

# LEARN LOVE LIVE

THIRD QUARTER 2010



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**FRONT COVER** Children playing at Mae Pa Dump  
**PHOTOGRAPHER** Brenden Allen

"The Mae Pa Rubbish dump near Mae Sot, Thailand is home to many migrant Burmese families, seeking refuge and a better way of life from the one they have fled only a few kilometres away in Burma. Families live atop the rubbish and try and carve out some sort of existence by scouring the trash for anything of value."

# NEW STAFF

## WELCOME TO THE FAMILY



### SOMBAT

FARM MANAGER

Sombat is the most recent addition to the Development Team based in Chiang Mai. He is the Farm Manager and is an incredibly humble, servant-hearted man who is often the first to offer assistance to others in the team.



### MARCI & BE SOE TOE

KAREN HEALTH & DEVELOPMENT

Marci Haigh, an experienced nurse from the USA who has already spent 6 years working with Karen medical clinics and patients, is our new Karen Medical Projects Manager. Her fantastic husband Be Soe Toe has joined our team as well to coordinate development projects. They have a beautiful eight month old baby girl called Nenana.



### SECRET SUPERHEROES

SHAN & KAREN PROJECTS

We have four new staff members who have joined us in the last six months that can not be named or pictured for security reasons. Two are working with Shan Projects and two with Karen Projects. They risk their lives everyday to bring training and relief inside Burma.



### MAUREEN

USA NATIONAL DIRECTOR

Maureen Beighey has been part of the Partners family for some time and is now in a new role as National Director of Partners Relief & Development, USA. She's been actively involved with Partner's work since 2006, after meeting and falling in love with the beautiful people of Burma.



### NIT NOY

HOUSEKEEPER

Nit Noy is a Thai Karen from Chiang Rai province and is a relative of two of our other staff. She has a beautiful rock star son called Guitar who is one and a half years old. She always has a smile on her face as she keeps the office clean and helps with projects.



"POWER WITHOUT LOVE IS RECKLESS AND ABUSIVE, AND LOVE WITHOUT POWER IS SENTIMENTAL AND ANEMIC." — MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

This summer my wife and I, along with our three daughters and Bob Marley, our energetic labradoodle climbed a mountain in Songdar, Norway. From the top of this peak, which overlooked Luster Fjord, we were surrounded by majestic beauty and felt close to the author of love. As we hiked, I reflected on love and its demands.

What is the power of love? What is it that makes love visible and unstoppable? Some may say it is sentiment and others, prayer. I believe it is neither. Sentiment is needed and prayer is essential to the mechanics of love, but once the closet of prayer is closed, how is love fleshed out? How will people in Fairbanks, Toronto, Las Vegas, Grand Rapids, Calgary, and Midland understand loves grip today? How will the people of Burma understand that love can not be stolen by a dictatorship?

Jesus overcame evil with good, but it required his death. Now that's powerful love: a person gives their life so that others may live. This is the complete opposite of how General Than Shwe and his 500,000 soldiers rule Burma. The might they wield is reckless and abusive.

You will see some examples of that powerful love in this magazine. Stuart Corlett writes about our work with Shan people to make love real, the determined actions that bring hope and life to thousands of vulnerable people. Read his article and devotion on Habakkuk. It will bless you. Stu helps me see what the power of love is all about.

Our team gives 150% to bring education and capacity to the children of Burma. Read Sonya's article on how their tenacity and commitment to make God's love visible has resulted in more than 80,000 children, even kids on the run and in hiding from the regime, the chance to learn math, reading, and science in Karen State.

Grace International School is just one good example of the hundreds of people who make what we do possible. The money the students raised meant that love had a gas tank, a pair of shoes, and a representative. We featured the article about their event for your encouragement.

As we at Partners work to bring Christ and His love to the hills of Karen State, the mountains of Shan State, and into the plains of Burma's millions, we depend on our partnership with you.

