



HEALED  
WE ARE  
WOUNDS?  
BY HIS  
BY HIS  
WOUNDS  
WE ARE  
HEALED

Partners Magazine September Issue 2011

**PUBLISHER** Partners Relief & Development

**OUR VISION** Free, full lives for the children of Burma

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**FRONT COVER**

"Saw Kyie John (38) lives in Karen State, Burma, and has been ruthlessly attacked by the Burma Army over 20 times, displacing him from his home time and again. In 2010 he stepped on a Burma Army landmine while farming, and because he was denied access to healthcare, will most likely lose his foot."

1. What's the worst thing that you've eaten?
2. What's your funniest cultural experience?
3. What story does your family always tell about you?



**LEAH ROCO**

1. In Thailand? American food. No one knows what in the world they are doing here when it comes to good American food.
2. Seeing Thai ladies who think they are exercising by hula hooping outside their shops and doing jazzercise by our office.
3. How an actress became a farmer.



**DOUG GIBBONS**

1. Bat, actually it tasted quite good but it was the most interesting thing I could think of.
2. When I went to the hairdresser and asked if they could cut my grass. I meant to say hair of course but the wrong word came out.
3. When I was a kid I spent a whole summer holidays digging a hole with my friend. In my version of the story it's a really cool underground spy headquarters!



**MARCI HAIGH-TOE**

1. Poorly cleaned-out goat intestine.
2. Trying to bathe in the river in front of the whole village with a sarong that won't stay cinched!
3. The time that a sweet elderly Karen couple set before me (in their nicest dish) monkey brain curry - still in the skull. And no, it wasn't the worst thing I've ever eaten.



**SHAUNE VINCENT**

1. Pig brains and pig ear - disgusting. Cat - delicious but sad - I like cats. Boiled grasshoppers.
2. I'm a hugger. Asians are not. Especially Asian guys. Sorry for all the awkward hugs - even after nine years in Thailand many of you are still getting them from me! Some habits are hard to break.
3. They are shocked because I used to shriek at small cockroaches and microscopic spiders. Now I consider cockroaches dropping from my ceiling as pets and name them, and it takes a spider the size of a man's hand to get me to scream these days.

# FIRST WORD

HOPE HAS A FACE



"LORD, MAKE ME AN INSTRUMENT OF YOUR PEACE; WHERE THERE IS HATRED, LET ME SOW LOVE; WHERE THERE IS INJURY, PARDON; WHERE THERE IS DOUBT, FAITH; WHERE THERE IS DESPAIR, HOPE; WHERE THERE IS DARKNESS, LIGHT; AND WHERE THERE IS SADNESS, JOY"  
— FRANCIS OF ASSISI

### What does hope look like?

Last month I visited three populations of Kachin refugees who fled their villages in June because of Burma Army attacks. In those huts of despair, I met two reasons to have hope.

**I met a little girl.** She had a bright smile, an open and inquiring face. She was self-confident and looked me in the eyes. She posed while I snapped the shutter on my camera numerous times, trying for the perfect exposure. I adjusted my f-stop. Her mom came over and saddled the child on her lap. I took more pictures. Both mother and daughter smiled so freely, so beautifully, that everything seemed sacred. I turned to my travel companion in awe and said "Brad, do you see that smile?" Brad was also captivated and couldn't help but chuckle himself.

I asked the young mother how old her daughter was. With a shy smile she held her hand up between her child's arms and gave the peace sign. "Two, she is two", her fingers said.

**I met an elderly woman.** I said hello and her ageless face turned into a grin. Looking into my eyes she giggled. I felt warmed by her grandmotherly expression, her big round eyes, and her laughter.

Her village was attacked at 3:30 am on June 9th by a Burma Army battalion. She hid in the jungle until dawn, then trekked with 47 other families for three days to get to where I met her on August 1st –under the shelter of a blue tarp drawn over bamboo poles that she and 140 others hope will be a temporary arrangement.

Having been through all this and so much more, she still smiles. She plays with the many toddlers running through the dirt alleys between tarp tents. She moves to comfort a brand new mother, a grieving teen, and has a kind word for the lady stirring stew beside the fire.

Hope has a face. In the young it may be untested, but it is pure and visible. Our challenge is to nurture it. In the old, having been tested to the core, it is one of the most rare and beautiful things to behold.

