel will be used to make reusable feminine hygiene pads. Yes.



7 Tanner travels several hours in a van to the Partners office in Mae Sot, where he hands off the flannel to Dorothy, who happily takes it.

10 Our Mae Sot-based team boxes up the Days for Girls kits that have been purchased and gives them to various team members to distribute in refugee and internally displaced person camps in Bangladesh, Myanmar and Thailand.

8 Meanwhile, our social media team decides to include the Days for Girls kit in our 2018 Christmas catalogue, a bit unsure how many people will buy what amounts to fabric menstrual pads for Christmas gifts. Surprisingly, the kits turn out to be the best-selling product of the season. Who knew?

11 Naw Khin Mar Cho receives her kit and one of our trained Community Health Workers makes sure she knows how to use it.

9 People like Samantha purchase the kits from the catalogue. "My family is spread across the country and no one stays in close enough contact to effectively Christmas shop for yet more THINGS that we don't actually need. I've moved instead to giving gifts that matter where they are sincerely needed in honor of my family members. I get as many of the available options as I can at the time - and this is as valuable and necessary as first aid or food. Thank you for creating these options for us!" Samantha is grateful for the gift options and Ma Let Let Win is grateful for work that pays well.

12 We wonder if we can make Christmas last all year long by selling the Days for Girls kit in our online store and in pop-up shops around the country. The answer is yes we can; the kit continues to be a best-seller online and in-person.



This is love: a motley group of people - most of whom will never meet each other - linking arms to form a supply chain that reaches into wallets, runs into fabric stores, flies over an ocean, feeds through a sewing machine and motors over mountains and through the gates of a refugee camp straight to Naw Khin Mar Cho's tiny bamboo hut where her husband cradles their baby while her mama walks to the market because now she can.

Want to be a part of this supply chain? Buy a DFG kit at our store, [STORE.PARTNERS.NGO](https://store.partners.ngo), or buy flannel for the kits; email Jenn at jenn.tendero@partners.ngo for instructions. Because there are too many girls still missing weeks of school each year, too few new mothers able to leave the house and there are lots of migrant women who would love to earn income to support their families.

So many problems are complex; this is not one of them. We can solve this problem, period.

P.S. "full of floral flannel" is a fun tongue-twister.



"I received the bag for Days for Girls before I gave birth to my youngest daughter. At first, I wanted to have one because of the fresh, girly and pretty bag. I hesitated to use them because it would be my first time using pads after giving birth instead of laying down on my bed with many layers underneath me. Usually, it took a week or even more to go around the village due to that. This time was different, I used the pads just one day after giving birth to my little one. Amazingly, the pad can hold the flow securely and I love to use them. Thanks to the bag, it made my days easier, confidently using them. I would like to get another bag for my 12-year-old daughter to use for when her menstruation comes."

- Naw Khin Mar Cho

In 2003, Ma Let Let Win met her husband. He is Karen and also a Christian. After they married she got pregnant, but two days after she delivered the baby, the baby died. Currently she has two children - one son and one daughter. Her son is 14 years old and her daughter is 9 years old. They all used to go to the migrant school, but with support from Partners they are now able to go to the Thai School.

After her daughter turned one, Ma Let Let Win started praying and seeking the Lord and soon became a Christian. Things have been difficult, but God has been with her. She has been a Christian for eight years and is very involved in the Light of Love Church. Partners Relief & Development partners with Pastor Ahtee and Pranee in the Migrant Community Support Project that was started together with the Light of Love Church.

Her husband is not healthy and becomes sick very often. She is the main person who earns the money. She works as a cleaner and is working part-time for Partners sewing components of the Days for Girls kits.

She can't get an ID card in Myanmar because the Myanmar Government suspect anyone with darker skin of being a Rohingya. She has tried many times with the help of Partners, but the Government refuse to help her.

Ma Let Let Win has a joy about her that does not show the hardships that she has had to endure.



PRAYER, PLEASE.



