

Still **EVEN IN LACK. LOVE.** *generous.*

2025 VOL.2

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IT'S ABOUT HEART

Years ago, I came to understand a powerful truth: **generosity has nothing to do with how much you have**—it's all about the heart.

Refugees, though they may have few material possessions, are often quick to share what little they have.

Just this week, a Syrian refugee living in a camp in northern Iraq—where she participates in a Partners women's empowerment program—told our trainer, ***"I want others to have what I want for myself."***

Despite her own hardships, her desire was not to seek more for herself, but to lift those around her. It was a powerful reminder that true generosity comes not from abundance, but from the heart. In almost 40 years of working with refugees and those in need, I've seen this lived out. They have shown me how generosity is a matter of the heart.

I've seen this kind of generosity many times before. I remember standing with displaced families deep in the jungles of Myanmar—people who had fled their homes with nothing, sleeping under trees, cooking over fires made from damp wood, always alert to danger. And yet, ***without hesitation, they'd offer me a cup of tea, a bit of rice, or whatever they had to give.***



I was a visitor, a stranger—and still, they gave.

That kind of giving... it stays with you. No matter where I've gone—different countries, different languages, different conflicts—I've seen this same thread of generosity run through communities that have lost so much. It's not about what's in their hands. It's about what's in their hearts.

And honestly? **I see that same kind of heart in people like you—our supporters, our friends.** People who may never meet those they're helping, who come from entirely different cultures or backgrounds, but still choose to give. You've responded with kindness, with compassion, and with a willingness to act.

It humbles me. It reminds me that generosity doesn't just come from those with plenty—it comes from those with love and empathy. *And that includes you.*

As you flip through this magazine, I hope you catch a glimpse of the impact you've made. Whether it's a woman learning new skills, a child receiving health care, or a family finding a way forward after losing everything—**your generosity is part of their story.**

Just like that woman in the camp who wanted others to have what she herself hopes for—you've shown that **giving isn't about obligation. It's about connection.** It's about heart.

Thank you for listening to yours.

Brad Hazlett
CEO



Cover Photo: Children near a food distribution in the Inle Lake area, Myanmar, after the 7.7 magnitude earthquake, March, 2025.



VILLAGE SPIRIT

BY REBECCA NEWTON

Stripped of all their material possessions, this community in Myanmar told us, ***“we need a place to be together.”***

“Last year the flood took our farms and now the earthquake has taken our houses.”

For families living at Inle Lake, all they have known is life on the water. Making their homes in houses on stilts over the water is a way of life. Even young children deftly maneuver boats from one house to another or between the rows of tomato plants that provide a small income.



The lake is their home, and their neighbors are their community through all the ups and downs of life.

I joined a relief team traveling to the Inle area one month after the March 28th earthquake. As the driver cut our boat's motor and maneuvered into the narrower passage between houses and clumps of reeds at the entrance to one village, we passed under a damaged water tower. **A sign posted on this tower caught my eye. The title, "Village Spirit,"** stuck with me over the next couple of days as we met with the villagers and asked them how we could best support them in their rebuilding efforts.

One woman in particular exemplified this village spirit. The teacher's eyes sparkled with hope as she spoke to us about her vision for rebuilding the kindergarten which had collapsed into the water. I didn't understand her words, but her face and tone appeared passionate as she spoke.

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She related to us how the building would serve not only as a space for the children to play, learn, and develop safely while their parents work, but also as a community center for village meetings and celebrations. On the water there are no other large spaces to gather.

Other villagers confirmed that rebuilding the kindergarten was their priority and **that if the materials could be provided, they would rally together to rebuild a place that would belong to all of them:** a place where “community spirit” can continue to grow and thrive.

Three days later we left the village. We passed under the sign again. Under the title, points were listed.

- **Be united**
- **Participate actively**
- **Nurture a self-reliant mindset**
- **Bear a we-can-do spirit**
- **Make the most of shared resources**

This is what we had seen in the villagers.

There are many communities in Southeast Asia and the Middle East that operate at a level of interwoven support that is unfamiliar to many of us. **When war and disaster send families in different directions in order to survive, the separation makes resilience a challenge.** To the degree that a community can remain together, supportive of each other, we see varying degrees of hope.

Find joy today in giving a gift that builds solid infrastructure— the kind that rallies villages like these with spirit—where community members can come together and find strength in each other...again.



