

Voices OF HOPE

Thai-Burmese border

Karen refugees and migrant communities have lived in camps along the Thai-Burmese border for years. “People are dealing with many losses: their family, their land, their heritage, their freedom, even their body parts. They can’t leave the camps. There is nothing to do,” says Pam Rogers, a Toronto-based addiction counsellor. Because many people turn to alcohol or other drugs to cope, Rogers founded the Drug Addiction Recovery and Education (DARE) Network operating in the camps. PWRDF is a long-time supporter.

DARE’s addiction recovery program blends Western practice with local knowledge and has a 65% success rate, compared to the typical North American success rate of 25% to 30%. DARE staff are trained in acupuncture, herbal medicines and counselling. DARE also focuses on prevention in young people. Teen volunteers perform plays and other education events for children and DARE workers visit more than 16,000 homes a year to talk to people about the dangers of addiction.

Rogers also credits DARE’s success to PWRDF. “DARE Network staff understand that PWRDF’s support comes from people. People who actually care about them. ... It helps the refugees feel valuable, which in turns helps DARE Network to reduce addiction.”



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