

March 13, 2012

Greetings to all,

I have been in Asia since January and it's been good for me to "wash my brain" as a friend says. My main priority in life is still to change international development and donor aid. And rather than complaining and getting angry as to what does NOT work I am finding solutions and initiatives that truly DO work. I want [Participate Now](#) to focus on organizations that generate life and not misery for those in need.

I have decided that I am going to live in Asia 6 months and in Zanzibar 6 months. I am focused in Zanzibar on The One Stop Center, Welezo Old Age Home, Maulidi ya Homu, Kendwa village and my farmers in Koani. Participate Now will continue to document the successes and challenges of these different initiatives. I will take photos, write and be a voice for people who do not have a voice or are too busy with their daily work to promote themselves.

In Asia I plan on initially focusing on two successful organizations that I have met with. These three months have really been a "recon mission". I am quickly meeting with different people and getting a sense of what I may want to focus on when I'm living here for 6 months. I'm happy to say that I have been very successful and look forward to the future here.

As usual, I had my medical checkups at Bumrungrad Hospital which I love more and more every year. I love that the doctors work part time there and then either teach or work at other places. They don't have to worry about managing an office or dealing with all the paperwork – they get to come to Bumrungrad and be doctors. I consider that the most productive form of healthcare that I've ever seen. I know that America is slowly moving forward to find a more efficient health care system and I hope that they adopt some of the Bumrungrad model.

## Phnom Penh Cambodia



I was in Phnom Penh for Chinese New Year (the year of the dragon) and it was fascinating. Down the street lives a very wealthy man who had a group come with their dragon costumes and they danced, set off fireworks and I think they blessed the household for the year. I couldn't see because he has a big wall around the house. There were hundreds of police around and I asked what they were waiting for. I was told that they were to receive their New Year gift from the wealthy man – either \$10 or \$15 depending on their rank. Now, some might think that's corruption but I'm not so sure – it's very cultural and I thought it was very interesting.

Cambodia has gone through drastic changes since the end of the Pol Pot regime. The first thing I noticed is that the majority of the population is 35 or younger!!!! So many people died during the Khmer Rouge

era. I visited my friend Susan, who is a lawyer at the Cambodian War Tribunal. I had met her when she was working at the Rwanda War Tribunal and it's fascinating to be able to visit the Tribunal here. I went one day and in the morning there were many local Cambodians in the public gallery and in the afternoon the place was filled with school children. Now that I thought was interesting – it's wonderful that the people are able to talk about what happened during the Pol Pot regime. I talked to some locals and they would like to just put it behind them and move on and I can understand that. It's all very confusing because many of the Khmer Rouge are now integrated into the government.

It was certainly obvious that the Cambodians are very enterprising people. They have no choice with so many people competing for jobs and work. Sadly, donors have descended on the country and I just hope that they do not become donor dependent. I hope the people can figure out what they need and then make sure that the donors abide by their needs rather than trying to please the donors.

## Angkor Wat in Siem Reap



I visited Angkor Wat at Siem Reap, Cambodia and it was truly awesome. I was not in the best shape health wise so I wasn't able to walk around much but I thoroughly enjoyed my tuk tuk drive. I visited the Landmine Museum and was very impressed. I met an American who talked as fast as I do (wow)! The organization was started by a Cambodian, Aki Ra, who received the CNN Hero award in 2010. They have also started an orphanage and school for the children. I loved that they had the photos of the kids and their own stories up on the wall. I hope to visit them again when I return next year. The website is <http://www.landmine-relief-fund.com/>. Most of the landmines around the main roads have been demined but there are still rural areas where no one can live or farm because of the mines.

## JD in Chiang Mai



I then went up to Chiang Mai to visit my youngest son, JD. He is a deep sea diver who repairs oil pipe lines and has been working in the Gulf of Malaysia for the past few years. He bought a condo in Chiang Mai that he is renting out and he is living in a beautiful house that looks like it could be in Connecticut!!! It has a big yard and he's hoping to get a dog next year.

