

Eastern Asia and the Pacific (EAP) Highlights

The Secretary of State Award for Outstanding Volunteerism Abroad



The demographics of Eastern Asia and Pacific (EAP) tell us that nearly one-third of the world's population lives in this culturally diverse region of the world. With large land masses dominated by China to the north and Australia to the south, and many island nations in between, EAP is home to highly-populated countries that differ in religious belief, culture, and native language. Sixty-two volunteers in 15 of this region's 31 countries were nominated for a SOSA in the last 19 years.



SOSA nominations give us a glimpse of the challenges of large countries like China, where helping orphaned infants to thrive was the focus of one volunteer with a background in nutrition. One can also read of the vulnerability of small countries when severe weather, earthquakes, or other natural disasters hit their shores. The hard work of one American following the devastation of cyclone Nargis in Burma is a prime example of volunteerism at its best. The ability to quickly organize relief efforts can and does save lives.



Volunteers have lent their expertise to building and strengthening organizations and to creating self-sustainability in rural communities. Some SOSA nominees began their own volunteer organizations, calling upon Embassy colleagues to join with them in community service. Others took on leadership roles in existing clubs, and upon departure from their country of assignment, left behind a legacy of good works. Teaching and empowering others to participate in public service, with a project at hand, further builds the capacity of "how to help" for future generations.

For many Americans, the languages of this region are difficult and challenging to master. Volunteers have studied Chinese, Thai, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese. Several SOSA nominees have overcome communication barriers, immersed themselves in the local culture, and successfully taught others skills in a native language. One volunteer, recognizing that expats struggle with the Chinese language, founded an internet group to help English speakers cope while living in a country where the written word is one of characters, not letters.

Concern for the health and well being of children is a common thread throughout the region, with volunteers giving of their time in hospitals, in orphanages, and in some cases, opening their homes as foster parents or simply as a safe haven for a shorter period of time.

Creative answers to the persistent question of funding — how can we generate money to sustain this project or provide income to this community? — can be found in the special profiles and country highlights on the following pages. Partnering with larger corporations, finding support from friends and family and organizations back home, and discovering innovative ways for villagers to share community resources for the betterment of all, are all strategies for success.

Toby Glucksman

FriendshipWorks Sets an Example of American Goodwill in Singapore

Toby Glucksman's dedication to and continuing participation in the FriendshipWorks initiative are an inspiration for all of us at the Embassy, and to many others in the Singapore American Community. His efforts are highly commendable and most worthy of recognition as they have, in their own unorthodox way, contributed significantly towards fostering good bilateral relations between Singapore and the United States, as well as greater goodwill between the peoples of our two countries.

- U.S. Ambassador
Steven J. Green

Toby Glucksman volunteered in March 1999 to be the Embassy point of contact for an innovative initiative called FriendshipWorks. As a former Peace Corps volunteer with a broad range of experiences in charitable activities, and as Special Assistant to the Ambassador, he was the ideal person for the task at hand. The concept of FriendshipWorks began when members of Singapore's American community approached the U.S. Embassy for advice and support in developing a charitable initiative that would better tap the resources of the 17,000 Americans living in Singapore and some 1,200 American corporations. While American corporations in Singapore had begun exploring ways to build goodwill in the Singapore community, no formal program existed to help channel charitable giving. At the same time, volunteers (including non-working spouses in the U.S. Embassy community) were looking for meaningful opportunities to give of their free time and become more involved.

A logical solution was born — FriendshipWorks — which matched U.S. business philanthropy and volunteer talent with charity and grassroots organizations that needed assistance. Toby worked on every aspect of its creation, including the name and organizational structure, the mission and the criteria for giving. He attracted interest from prominent Singaporeans and Americans to serve on the FriendshipWorks Advisory Council and he developed databases that cataloged the names of local charities and their needs, lists of volunteers, and pledges made on the part of the American business community.