I remember this everyday whether I am in the jungle, in Thailand or on a mountain in Norway. As you turn these pages, celebrate with us His powerful love. Celebrate the fact that the people of Burma have seen the light of love and will ever be changed by it.

*Steve Gumaer*

Steve Gumaer  
 CEO, PARTNERS RELIEF & DEVELOPMENT

# Good Life Club

by Hosannah Valentine



THA DAH DER VILLAGE. In July 2010, this village was attacked and burned by Burma Army soldiers.

Tho Htoo is 11 years old but looks like he's 9, small and thin but bright-eyed. He's in second grade. I interviewed him because his house had been burned down two months before and I wanted to hear his story in his own words; one week after this interview, his family packed and ran again as the Burma Army again sent patrols toward his village.

Dah Wah is 19 and is in first grade. Both of her parents died of fever when she was 5 years old. She lived with her aunt and uncle in a village that often had to run from Burma Army attacks, sometimes as many as 10 times a year. The rest of her time as spent helping her family find food. She had no time for school. Now she lives in her township headquarters and the Karen National Union (KNU) supports her schooling.

These are two of the nearly 3000 students from over 50 schools who came to Good Life Club programs in northern Karen State in December and January. Out of 54 schools, 3 were high schools and 10 were middle schools. 41 of the schools were primary schools. This means in 41 villages out of 54, children have no option for school after primary school – or at least no options that don't require them to leave their families and move to a different village. This means that for most children in Karen State education stops after 5th grade. And school, such as it is, is interrupted by Burma Army attacks, by untreated illness, by hunger and the struggle to find food. This is not just education at risk – this is a people's hope for the future at risk.

And loss seems imminent.

When families are hiding, living under makeshift shelters in the jungle, rationing out the little food they are able to carry and hoping the marauding soldiers will turn back before it's gone, when teachers are trying to decide whether to attempt to have class in the jungle or wait until they have a classroom, and maybe a routine (with no guarantee that will happen), when the people are locked into the binding struggle for immediate survival, when children too young to fully understand life bear already the burden of death – this is when hope can be lost.

It is into this situation, precisely this situation when things are at the worst, that the Free Burma Rangers and Good Life Club come. They bring help in the form of medicine and food and additional security from oncoming attacks. They bring gifts from people around the world, accompanied by messages from those people of support and prayer and encouragement. They bring a children's program of singing, games, health teaching and the message that God offers freedom from fear and can redeem any circumstance. They give the children a chance to be children again, for a day at least.

The Good Life Club counselors volunteer because they love children; Free Burma Rangers (FBR) teams are volunteers who love and want to serve their people. And so seeds of love are planted, during each mission and in each program, seeds whose flower is hope and yield is freedom.

**"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." John 10:10 (ESV)**

*Like many literature majors, Hosannah has held the longest, oddest assortment of jobs. She has now worked with the Free Burma Rangers for 4 and a half years. She helps lead the Good Life Club program and trainings in tough places across Burma.*

*Partners Relief & Development helps fund and train relief team members for the Good Life Club program in partnership with the Free Burma Rangers. The following words describe what the program looks like on the ground.*

Every year the Good Life Club visits Tha Dah Der village, in Muthraw District, for a big program before it heads off to the rest of its mission. Children from Tee Mu Der, Dah Oh Der and Daw Kah To Baw villages also come. These villages are all 2–3 hours from a major Burma Army camp and have to flee from attacks nearly every year. They have always been able to return to their homes and they welcome the FBR teams and participate whole-heartedly in the Good Life Club.

One child who came was Naw Noe, now a student at New Generation School, a high school in Muthraw District. This year Naw Noe and 13 of her 10th grade classmates accompanied the Good Life Club for several weeks of the GLC school tour. They helped lead singing, performed dramas and became part of the team. Like Naw Noe, they all had stories of running away from attacking Burma Army soldiers, instability, and losing parents or siblings. Like her, they were all determined to come back and help their people. Good Life Club had come full-circle, and those children who had once been participants were now leading.

