

Honoring the Passing of Kay Bullitt PeaceTrees Vietnam founding donor and compassionate bridge builder

On August 22nd, the Seattle community and PeaceTrees Vietnam lost a shining light. Kay Bullitt was an extraordinary woman, visionary and peacemaker. Kay's steadfast commitment to peace and social justice spread around the world, from civic issues here in Seattle to removing landmines in Vietnam to transform the wounds of war back into trusting relationships with the Vietnamese people.

In 1995, after she sat around the table eating cinnamon rolls with us, she helped us shape PeaceTrees Vietnam. Then, she invited us to her home and invited others to support the launch of PeaceTrees Vietnam, 26 years after my brother Lt. Dan Cheney's death in Vietnam. The vision for PeaceTrees was literally born in Kay's living room.

She then reached out to Governor Mike Lowry, who had just returned from Vietnam as the first US Governor to visit Vietnam after the war ended and his Vietnam Trade Commission Director Bob Randolph. Kay shared the vision of PeaceTrees Vietnam with them and asked Governor Lowry to write an official letter to introduce us to Vietnamese leaders in Hanoi. When we arrived in Hanoi, the doors opened widely for us.

She was always in action. She didn't wait for public consensus. She helped shape how we think about what we were about to engage in. Her contributions were very personal, not only intellectual—her ideas were always in service of relationships. She always paid attention to the people, making connections, building bridges and creating long lasting relationships, so often in her home which she generously made available to PeaceTrees Vietnam and so many other organizations.

We revere Kay and her tremendous commitment to peace in the world and peace filled relationships. We will be eternally grateful for her unwavering commitment to reaching out to the Vietnamese people, to go deeper than the pathos of war, to honor their losses and begin to build bridges of trust and friendship, by sponsoring safe clearance of the explosive remnants of war and building safe and healthy futures for the families of central Vietnam.