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 ■ Photograph by Amanda Koster

PLANTING FOR THE FUTURE



JERILYN BRUSSEAU (TOP) IS HELPING REBUILD VIETNAM IN TRIBUTE TO HER BROTHER, WHOSE DEATH IS COMMEMORATED IN BENAROYA HALL'S GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE. DRAWINGS BY CHILDREN IN QUANG TRI PROVINCE (ABOVE) OFTEN INCLUDE DEPICTIONS OF BOMBS AND LAND MINES.

Jerilyn Brusseau's childhood was played out against a backdrop of distant war and home cooking—themes that would follow her for decades to come.

While her father served in the Pacific during World War II, Brusseau found comfort in her grandmother's kitchen. Soon she followed in her footsteps, spicing up the family's farmhouse repertoire with gourmet dishes and specialty baking.

"My whole life has been learning by doing," says the 60-year-old chef, who in 1978 transformed a dingy former gunsmith's shop into the popular sidewalk cafe and bakery "brusseau's in edmonds."

As business flourished, her reputation grew, and in 1985 the restaurateur was tapped by Restaurants Unlimited to create the perfect cinnamon roll, known today as the Cinnabon.

Despite the sweet success of her culinary career, Brusseau carried a hidden sadness. Her younger brother, Daniel Cheney, had been killed in Vietnam in 1969. His tragic death instilled in her a longing to overcome the hostility and controversy surrounding that war.

Brusseau's dream took shape in 1995 when she and her husband, the late Danaan Parry, founded Peace Trees Vietnam, a humanitarian organization that sponsors the removal of land mines and sends volunteers to plant trees and build homes in their place. A center for land-mine education has been named in Parry's honor.

The nonprofit's efforts are focused on Quang Tri Province, an area in the center of Vietnam where 60 percent of the war's casualties took place. Nearing completion there is Friendship Village, a community of 100 homes and a kindergarten built on the site of Dong Ha Combat Base, a former U.S. Marine base.

"These have been both challenging and tender, touching years," says Brusseau. For this cook and cultural diplomat, restoring land and friendships is a suitable "peace" *de resistance*.

Peace Trees Vietnam holds its annual fund-raising breakfast June 25 at the Seattle Marriott Waterfront Hotel. For more information, call (206) 842-7986 or visit peacetreesvietnam.org.