MEET NOOM. PARTNERS SOUTHEAST ASIA DIRECTOR.

Noom first became aware of Partners - through a mutual friend - back in 2008. In 2012, he interviewed for the position of assistant project manager after seeing the way Partners had responded rapidly to community needs.

A STAFF TRIBUTE

Why Partners: *“Compared to other large organizations, I thought Partners was quite flexible. My friend told me, (at Partners) we do not need to follow the organization’s interests, we follow the community’s interest and needs. I quite liked that policy.”*

We love Noom: He goes to great lengths to show up for children in Myanmar and his community in Shan State. A Partners’ team member shared, *“He treats every child that he sees as his own. He grew up like them, going through all that hardship. Within Myanmar, you have many ethnic communities, different religions, cultural rules, and he has knowledge about all of it. He loves his country. He loves the people who are in it. Within a country where there is so much division and anger, it’s refreshing to have someone in his position represent love.”*

Noom sees generosity: *“Even though people are in the same position as displaced families, they are happy to help each other. After the recent earthquake in Myanmar, other communities went to help. They are not organizations, they are individual persons. They came with vegetables and cooking oil. Sometimes people sacrifice, or they make a risk.”* Day after day, Noom sees the generosity of this community at work as people see and respond to the suffering of families in war zones.

Noom’s hope: *“I want Partners to grow and to be able to do more. There’s no sign that the civil war will end in Myanmar. I think it will continue. I want to see more sustainable projects from our side to support the long-term needs of communities.”*





THE ART SHOW

Driving through the countryside in Northeast Syria in the summer, the world exists in muted shades of sand. Wind funnels swirl around farm yards. Dust billows as far as the eye can see.

Many refugee camps are planted in the middle of this countryside, rows of tents or housing structures repeating. Families create little spaces of green where they can, carefully using precious water to keep a few plants alive outside of their tents. Sprigs of life and hope in the middle of the barrenness.

Sere Kaniye Camp is one of many refugee camps in Syria and a place where our Partners community continues to show

up with love: **building toilets, spraying for bugs causing illness, providing food and bedding when families arrived after their homes were bombed.**

On one visit to the camp, our team was invited to a **student art show**. Entering a white, concrete building, we were met with walls covered in balloons and bright art. Students stood by their art pieces with pride, ready to share about their creation.



As we spoke to the leaders of the program, they shared how this community center was a labor of love for the camp residents. Together, they saved precious funds to build the center and support the art activities.

In a camp where families struggle to meet their day-to-day needs, they had banded together to create a space where their children could gather to create art and play. They gave so much of themselves, with open hands and wide-open hearts.

When we say that we partner hand in hand with local communities, this is a picture of what we mean. Across war zones, we witness a myriad of ways **community members band together to care for each other;** who pour out their little to build up their community and better their children's lives.

We have the immense joy of joining them in their work - we have the immense joy of **joining with you** in supporting the wisdom and resilience of communities already at work, in the face of insurmountable odds, to bring free, full lives to their children.



“I have always been impressed with Partners’ willingness to go into some of the toughest, most dangerous

places, close to the front lines: **being prepared to go where other better-known relief organizations wouldn’t dare to go.** And to use local staff to accomplish its goals.”
-Bob, long-time supporter

HOW DID YOU FIND PARTNERS

For over 3 decades, thousands of you have found Partners Relief & Development.

Maybe you met a staff member, volunteered, visited a project, saw something on the news or happened upon a viral video on social. *Right then and there you decided to join your love with the love of others to take profound action in some of the most oppressive places.*

For Bob, it began on a Sunday morning in 2018 at his local church. *"Partners' focus at that time was primarily on Myanmar and the ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya Muslims... Partners was able to gain entry to provide significant humanitarian relief."*

Another faithful supporter, Bernard, shared with us, **"Partners has a tagline I love that sums up why we care - 'It starts with love and ends with action.'"** *My wife and I have travelled with Partners. Every place has been inspiring in its own way, like seeing how Partners is providing education in Kurdish Iraq for children in a refugee camp. These kids were born in the camp and their entire world is a 1km square gravel area with simple concrete houses."*

Getting love to children in oppressive and hard-to-reach places is what speaks to both Bob and Bernard. We all celebrate every local relationship and open door that gives us the ability to reach children and women in **Afghanistan, Myanmar, Syria, Bangladesh, Yemen, Thailand, and Iraq.**

However *you* came to know this work, in whatever capacity that *you* give to it, **we are so grateful that you found us.** The vision is short-term emergency **relief** AND long-term change through sustainable **development** programs. Together; *you*, Bob, Bernard, and thousands like *you*, are moving in generosity and doing just that!