Our team works hard to provide medical assistance and healthcare, as well as food and shelter during periods of acute crisis. Equally important in my mind is our team's mission to nurture hope and to work towards a time when the people of Burma enjoy the freedom and fullness my own children to have.


Through these two lives, and the many others you will read about in this publication, I believe you will gain a stronger connection with the people we serve. And I pray: Lord, make us all instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred help us to plant love, where despair abounds, let us nourish hope...

Your brother,

*Steve Gumaer*

Steve Gumaer  
CEO, PARTNERS RELIEF & DEVELOPMENT





*one in five*  
**CHILDREN**  
**DIE BEFORE**  
*their fifth*  
**BIRTHDAY\***

"My name is Naw Moo Lay. I live in Haw Ta village. Since I was a child I have feared the Burma Army. My village is in the mountains, and the land we farm is poor. We have no roads, no electricity and no running water. In the past all I have known is hard work. I rise early and cook for my husband and children. I help in the farm and wash the children's clothes. All of the water we use I have to carry up from the stream, day after day. I have to carry enough for drinking, for cooking, for washing and for cleaning our home.

At dinner time I'm often at a loss since we don't have enough food. It makes me smile when my son brings home a bird he shot with his slingshot, but it doesn't provide much nutrition for us. Because of the Burma Army we cannot feed ourselves. Because of the Burma Army, we cannot live in peace or develop our homes. Last year the Burma Army attacked my village. My neighbor was shot while she was carrying her baby boy. Her baby was killed.

I too have lost babies. Ten pregnancies, ten lives born just a little too soon. I watched in agony as the too-small little babies struggled to breathe, but couldn't. They told me my womb was weak, that I was weak. After the last one my husband asked one of the health leaders to send me to a clinic. They helped me get to Tee Mu Ta clinic but the medic there sent me onwards. Partners staff will help, he said. I finally arrived at Mae Sot, and it all felt so surreal—cars, people speaking other languages, phones ringing and clamoring noise. I was scared, but the translator put her arm around me and told me just the right joke to make me laugh. Partners helped me get treatment but cautioned me to come back and stay in town for my next pregnancy. I cried a lot while away from my family and was happy to return to them after three weeks.





When I felt the little life moving in my belly I was hopeful, fearful and torn. How could I leave my husband and two older children all those months? I hoped that the treatment I had already received would somehow make my womb stronger. My husband decided to move me closer to the clinic. He built me a small house there and spent alternating weeks with me and then back home to tend to the farm and kids.

One day while carrying water I saw the nurse from Partners appear at my door. I was so surprised! I looked at our tiny little house for something I could give her but all I had was lukewarm tea. She tried to convince me to come to Mae Sot but I had already made up my mind. The next day she visited me again with a Village Health Worker. They made a plan to give me vitamins and iron pills to treat my anemia. She also bought us some water pipe so that I could get stream water to my front door. After that day, the Village Health Worker visited me every day. She even shared her family's food with me and always made me laugh. Day after day, with no heavy labor and better nutrition my strength grew.

As nine months came to a close I was full of joy but still worried that something might go wrong. The day I waited for, finally came. In my arms now I carry a healthy, full term child. I feel so blessed!"

Naw Moo Lay highlights the plight of women in Eastern Burma. Over one million internally displaced people are prohibited from seeking health care in a Burmese hospital due to: prejudice, poverty, or risk of death from traveling in a war zone.

One in 12 women die due to pregnancy-related complications. One in five children die before reaching their fifth birthday in IDP areas.

Partners now supports eight mobile health clinics, one of which referred Naw Moo Lay. Partners provides consultation and care for a limited number of referral cases like hers.