# Nasty & complaints passionate Hope

*Like many other people in history, Habakkuk the prophet observed massive injustice in the world. He asked God: "Where are you when it hurts?"*

*What do you do when the rich rob the poor blind, when orphans are made and destroyed, where the weak are taken advantage of? We all struggle with this question. The compassion in us drives us to give, work to change the world and to pray.*

*The world is at times an incredibly nasty place.*

I am reminded of a Shan girl who was raped by Burma soldiers at 12 years old after having seen her family and friends burned alive, only hours previously.

Its easy to feel depressed. "God this is just too much. "The stories become overwhelming and we cry out "God, you don't seem to be here. Where are you?"

*And God sure takes his time.... it seems....*

There are thousands of people inside Burma and outside who daily pray for freedom in that country. There are faithful men and women who risk their lives to serve God and people in that country. But, decades later, no change seems to be on the horizon. It feels frustrating.

*And it feels hopeless.*

The massive, technologically advanced Burma army against just a few under resourced ragtag groups in the hills protecting wounded and innocent civilians brutalized by attacks. The odds seem impossible.

In the book of Habakkuk there are three simple chapters.

In Chapter One Habakkuk has a lot to complain about. Mostly things like I've mentioned above.

In Chapter Two God gives him an answer, and its mostly to remind the prophet about God's real character. He reminds the prophet, that He is a God of JUSTICE.... and that justice will come.

In Chapter Three Habakkuk stops complaining. He reminds us of the awesomeness of God, the greatness and the beauty.... and then he makes this famous statement: "Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though

there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior."  
Habakkuk 3:17,18a

*It feels hopeful.*

I have glimpsed this attitude in the weakest of people, amongst refugees and internally displaced people from Burma, even amongst those who we think are far from God, and yet are somehow drawing close to him.

Last year I witnessed three special examples of this attitude amongst students training to be Community Health Care Workers in Buddhist Shan State.

— One man walked 3 months to reach the training, and 3 months home again. He made a canoe from a tree he cut down to cross the massive Salween river so he could reach the training and serve his people with health care in his village.

— One man had been a soldier since he was very young (a child soldier). He worked past the struggles of his past to learn to heal people instead of kill them.

— One young woman, who had a university degree from Burma, risked her identity and life to be at our training so that she could care for people. She put this ahead of her own "career" and future. This year she will be one of our senior trainers in the program. There were another 57 students with stories like this.

*Here's a summary of their attitude:*

"Though our rice supplies are stolen and our houses burned down, though our women are raped, and our parents murdered, though we have not a cent to our name, and struggle for food and water. Yet we will hope."

*Here's the interesting twist:*

Many of these young people are beginning to respond to God their Savior.

*Hope leads to hope.*

So, I won't get depressed, and I might even stop complaining. I will look to see God at work, to find where he is working, and to join in... because I like what He does.

*Stuart Corlett, from New Zealand, leads our programs in Shan State. He's a Dad, a phenomenal photographer, a fluent Thai speaker and semi-professional at executing hand brake turns in his black Honda.*

by Stuart Corlett

# "IN THE FUTURE

STUDENTS WILL GET EDUCATION,  
WILL BECOME TEACHERS  
& PROTECT OUR NATION FROM BRUTALITY.

so when we have  
**EDUCATION,**  
WE CAN HELP OUR NATION  
==== *grow* =====

# OUR AMBITION

IS THAT STUDENTS WILL BECOME  
LEADERS AND TEACHERS

AND HELP THEIR  
OWN PEOPLE

— *to have* —  
**FREEDOM"**

NAW HTOO PAW — SCHOOL TEACHER IN KAREN STATE



NAW HTOO PAW \*

less than 3% of children in Burma are able to  
complete education past elementary school level \*

WITH YOUR HELP, TEACHERS LIKE  
NAW HTOO PAW AND THE  
CHILDREN SHE TEACHES CAN  
HAVE A **NEW FUTURE**

**\$15** for one  
CHILD

GIVE \$15 TODAY TO MEET  
ALL THE EDUCATION NEEDS  
FOR ONE CHILD FOR A YEAR

Use the attached envelope and send your check today.  
Or donate online: [www.partnersworld.org](http://www.partnersworld.org)

# EDUCATION IN A WARZONE

## KAREN STATE, BURMA

Every parent wants their children to receive a good education; an education that prepares them for life, love, and happiness. Indeed, we hold this as a basic right that every person should be able to enjoy.