You found Partners Relief & Development, but more than that, we hope *you've* found joy from having a way to shine a light in the darkness of war and oppression with *your* love in action.

Do you have a story to tell about how you discovered Partners? We'd love to hear it! Email info@partners.ngo.



SACRIFICIAL HOSPITALITY

Families living in areas of conflict often define for us a level of hospitality and care that we aspire to. The kind that costs. The kind that speaks love with action. When resources are squeezed and a community suffers, and yet still, they are generous.

BY SCOTT BRINDLE

Photography by Scott Brindle

There was no privacy.
Basic necessities like food,
clean water, heating, and
electricity were scarce.

In the Middle East, generosity is a way of life. It is deeply embedded in the region's history and culture. Rooted in centuries of tradition, the Bedouin three-day guest law is a testament to their hospitality. This tradition dictates that a host must provide care to a traveler for three full days before they can ask about their journey or purpose. Islam and other faiths enshrined charity into their religious traditions. The 11th-century philosopher Al-Ghazālī once wrote that economic life should benefit not only oneself and one's family, but also the needy, urging people to give freely.

Having spent the past 5 years documenting the impact of war on communities caught in the crossfire, **I've witnessed firsthand how generosity remains a pillar of**



communities in the Middle East; even while political instability and foreign interference has created generations of hardship.

Families who have little still give to others who have less. Even when they are themselves in need, they continue to look out for one another.

I will never forget what I witnessed in Syria during the *collapse of the Assad regime in December 2024*. Thousands of internally displaced people were fleeing persecution with nothing but the clothes on their backs.

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SACRIFICIAL HOSPITALITY

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They relied solely on the strength and kindness of the communities around them. Many sheltered in half-built buildings and overcrowded schools. Humanitarian aid was stretched thin, and international organisations had withdrawn or scaled back due to the challenging economic and political situation.

Yet, their own generosity endured.

In one overcrowded school, I met an elderly man and his family; they were sharing a classroom with two other families. There was no privacy. Basic necessities like food, clean water, heating, and electricity were scarce. He welcomed me with tea and offered a quiet space to talk. We shared stories, and importantly, time.

When we parted, I expected not to see him again. *Three days later*, I stumbled upon him and his family on the other side of the country. He explained that

the night I met him, a young family had arrived seeking shelter. He gave up his spot in the classroom so they could have a warm place to sleep. He and his family continued their journey, traveling for days in the cold.

“He gave up his spot in the classroom so they could have a warm place to sleep. He and his family continued their journey, traveling for days in the cold.”

What struck me was not just the sacrifice, but the clarity with which he made it. He understood that he could endure more than the young family could. He saw his strength as something that could be used to help others. His sense of hospitality and duty had become second nature. His generosity reached beyond his family, extending to strangers in need.

Through his actions, he has taught me, and his community, that **even in the darkest of times, kindness remains a form of resistance; generosity, a sacrifice that is within everyone’s reach.**

JOIN THE *Rhythm of Love.*

Sign up to our monthly giving community in September
and **have your first recurring gift matched!**

Kids in war zones need to be free to reach their full potential. To truly plant that flag of hope, we need a Neighborhood full of people like you, that can't wait to joyfully slide into a rhythm of love.

Skipping a few lattes or a new pair of sneakers could keep medicine, nourishing food, trauma care, and vital education available to kids in the hardest-to-reach places.

January, February, March... the amount doesn't matter much. The power lies in numbers. When you give monthly, your impact multiples - you have 12 times the reach!

**We do a lot of things each month.
This could be your new habit.
The best type of subscription.
A joyful—compassionate—
rhythm of love. **Join us.****

A generous friend of Partners will match your

first monthly gift when you sign up to Neighbor,

our monthly giving community. Don't miss this

limited chance to increase your impact!



Scan to join!





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Accountability and integrity are necessary. Absolutely.



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