Just eight weeks later, FriendshipWorks officially launched and made its first match. United Parcel Service (UPS) International donated six computers and two printers to Boys' Town Singapore, a local orphanage. Toby and members of FriendshipWorks made sure the orphanage had tables and electrical outlets to support the equipment. During a tour of the facility, the President of UPS International learned the boys had no television; soon a large screen TV was delivered. Through Toby's Washington contacts, the White House learned of FriendshipWorks and recognized the new initiative with a message from then President Bill Clinton which was read at the opening ceremony, applauding participating volunteers and corporations.

Another early match with Jamiyah Islamic Center, a Muslim charity caring for orphaned and other children, helped to forge closer ties between the American and Islamic communities. The Center received computers from Edison Mission Energy and educational software and books from other donors. The President of the Jamiyah Islamic Center noted that a "bond of friendship" had been established.

FriendshipWorks steadily gained momentum in its first months. American businesses provided computers and software to numerous organizations and volunteers took orphans to the Singapore zoo and visited homes for the elderly. Paintings were auctioned with the proceeds donated to support Save the Children. FriendshipWorks collected clothes and donated books to schools. In October 1999, the American Singapore Association gave FriendshipWorks its official home with a formal office, stationery, discretionary funding, and a full-time paid staff to coordinate donations, charities, and volunteers. Toby continued his involvement on the steering committee as Public Relations Manager and evaluated projects. Due to his efforts, FriendshipWorks became a household name in the American community with many Singaporeans wanting to help. Officials at the highest levels of the Singapore government praised the initiative.

In November 1999, Toby and his FriendshipWorks colleagues hosted "The Spirit of Thanksgiving" dinner for some 200 physically disabled, orphaned and elderly indigent Singaporeans from the Chinese, Malay, and Indian communities. The President of Singapore and his wife were the guests of honor. CEOs of five corporate sponsors — Coca-Cola, Electronic Data Systems (EDS), General Motors, UPS, and United Airlines — helped to serve the food, thereby showing the commitment of American business leaders to FriendshipWorks and charitable giving opportunities. The event gained much attention in the press and served to illustrate the example set by the American community.

FriendshipWorks still exists today and continues to identify organizations in Singapore in need of American charitable donations and volunteer assistance.

Alison Padget (2007)

Proper Nutrition for the Youngest of Orphans Saves Lives in Beijing



Alison, in black, weighs an infant to track general health and the impact of improved nutritional support.

In China, children born with cerebral palsy, spinal bifida, club feet, cleft palate, heart defects and other congenital abnormalities are often abandoned by their birth parents and placed in orphanages. This harsh reality spawned the creation of the American non-profit United Foundation for Chinese Orphans (UFCO), whose primary focus is to provide China's impoverished children with quality medical care and a chance to be adopted into a loving family. To reach children at risk, the organization provides medical training to orphan caregivers. Alison Padget, while living in Beijing, served as the volunteer nutrition program coordinator for UFCO, dedicating her time and expertise to 40 children under the age of two at the Jiaozuo City orphanage in the Henan Province of China. Before the arrival of UFCO help, the infant mortality at this orphanage was very high. Without medical intervention, orphans faced the risk of malnutrition, complicated by infections and disease.

Alison, who holds a Ph.D. in nutrition, coordinated the ordering and transport of infant formula to this rural orphanage, maintained the inventory, and traveled to the orphanage every 2 to 3 months to weigh and measure the babies. Her assistance was crucial to improving survival rates of

the children. Alison taught orphanage workers proper sanitation techniques, formula preparation, and supplemental feeding. To track each child's progress, she plotted heights and weights on growth charts and used this information to relay to doctors which children needed special attention. She also analyzed the results and wrote reports submitted to donors and UFCO's Board of Directors.

Due to Alison's effort in keeping them informed of the infants' progress at the orphanage, one donor of formula, Abbott Pharmaceuticals, further awarded UFCO a grant of \$10,000 for corrective surgeries and promised another \$45,000 in 2008.