Jared

adrianna

Dae

Chuang Klane

Terrance

Ken

Doug

Bom

Johan

LORI

Steve

Aye Aye

James

andrew

TREE

Evan

Dregy

Katie

TANNER

Dara

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Gay Doe Htoo

Claudia

ZING

Witsana

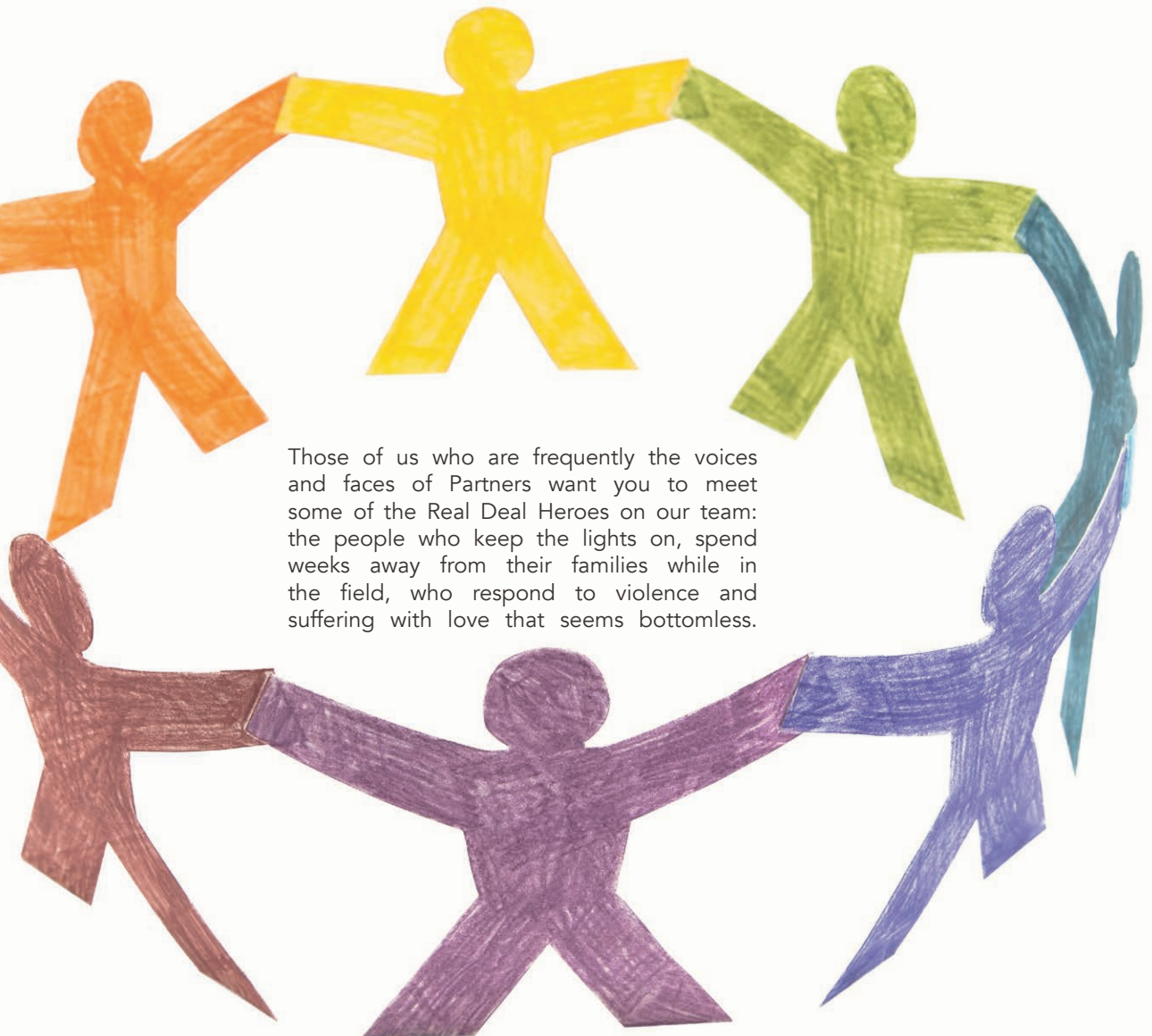
Aura

David

Our team is small and mighty and scattered throughout the world. We'd love for you to pray for each of these names, that we can be the hands and feet of God with love and joy.



WE ARE PARTNERS



Those of us who are frequently the voices and faces of Partners want you to meet some of the Real Deal Heroes on our team: the people who keep the lights on, spend weeks away from their families while in the field, who respond to violence and suffering with love that seems bottomless.

Daa has been working with Partners since 2004. She works in our sewing and weaving department in **Chiang Mai**. Daa has two children to keep her busy when she's not working in the office. Her dream when she was young was to do everything she could to serve the Lord, and she certainly does this today. Daa loves to make people happy and is always trying to find ways to make others smile. Even though she doesn't have much spare time and looks after her children when she is not working, she will visit the Karen people in the hospital to pray for them when she does have spare time. She enjoys praying for people, and is always encouraging and kind to others.



Dave lives and works out of **Australia**, which means all our Skype meetings happen at odd hours of the day. Dave is Director of Communications and is responsible for most of the magic you see on our website and social media. A team member for 12 years, he says, "I've got a huge soft spot for kids. So working with a team committed to doing everything possible to end the suffering of some of the world's most vulnerable children is really inspiring." When he is not creating beautiful images online, he can be found chasing - and photographing - storms in the Australian countryside.

Bom has been with Partners for nearly 20 years now. She has one daughter and son-in-law, and one grandchild whom she loves very much and another one on the way. Bom has lived in **Chiang Mai** all her life. One of the most exciting things that happened to her was when she was a teenager, she and a friend were stopped at night by a thief who ripped the necklace right off her friend's neck! They both ran and hid until he had gone away, then went home to their families to tell them the story. Bom loves working with Partners because they help children and people in need. Bom loves children. When Bom is not working she loves to cook and work in the garden.



Bashir was adopted as a child by a Kurdish family and now lives **between Erbil in northern Iraq and Qamishli in northern Syria**. He studied agricultural engineering in college but when war broke out he worked as a translator and war correspondent, covering the fronts in Northern Iraq and Northern Syria. The devastation caused by the war propelled Bashir to volunteer, where he met our team from Partners in 2015. "I worked with Partners in historical times in Syria. We were the first to distribute aid in the Tuhina camp and we were the first to distribute relief in the city of Raqqa after the defeat of the Islamic state, which was considered their capital. My faith taught me that joy is an orphan if we do not share it. That's what has been shared with me by my wonderful parents through the plan God set for my life."



Ken has worked with Partners for 3 years, telling people in **Texas** and beyond how they can meet the needs of kids affected by conflict and oppression. Affectionately called the Lonestar Rainmaker at HQ, Ken says his friends "describe me as humorous, I suppose...they laugh at me not with me." This is true.

