

WE ARE PARTNERS

FALL 2018

Friends,

Our magazine this fall explores the idea that we are Partners. This is the white hot core of our organization. When Oddny and I began Partners in 1994, we deliberately chose this name because we knew that we could only accomplish our goal of free, full lives for kids if we had partners that linked arms with us until we achieved our goal.

Nothing has changed; we still cannot do this without you. All the collective love our team has only gets us so far, but when you partner with us, real transformation occurs in the lives of real children. And where violence and politics prevents kids from thriving, that is where you and we come in. This is our lane, and over the past 24 years, we have learned how to leverage your contributions and our team's efforts to maximize our reach to those kids with life-saving emergency relief, schools they can attend and medics to treat them when they're sick. That's the relief side of our partnership.

When the dust settles - and sometimes even before it does - we immediately work with families and communities to launch sustainable development projects that will allow them to put food on the table and lessen the risk of having to sell their children to traffickers. Parents learn to sew and sell their goods; they learn how to dig a Tillapia pond and raise food for their families. Teenagers learn animal husbandry to earn money for their education. None of those development projects would exist without your partnership.

All the articles and stories in this magazine point back to that core of who we are: **Partners.**

Until every child is free,

Steve Gumaer

STEVE GUMAER

President, Partners Relief & Development

A person is shown from the chest up, holding a large, shiny metal pot with both hands. The person is wearing a dark, textured sweater and a light-colored, patterned headscarf. The background is a bright, outdoor setting with a blurred building and a clear sky. The quote is overlaid in large, bold, yellow capital letters.

**“GO WHERE
YOU’RE SENT.
STAY WHERE
YOU’RE PUT.
AND YOU GIVE
WHAT YOU’VE
GOT TILL YOU’RE
DONE.”**

-JILL BRISCOE

By Monica Parker



PARTNERS
in a
BETTER
Outcome

Partnerships can be pretty magical and incredible things.

In 2009, I started working for Partners. From the very beginning I was enabled to partner with Earth Mission Asia (EMA), a group Partners recognizes for the importance and vision of their mission. EMA, like Partners, seeks to serve the poor and oppressed. EMA's vision is focused on sustainable health care training and development, while Partners' is more diverse and is involved in both relief and development in a number of locations. I have been able to work via both organizations using my profession as a midwife to make small inroads on a terrible maternal health situation in Myanmar that sees 721 maternal deaths per 100,000 people each year.

While I have so many stories where this partnership is used to the maximum impact, my current favorite is this: in 2015 one of the Village Health Managers (VHM) contacted the Partners health team leader and shared a horrific story. A young woman from his village was 8 months pregnant when she slipped and fell. She thought nothing of it, it wasn't traumatic, but she went on to experience a catastrophic and heart-breaking event that saw her carried over mountains and across a lake to the government hospital, where she was rushed in for an emergency c-section and multiple blood transfusions. She

walked away from this horror without her baby, with a traumatized uterus and a big hospital bill that she had no ability to pay. I had worked with the health worker for a number of years, and I had taught him to do exactly what he did in these circumstances to save a mother's life. Through Partners we could support him and moreover this grieving woman by covering her hospital costs.

In the spring of 2018 a woman was referred to the Ther Ray Dau Pae Rehabilitation and Development Midwife Clinic (a project where I am Midwifery Director). I sat there looking at this woman feeling a sense of familiarity. As she told her story, I realized I knew it already and had photos of her on my computer. She was the lady from 2015. She was pregnant again and had been referred early to us for care. It turned out she required another c-section and we were able to support her again. The difference this time was that it was planned, it was a gentle experience and provided maximum joy; we were able to put in place social as well as financial support. This time she got to take home the sweet, fat little baby she had been growing. It's an enriching experience to walk such incredible journeys with the women of this area and to be reminded of the power of partnerships to bring such positive transformation in their lives.



PARTNERS AND NEIGHBORS

BY TANNER SMITH

One time, Jesus was talking with a very religious man, a scholar, and Jesus told him that loving God and loving your neighbor are the most important things a person can do. The door to a full, free life, Jesus claimed, swings on those hinges. The scholar wanted more clarification, so he asked, "But, who is my neighbor?"

To whom am I obligated? Where are the boundaries of my neighborhood? Jesus answered the man by telling the famous story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10). A neighbor is anyone who helps someone in need, the story concludes.

Elsewhere, in Matthew 25, Jesus tells a story about the Kingdom that he is ushering in. He says,

"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance,

the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

"Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

- Matthew 25:34-40 (NIV)



Who is my neighbor? Religious scholars might be tempted to answer with a complicated theological treatise. First-century lawyers might define a neighbor according to legal precedent (there was one). But not Jesus. When it comes to neighbors, Jesus is supremely practical.