From the start, Alison recognized the extreme importance of UFCO's mission. Without such medical support, many babies would die. She believed that through improved marketing and communications, the organization could better spread the good news about their accomplishments and garner even more support. With the help of others, she suggested renaming the organization and rewrote their mission statement to better reflect foundation activities.



UFCO became the United Foundation for Children's Health (UFCH). Alison designed a new website and assisted with the design of other promotional materials. She actively helped in fundraising and assisted with medical case management for children who were receiving treatment or undergoing surgery. And to widen UFCH's impact, she worked with the China Center for Adoption Affairs to find a second orphanage to sponsor.

In addition to her services at UFCH, Alison gave free lectures on childhood nutrition to the Embassy community, training sessions for other caregivers (known as ayis) on childhood nutrition, and a talk on weight loss for adults. In nominating Alison for SOSA, Carlton Benson said "I have been amazed by how quickly, how effectively, and how whole-heartedly she has dedicated herself to bettering the lives of Chinese orphans."

Visit the United Foundation for Children's Health at www.unitedfoundation.org. Today, several years after Alison's departure from Beijing, one can still see the impact of UFCH's work in helping the youngest of infants thrive. UFCH continues to be staffed by volunteers, including physicians, nurses, therapists, and individuals with expertise in nutrition, fundraising, and accounting.



Food deliveries to Burmese villages saved lives in the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis.

Amy E. Robinson (2008) Emergency Aid to Cyclone Nargis Victims in Rangoon, Burma

Amy Robinson jumped into action with her Embassy colleagues after a Category 4 cyclone named “Nargis” hit Rangoon on May 2, 2008. Over 100,000 people lost their lives on that Friday night. In villages throughout the country, bamboo huts were blown away leaving people with no protection from the elements and nothing but the clothes on their backs. Livestock and other food sources were killed causing an immediate food shortage. And while the country lay in crisis, the governing military regime hampered relief efforts by restricting aid donations and offers of help from international NGOs. Amy, who was a Consular Associate working at the embassy, knew that help needed to come from inside the country.

Coordinating with four Embassy colleagues, she began with a small donation of 1,000 eggs to one village. That one act soon blossomed into aid to seven ethnic Karen villages in the Twante region, accessible only by boat. People in these villages were desperate and running out of food. In the weeks after the devastation, Amy and a small team of American officers, teachers and local staff distributed approximately 30,000 pounds of rice, over 1,500 pounds of dehydrated fish, some 3,600 servings of noodles, over 1,000 oral hydration tablets, more than 300 pounds of salt, over 1,500 eggs, 1,500 pounds of onions, garlic, and chilies, and over 800 pounds of yellow beans and potatoes. They supplemented food donations with vitamins, clothes, toys, tarps and ropes and other supplies to restore roofing, rainwater collection kits, candles, and soap. Travel to these remote villages was difficult at best. Using local boats, the volunteers had to keep a low profile.



Health workers meet with families.

Months later, by the time a limited number of international aid workers were allowed to travel and provide assistance, Amy had expanded activities to include community-building. Following the old proverb “teach a man to fish, you feed him for a lifetime,” Amy’s team provided 30 to 35 boats, fishing nets and 1,500 shrimp traps to one of the villages. Her team also provided 20 live chickens and 20 live ducks and seeds to plant over 100 acres. They coordinated with a local NGO who came into one village to set up “rain-water” catchers at each house. To manage the flow of donations, Amy and her team encouraged villagers to form committees to determine priorities. The aim was clear. If you rebuild and restock supplies and assist with organizational strategies, villages could once again become self-sufficient and self-sustaining.

As communities gained strength, Amy continued to help rebuild by adding social assistance in the form of dental and medical visits and nutritional counseling. Children needed to return to school so the team began support for educational activities as well, collecting and distributing school supplies. One village established a school for 145 children with donations from a massive grassroots fundraising campaign initiated by Amy.