Fran has been working with Partners in **Thailand** and **Myanmar** for nearly 3 years as the HR Manager and also the Relief Manager. He is married to Lori who also works in our office. Fran has a heart of compassion for those forgotten. He loves that Partners feels like a big family and he loves hearing the laughter around the office. At one point in his life, Fran was on track to become a priest, however after asking his wife-to-be what she thought of it... he decided against it. Fran loves to garden, and around the office it is said that everything beautiful you see when you arrive is from him. Fran says that it's from God, and he gets to enjoy it.



Born on the Thai-Myanmar border, **Khu Htoo** grew up in a refugee camp for 9 years, moved to Myanmar and then to a school dormitory in Thailand to finish his schooling. In 2013 Khu Htoo moved to **Mae Sot** and joined Partners as an intern. He is currently the Project Manager for the Kingdom Building projects supporting four Bible schools and nearly 150 students. The best part about working for Partners, "we are like one big family, working together, sharing together and helping each other out."



Chaung Klane joined Partners as an intern in 2012 and in 2013 became full-time. Chaung Klane is from Karen state and grew up on the border. Her parents are farmers. After school she studied to be a teacher and worked in the community on children's projects as an interpreter. Chaung Klane is furthering her education at a university in **Chiang Mai** while helping with the sewing and Days for Girls projects. Where does she see herself in ten years? With Partners of course! She loves Partners because of what they do for children and because Partners puts God first - by loving one another.

Zing and Wan came to Thailand in 2005 from Shan State, Myanmar. When they first arrived they worked on an orange farm and did construction work. In 2009 while doing a construction project on a farm, Zing met Steve. Steve told him that Partners wanted to buy land nearby for a farm and asked if he wanted to stay on the land. Since then Zing has been full time with Partners managing the farm in **Chiang Mai**. He likes that the farm finds organic ways for growing things and raising animals. Wan started full-time on the farm in 2015 keeping things in order, helping with the trainings, cooking for guests, and tidying the buildings. She loves to spend time with their two boys, 10 and 8, doing activities with them as well as working in the vegetable gardens on the farm. She said that she is glad to be a part of the work and to be a part of a team that is helping people.





What 'To Love Is To Act' Means To Me.

Reflections from our staff.

AT OUR STAFF RETREAT THIS YEAR, WE ASKED OUR TEAM TO ANSWER
THIS QUESTION: HOW DO THEY LIVE OUT 'TO LOVE IS TO ACT?'

THESE ARE SOME OF THEIR ANSWERS.



Greg

I work in Partners' Canada office and I know that every day I go to work and engage with Canadians, kids get fed, they go to school, families better themselves and their situation and we show God's love to those who are affected by conflict and oppression. I know that when we do these things, to love is to act.



Bia

I have worked with Partners for 22 years as the foundation manager. I like that Partners sends their love in whatever they do. To love is to act.



Noom

It has been 8 years that I have worked with Partners and I am in charge of social development. I love working with Partners because I can prove my love to the people we are working with.



Wat

I work in the agriculture department. What we do is provide training to help encourage and teach people to do farming. Every time I see these people have enough food to eat, it makes me happy, because to love is to act.



