



PeaceTrees VietNam

Healing the Land • Building Community • Planting Futures



2017 Annual Report

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Explosive Ordnance Disposal Response Teams

PeaceTrees Vietnam's work would not be possible without our four complete Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Response Teams. Two of the teams are based in Huong Hoa District, and two in Dakrong District.

Volunteers

We want to extend a special thank you to the 115 dedicated volunteers who graciously gave their time and talents to support the work of PeaceTrees Vietnam in 2017.



MISSION & VISION



Safe Land, Successful Communities

PeaceTrees Vietnam creates a safe and successful future for children and families endangered by the legacy of the Vietnam War. In partnership with the people we serve in the region of Vietnam still suffering the most decades after the war — Quang Tri Province — we remove explosives and return land to productive use, build schools and libraries to educate future generations, and advance economic development to ensure a prosperous tomorrow. Your support cultivates secure and flourishing communities in a country still ravaged by the remnants of war.

Founded in 1995 by Danaan Parry and Jerilyn Brusseau — whose brother, U.S. Army helicopter pilot Lt. Daniel Cheney, was killed during the Vietnam War in 1969 — PeaceTrees Vietnam is a shining example to the world of how tragedy and conflict can be transformed into peace and partnership.

Our Mission

Our mission is to heal the legacy of war by removing dangerous explosives, returning land to safe use, promoting peace and cultivating a brighter future for the children and families of Vietnam.

Our Vision

Our vision is a Vietnam completely cleared of dangerous unexploded ordnance and communities fully supported in their goals for safety, education and economic success.



KEY 2017 EOD TEAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

2,905 pieces of UXO removed and destroyed

533,521 square meters of land safely cleared of UXOs

35,379 individuals directly benefited from clearance work

16,404 individuals received Mine Risk Education

1,876 sessions of Mine Risk Education

EOD Team: Huong Hoa

270,382 square meters of land
safely cleared

1370 weapons
removed and
destroyed

851 EOD Team
field responses

EOD Team: Dakrong

263,139 square meters of land
safely cleared

1535 weapons
removed and
destroyed

906 EOD Team
field responses

Explosive Ordnance Disposal in 2017

Our Top Priority: Making Dangerous Land Safe Again

PeaceTrees Vietnam's core work is sponsoring the clearance of landmines and other unexploded ordnance (UXO) in Quang Tri Province in central Vietnam. Throughout 2017, four PeaceTrees explosive ordnance disposal teams worked to clear UXO from fields, schoolyards, roadsides and gardens.

Step by step since 1995, we have achieved remarkable results. We have removed over 100,000 dangerous landmines, bombs, mortar shells and grenades from more than 1,000 acres of land. In every acre we clear, farmers can once again plow their fields without fear and feed their families. Children can play carefree and walk safely through the countryside. Towns can expand with new houses and schools, building on land clear of danger.



Increasing Our Capacity

We now have the most highly trained Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technicians in Vietnam. Trained to United Nations International Mine Action standards, many technicians are certified to Level 3, the highest level possible.

Expanding Our Reach Through Partnership

Peacetrees technicians worked to help World Vision and PLAN International staff bring Mine Risk Education to their field visits. This important work ensures that more children and families in neighboring provinces are aware of the risks of unexploded ordnance.

Our Teams at Work

In September of 2017, our teams cleared a 500 pound aircraft bomb found at the bottom of a narrow canyon at the border of Laos. This is one example of the challenges regularly faced by our EOD technicians. The fuse was unstable, and the bomb was 200 meters from the nearby village and a forest considered sacred by the ethnic minority villagers. The team worked closely with Laotian authorities, border guards and Quang Tri officials to demolish the bomb on site. Our technicians successfully cleared the bomb after evacuating residents of the nearby village to a safe distance.

A photograph of three young children, two boys and one girl, smiling and leaning over a wooden railing. The boy on the left is wearing a blue shirt and a silver chain. The girl in the middle is wearing a white shirt with a red and green pattern. The boy on the right is partially visible. The background is a blurred indoor setting.