Amy had raised \$10,000 from family, friends, former and current co-workers. She also successfully lobbied the Burma Foundation for an additional \$8,000. Using creativity combined with necessity, she started a “boat drive” offering interested persons the ability to buy a boat for a village. The name of the sponsor was painted on the boat and then Amy sent the donors a picture. In a strategy to generate income for the village, each Karen family that received a boat donated half of their fishing profits to their village committee. At the end of each “shrimping season,” the village committee discussed how best to use the communal money. Such a model served to strengthen civil society within the village and helped communities plan for the future. The outcome was that each village was better equipped to assist each other when needed, instead of living day to day.

Without immediate assistance following cyclone Nargis, many more people would have died. The relief projects rallied Embassy morale and support and soon others joined in to help. Amy, along with her co-volunteers, encouraged personal investment by villagers in their recovery program. Amy’s nomination stated her “*inexhaustible and sustained efforts to provide humanitarian relief to the people of Burma following cyclone Nargis saved numerous lives.*” Such dedication to others in the face of disaster is truly commendable.



Delivering drinking water by boat.



A newly-built schoolhouse.

Country Highlights

“Joanne arranged for financing from American corporations for the production and videotaping of a play by a deaf acting group in Beijing. She gained the sponsorship of the U.S. National Theater for the Deaf, under whose auspices the videotape has been touring American cities.”

-from the nomination of Joanne Grady

Joanne Grady (Beijing 1991) founded Beijing International Volunteers (BIV) in 1988 to gather volunteers from the international community interested in working with orphans and disabled children. BIV began working with the Beijing Children’s Welfare Institute and later expanded to provide assistance for disabled children at the Chaoyang Red Cross Hospital and a local school. Joanne organized a number of fund drives to raise money for toys and equipment. She also volunteered regularly for the China Disabled Person’s Federation (CDPF), running a number of training camps for teachers and disabled children, incorporating theater for the deaf, wheelchair dancing and other art forms into her teaching techniques. Joanne traveled to Shanghai and other locations in China to work with CDPF branches (www.cdpf.org). Her teaching skills were in demand and soon she was traveling to Hong Kong to lead week-long workshops for special education teachers. Joanne became involved with Special Olympics International to organize a Chinese branch organization to promote sports for the disabled. Partnering with Honeywell China Inc., Joanne was able to help fund travel for disabled athletics to participate in Special Olympics games in Minneapolis. And finally, in 1990, Joanne was one of the organizers of the U.S.-China Women’s Conference, paving the way for exchanges between American women’s organizations and Chinese women.

Janice Scholfield Skoog (Beijing 2002) contributed to the well being of the American community in Beijing while also improving the lives of numerous Chinese children. Janice helped to establish the U.S. Embassy-Community Outreach Group (USE-COG), developed its by-laws and recruited volunteers. Through several major projects, which she conceived, USE-COG successfully secured contributions of money, clothing, and other articles for needy children in Beijing. Janice also served on the boards of the American Employee’s Association and of the International Newcomer Network with characteristic drive, creativity and enthusiasm.

Victoria Cross (Beijing 2007) set up the Beijing Café, an internet group to share experiences, tips for daily living, and lessons learned among English-speaking expatriates. Few Chinese speak English and without Chinese-language skills, the tasks of daily living can be difficult at best. In the first two weeks, over 200 members signed on to become virtual users of the Beijing Café. Victoria recruited three moderators to handle the workload of answering questions about all facets of life in Beijing. For the second year anniversary, she organized a party at a local restaurant for all the group’s members and convinced sponsors to donate thousands of dollars worth of door prizes. More than 80 members celebrated together. Within three years, the group had over 1,000 members. Before leaving Beijing, Victoria trained a new team to manage the internet group. Victoria’s nomination stated, *“The Embassy and U.S. expatriate community at large in Beijing are better off because of Beijing Café, born and nurtured from Victoria’s recognition of a gaping need, her creativity in filling that need and her commitment to helping her community.”*