He has gotten into yoga and the like and is having a grand time. He and many of his friends spend Sunday afternoon in the park doing flack lining (looks like a high wire to me). We drove up north to Pai which is kind of a hippie type town that is very beautiful. It's up in the mountains and gets so cold at night that I had to wear a hat to bed!!!! We stayed at a beautiful hotel called The Fish Pond and they would do their yoga every morning.

I'm excited that I will be living in Asia for 6 months and I'll be able to see JD more often. I didn't visit my son Keith in San Francisco this time but we have video skyped with my granddaughter Molly who turned 2 in January. Time moves so fast!!

## Childs Dream



I met Manuela who lives in JD's condo building. She is Swiss and a happy person who is COO of a charitable organization that I think is wonderful. She and two Swiss men decided to "retire" from the corporate life and moved to Thailand 10 years ago. They started Child's Dream [www.childsdream.org](http://www.childsdream.org) and it's very successful. They focus on simple health care (like de-worming and diarrhea) and education. They work close to the borders in Thailand, Burma, Cambodia and Laos. I am planning on visiting some of their projects when I return in December and I'm very excited about that.

JD and I visited their offices (the building was donated separately) and I was in awe as to how organized they are and what they are accomplishing. To me, this is true international development at work. Manuela and the others have a long term plan. The donation volume they raise annually is \$5 million, 80% generated from private individuals and 20% from corporations. They do not write proposals to large grant giving institutions because they are often too restrictive. They believe that it's most important that the money go directly to the people who they are helping. When they travel to Hong Kong, Switzerland, Singapore or other places to do fund raising they are allowed to use donated sky miles and stay with friends rather than fancy hotels. Now that totally impressed me!!! Check out their website and see how they are helping Burmese to get scholarships and go to university in Thailand.

I really liked that they know what they do best and they focus on that rather than "scaling up". I agree that donor aid can be more effective if it is focused on truly benefiting a few rather than trying to "reach thousands" in ways that are not sustainable. A Child's Dream makes a difference!!!!

## Welezo Old Age Home



Back in Zanzibar much of what I helped to put in place is progressing just fine without me. Margit is a German nurse who somehow found my Participate Now website last year and contacted me to ask if there were any volunteer opportunities in Zanzibar. I linked her with Welezo Old Age Home and she stayed with them for a few months!!!! She came to Zanzibar just days before I left for Asia and spent the first night at my house so we had time to chat but I'm sorry that I wasn't able to visit with her during her time there.

She sent me these lovely photos and told me that she had a magnificent time at Welezo. Believe it or not one of the sisters speaks German so they got along just great. Margit stayed at the volunteer house at Welezo which is quite lovely and very reasonable. The best part is that the money goes directly to buy medicines and items for the patients. My friend, Ali Hussein, helped Margit find her way around Zanzibar and she wants me to be sure to tell others that this is a wonderful volunteer opportunity.

I was told that my \$2,000.00 donation to Child Protection in Zanzibar was used well. They bought some smart phones and internet so that they can communicate easily between everyone. Hashim, who works at Save the Children, is assisting me in communication with The One Stop Center. They hired a new coordinator and that's wonderful. I look forward to getting back home and learning more about what is going on. I am most interested to interview the lawyers and learn more about the court process for the perpetrators. And I will certainly focus on pursuing support groups for the victims and their families.

[Participate Now](#) will concentrate on becoming a "flow through" for funds that can go directly to organizations and people. Our goal is to raise the quality of life for those in need. And I am gaining the knowledge that those people in need often know exactly what they need. We hope to help them achieve their goals.

I am a most fortunate woman and have a wonderful life that is only getting better and better. I am happy to continue on my road of happy destiny.

Kathryn

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If you are interested in supporting these programs you can easily do it through [Participate Now](#) which is a US based charitable foundation and a 5013C tax deductible organization. Any donations received will go directly towards the One Stop Center in Zanzibar.

Participate Now is dedicated to continue working for the welfare of the people of Zanzibar. We strive to make the biggest impact possible with very little resources. We do have a wealth of love and caring to share with others who are interested in raising the quality of their lives.

*“Being rich is having enough to share with others”*

Please send a check to the CT address below. Or visit our website [Participate Now!](#) to make a donation through PayPal.

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