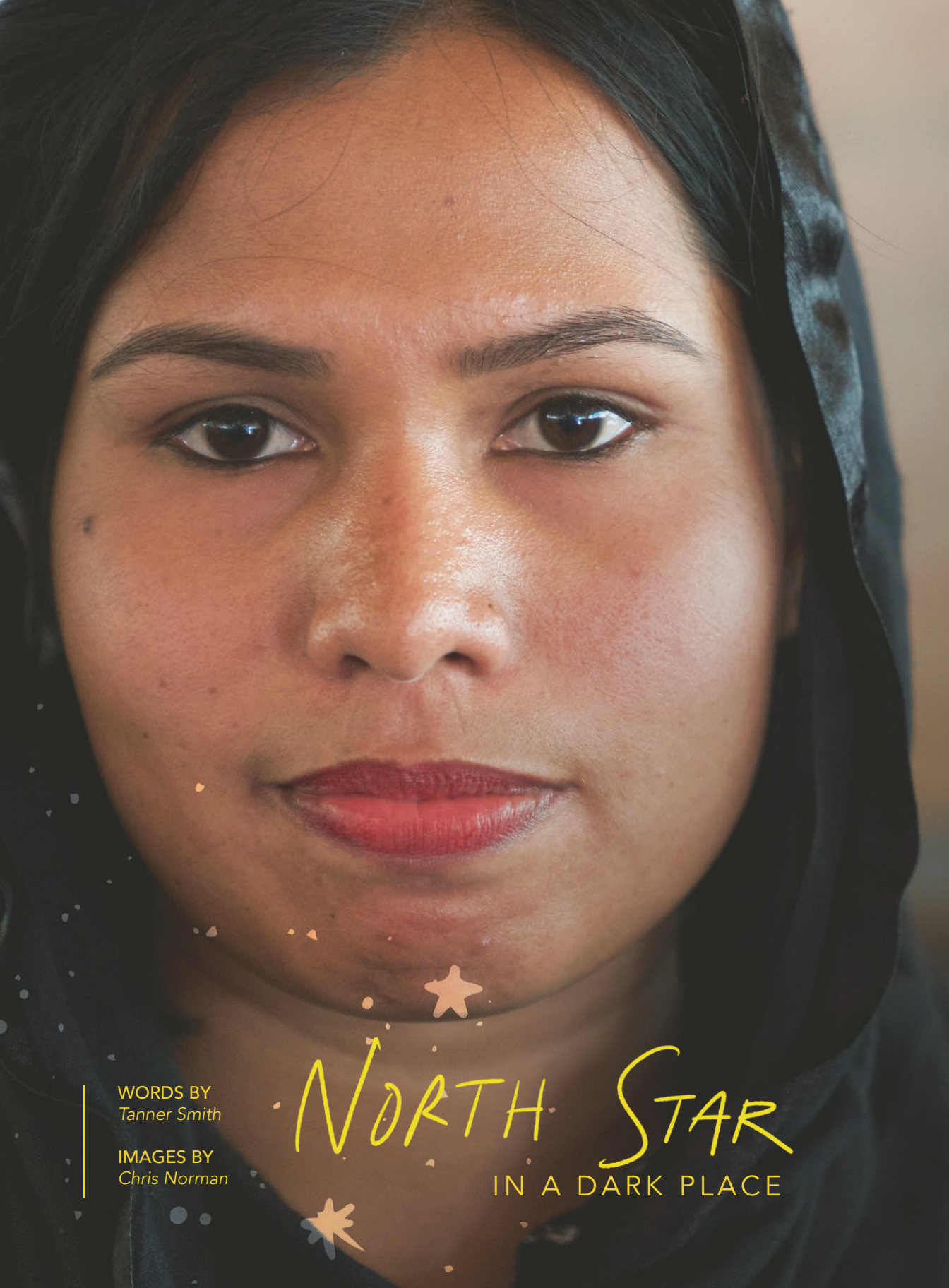
Claire

I'm from New Zealand and I've worked with Partners for the past 10 years. Every day whether I'm looking at a spreadsheet or a strategic plan I know that I am part of something bigger; that God's love is big enough for everyone and that's why to love is to act every time I open my computer.



Mike

I work in the Middle East department with Partners and whether I'm out in the desert in the Middle East or in my office working through Excel spreadsheets, I know that every day I show up to work, somebody else gets fed. That's why I love my job. To love is to act.



WORDS BY
Tanner Smith

IMAGES BY
Chris Norman

NORTH STAR

IN A DARK PLACE

HADISA BEGAN TEACHING SCHOOL WHEN SHE WAS 15. THAT MAKES HER ALMOST A VETERAN TODAY AT AGE 18.

Her one-room schoolhouse is packed with 34 children and teenagers, ranging in age from 5 – 13 years old. They're eager to learn, proudly carrying their colorful backpacks filled with pencils, composition books, reading texts, and math workbooks. Their blue and maroon uniforms show the world that they belong, that they have somewhere important to be, that they have a future. These things matter when you're Rohingya, violently uprooted from your home, and trying to find your way in a new, disorienting country like Bangladesh.

Hadisa is a north star in this mess. She's a teacher. A guardian. A social worker. An advocate. Often, she's a surrogate mother – at least for a few hours each school day, and probably for many hours outside of the classroom, too. Twenty-five percent of the children in her class have lost both parents to the violence perpetrated against the Rohingya in 2017. So, Hadisa not only teaches math and reading, but resiliency and self-respect. Hadisa, and teachers like her, speak the language of hope. The fact that they exist, that their classrooms create a tiny slice of order out of the daily chaos of a refugee camp, means that a better future is possible. Classrooms like Hadisa's boldly declare that the lives of these children aren't going to be wasted in the slums of desperate poverty caused by the horrific consequences of genocide. These children are worth the investment, worth teaching, worth loving, worth seeing.

Schools are one of the very best ways to turn the tide of hopelessness and poverty in crisis situations like the one unfolding in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. When a humanitarian crisis, like a genocide, happens, the catastrophe escalates quickly – and multiple catastrophes converge. Orphaned children and the chaos of resettlement means that children are easy targets for exploitation by predators. But children who are in school are hard targets because Hadisa's watchful gaze is always scanning for wolves attempting to victimize her little flock. Look at her eyes. This woman is not to be trifled with. Children are also targets of recruitment by violent extremists, but a child who goes to school has hope and a future. Hope is the ultimate antidote to the false promises of extremism.

Teachers are truly the *special forces* of the Kingdom of God, and schools are their secret weapon. Do you want to change the world? Build a school, and train a teacher.

Our hats are off to the Hadisas of the world who stand in the gap for displaced and vulnerable children. We are grateful that we can partner with her in bringing free, full lives to children affected by conflict and oppression.

Will you join us?

Update: Since this article was written, a private donor has funded Hadisa's school and two others for 2019.



TEACHERS ARE TRULY THE
SPECIAL FORCES
OF GOD'S KINGDOM

POP-UP SHOPS:

OUR NEW FAVORITE THING



THE PROBLEM IS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE OCEAN BUT WE BRING THE SOLUTION TO YOUR DOOR.

Go shopping: in your dorm. Your church. We will set up items we have sourced from either SE Asia or the Middle East - actual items we purchase on the ground to distribute. Want to provide food for a family for a month? That will be \$50, please. We will make sure that a family then receives a package of salt, 1 bottle of oil, a 50kg bag of rice and an orange tarp to keep them dry. Want to provide a soft blanket for a child who has to sleep on the ground? Great choice - \$25 - and in a few weeks we will put a blanket just like the one you hold in your hands at the shop in the hands of a child in a refugee camp in Bangladesh.

