



Spring 2019

# Border Crossings

A Newsletter of the Brackett Refugee Education Fund



## Annual Report 2018

In Thailand, BREF distributed a total of 209 scholarships in 2018, 113 at the university level. We had 24 graduates and two graduates of the Ag and Tech two-year program. Additionally BREF provided 77 high school scholarships and supported two college preparatory schools.

In cross-border aid we supported nearly 40 elementary and middle schools serving over 3,700 children in IDP areas of Burma where there is little support for education from the government. Two of these are unique animist schools where Karen traditions are taught by elders from the community. We assisted Children on the Edge in providing safe spaces and nursery education for 629 preschool children in 12 IDP camps along the Burma/China border. Near the Bangladesh border, we supported COTE in their work with 8,400 Rohingya children in refugee camp schools.

In India, BREF distributed a total of 290 scholarships to support education for Chin refugees from Burma, most of whom are living in the Indian state of Mizoram. There were 153 scholarships directed towards high school students; 49 graduated this year. And 79 scholarships were distributed to university prep students. BREF sponsored 58 students to attend university and 22 students graduated in the 2018-19 academic year. Another 179 elementary school children were supported whose parents often struggle to pay for the costs of textbooks, uniforms and exam fees.

We have continued support at the migrant school in Mae Tao associated with Dr. Cynthia's clinic, two boarding houses, three language and computer schools, and two post high school programs to train teachers and community leaders to return to work in Burma.

### Summary of Income and Expenses 2018 in US Dollars

Income		Expenses	
Individual Gifts	\$178,149	<b>Grants in Thailand and Burma (Myanmar)</b>	
Trustee's Gifts	49,350	Univ. & High School Scholarships	\$110,257
Grants Received	10,000	Projects	142,706
Directed Gifts	55,255	<b>Grants in India</b>	
Contribution to Endowment	0	Univ. Scholarships	20,424
<b>Total Public Support</b>	<b>\$292,754</b>	Project Support (KG thru 12)	22,861
<b>Investment Income</b>		<b>Grants in Bangladesh</b>	
Income from Endowment	47,759	Elementary Schools	70,000
Other (dividends, interest & gains)	18,978	<b>Total Grants</b>	<b>\$366,248</b>
	<b>66,737</b>	Other Program Costs	8,388
		Management & Fundraising	4,611
			<b>12,999</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$359,491</b>	<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$379,247</b>

**NOTE:** It is BREF's practice to prepare a budget on the basis of funds we have acquired in the previous year. Thus the expense budget for 2018 was prepared on the basis of funds we held on December 31, 2017.

## Visiting the Projects



Sally Brackett, Chair of the BREF board, and board member Dianne Becker traveled to Thailand and Bangladesh in February to visit the projects.

We met with Myint Wai with DEAR BURMA, a unique school in Bangkok that provides classes for migrant workers mostly on a 2-year work permit from Myanmar. They meet on Sunday plus two evenings each week, teaching English, Thai, computers, Thai cooking, guitar and cosmetology.



The visit to Bangladesh with BREF board member John Littleton was eye opening, where struggles to teach in a common beneficial language are difficult. The kids were charming and smiling and each class performed a song, dance or recited something together.

Naw Tamlá (shown standing) works with Takabaw and Maw Tee Paw interviewing high school students for scholarships in the Mae Sot area.



Say K'Bleet, a recent BREF graduate, organized the Brackett Foundation dinner where we honored one of BREFs early students from the 90s, Saw William, who has helped us support students. Many of these alumni continue to work with educational projects on both sides of the border and continue to look forward to the future.



Supporters of BREF Lisa Reid and Sandy Morrett traveled to Noh Bo for a memorial service for their father John Morrett, who helped start St. John's Orphanage and school in the 1980s.

While in Noh Bo, we met with the committee of ALCC, a language and computer school, in the Mae La camp. It is considered a model school by all the refugee camps along the border. They are looking into online learning and cautiously discussed a future in Burma.



During a visit to Thoo Mweh Khee, a migrant learning center near the border, we heard about students who spend their summers returning to villages in Burma to teach a six-week summer school. This is the third year of an expanding program.



On Valentine’s Day, we enjoyed an alumni dinner with past and present students with T-Rep team Doug Offenhartz and Daruna, shown here with a student. All day long students were showing us their “little hearts.”

First project director and long-time friend of founders Liz and Tom Brackett, Naw Tamla and husband Kaw Reh Htoo continue working with educational projects along the border.



## New T-Reps Josh Hawley and Jenny Jones



Two new Trustee Representatives (T-Reps) interviewed students this year in Northern Thailand. Josh Hawley and Jenny Jones are from Columbus, Ohio. This wasn’t their first trip to Thailand. During the 1990s, Josh was a Peace Corps volunteer and Jenny taught English in Chiang Mai. Josh is a long-time professor at Ohio State University, and Jenny is recently retired from State of Ohio as a Fiscal Manager. They have two daughters. They’ve been supporting BREF since 1999 and, 20 years later, they volunteered their time and skills, returning to a country they love.

“The teachers we met were very welcoming and the students really impressed us. We appreciate our patient and experienced guides – Judy and Hoppy Winfield. Josh’s fluency in Thai really helped with interviews, speeding up the process as well as helping the students to relax. We are very excited to be part of the T-Rep team and look forward to returning in 2020 with a stronger sense of how to give back to Thailand and refugee students.”



The Brackett Refugee Education Fund, established in April 1997, is a small not-for-profit foundation organized to help educate refugees. Currently the Fund is concentrating its efforts on refugees from Burma in India, Thailand and Bangladesh. Our trustees are Sally Brackett (Chair of the Board), Mark Sommer, Russell Brackett, Doug Offenhartz, Melinda Jackson, Dianne Becker, Penelope Smith Brackett, John Littleton and Elizabeth Brackett. The Fund has received 501C3 tax-exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service. It is identified by EIN number 16-1523586, and it seeks support from friends, family and foundations. In order to make most efficient use of the money it receives, the Fund has adopted the following policies:

- All administrative and communication costs will be supported by the trustees;
- Living and travel expenses of trustees and volunteers, while on business for the Fund, will be donated by themselves;
- The Fund will not sell or give away the names and addresses of any of its contributors;
- Although the Fund is happy to receive contributions at any time, only one fundraising campaign will be made each year;
- The Fund has no paid employees, so administrative and fundraising expenses are very low, typically less than 4% of total expenditures;
- Because the trustees donate far more than required for administrative purposes, every dollar donated will go towards helping people receive an education.