Imagine now that the world you live in is too uncertain, too dangerous for your child to go to school. What will you do? Educate them yourself? Even if you have to spend your entire day bent over in a rice field so you can feed the rest of your family? Perhaps even send them to school somewhere safer?

For the Karen people of Burma, education is held in very high esteem. Many Karen parents make the difficult choice to send their children to schools in nearby towns and villages or even to refugee camps in neighboring Thailand, often braving many hardships and dangers. The decision to send their child away is not without tremendous emotional costs to both the child and the family. Given the precarious nature of life in their villages, parents know that there is no guarantee that they will ever be united again as a family.

The harsh truth is that for many internally displaced Karen children, education is a distant dream. The reality of a life on the run and hiding in makeshift jungle camps has robbed them of an education and a quality of life that most consider a basic right. Understandably, parents are desperate

to give their children an education and a future, even if it means never seeing them again.

The problems don't stop when the child gets to school either. In Burma, the political, social, and economic hardships endured by communities at the hands of the Burma Army have severely limited their capacity to support teachers, students, and schools. Malnutrition, disease, security issues, and general poverty all contribute to poor student performance and attendance in school. Teachers have no time to grow their own food due to their teaching responsibilities and must depend on their communities for food or money. When a community cannot support educators' basic needs, it becomes extremely difficult for teachers to remain in their positions, and the educational quality of life for the entire community suffers.

Access to education is limited in conflict areas, particularly for those children who want to study beyond the primary level. In most villages, whether temporary or established, there are no government-supported schools.

But there is hope! What does exist is a network of more than 1000 community-run schools across Karen State, Burma that includes six high schools. Many of these schools consist of little more than a few bamboo benches under a tree. Rocks are used as writing boards, and books, pencils, paper are scarce to non-existent. The few supplies available to these schools are frequently lost or destroyed in Burma Army attacks. One of the last things any of us would pick up when fleeing would be our school books.

Our goal at Partners is to work collaboratively with the other organizations that are already working within the area of education in Karen State. In November 2005, the Karen Education Department (KED), the Karen Teachers Working Group (KTWG) and Partners Relief & Development (PRAD) agreed to pool, coordinate and jointly distribute education assistance to the Karen State schools, forming KSEAG (Karen State Education Assistance Group). The aim of KSEAG is to ensure that all schools, teachers and students in Karen State receive the best possible education assistance in a systematic manner that is fair to all involved.

Together with others, Partners has successfully worked as part of KSEAG to:

- Decrease the attrition rates of Karen State teachers resulting from abject poverty.
- Enhance the mental, physical and social development of Karen students by providing school and health materials.

EACH DOT  
REPRESENTS  
ONE SCHOOL &  
TOGETHER THEY  
REPRESENT  
THE HOPE OF  
83,920 STUDENTS  
WHO ARE ABLE  
TO LEARN.

- Increase the capacity of Karen State education leaders in the management of the Karen education system.

There are currently **1049** schools, **3981** teachers and more than **83,920** students in Karen State. These numbers fluctuate depending on current situations on the ground, but they give you a glimpse into the size and scope of this effort.