Now that she is back in her home village, her only reliable access to health care is the Village Health Worker. Partners' Village Health Worker Program supports holistic care to people living in 47 remote villages, by providing medicine as well as on-going training.

by Marci Haigh-Toe

*Marci Haigh-Toe is a busy mom to an adorable little toddler. She has been working with Karen people for over seven years to promote health and improve medical care. She recently founded a stir-fry recipe using a bitter melon that is useful in treating diabetes, the common cold, malaria and also aids in digestion.*

1 in 12  
WOMEN  
DIE  
DUE TO  
pregnancy  
RELATED  
COMPLI-  
CATIONS\*

# WHERE WOULD YOU WANT YOUR CHILD TO LIVE?



## TOTAL HEALTH EXPENDITURE PER CAPITA (\$US)

<b>\$45</b> INDIA	<b>\$168</b> THAILAND	<b>\$169</b> CHINA	<b>\$2364</b> NEW ZEALAND
<b>\$3285</b> UNITED KINGDOM	<b>\$3867</b> AUSTRALIA	<b>\$4380</b> CANADA	<b>\$7662</b> NORWAY



I AM LOVED AND

THE STORY OF HOW IT ALL BEG





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30

NOT FORGOTTEN

GAN — COMING JANUARY 2012



**SAI BOI'S STORY**



I first met Sai Boi in 2009. He was curled up on a bed in absolute agony, his hands and feet were curled up and writhing in pain. He was suffering from what they call spastic paralysis.

Sai Boi has no mother or father - his father was murdered and his mother died of ill health. Shan resistance soldiers found him some years ago and brought him to the border where he was housed in an orphanage with 100 other boys. Sometime in 2009 Sai Boi got scabies, a common infection worldwide, but especially widespread in refugee camps. He was treated, but since scabies (a small insect that infects bedding) is quite contagious, it soon infected Sai Boi a second time. This time, as any normal nine-year-old might, he thought the medicine hadn't worked the first time and decided not to return to the clinic; so he got a secondary infection. His immune system learned to fight the school sores, but unfortunately also turned against his kidneys. The medics in the camp, not knowing what to do, sent him to a far-away hospital. There he received a medicine with dangerous side effects that caused greater damage to his kidneys, and hospital authorities sent him back to the camp... simply to die.

I was with Dr. Stuart Hockey from Gisborne, New Zealand when we found Sai Boi. After examining him, we honestly thought he would die. We treated him as best we could with the antibiotics available, prayed for him and left the camp. After expecting the worst, you can imagine the surprise we felt when we received news a few weeks later that he was still alive; and furthermore, even showing improvement. In the months to come he would start to use a wheelchair and eventually learn to walk again. We recently brought him to Chiang Mai for Physiotherapy and the fitting of special shoes to help him walk. What happened to Sai Boi was truly a miracle!

#### CAUSE AND SOLUTION

It's easy to focus on the immediate problem -- a scabies infection. But we need to take a look at the root causes. Firstly, Sai Boi's parents had been taken away from him prematurely. Secondly, there just are not enough medics available at the refugee camps -- only two (who are not trained doctors) to care for an overwhelming 5000 people. Sai Boi's condition worsened almost to the point of death, when it started out as a very treatable condition.

Clearly there needed to be longer-term solutions to these plaguing problems. In 2009, Partners Relief and Development - Shan projects, initiated a five-year long project to address some of these issues. With the support of a generous donor, Partners built a training clinic in Loi Taileng. We will have trained a total of 133 Community Healthcare Workers (CHWs) and 56 medics by the end of 2011. CHWs go into the community and teach people a broad range of health concerns from proper hand-washing and food preparation; to family planning, and preventative care. Today, three years later, primary health indicators in the camps show marked signs of improvement as a result of these hard-working, dedicated individuals.



Main Image Left: Bah Thay is the number two medic at the clinic. Main Image Right: Our medical advisor and trainer, Doctor Bert White from New Zealand, spends two weeks out of every month at the Loi Taileng clinic. Top Left: Dr. Bert teaching in our makeshift classroom. Top Right: Paw Hser Gay oversees the medical training program and is a wonderful medic, doing everything out of an overflow of love. Middle: During rounds, various students observe Dr. Bert's evaluation and diagnosis. Bottom: Students doing their own rounds.

#### WHAT IS THE FUTURE?

Sai Boi is just one child in a population of 5000 at this refugee camp, and 10 million in Shan State. Partners was able to help this one boy but we have a much bigger vision of being able to make a difference throughout Shan State. Through the CHW and Medic training program we hope to prevent people like Sai Boi from getting sick from curable diseases. With the support of great people like Paw Hser Gay and Dr. Bert (pictured), along with generous supporters around the world -- together, we are bringing hope and changing reality for the people of Shan State.