Abby Hvitfelt (Suva 1992) arrived in Fiji as a Peace Corps volunteer following 50 years of nursing and teaching in the United States. When her tour with Peace Corps ended, Abby became a part-time nurse at the U.S. Embassy in Suva and spent her time off on numerous volunteer efforts. For the Colonial War Memorial Hospital, she coordinated the donation of a rocking chair for the pediatric ward and several wheelchairs. She helped arrange for bed sheets for another ward through a donation from her hometown Rotary Club of New Delhi, New York. Abby began a toy donation program at the hospital, hand-making soft stuffed animals for each child to hug during the admissions process. The idea caught on and before long others pitched in with donations of material or their sewing expertise. Abby also joined a group of older expat women who volunteered to take children from the Chevalier Hostel for disabled boys on weekend outings, such as visits to a restaurant for pizza, a cultural event, or dinner in someone’s home. Abby arranged for funding for two of the boys to receive corrective surgery for deformities at Shriners’ Hospital in Honolulu. She also volunteered many hours to proper preparation of all the paperwork. At the time she won a SOSA in 1992, Abby was 72 years old and had initiated a wide range of successful volunteer projects in her new-found home in the South Pacific.

“The full measure of success of a U.S. Diplomatic Mission to a foreign country cannot and should not be measured by its formal conduct of relations alone. The contributions of American community volunteers often provide the most immediate and tangible manifestation of our people to people relationship that reinforces and captures the true essence of the United States’ presence. Within our own Mission community in Manila, we are fortunate to have a number of dedicated American family members, our “Goodwill Ambassadors” who give selflessly of their time and themselves to promote the spirit of America and to make the community in which we live a more meaningful and enjoyable experience.”

-from the nominations of Sharon Sargent and Judith McLaughlin

Richard O’Brien (Seoul 1993), together with his wife Sandy, served as foster parents for the U.S. Department of Army’s Family Advocacy Program in Yongsan, housing children in crisis. To do this, they completed a mandatory training program and opened their home to an Army social worker who reviewed their parenting skills and home environment. To help promote foster parenting among Army families, they participated in a U.S. Forces Korea (USFK) television special report illustrating the benefits of opening one’s home to children in need. Richard and Sandy also led the Yongsan South Post Chapel youth group, further encouraging community service through a “service day” visit to an elderly home in Chongju, among other activities.

Kathy Hansen (Seoul 2006) dedicated two years to a full range of volunteer services for the benefit of U.S. Government employees through her involvement in a variety of activities including the American Forces Spouses Club, their Chosun Gift Shop, Quilts for Soldiers and Stork’s Nest Quilts, The Christ Child Society, Seoul Elementary School, the Embassy Book Club, Yongsan Vacation Bible School, Yongsan Library, Cursillo, Holy Family Parish (South Post Chapel), CLO Monthly Teas, and financial support for the adoption of children from Korea, Vietnam, and China. She was especially valued in the community for her ability to recruit, direct and advise other volunteers about community projects. For Kathy, no task was too difficult to perform, especially if it touched the hearts of both the giver and the recipient. Her winning SOSA nomination stated that *“her dedication is centered on the motto that no task is too difficult to perform.”*

Grace Grammo (Manila 1994) spent many Saturdays traveling with local dentists to deliver preventive and emergency dental care to children in low-income areas both within the Manila city limits and in surrounding areas. Grace assisted with set up, cleanings, and general comfort to the young patients. Through her volunteering, she became aware of Operation Smile, a program that identified children with cleft palate and supported corrective surgery. Grace, a trained nurse, provided the link between the patients and the volunteer doctors who performed the surgery. Through her fund raising efforts, the St. Martin de Porres Hospital, where most surgeries were done, received a generator for use during frequent electrical outages.