2017: A YEAR IN REVIEW

199 scholarships awarded to ethnic minority and
accident-survivor families

31 travelers participated on 2 citizen diplomacy trips

8,817 people visited Peacetrees libraries:
1,057 library cards issued

426 total trees planted by citizen diplomats and
volunteers

3 new kindergartens under construction

EDUCATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Healthful Gardens for Healthy Children

The Healthful Gardens for Healthy Children program started in 2010 with three core programmatic elements:

- Clearing land of unexploded bombs and mines
- Delivering training, tools, and support to establish healthy gardens
- Providing long-term support to achieve success and sustainability



Based on the success of the pilot project, the decision was made to expand the Healthful Gardens for Healthy Children program. In February and March 2017, PeaceTrees deminers safely cleared individual families' plots of land containing unexploded ordnance so they could participate in our Healthful Gardens for Healthy Children project. Once land was made safe, Seattle-area Rotary Clubs and Kirchoff Fitness Adventures supported the establishment of gardens that now provide the opportunity for families to grow and eat nutritious food, such as amaranth, spinach, and other local vegetables, and for women to earn money by selling some of their harvest at local markets.

We are excited to report that 100% of the more than 200 farmers participating in this program have successfully planted gardens and harvested crops, and more than 10% have earned income by selling vegetables at the market.

Kindergarten Update

Thanks to the support of generous donors, we began construction on three new kindergartens in 2017. These kindergartens are in ethnic minority areas where children are often unable to attend school.

PeaceTrees kindergartens provide daily meals, a safe space clear of unexploded ordnance in which to play, and devoted teachers. At each kindergarten, 30 young children will be able to grow, learn, and play in safety. The Ruong Kindergarten is now open for school, and the Ta Leng Kindergarten will be opening for school in Spring 2018. The Ra Man Kindergarten is currently under construction and will also open in 2018.



Ra Man Kindergarten Groundbreaking Ceremony



Ruong Kindergarten — Now Open!



Ta Leng Kindergarten Groundbreaking Ceremony

EDUCATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Mine Risk Education

In October 2017, PeaceTrees hosted two Mine Risk Education Camps, one in Huong Hoa district and one in Dakrong district. Over 300 middle school students and 50 teachers attended the camps to learn about the risks of unexploded ordnance (UXO) and what to do should they discover or suspect UXO. The camps also featured activities ranging from group games to essay and poster contests to listening to accident survivors share their stories. In 2017, PeaceTrees administered 1,876 Mine Risk Education sessions and provided Mine Risk Education to 16,404 people — fulfilling 205% of our goal.

Winning Essay Excerpt

"In 2007, another landmine accident happened to five 4th grade students. In a training course on Mine Risk Education (MRE), I met Lam, one of the victims of that accident and learned about his story. He said: 'It was Sunday. We went to play soccer in an open field. Someone kicked the ball and it flew into a bush. While we were looking for our ball, we found another ball hidden in the bush. We fought with each other to reach the ball but that made the ball explode. I was the only one to survive the accident but I lost both my legs.'

The accident happened many years ago but Lam still couldn't hold back his emotion when telling us his story. I could feel the loss and sorrow of landmine victims and their families through his eyes.

As a student, I will use the knowledge about preventing bomb, mine and UXO accidents for myself and share the lessons I learn, the stories I know, and the pictures my friends and I draw with my family, friends, and everyone around me. I will certainly make an effort to contribute to limiting landmine accidents."

- Nguyen Thi Hanh Nguyen

COMMUNITY STORIES

Family Histories: Sue Warner-Bean's Story

In November 2017, PeaceTrees Vietnam's Explosive Ordinance Disposal (EOD) teams responded to a report of suspected unexploded munitions. When they arrived, the team discovered and safely removed 60 volatile cluster bombs buried in the ground near PeaceTrees' David Warner kindergarten. Sue Warner-Bean has graciously shared the story of how that kindergarten came into being:



Sue Warner-Bean painting playground equipment at David Warner Kindergarten (Spring 2017).

"David Warner was my big brother. He was smart, funny, athletic, thoughtful, and a natural leader. He was killed at the age of 21 in the 30-day Battle of Huế City, when I was seven years old. He exists for me in fuzzy, joyful memories of water fights, practical jokes, and enthusiastic renditions of "The Halls of Montezuma" when he returned home on leave from the U.S. Marine Corps. For decades after his death our family would share memories of David, but we never discussed his military service.

Eventually I wanted to know more. When I tracked down David's military records in 2003, my research led me to then-PeaceTrees Executive Director Chuck Meadows, who had been David's commanding officer in Huế. I learned how PeaceTrees was partnering with Vietnamese villages to remove deadly unexploded weapons that still threaten local children and families. I also learned that PeaceTrees was building schools to educate future generations, and helping to advance economic opportunities for rural families struggling due to the legacy of war. When I participated in a citizen diplomacy trip with PeaceTrees in 2005, I finally saw how David's life could continue to tangibly serve and transform the lives of others.