Can't make up your mind between eyeglasses for a student at our pop-up school in Bangladesh and a reusable feminine hygiene pack? No worries; you can purchase the whole shop and we will buy one of everything for you! You can even give \$5 for whatever is needed most and we will use that too.

Interested in hosting a pop-up shop? Let's talk. Send us an email at info@partners.ngo.



WORDS BY
Jenn Tendero

IMAGES BY
Fair Haven Church

HOW WE REBUILT A SCHOOL AND DRANK A WHOLE LOT OF LEMONADE

(AND OTHER TALES FROM VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL).

We aren't sure what you did last summer, but about 1000 kids earned the right to wear t-shirts that say, "We rebuilt a school in Syria because to love is to act." Their parents and neighbors learned how to make and drink lots of lemonade. And hundreds of Syrian kids are now back in school because our youngest major donors decided that kids in Syria deserve to go to school as much as kids in Texas do.

Two women - one from Michigan and one from Texas - decided that they would commit to rebuilding a school through the Amar Project. We kind of thought that asking 8-year-olds to raise \$5000 in a week was shooting for the stars; they went for it anyway. And then we got a front-row seat watching God move and motivate and work through kids who know injustice when they see it even if they can't name it.

"At first our team was leery of choosing the Amar Project as our VBS mission because of concerns around how we would communicate the cause well enough while protecting kids' innocence and not generating fear. We felt equipped after getting resources from the Partners staff and explained in simple terms why this was an important cause - every kid deserves to go to school! Our VBS kids sure lived into the Amar Project's phrase 'Little kids can do BIG things!' The kids surpassed our goal and the place erupted in excitement!"

Lori McCrum
Family Ministries Director
Fair Haven Church

Lemonade stands in their neighborhood.
Doing chores around the house
Birthday money.
Lemonade stands in front of the fire station (brilliant!)
Asking grandparents to contribute (also brilliant!)
Emptying piggy banks of life savings.
Contributed tooth fairy money.
Bakes sales.
Pop-can drives.

THIS IS HOW THEY DID IT.



WORDS BY
Jenn Tendero

A LUDICROUS DREAM, A MOVING GOALPOST, AND 24 HOURS OF RIDICULOUS GENEROSITY

In the fall of 2018 we came up with a wild idea: to fund the rebuilding of 2 schools in Syria destroyed by ISIS. And to do it all on the one day when every single non-profit is trying to raise loads of money also. It was preposterous; the idea may have even been shot down at one point as too ambitious. But we had a gut feeling our supporters would do what they do best: support our dream of bringing light and love to impossible situations.

Still, we have to admit we were bowled over by your response as donation after donation came pouring in. By 1pm we had met our goal and looked at each other with amazement: we never had this problem before. So we doubled the goal. You crushed that, too.

And after lots of hard work by community volunteers in Raqqa, Syria, in the spring of 2019, ribbons were cut not on four small schools but two large middle schools previously emptied of students and occupied by ISIS since 2014: Raqqa

Middle School and Al Amin Middle School.

Students had been unable to attend school for five years. Let the injustice of that sink in for a second.

Today, 1012 students are in two gorgeous refurbished buildings and learning. Let the love of that sink in, too.

Teachers and administrators at these schools are implementing a curriculum that is designed to allow students to catch up to a grade level that is appropriate for their age. The reopening of Raqqa Middle School, in particular, created great hope because it was among the first schools to reopen in Raqqa City since ISIS occupation ended in 2017.

This is who you are: you see an injustice and you act out of love to right what is wrong. You lived with less for yourselves so 1012 kids who have had the right to an education stolen from them, whose school was used as an ISIS barricade, could have more.

We can't wait to tell you what we have planned for this year's Giving Tuesday: our most outlandish dream yet!

HERE'S WHAT HAPPENED



You gave on #GivingTuesday and your gift was doubled.



Our local staff in Syria bought materials for the rebuild.



Community volunteers swept, patched and painted.



Teachers were called back to teach and students enrolled.



After a ribbon cutting ceremony the school opened.



Kids ran into their classrooms for the first time in years.



This is the best and most joyful kind of work. Because it's one thing to keep kids from starving by giving them emergency rations of food. It's quite another to do something that will change their lives next week and next month and next year and the years after that.

WORDS BY
Mike Riley

IMAGE BY
Mona Relief

P R O X Y H A T E :

P R O X Y

Love

THE YEMENI CIVIL WAR IS NOT A TRADITIONAL WAR. IT IS A PROXY WAR.
AND, A PROXY WAR CAN ONLY TRULY BE BEAT BY PROXY LOVE.

A proxy war is defined as a situation in which foreign powers try to promote their political, ideological or religious goals by engaging in another country's conflict. In the case of Yemen, Sunni foreign powers back the exiled government, meanwhile Shi'ite nations back the Houthi rebels.

This proxy war has become a playground for countries with political, financial and, especially, religious goals to "play war" without much suffering of their own. Who has suffered during this proxy war? Probably not you. Definitely not me.