Who is my neighbor? According to Jesus, a neighbor is one who pursues full, free lives for others. A neighbor is a person who acts for the wellbeing of those in need. A neighbor provides food, water, clothes, medicine, friendship, and a home to anyone who needs it. That's it. Full stop. A neighbor is one who acts.

About a year ago, I saw a picture of a child in Syria who had been helped by Partners. He was about the same age as my son. He was crying, terrified and hurting, and his face had a nasty cut on it, dried blood covering

his forehead. When I looked at that picture, I saw in his eyes the eyes of my own young son. And these words of Jesus came at me hard and fast:

So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.
Matthew 7:12 (NIV)

This passage is about DOING. "Do to others ..." Which reminds me of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10 and Jesus' story about the Kingdom in Matthew 25. Neighbors DO. What would I DO if that were my son in that picture? Everything and anything that I could.

Neighbors are Partners who seek full, free lives. Neighbors are Partners who DO.



PARTNERS
♥️ IN ♥️
MENDING
HEARTS

Because Partners is committed to giving kids the free, full lives they were meant to live, we cannot be content to simply meet the urgent physical needs of kids affected by conflict; empty tummies can be filled in minutes and thirst satisfied after a few swigs of fresh water. Food matters to these kids and their parents and we never get tired of seeing them perk up after they receive it. But children exposed to conflict have been traumatized; what their eyes have seen, their ears have heard and their hearts experienced create open wounds that aren't quickly healed; trauma is a much more complicated wound to heal than hunger.

This is precisely why we love Haven Center, which runs a 3-month trauma-recovery program for Yazidi children ages 5-13 in Duhok, Iraq. Haven Center is a partnership of local Yazidi professionals and European and US partners, including Partners Relief & Development. Their program was created because it's not normal when a four-year-old boy sleeps with a knife under his pillow out of fear ISIS will come after him again. It was also created for the two brothers, now 8 and 6 years of age, who were sold to different ISIS families when the boys were 4 and 2 years of age. When these brothers were reunited in November 2017, they could not communicate with each other because they no longer spoke the same language. We know what our Partners team does well: delivering emergency relief and launching sustainable development projects that strengthen families. And we are wise enough to know when we

need Partners to help us achieve our goal. Traumatized Yazidi children need people who speak their language, are specifically trained in trauma care and are accessible to the children for the long haul. The program at Haven Center checks all those boxes and more. The effectiveness of their program to heal broken hearts beautifully supplements the work we do to fill empty tummies.

Trauma therapy at Haven Center includes individual counseling, group counseling, play therapy and art therapy. It is inspiring and heartwarming to witness the transformation in the children's behavior and mental health as they progress through each session.

In the beginning, therapy groups are chaotic. Many children are withdrawn or act out inappropriately. By the end of 3 months, the children are more social, more cheerful and much better behaved. The last week of their session, the children go on a field trip by bus. On the bus, the music is turned up and the children sing at the top of their lungs as the bus lumbers down a two-lane Iraqi highway. Their young hearts have been broken but not destroyed. At that moment, on that bus, they are joyful children. And for that moment, they experience a slice of innocence, perceived safety and a glimpse of the free, full lives God created them to live.

BY JEFF DARR & JENN TENDERO



"AND"

&, And, and;

Together with, along with, with, as well as, in addition to, including, also, too; More besides, furthermore, moreover;

It's a small word but it has a special place in our organization's name. Like any name, ours was chosen and deliberated over.

It's the words before and after that are easy to see "Relief" and "Development" but without acknowledging the 'and,' a key piece of who we are is lost.

Dreaming of free, full lives for children affected by the horrors of war or the injustice of oppression is the fire in our bellies. We know what it means to sit with someone at their most desperate moment and to share with them that they are loved, they matter, and we will do all we can to meet their needs. We know too that dignity and hope are born out of giving communities the freedom to build their own solutions, equipped with tools and knowledge to keep their children safe, healthy and educated.

But what is often forgotten is the piece in between. The crucial transformation from relief into development. When this divide is crossed, there is mutual trust, true partnership and a solid foundation for long term relationships. It's often through the intensity of a relief situation that relationships are formed but it is in the long-term development that these relationships really blossom and transformation and sharing of faith can happen.

We started working in Kachin State, Myanmar, just after the fighting started in June 2011. A chance meeting with the leader of a grass-roots Kachin organisation started the ball rolling. This organisation had been working hard to care for thousands of internally-displaced people who had fled for their lives running from the Myanmar Army with only what they could carry. Partners was able to immediately respond to this need and then 6

months later, when the initial and urgent need for food and shelter had lessened, we were asked by Kachin leaders to help them with some of their more long-term development needs.

When we first visited, just a short time after the fighting had started, people were living in the cold under tarpaulins with huge holes. They told us of how the children had thought they were just going on a special Christmas trip to see family but were now asking their parents when they could go home. Partners helped Kachin friends to set up a sustainable organic farm at one of the camps so that they could feed themselves. We also set up a system of volunteers called a Community Support Network to make sure that everyone in the camp was being cared for and looked after.

