

// LOCAL HEROES //

Framing a Passion

“Shoot Cameras, Not Guns” joins a long line of Breck-based global philanthropies.



Breck locals' philanthropic instincts tend to have a global scope—there's Doug Mendel, a former volunteer firefighter, who created The Cambodian Relief Fund to support firefighters in Cambodia who were in desperate need of supplies to do their jobs. And Shannon Galpin, who founded Mountain2Mountain, which partners with Afghanistan organizations to empower women and children in that country through education. And physician Craig Perrinjaquet (a.k.a. 'Doc PJ'), perhaps the best known among Breckenridge's traveling solo philanthropists, who has improved the lives of thousands of patients worldwide through his grassroots medical trips, spanning Honduras to Haiti to Nepal and the Darfur region of Sudan.

The latest to join their tribe is Breck photographer Diana Sabreen. In 2006, she set off on a climbing trip along the Thai-Myanmar

border. While there she began volunteering at a local children's home, then sharing her photography passion with undocumented Burmese refugee students in the border town of Sangklaburi.

Word spread and other non-governmental organizations in the region soon began asking her to teach their students photography, including a group of Burmese journalists-in-exile who had previously had little access to cameras. Sabreen's teaching opened up new worlds to them as they learned to use photographs to tell the stories of their political exile in positive and empowering ways—and it planted a seed in her mind. Photography provided a nonviolent voice and outlet to people who had suffered massive injustice. Could she share cameras and know-how in other war torn regions across the world?

In November 2010, Sabreen traveled to

Kenya with Technology Partnership, a non-profit that teaches computer literacy training in schools in the developing world. She taught photography to 250 students at ten different schools, leaving a camera behind at each with the hopes that the teachers will continue to teach additional students. The trip helped solidify her vision for her budding organization and she's at work turning “Shoot Cameras Not Guns” into an official non-profit.

To continue her mission, Sabreen is soliciting donations of new or used digital cameras, memory card readers, memory cards, USB-to-camera cables, adapters, camera cases, and a variety of batteries to share on her trips.

To learn more or donate visit www.shootcamerasnotguns.blogspot.com

— KATE LAPIDES

PHOTOS COURTESY OF DIANA SABREEN