There is only one victim in this proxy war; the people of Yemen. In the last two years, tens of thousands of people, including civilians, have died as a result of direct exposure to battle or bombings from the main players engaged in this proxy war. According to the





Sameeh



United Nations, over 22 million Yemenis need urgent humanitarian aid and protection; two million of them are displaced, and 8 million of them do not know where they will get their next meal.

This proxy war, fueled by proxy hatred, is destroying a country. Not your country. Not my country. It is destroying a country filled with beautiful people who deserve free, full lives. It is time for proxy love to fight proxy war.

Proxy love is a beautiful thing. It is the exact opposite of proxy war and hatred; proxy love occurs when people, with no connection to a conflict, love in a generous and beautiful way.

Beautiful proxy love occurred last year when Partners Relief & Development and Mona Relief, our local Yemeni partners, delivered family food parcels including rice, cooking oil and dates to families in Al-Raqeah, Yemen. Beautiful proxy love occurred when we delivered parcels including flour, powdered milk and sugar in Hudaydah, Yemen. Or when we fed over 1,500 people in Al-Lawya.

Sameeh, the boy in the blue striped shirt, pictured here, has suffered from the effects of proxy war and hatred. He lost his father in an air strike while they attended a wedding party. But, proxy love occurred when you trusted us with your donation. We passed your love onto our local partners and they delivered that love to Sameeh's home in the Al-Raqeh, in the form of an urgent food basket. Sameeh believes in, and relies on, proxy love.

We know you have absolutely nothing to do with this conflict. But, you have the opportunity to fight proxy war and hatred with proxy love. **While the rest of the world uses Yemen as their war playground, we challenge you to use Yemen as your love playground.** It is a beautiful thing to love by proxy.



