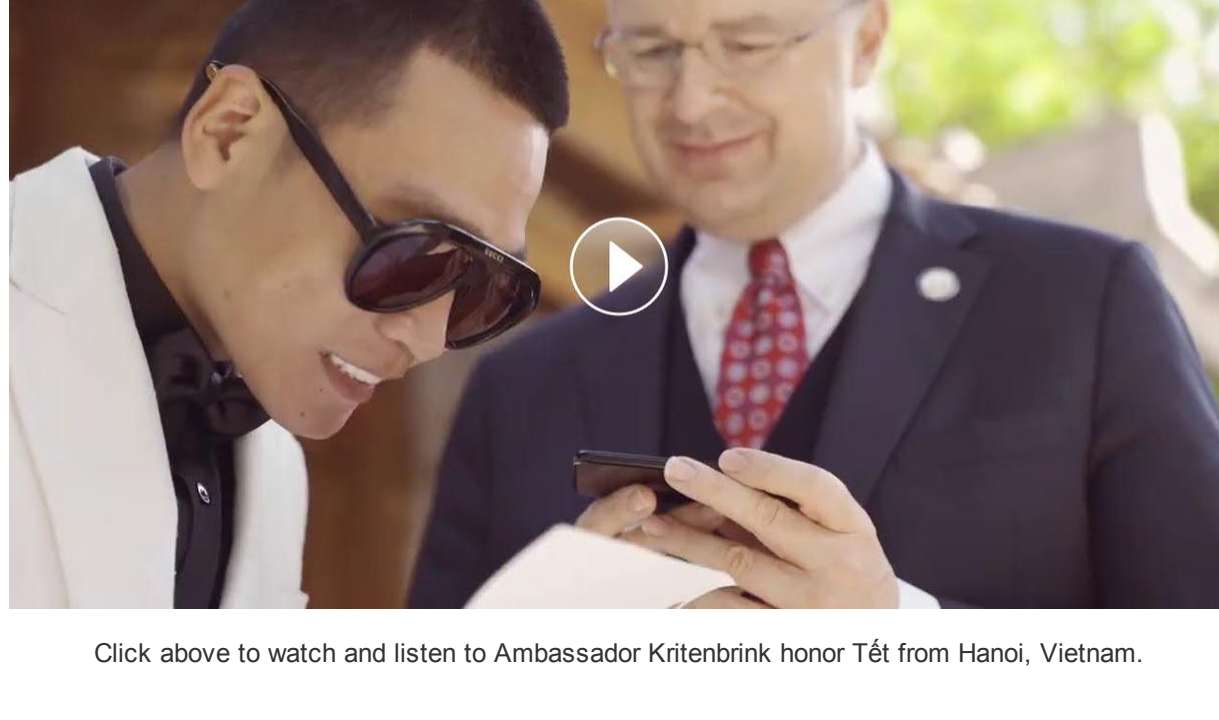


February 2021 Newsletter

Wrapping Up the Tết Holiday:

Whether you celebrated the new year in January or February, we hope you and yours are finding health and joy in 2021! In this newsletter you will find a music video featuring US Ambassador to Vietnam, Dan Kritenbrink, exciting project updates and an inspiring story about traveling to Vietnam and volunteering with PeaceTrees.

Last October, we were honored to welcome the US Ambassador to Vietnam, Dan Kritenbrink, as a speaker at our 25th Anniversary Virtual Celebration. A few weeks ago, Ambassador Kritenbrink released a rap-inspired music video honoring the Tết holiday. This video illustrates Tết traditions, takes you through the streets of Hanoi, and celebrates the beautiful friendship between the US and Vietnam. We hope you enjoy hearing from "your boy in Hanoi" as much as we did!



Click above to watch and listen to Ambassador Kritenbrink honor Tết from Hanoi, Vietnam.

And, if you missed the video of our team in Vietnam making banh chung, a Vietnamese sticky rice cake often eaten during Tết, [be sure to watch it here!](#)



Ha Pham, PeaceTrees In-Country Director, passes out lucky envelopes to a group of students at the David Warner Kindergarten in the A Xing Commune, QuảngTrị Province, February 2021