Sharon Sargent (Manila 1996) arrived in Manila in October 1993 and immediately focused her efforts on post morale-building activities including instituting a bi-monthly lunch bunch outing to sample local restaurants and helping to rejuvenate the membership base of the Embassy Wives Club through the U.S. Embassy Club (USEC). She actively volunteered as a member of USEC’s scholarship committee, which offered university stipends to Embassy FSN dependents. Under her tutelage, the program grew from 15 to over 40 scholarships offered annually. Outside of the Mission community, Sharon was actively engaged with Project Smile, which underwrites corrective surgeries for children with cleft palate, and chaired major fund raising efforts. The next year, **Judith McLaughlin (Manila 1997)** was also nominated for her volunteer successes with USEC and for her activities with Project Smile. Of particular note, she solicited donations of special cleft lip and palate nursers from a major U.S. drug company and worked closely with government officials to release the bottles for distribution.

Thanh Mai Bertotti (Phnom Penh 1997) reached out to the people of Cambodia with selfless dedication, distributing more than two tons of clothes to a wide range of disadvantaged Kmer, Vietnamese, Chams, and other ethnic groups that had fallen outside the safety nets of the government, foreign assistance, and NGOs. Clothes were donated to street people, working children, scavengers, cart pushers, bicycle taxi drivers, indigent hospital patients and their families, and poor migrant workers living in slums and along river banks. In one case, clothing was donated to victims of a fire which destroyed an entire squatter community. What made Mai’s work so unique is that she funded the effort entirely on her own, often buying and selecting clothing from the local markets. Mai also realized the need for the spiritual rebuilding of Cambodian Buddhist beliefs, on the verge of collapse due to former Kmer Rouge policies. She reproduced and loaned lecture tapes by the few remaining Buddhist masters in the world. Her extensive tape and book lending library was used by monks and street vendors alike. According to her winning nomination, *“Her efforts to strengthen the spiritual life of Cambodians have led to greater tolerance, reconciliation, and non-violence.”*

“The long-term influence on the future lives of young men Mr. Dean has served in BSA Troop 91 in Taipei, Taiwan can now only be measured in part. His total contribution will continue to be reflected as “his scouts” give service and good will in their growing spheres of influence. Tributes from the youth he has served have been moving, particularly in award ceremonies as they have reminisced about Mr. Dean’s part in their advancement along the Eagle trail. These have been echoed by adults associated with Troop 91 as parents, leaders, and members of the community. ”

-from the nomination of Bruce Dean, written by Richard C. Holloman

Cheryl Rose (Bangkok 1999) volunteered daily at the Baan Nor Giank Baby Home providing children infected with HIV with love, comfort, and tenderness. At that time, according to the United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), over 6,000 children were born each year in Thailand with HIV, adding to the 63,000 Thai children under the age of fifteen already infected with the virus. Thousands of these children had lost their mothers or had been abandoned by HIV-infected parents. Only a few organizations, like the Baan Nor Giank Baby Home, shouldered the financial and social responsibilities of caring for HIV-infected children. Cheryl helped to care for the babies at the home, playing with them, loving them, and feeding them. Cheryl periodically took HIV-infected babies into her home, including during the Christmas holidays, serving as a temporary foster parent. Cheryl made the lives of these innocent victims easier as they battled with the deadly disease. Her selfless efforts are a story of commitment, love and self-sacrifice. The nomination of Cheryl Rose stated “Cheryl does not tout her work among the embassy community, but goes about it quietly, not seeking recognition other than the smiles of “her” children.”