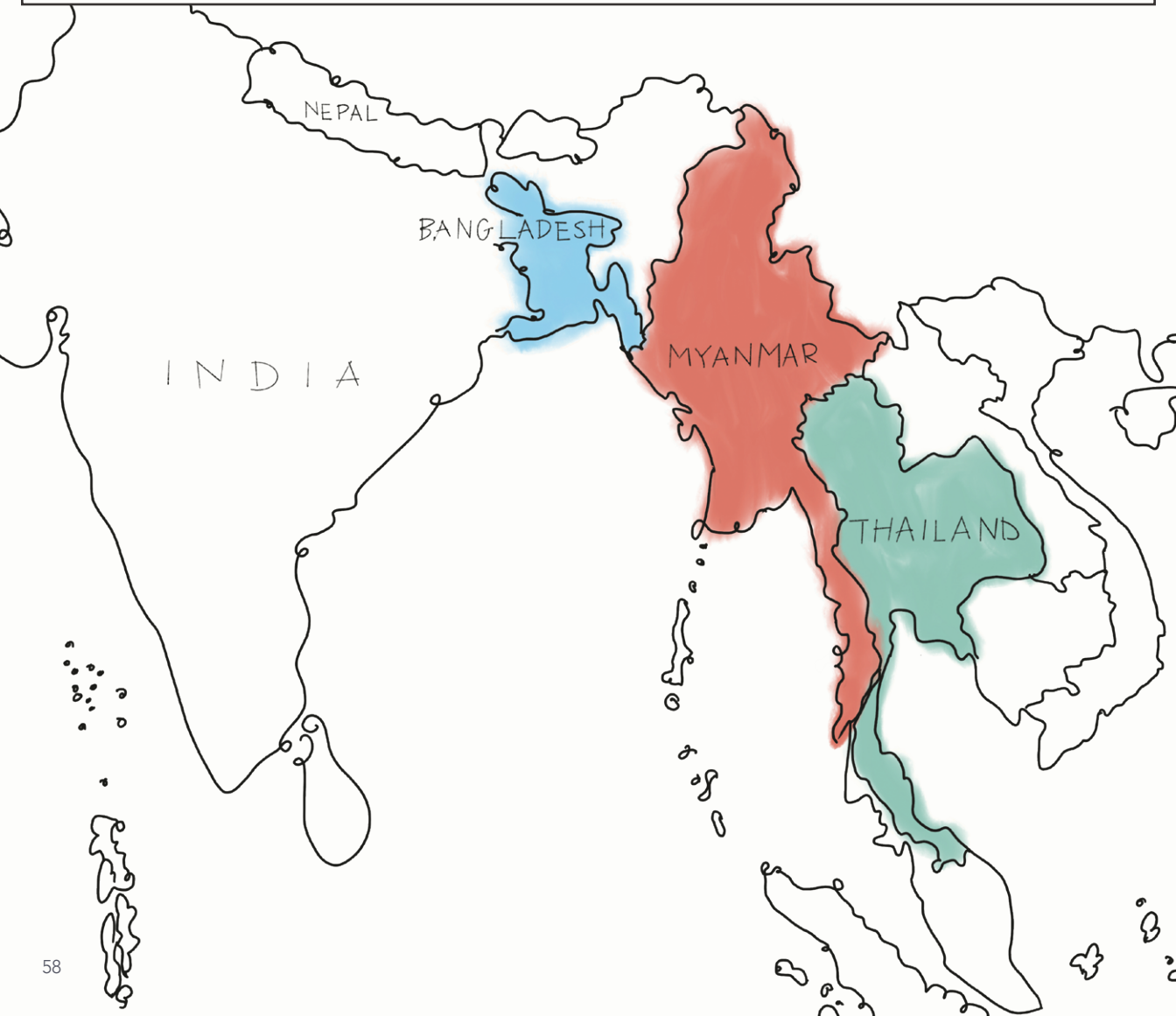
2018
Snapshot

2018 PROGRAMS, PROJECTS & HIGHLIGHTS



SOUTH EAST ASIA

Compassion and Assistance for Refugee Education | Community Schools Support | Kingdom Building | Sustainable Agriculture for Education | Early Childhood Education | Karen Sustainable Schools | Rohingya Emergency Relief | Patient Referrals | Lay Tong Ku Health Centre | Migrant Community Support | Karen Village Health Centres | Migrant Sewing | Days for Girls | Village Health Workers | Seed Migrant Centre | Shan Healthcare Training | Shan Sustainable Schools | Focus Communities | Rohingya Schools | Intertwine | Strengthening Families | Kachin Community Support Networks | Rohingya Health | Eden Development Training Centre | Mae Jo Development Training Center | System of Rice Intensification Training





BANGLADESH

As almost a million Rohingya are still living in limbo in some of the largest refugee camps in the world, you're still there providing life-saving relief, medical care and education support to families who have lost almost everything.

HIGHLIGHTS



98

sanitation solutions (wells, showers & toilets) installed.



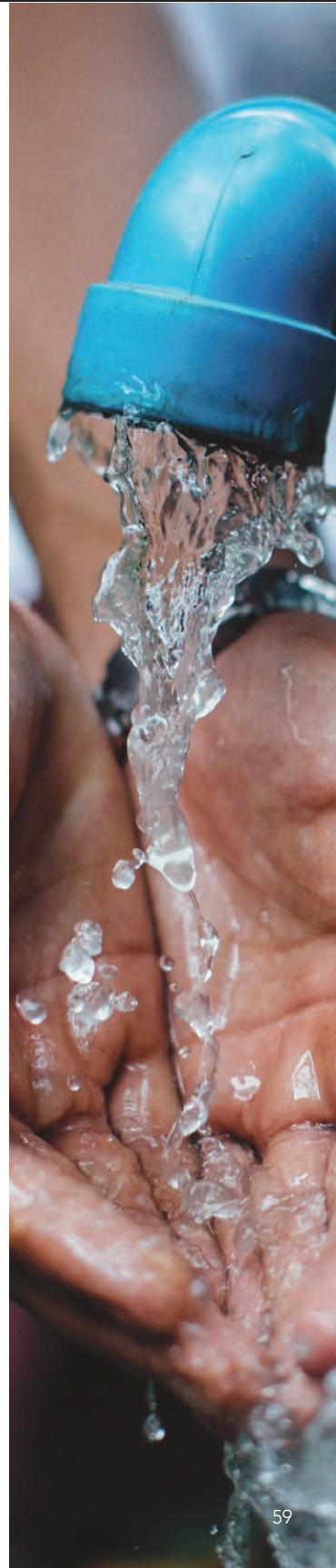
2,400

infant nutrition packs distributed.



6,504

family food packs delivered.





THAILAND

You worked in migrant communities and amongst refugee populations to provide greater access to education and health care, while also investing in the training of migrants to gain employment so they can financially support their families.

HIGHLIGHTS



4,198

patients treated by locally trained health workers.



580

refugee and migrant students supported to attend school.



1,707

Days For Girls kits produced and distributed.



MYANMAR

As human right abuses continued in Myanmar, you provided food for those displaced by conflict, while also investing in better health care, education and farming practices in communities recovering from decades of war.

HIGHLIGHTS



151,529

instances of emergency relief delivered.



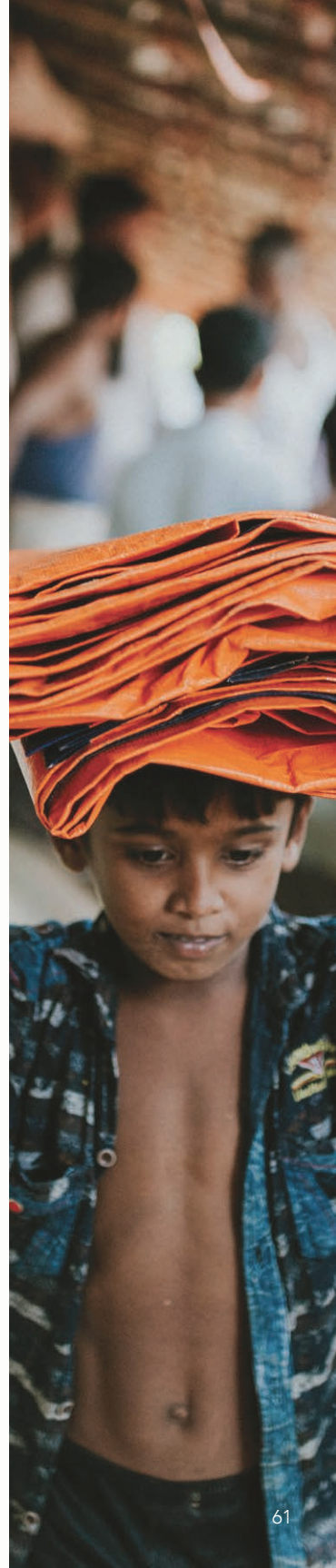
2,172

children in education initiatives.



307

attendees at agricultural trainings.