David with sisters, Marci and Sue, at their Mercer Island Home

Through the generosity of friends, family, and fellow veterans, funds were raised to build PeaceTrees' David Howard Warner Kindergarten in the remote mountain village of A Xing, Quang Tri Province. PeaceTrees' EOD technicians safely removed nine bombs from the land to clear the way for construction. Accompanied by a PeaceTrees Citizen Diplomacy group, I dedicated the school on what would have been David's 61st birthday in 2007. I was a kindergartener myself when David went to Vietnam, so it was deeply meaningful to know that his life would make a difference for kindergarteners who are still affected by the remnants of war.

Since then I've returned to Vietnam with PeaceTrees three more times and have seen first-hand how our donors' contributions are transforming lives. The kindergarten has now been open for ten years and has provided 300 children a daily nutritious meal and an early childhood education—it offers a gateway to education and pathway out of poverty. I've planted a tree in David's honor on what is now safe and fertile land and spoken with graduates of his kindergarten, many of whom are now excelling in high school. In 2017, PeaceTrees Vietnam's EOD teams cleared five times more land than targeted in any previous year, and PeaceTrees programs are making a bigger impact than ever before."

- Sue Warner-Bean

CITIZEN DIPLOMACY

Vietnam Today: A University of Washington Student's Perspective

As a senior at the University of Washington studying sustainable community development, and an Intern with PeaceTrees Vietnam, I jumped at the chance to be a part of Christoph Giebel's study abroad program in Vietnam. The trip was connected to UW's Comparative History and Ideas program and focused on "Building for Peace in the Wake of War." This past June, our group of 18 university students set out to spend five weeks studying Post-Colonial Vietnam and the American/Vietnam War. After three weeks traveling and in the classroom, we spent our final two weeks working with PeaceTrees Vietnam in Quang Tri province. During the time with PeaceTrees we planted trees, played with children at kindergartens, tiled homes, and got to know the PeaceTrees staff, local high school volunteers, and the greater Quang Tri community. PeaceTrees Vietnam introduced us to a part of Vietnam that we may never have experienced on our own. In Quang Tri, we connected with a community that is linked to the U.S. through our shared history, but is increasingly forgotten by the general American public as the memory of war fades with time. We were given the chance to witness an organization working tirelessly to ensure that the futures of the people of Quang Tri are never forgotten. I believe that the relationships that we students made during our two short weeks in Dong Ha are some of the most meaningful connections that we will ever make. As students, we observed how PeaceTrees is making a physical impact by removing UXOs and restoring land to productive use, and we also witnessed the cultural impact of restoring relations between two countries once at war. For that, my fellow classmates and I will always be grateful.



Carlie Stowe planting a tree at The Danaan Parry
Landmine Education Center

- Carlie Stowe, UW '18 and Peacetrees Vietnam Intern



UW students with children at a PeaceTrees Kindergarten



PeaceTrees In-Country Director, Quang Le, explains
the Black Pepper Project

REMEMBERING RAE CHENEY



On August 16, 2017 PeaceTrees Vietnam lost a shining light — Rae Cheney, founding board member and 97 year old Gold Star mother of US Army helicopter pilot Dan Cheney who died during a rescue mission in Vietnam.

Rae was our moral compass and an inspiration to all who served on the board with her. She embodied values that PeaceTrees stands for: love, compassion, healing, understanding, and welcoming to all. In Rae's words:

"The most important aspect of PeaceTrees Vietnam's vision and mission is healing for all those impacted by the Vietnam War...veterans, mothers, fathers, families on all sides... Only parents of a lost soldier could describe the depth of pain in losing their soldier." Talking about her involvement with PeaceTrees Vietnam she said, "I felt it was within my soul to reach my hands to the families on both sides of this war, to begin to heal."

"Rae modeled how to grieve and how to move beyond grief by focusing on others. Rae was a vital person- every day. Down to earth and powerfully elegant."

"Our matriarch; our Gold Star Mother. PeaceTrees' mission in life and now our mission in spirit. Our north star. Our moral compass. Our guiding light."

". . .Rae was really the soul of PeaceTrees - her enthusiasm, her commitment, and her constancy were vital and will be missed. Every organization need a soul, and she was it."



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