Partners is looking for qualified medical professionals to join us. Please contact us at: [getinvolved@partnersworld.org](mailto:getinvolved@partnersworld.org)

by **Stuart Corlett**

**Stuart Corlett** —a man of many talents, works passionately and tirelessly to serve the people of Shan State, Burma. He makes instant connections wherever he goes, with people young and old, and tells a poignant story through his camera lens, of their life, struggle, and triumph.







# A WOMAN OF GREAT FAITH

Now a true widow, a woman who is truly alone in this world, has placed her hope in God. She prays night and day, asking God for his help. —1 Timothy 5:5

It was Partners greatest pleasure to meet 76 year old Khun Aza earlier this year. Having been a widow for many years, she spent her days encouraging other widows and sewing bags and dresses for income. Unable to bear her own children during marriage, she had a ministry to young women suffering the same predicament. She encouraged them, praying for God's gift for the miracle of life. Many babies were conceived and born as a result of God answering her prayers.

Khun Aza moved from Burma to the border area of Thailand when she was 40 years old, but like many displaced people she never obtained official status. Consequently late last year when she took a bad fall inside her home and broke her lower leg in two places, she had no access to health care – and she was too poor to pay any medical bills.

For two and a half months she remained stranded and in constant pain. She relied on the mercy of kind-hearted neighbors for every need. Later when Partners met her she told us that on the morning of her fall, she had read the story of Daniel in the Lion's Den. Regularly she had prayed, reminding God that as He was faithful to protect and provide for Daniel, so she would trust in His goodness and faithfulness. She knew He would protect and provide for her too.

Aza waited two and a half months until she "met God's angels", as was what she called Partners staff. One day a staff member heard about Aza and urgently went to meet her. What she saw shocked her. A frail, thin, elderly lady with home-made bandages wrapped around her leg to cover the broken edges of bone, piercing through skin. Yet, Aza was a woman with an obvious inner strength and faith. Immediately our worker arranged for her to be transported to the hospital.

The medical staff responded compassionately. They were horrified that Aza had suffered great agony for so long. Her leg was infected, her wounds oozing. She was underweight, had a chest infection and pressure sores on her bottom from months of lying down on a wooden bed. Thanks to the care given by her friends, and God's mercy, she had survived even this long. Normally amputation would be ideal but she would need to be transferred to a larger hospital two hours away. But even if she were to go, would she survive the surgery? The recovery may be too arduous and she would be

alone there, away from friends. She could possibly live longer but would she suffer more in the process?

Partners staff offered Aza and her friends three fully paid options, explaining to them the pros and cons of each. We suggested either a transfer to the regional hospital for amputation; remain in the local hospital for ongoing care, or return to her village with a paid caregiver. Over the course of two days Aza and her support network thought and prayed. Their conclusion was to bring Khun Aza home with a paid caregiver.

Thanks to the kindness of Partners donors, we brought sheets, pillows, a soft mattress, nutritional support, medicines, bandages and more, to help her feel comfortable. We provided a small wage to her neighbor so that she would know that we were honored to have her caring for Aza. Our staff returned regularly to visit and provide medical support as well as prayer.

The joy in Khun Aza's face was genuine. Once home she told her story to anyone who would listen! God was her protector, her deliverer. It was an unlikely story of hope. There she had laid, an old dying widow unable to pay for medical care. She had been in excruciating pain, unable to walk, cook or work. God heard her prayers and brought strangers to help her.

At this time, two young men had come to hear her testimony. They were heavy drinkers and addicted to drugs. Through Aza's story they heard about God's grace and mercy. She prayed with them and they met with the God whom Aza spoke of. Unbelievably, now they are both attending a local bible college.

Five weeks after Khun Aza returned home, she passed from earth into heaven. Aza regularly thanked God for Partners and all of our supporters. But most of all she gave thanks to God for His faithfulness to deliver her from her lion's den.

Father to the fatherless, defender of widows—  
this is God, whose dwelling is holy. —Psalm 68:5

by Kathryn Charman & Sarah Lapa

Kathryn Charman & Sarah Lapa are incredible women with big hearts! As natural caregivers, they spend countless days and nights in and out of hospitals and children's homes, caring for the sick and loving on the kids —meeting their physical, emotional and soul care needs.