MIDDLE EAST

The Amar Project - School Rebuilds | Emergency Relief in Yemen | Hospitainer | Clinic Rebuilds | Days for Girls | Trauma Care | Emergency Relief in Syria | Emergency Relief in Iraq





SYRIA

Care for children orphaned by war, food for the victims of bombings, schools destroyed by ISIS rebuilt and reopened. These were just some of the ways you brought God's love into one of the world's most devastating conflicts.

HIGHLIGHTS



41,600

newly displaced people served a hot meal.



6,100

people given access to health care in rebuilt facilities.



924

students back in class in newly rebuilt schools.





YEMEN

Described as the worst humanitarian crisis in the world, the impact of Yemen's civil war is beyond comprehension, with 8 million children going hungry every day. Although just a drop in an ocean of great need, you entered into this crisis with us to provide food to hundreds of starving families.

HIGHLIGHTS



3,693

food parcels distributed to hungry families.



IRAQ

As the last strongholds of ISIS fell, you were there to bring healing and hope to communities who have been left deeply scarred. You met those still displaced with food parcels and trained trauma counselors to begin healing the hearts of the youngest victims of a brutal conflict.

HIGHLIGHTS



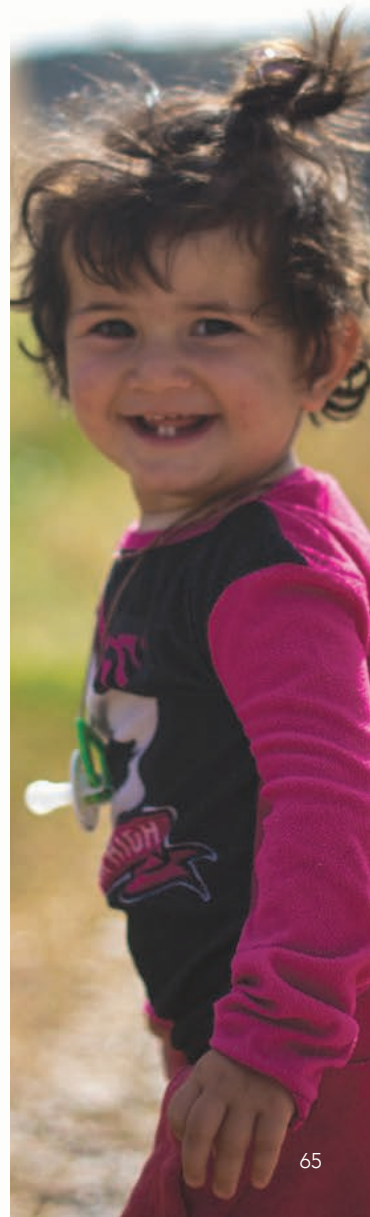
236

family food packs distributed.



50

children provided with trauma counseling.



2018 SNAPSHOT



THANK YOU FOR MAKING LAST YEAR BRILLIANT





Why WE AREN'T Celebrating 25 IN 2019

How did we get so old overnight? Most organizations celebrate the milestone of 25 years; we aren't most organizations, but you knew that already, didn't you? Our heads and hearts are so immersed in our work that we forgot entirely about our big birthday and now 2019 is halfway over. So we are going to celebrate turning 26 in 2020 with a year-long party.

Watch for your invite to celebrate with us!

2019 Summer Playlist

Because our team has found so much beauty in unlikely places this past year, we thought you'd also enjoy finding beauty in an unlikely place. The annual journal of a Christian NGO is as unlikely a place as there is to find songs by Louis Armstrong and Bob Dylan, but we want to change that.

Because Steve Gumaer believes there is a playlist for absolutely every occasion, we leave you with his summer playlist which you can find by typing "*Mellonate*" in the Spotify search bar. Here's the link: <https://sptfy.com/4Ens>. In fact, I'm listening to "Everglow" by Coldplay as I write this.

*So if you love someone, you should let them know
Oh, the light that you left me will everglow*

P.S. Email me a selfie of you holding your journal after you've written on the back of it or tag us on Instagram and we will share it on our social media to inspire others.
jenn.tendero@partners.ngo

I hope you, too, find beauty in this music, in the slower pace of summer and in this journal. Our team is ever inspired by the grit and resilience and capacity for joy in the hardest conditions that the people we work with possess. I honestly don't know how they do it day after day, but I am a better person for being in their orbit.

Take this journal with you camping, to the beach, to the front porch. *And when you are done, please write on the back cover - why others might want to read this and then leave it at your local coffee shop/book store/church/pool/microbrewery/farmer's market so they can. Please?* The more people who know about our work, the closer we get to our goal to create free, full lives for children affected by conflict. You can help Partners no longer be the best-kept secret in loving refugees.

Wouldn't that be beautiful?



Jenn Tendero
VP of Strategic Engagement

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Partners Relief & Development (Partners) is a nonprofit organization with a 501(c)(3) federal tax exempt status. Any contributions given to Partners are tax deductible for U.S. taxpayers.

DISCLAIMER

In the event of a particular project being fully funded, Partners Relief & Development will redirect your donation to other needs of the same community project, or to an equally worthwhile project.

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When you are done reading, fill in the blanks and post a photo of this back cover using **#summerofbeautiful**. We will share your photo on our social media pages!

I found this journal (circle one) Mildly Hardly Wildly inspiring

My favorite page is _____

This is what To Love is to Act means to me: _____

The best song on Steve's playlist is: _____

This is going to be #summerofbeautiful (circle one)

Yes

No

Quite possibly