Melanie Kilmarx (Chiang Rai 2001), a former Peace Corps volunteer, showed a stunning array of accomplishments in Chiang Rai, located in the northernmost province of Thailand. She learned to speak Thai and drew on her language skills to teach natural childbirth methods, helping local women who wished to deliver using natural childbirth techniques. She also worked closely with a home for abused and orphaned hill tribe girls, providing employment for some of the graduates of the home. Melanie’s principal achievement, however, was in the successful launch of the Chiang Rai Montessori School, the first child-centered, English language school in the area. She brought Thais and westerners together to complete a daunting range of tasks, including obtaining a license, a school building, teaching materials and recruiting teachers and students. She also secured a \$25,000 donation from an American businessman to launch the project. Melanie’s volunteer work served to promote education, child welfare and Thai-American cooperation in Chiang Rai.

Bruce Dean (Taipei 1999) served as Scoutmaster for Boy Scouts of America (BSA) Troop 91 for two years while posted in Taiwan. Bruce successfully recruited local adult experts to serve as troop committee members and provide boys with instruction in first aid, swimming, lifesaving, citizenship, emergency preparedness, safety, outdoor skills and service to others. Under his leadership, several of the boys were able to reach the highest BSA level of achievement, earning the Eagle rank. He also led the troop in giving more than 250 hours of service to the local community, including improvements to school facilities, clean-up campaigns, fire safety, and campground upgrades. Foreign Service families inevitably move on. Knowing this, Bruce mentored his successor and the other troop parents to make sure the youth in the community would continue to receive sustained support and encouragement.

Frank J. Weicks (Chiang Mai 2003) won a SOSA in 2003 for making a significant contribution to the underprivileged children of the region. Frank supported a fledgling foster care program at a local government orphanage by organizing a gala dinner and auction that raised an unprecedented \$10,000. Frank became Vice Chairman of The Foundation for the Education of Rural Children and led the way in a fundraising campaign to build a preschool in a remote Karen hill tribe village. His further efforts sought to supplement basic education with music and field trips and to provide volunteer medical professionals for routine health care. Frank also wrote grant proposals on behalf of Rotary Chiang Mai West, requesting that Rotary International match retired teachers from the U.S. with needy communities in Thailand and to assist the Rotary club with its program for infants with poor vision. Frank left a legacy of good works and goodwill in northern Thailand.

June Carmichael (Hanoi 2004) used her experience in retailing to help the museum shops of Hanoi. She began a series of projects with the Vietnam Museum of Ethnology presenting lectures on the importance of museum shops, collaborating with the shop manager to design and locate vendors to produce a VME mug, and helped the museum director launch Vietnam’s first museum membership program. She also helped produce a simple museum tote bag. She encouraged the museum director to join in the worldwide celebration of International Museum Day, which saw thousands of Vietnamese attend this special free family activity day, raising awareness of their own rich cultural heritage.

During his first tour as a Foreign Service Officer in Tokyo, Japan, **Jeff Weinschenker (Tokyo 2007)** helped develop a series of monthly Embassy-sponsored volunteer events called “First Fridays” to provide volunteers with community service opportunities. First Friday teams picked up trash, planted flowers in downtown Tokyo, delivered baked goods to a nursing home for Alzheimer patients, helped prepare meals for a food bank that stocks local soup kitchens, and visited a Japanese school to share American music and culture. To broaden the effort, Jeff co-founded Japan Community Outreach (JCO), a community-based organization to bring together dozens of people from the Embassy, the international community, and the host country under one common cause – volunteerism. Jeff spread the spirit of community service among his embassy colleagues and through his own actions, encouraged other to join in.

JanMarie Flattum-Riemers (Jakarta 2009) showed great determination in helping the poorest and most disadvantaged in Indonesia. JanMarie provided much-needed medical services at the Bakti Luhur Orphanage, home to 250 orphaned and disabled children. She established An Embassy recycling program which provided employment opportunities for the mentally disadvantaged adults of the orphanage. JanMarie also developed an innovative program to help treat neglected children in scavenger communities. Knowing she could not personally visit these communities, JanMarie obtained a J. Kirby Simon grant of \$3,500 to fund traveling occupational therapy kits for Indonesian caseworkers who service the scavenger communities. She trained the caseworkers in patient assessment and occupational therapy techniques. From photos documenting children's disabilities, she designed patient care plans specific to the children's needs. She conducted family planning seminars for poor Indonesian women and provided caretaker training at a local nursing home. She also taught hygiene to 100 scavenger families and coordinated with a local charity to provide medical assistance to another 300 families. JanMarie saved and changed lives and inspired the Embassy community to become activists in charitable work. For this, she won the 2009 SOSA for the EAP region.