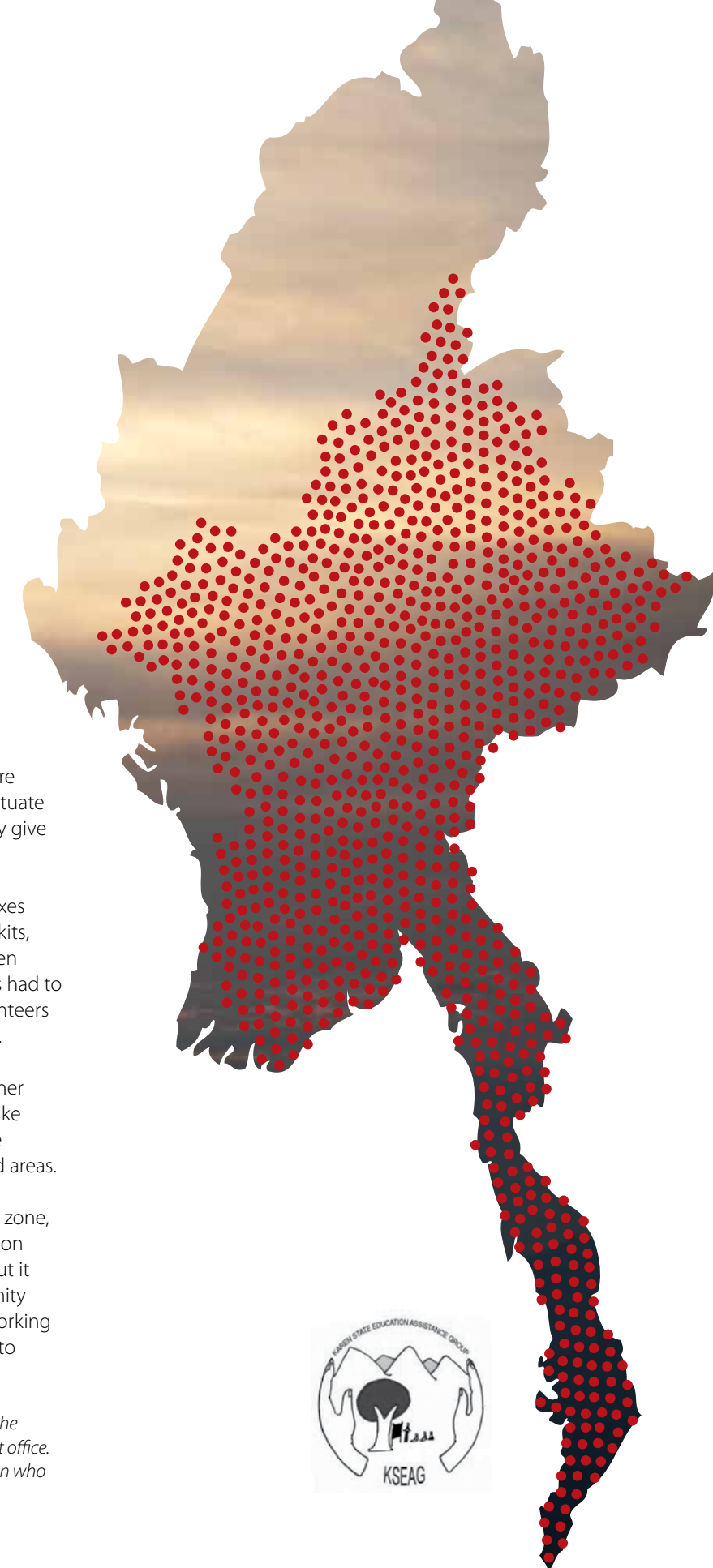
At the beginning of this year **414,442** notebooks, **279,652** pens, **306,120** pencils, **987** footballs, **13,440** boxes of chalk, **987** Karen-English dictionaries, **66,671** vitamin kits, and much more were delivered to schools all across Karen State. The majority of the **103,237** kilograms of materials had to be carried on the backs of over **10,000** community volunteers who had to walk up to 3 weeks to return to their homes.

At the end of each school year, KSEAG provides a subsidy for each teacher. In 2009, KSEAG gave each teacher a **2,500 THB (approx. \$75 USD)**. While this might seem like a small amount, it goes a long way towards ensuring the wellbeing and health of the teachers in these devastated areas.