# FIVE BABIES & ONE WEDDING

Over the last few months Partners Thailand has been experiencing a rather sudden baby boom in the family. On March 30, 2011, a gorgeous little 7.2 pound (3.3kgs) boy, Matthew Johan was born to Sonya and Tah Doh Moo. Soon after in April 'Songkran'; a 6.1 pound (2.8kg) baby boy came along, to parents Zing and Wan (caretakers on our development farm). Continuing in the excitement two months later on June 29, another wee cutie arrived to Doug and Claire Gibbons. Olivia Grace was 52cm long and weighed 7 pounds (3.2kgs). Then just as this issue was going to print, we were ecstatic to hear that another two babies had arrived. Dara, one of our wonderful administrators, and husband Eak welcomed a baby girl they named 'In,' weighing in at 6.3 pounds (2.9kgs). Following closely behind and rounding out the pack, Bom (our irreplaceable office helper) became a grandmother to 'Pakin,' a 6.8 pound (3.1kg) baby boy.

The excitement doesn't end with babies. Our beloved Nit Noy married Mr. Sarawut Norkam (nickname Aod) in a beautiful ceremony on July 16, 2011. They were surrounded by friends and loved ones, and many from our Partners family took part by saying heartfelt prayers over the happy couple. Afterwards we celebrated with a traditional Karen feast. It was a day to remember!



MATTHEW MOO



OLIVIA GIBBONS



BABY 'IN'



BABY 'SONGKRAN'



BABY 'PAKIN'



AOD & NIT NOY

CONGRATULATIONS



# DIRECTORS DESK



Generally we Canadians love ice hockey, our coffee (either Timmy's or Starbucks, no need to fight) and the occasional 'water cooler' gripe about our healthcare system. Long wait times that inconvenience us, trouble finding a family doctor and expensive medicines are just a few of our favourite topics. Imagine though, if your wait times were years or longer? Sixty years of civil war have reduced access to basic health services and the numbers of medical professionals to almost zero in many places in Burma. With a government in Burma dedicated to the destruction of various ethnic groups rather than caring for their people, you can see how the deterioration of their medical system has come to pass.

It is only through organizations like Partners Relief & Development, who work with various community based groups and volunteers, that any form of healthcare is reaching people in Burma's conflict areas. Still the Burma Army, on average, manages to burn down a Partners

medical clinic each year no matter how well it is hidden in the jungle. But we will relocate, rebuild and continue to care for these amazing people who simply want to live their lives and receive adequate health services. **Your support of our programs, including the medicine that our relief teams and clinics distribute, saves thousands of lives each year and we cannot do it without you.**

The next time I am waiting to see a doctor, I will try to remind myself how blessed I am, when so few people in the world have it as good as I do.

Greg Teows  
PARTNERS RELIEF & DEVELOPMENT CANADA

*THANK YOU GOD  
THAT YOU ARE THE GREAT HEALER  
YOU CAN HEAL THE SICK AND THE BROKEN  
YOU CAN MEND BODIES AND HEARTS*

We pray for *HEALING* for the nation of Burma. We pray that the leaders will see that the country is *INFECTED BY GREED*, corruption, violence, lies and arrogance. We pray for healing from the wounds that have been caused by the war and the ongoing conflict.

We pray for the mothers about to give birth and for the children who are about to be born in the ethnic areas of Burma. Please protect them in the primitive conditions they live in. So many have died already. So many have suffered. Send *MEDICS, NURSES AND MIDWIVES* to the remote areas!

We pray for the children who are at risk of dying before they turn five. As always, the young children are the most vulnerable in a country at war. They need nutritious food, medicines, doctors, clean drinking water, a safe place to live, mosquito nets and other essentials to *STAY HEALTHY*. Give it to them, Lord!

We pray for the men, women and children who are sick, but who cannot receive medical care. Bring your *SUPERNATURAL HEALING* to the jungles and villages of Burma.

We pray for the *HEALTHCARE WORKERS* who are trained and supported by Partners. Give them the courage, wisdom, stamina and equipment they need to help thousands of people.

We pray for Partners staff that train, equip and sometimes go with the healthcare workers. *SUSTAIN THEM* in their work.

We pray that you will provide all of Partners needs as they try to *IMPROVE* the healthcare in Burma. We need the finances, the people and the relationships to do it.

Amen



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