At right, pictures from JanMarie Flattum-Reimers' 2009 volunteer work in Jakarta, Indonesia. At bottom, site of large homeless population in Sewan, near the Jarkata International Airport.



SOSA Award Winners and Nominees

Winners are noted with an asterisk (*)

AUSTRALIA

2000 Judith Sotherlund (Canberra)
1997 Sharon Mattei (Canberra)
1992 Lou Iverson (Canberra)

BURMA

2008 Amy E. Robinson (Rangoon) *
2008 Julie A. Kraske (Rangoon)
2008 Elvia Hembree (Rangoon)

CAMBODIA

1998 Diane Basso, Mai Hertotti, Patricia McMillan, LeSon Quinn,
Kelly Quinn, Nancy Stanford, Dorvin Stockdale (Phnom Penh)
1997 Thanh Mai Bertotti (Phnom Penh) *

CHINA

2007 Alison Padget (Beijing) *
2007 Victoria Cross (Beijing)
2005 Robert Raines (Guangzhou)
2003 Janice Skoog (Beijing)
2002 Janice S. Skoog (Beijing) *
2001 Patricia Bienia (Beijing)
1998 Jacqueline Schurman (Beijing) *
1996 Genevieve DiMeglio (Guangzou)
1996 Carol Corbett (Hong Kong)
1995 Marjorie Bigelow (Hong Kong)
1991 Joanne Grady (Beijing) *

FIJI

2007 Paula Dinger (Suva)
1992 Abby Hvitfelt (Suva) *

INDONESIA

2009 JanMarie Flattum-Riemera (Jakarta) *
2008 JanMarie Flattum-Riemers (Jakarta)
2001 Jane Owens (Jakarta)
2000 Lori Stolp (Jakarta)

JAPAN

2009 Jamie O. Roane (Tokyo)
2007 Jeff Weinshenker (Tokyo)
2000 Marge Catt (Tokyo)
1996 Rachel Van Derhoff (Tokyo)
1995 Susan Summers (Tokyo) *

KOREA

2008 Mariya Fogarasi (Seoul)
2007 Hoa Kim Teague (Seoul)
2006 Kathy Hansen (Seoul) *
1993 Richard O'Brien (Seoul) *

MALASIA

2000 Priscilla Leighton (Kuala Lumpur)
1995 Joanne Mauger (Kuala Lumpur)
1994 Helene Mele (Kuala Lumpur) *

NEW ZEALAND

2009 Nicholas J. Greanias (Auckland)

THE PHILIPPINES

2008 Catherine C. G. Jones (Manila)
2005 Romi Ballesteros (Manila)
1999 Eloise Klecheski (Manila)
1997 Judith McLaughlin (Manila)
1996 Sharon Sargent (Manila) *
1994 Grace Grammo (Manila)

SINGAPORE

2000 Toby Glucksman (Singapore) *

TAIWAN

2002 Grace Sharples Cooke (Taipei)
2000 Mark Mayfield (Taipei)
1999 Bruce J. M. Dean (Taipei)

THAILAND

2005 Robi Keyes (Bangkok) *
2005 Annie Milstead (Bangkok)
2003 Frank J. Weicks (Chiang Mai) *
2003 Theodore Osius (Bangkok)
2003 Cheryl Rose (Bangkok)
2001 Melanie Kilmarx (Chiang Rai) *
1999 Cheryl Rose (Bangkok) *

VIETNAM

2004 June Carmichael (Hanoi) *