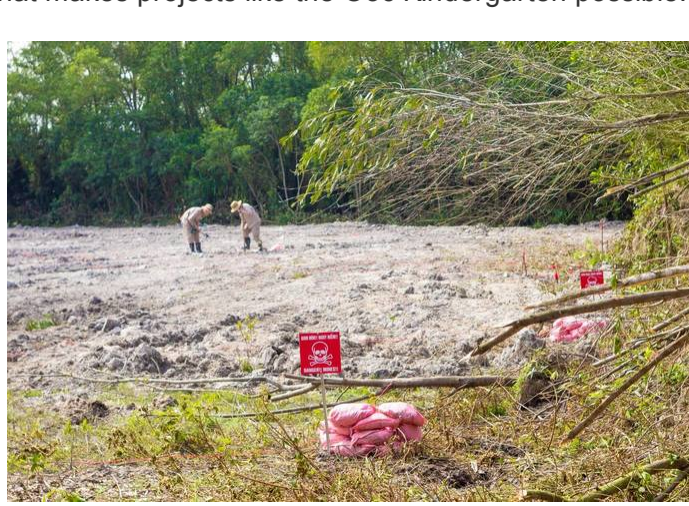
Students at the Prinh Thanh kindergarten show off their lucky envelopes in A Doi Commune, QuảngTrị Province, February 2021

Project Updates:

Quang Binh

Last month, PeaceTrees officially began demining operations in Quảng Bình Province! PeaceTrees EOD teams have already safely collected and destroyed over **1,175** explosive remnants of war and **cleared nearly 15,000 square meters of land**. This work has benefited **1,229 people**, who can now walk through their community safely without the threat of unexploded ordnance. This progress will allow us to continue building lasting relationships with local communities in Quảng Bình Province.

On December 14, 2020 we also broke ground on our second kindergarten in Quảng Bình Province! Now that construction of the Ooc Village Kindergarten is underway, we expect to welcome the 29 kindergarten-age students of Ooc Village to the classroom this spring! PeaceTrees is so grateful for the steadfast support that makes projects like the Ooc Kindergarten possible.



PeaceTrees EOD technicians in Quảng Bình Province



During a pause in clearance, a PeaceTrees medic provides an EORE leaflet to a local resident in Quảng Trị Province



Ha Pham, PeaceTrees in-country Director attends a groundbreaking ceremony at the Ooc Kindergarten site in Quảng Bình, December 14, 2020

PeaceTrees Vietnam Travel Stories

Until we resume our citizen diplomacy trips in 2022, we are excited to bring you a series of stories about traveling with PeaceTrees!

This month we hear from PeaceTrees Vietnam board member, Daniel Nguyen, who traveled to Vietnam in 2012 as part of a study abroad program at the University of Washington. During his time in Vietnam, Daniel volunteered with PeaceTrees and has since been a close part of our community.

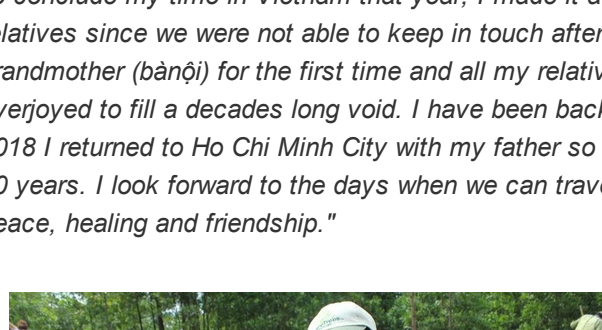
Daniel's Story:

"My mother and father left Saigon, Vietnam in 1979 after the Vietnam War with the hope of providing a better life for our family in America. They boarded a fishing boat with hundreds of other refugees packing nothing but some clothes and their dreams of reaching the United States, the land of freedom and opportunity. They drifted in the Pacific Ocean for weeks and my mother's prayers were answered miraculously when she spotted a helicopter flying overhead in the distance. Without hesitation, she lit her personal belongings on fire and the smoke caught the attention of the helicopter who eventually radioed a larger ship that would take them to a refugee camp in Palawan, Philippines. A year later they would be sponsored to Washington State by the generous families of the Westminster Chapel in Bellevue, Washington.

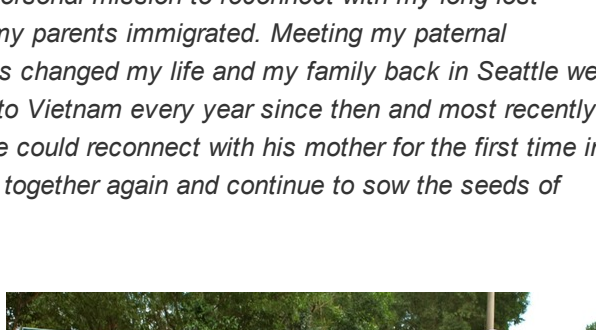
In 2012, while I was a student at the University of Washington, I was given the opportunity to study abroad to Vietnam, learn the history of the Vietnam War and volunteer with PeaceTrees. This would be the first time returning back to Vietnam since my parents left the shores of Saigon 33 years ago.