Karen State Education Assistance is the most comprehensive education support program in a conflict zone, not just in Burma, but the world. The scale of this operation is massive and complex, especially due to the conflict, but it works because of the tremendous level of local community support, and because of people all over the world are working together with communities to bring life, love, and hope to these precious children.

*Sonya Claase is a phenomenal leader, a passionate advocate for the Karen people and is the Director of Karen Projects and our Mae Sot office. She's also a busy mother and is married to a handsome Karen man who courageously serves his people.*

by Sonya Claase





## kids helping kids

GRACE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL  
STUDENTS MAKING A DIFFERENCE  
FOR CHILDREN FROM BURMA

Sports camps, art workshops, Christmas parties, Children's Day celebrations and trips to the zoo. These are just some of the many fun ways that students from Grace International School in Chiang Mai, Northern Thailand have been bringing love in action to children from Burma over the past three years.

One special way that Grace students connect is through the Sports Department's Sports Leadership program. This program includes students organizing and leading sports camps for underprivileged schools. For the past three years students have visited a migrant school at Phoppra near Mae Sot, that Partners helps fund. Each year they have run sports camps and fun activities like face painting, parachute games, water balloon catapulting, glow stick games, t-shirt painting and movies on a big screen. One year, 8,000 glow sticks were donated for use at one of the camps by an underground church in China by parents of students boarding at Grace!

Matt Coe – the teacher of the 17 Grace Sports Leaders said: "With no street lights, the giant game of capture-the-flag one night using 500 glow sticks was especially brilliant and the screeches of delight from the children made it all the more special. On Sunday the Sports Leaders and the Karen children shared testimonies and worship in their church – a very moving time for all!"

Dylan Coe (12 years old) wrote: "When we give the kids a coloring page and some colors they treasure them like I would treasure an X-box or a computer. I have learned that there are people in the world who are not as fortunate as me and so we need to love them and help them."

Pastor Peacefully (the pastor at the migrant school) shared with Matt Coe that he was particularly grateful for the way Matt and the Sports Leaders have mentored his senior students in leadership training over the course of their visits. He constantly marveled at the many and varied ways the foreign students found to have enormous amounts of fun with his students.

Last year the Sports Leaders also ran a very successful sports camp in a Thai village close to the Thai-Burma border. This village is close to a Shan displaced persons camp where some of Partners' Shan work is based. The students were invited back several months later to run the Children's Day celebrations for more than 300 children. The program they ran was so well received by the village and surrounding community that Partners now has greater access to the displaced Shan and are able to deliver more relief supplies, training equipment and trainers into the area than ever before.

At Grace International School graduation each year, it is common to hear the senior students speak of how ministering each year in a migrant village or Partners

Children's Home is a highlight of their high school years. This year, one of the graduating students gave this advice: "Don't waste time hanging out at the mall or doing random stuff in your spare time. Instead, make the most of the great opportunities there are, to do things for others. They will be the great memories you will remember long after you have left school!"

*Ruth Corlett is a great mum to three Grace International School students and is also National Director of Partners Relief & Development in New Zealand. She is passionate about the children of Burma and loves that her kids are able to be involved too!*

by Ruth Corlett



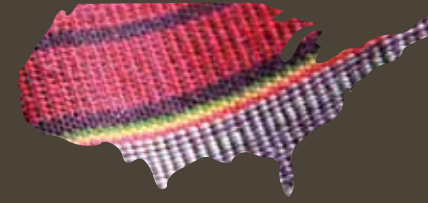
DANIEL & KATHRYN



KRITSANA & YUTTAPOOM

Love has been in the air at Partners over the past six months. Kritsana, the Mae Sot office manager married Yuttapoom in her home village in Northern Thailand in March. Most of the Thailand team were able to be there to help them celebrate their big day and have the special privilege of enjoying the traditional Karen dress, food and ceremony. Also congratulations to Kathryn Halley from Partners Australia and Daniel Charman from Partners New Zealand who married in Sydney, Australia in July. A number of the Thailand team were also able to join with them on their special day. We want to wish Kritsana, Yutapoom, Kathryn and Daniel God's richest blessing over their relationships as they set off on the exciting journey of marriage.