This combination of relief **and** development working together has

led to long-term, community-led, sustainable outcomes and most importantly: transformation.

Now in 2018 these programs continue to run and impact thousands of lives in more than 12 camps. In fact, many of the people we first formed relationships with are still working with us now. One of these is a young man named Htoi Lar who we first met at a training in February 2012, He is now leading our community support network program as well as helping with relief when needed.

Both these relief and development efforts are good and worthy on their own, but together that's where we see our passion and mission for free, full lives come into fruition.

That's why we are Partners Relief **AND** Development.

BY DOUG & CLAIRE GIBBONS



PARTNERS
FORCHANGE

Join a community of **world-changers** who are committed to give every month until the day when children no longer suffer because adults are fighting.

CHANGE.PARTNERS.ORG

BY JENN TENDERO

THE AMAR PROJECT



THE AMAR PROJECT started with these questions: What if we could show kids that, though they are small, love is big? What if we could give them a chance to generously love kids they will never meet, to work together toward a common goal, and to share with those who have less?

The Amar Project does all that and more. Named after Professor Amar who was scouting locations in Syria for us to rebuild schools when he stepped on a landmine and died, this project rebuilds schools flattened by ISIS.

First Presbyterian Church in Midland, Texas contacted us looking for something tangible they could raise money for in summer Vacation Bible School (VBS). "Would your kids like to rebuild a school in Syria?" we asked. And the Amar Project Kit was born. During their week-long VBS, kids learned that God makes beautiful things out of rubble, by themselves creating beautiful sculptures out of toilet paper tubes, scraps of fabric, cotton balls, discarded keys and whatever else they scrounged for in a giant bin of odds and ends. They wrote "to love is to act" in Arabic. They brought home to their parents ways they could pray as a family for kids in Syria.

And bit by bit over the course of the summer, after lemonade stands on sweltering days and hundreds of hours doing odd jobs, kids in Midland, Texas raised enough money to rebuild not one, but TWO schools in Syria.

960 kids at Fair Haven VBS this summer in Hudsonville, Michigan set a goal to raise \$5000 because a matching donor pledged the remaining \$5000 necessary to rebuild a school. Over the course of four days, excitement grew as every evening they learned the grand total they had raised. And on the final night, when the leader announced that they had smashed their goal and actually raised \$7200, the auditorium erupted in cheers of joy. They had worked toward a common goal and learned that you are never too little to make a big difference.

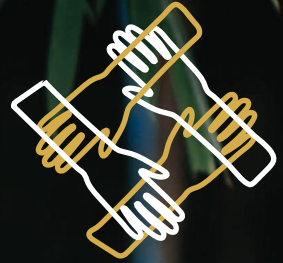
And now? Over 1000 children in two states are wearing t-shirts that say "We rebuilt a school in Syria because to love is to act" and we couldn't be happier about that.

As a mother of six, I want to raise my children to love God above all else and to love others like they love themselves. I want them to know they don't have to wait until they are adults to do this. I want them to experience the joy of giving to others. The Amar Project checks all these boxes for me, and we couldn't be more excited to offer this kit to churches and schools who want the same.

Our team will fully customize the Amar Project Kit to make it work for you. Contact Tanner at tanner.smith@partners.ngo to find out how.

bud•dy sys•tem

'bədə ,sɪstəm/
noun



A cooperative arrangement whereby individuals are paired or teamed up and assume responsibility for one another's instruction, productivity, welfare, or safety.

Migrants from **Myanmar** who live in Thailand are especially vulnerable to exploitation. But when you buddy up with us, we change that. Mothers like **Nie Ngwe Oo**, need a buddy system in order to provide for their children.

So you and we and Light of Love Church in Mae Sot, Thailand, partner together to assume responsibility for her medical expenses, **provide rice to feed her family** and pay for her children's school uniforms, fees and transportation.

And hers is just one story of thousands. When we link arms to demonstrate God's love in communities where suffering and hardship are everyday facts of life, we create the world's largest buddy system. And when we do that, we are truly **loving our neighbors as ourselves**.

Be inspired by just some of what we've already achieved together so far this year.



WHAT WE'VE ACHIEVED TOGETHER

Provided emergency relief and care to **63,800 people** in the Middle East.



Delivered more than **534,600kg** of rice to oppressed Rohingya in Myanmar.

Covered school expenses for **29 migrant children**.

Trained **130 people** in sustainable farming practices.



Supported **5 schools** providing early childhood education to **153 children**.

Held **2 trainings** for Rohingya community health workers.



Supported clinics serving a target population of **38,350 people**.

Supported **69 sustainable businesses** funding local education in Myanmar.



Free, Full Lives
For Children affected
by **CONFLICT**
& *oppression*

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