My most impactful experience was taking a bumpy bus ride to Quang Tri Province with my fellow UW Huskies, comprised of students from all backgrounds who shared a passion for Vietnamese history and public service. Upon arrival, I was introduced to the PeaceTrees mission and witnessed first-hand deminers safely clearing the land of bomb and mine remnants left over from the Vietnam war. We took part in building homes for local farmers and played soccer with the children in the PeaceTrees Vietnam Friendship Village. To commemorate our time together we planted 50 trees with the intention of restoring the environment and to serve as a symbol of healing the legacy of war and building friendship between the United States and Vietnam. This experience inspired me after graduation to join the PeaceTrees Vietnam organization in Seattle and serve as a board member.

To conclude my time in Vietnam that year, I made it a personal mission to reconnect with my long-lost relatives since we were not able to keep in touch after my parents immigrated. Meeting my paternal grandmother (bà nội) for the first time and all my relatives changed my life and my family back in Seattle were overjoyed to fill a decades long void. I have been back to Vietnam every year since then and most recently in 2018 I returned to Ho Chi Minh City with my father so he could reconnect with his mother for the first time in 40 years. I look forward to the days when we can travel together again and continue to sow the seeds of peace, healing and friendship."



PeaceTrees board member, Daniel Nguyen, planting trees in Quảng Trị Province, 2012



Daniel with a group of children outside of a PeaceTrees kindergarten in Quảng Trị Province, 2012

Do you have a story about traveling to Vietnam that you would like to share? Please contact Natalie at natalie@peacetreesvietnam.org to be featured in a future newsletter and on our website.

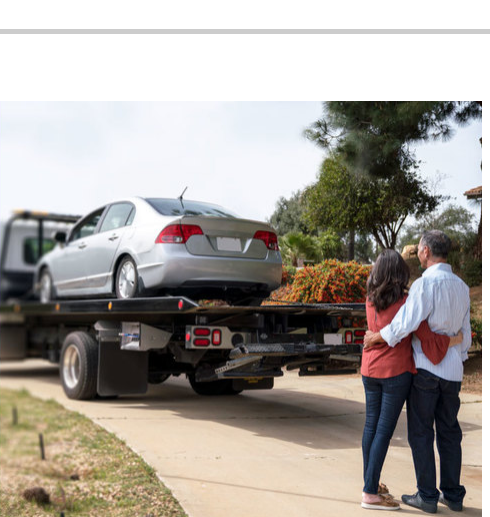
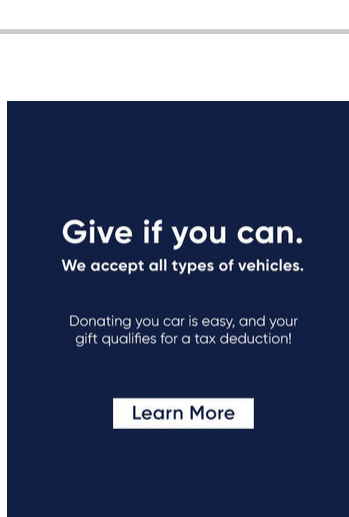
What We're Excited About:

Grand Opening of Hello Em in Little Saigon

Seattle area's International District welcomes a new cafe to the scene! Yenvy Pham, co-owner of the popular Pho Bac Sup Shop, has opened [Hello Em](#), a cafe and roastery that specializes in Vietnamese coffee and delectables. Hello Em is located inside of the Friends of Little Saigon Creative space. [Friends of Little Saigon](#) is a nonprofit working to preserve the cultural vibrancy of this historic neighborhood. We hope on a rainy Seattle day that you find yourself enjoying a delicious cup of Vietnamese coffee at Hello Em.

Vehicle Donations

PeaceTrees is now accepting vehicle donations! We have partnered with non-profit organization CARS to facilitate a vehicle donation program. All vehicles are eligible for donation – even if they are not running. This includes cars, trucks, SUV's, motorcycles, boats, farm equipment, and even airplanes. CARS has extensive experience with all steps of the vehicle donation process from pick-up to sale. This is both a wonderful way to donate and give new purpose to a vehicle that might be collecting dust. Call **855-500-7433** to get started or [click here to learn more!](#)



Looking for a creative way to support PeaceTrees Vietnam from home?



When you are online shopping, consider Amazon Smile and set PeaceTrees as your beneficiary! AmazonSmile is a program that donates 0.5% of your eligible purchases on Amazon to a charity of your choice. All you need to do is start your shopping at smile.amazon.com. The donation will be made at no extra cost to you and you will be contributing to PeaceTrees Vietnam's lifesaving work while you shop!



For more information contact us at 206-441-6136 or info@peacetreesvietnam.org

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