## DIRECTORS DESK



I recently put on my travelling shoes and headed to the great northwest where, in the summertime, the sun loves to hang around longer than I can keep my eyes open. It was a concert that drew me there, an outdoor event that drew thousands of people together to celebrate good music and sunshine! It was also an opportunity to engage people in a discussion about the human suffering happening in Burma.

We pulled up in our car, Michael and I, jumped out and attached our "Keep 5-Alive" red balloons to the door handles. Within 30 seconds someone came up to me and said "What are the balloons about?"

We spoke with all kinds of people: young and old, rich and poor. I spoke with many people and not one of them knew anything at all about Burma. Several times I clarified the name and said "its now called Myanmar". Maybe that would help. Even then, it was just a country, somewhere in Asia. I was getting discouraged.

The joy came soon enough though, when a young man and his dad who were parked right next to us, pulled out their camp chairs and sat with us, eager to learn about a people they had never met, never even thought about. They pulled out their cell phones and sent a text donation. They agreed to join us in spreading the word, in asking others to text donate. I kept talking. I will keep talking until the people of Burma can enjoy what I have. Freedom, Opportunity, Hope.

*Maureen Beighey*

Maureen Beighey  
PARTNERS RELIEF & DEVELOPMENT USA

*p.s. You can donate by text too! Go to <http://partnersworld.org/usa/text-to-save-a-life/text-to-save-a-life> for details..*



## FAREWELL SPENCER

The Partners family was sad to see Spencer Kerrigan leave our team at the end of May. Since early 2008, we have been blessed to have Spencer as the National Director of Partners Relief & Development USA. His commitment to helping the people of Burma was so clearly shown through every facet of his work. We will miss the constant stream of emails with huge ideas and excitement, his passion for change in Burma, his prayerful encouragement and his skills at networking and inspiring Americans to connect with the situation in Burma. With two little ones growing up quickly, Spencer has moved on to a new career that would allow him and his wife Lyssa to spend more time at home. We wish him every success in this new adventure.



*Jesus, you are the greatest teacher of all.*

*You speak to us and teach us wisdom that only you can give. Thank you for leading us and guiding us. **Thank you for teaching us.***

*We pray for the children in Burma who are in such great need of teachers – not only teachers, but schools and supplies too. And, not only that, but they need peace to study.*

*Today we pray for the schools supported by Partners.*

*We pray for the teachers who give sacrificially of themselves to teach thousands of children, often with little resources, education and security. Give them your peace and wisdom. **Protect them from all harm.***

*We pray for the students in the schools. The thousands of children who desire to learn and to reach their potential. They don't have the luxuries we have in our schools. A notebook and a pen may be all they have for supplies. Sometimes not even that. We pray that they will be able to learn and understand. **We pray that you will keep them safe as they study.***

*We pray for the Partners staff and villagers who risk a lot to bring supplies and salaries to the schools and to the teachers. **Give them strength to carry on, and protect them on perilous journeys.***

*We pray for all those that work on the logistics of keeping the schools running in Burma's warzones.*

*We pray that you will keep the funds coming to continue the wonderful work with the schools in Burma. **Help us do what we do with excellence and help us do more.***

***Most of all we pray that there will be peace in Burma and that there will be a day when all children can go to school in their own communities, without fear.***

*in Jesus' name, Amen*






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Change Service Requested

A young girl with dark hair, wearing a blue and white floral dress and sandals, stands in a rural, dusty outdoor setting. She is holding a coconut under her left arm. The background shows trees and a simple building.

**EVERY  
CHILD BORN  
INTO THE  
WORLD  
IS A NEW  
THOUGHT  
OF GOD,  
AN EVER  
FRESH AND  
RADIANT  
POSSIBILITY**

KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN