

WORLD ARK

Ending Hunger • Saving the Earth

Winter 2003

Saving the Sheep

Heifer Bolsters Navajo Herd

Working for Peace in Kosovo

A Promise to End Hunger

By David Beckmann



HEIFER[®]
INTERNATIONAL

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

Several years ago on a Heifer International trip to Bosnia, I learned how Heifer's principle of Passing on the Gift could help heal wounds so deep no healing was thought possible.

It was 1998, and though the terrible ethnic war there had officially ended three years before, villagers were still shooting at each other across the valleys of the mountainous region. What, we wondered, could we do to alleviate the terrible suffering that still existed?

We spent two nights in Srebrenica, nights marked by the deadly sounds of artillery fire from the surrounding hills. As we toured the villages of Bosnia, during the day the streets appeared calm, though various ethnic groups still controlled the highlands.

We discovered in every village, however, that almost all the farm animals had been killed, casualties of the ethnic violence that had erupted in 1992 among Bosnia's population of Muslims, Serbs and Croats. Animals weren't the only victims, of course. Thousands of people died, and more than a million became refugees.

But even three years after peace had been declared, the burned-out shells of houses and barns remained, testament to unleashed rage. Just a few years earlier, Christians and Muslims had lived together in the same village, sometimes divided by a street, but still neighbors, often intermarrying.

Now we found mostly women and young children in the villages, and occasionally older men, but almost no young men. Most of them had been killed or remained in hiding.

I remember the sight of one woman pushing a wheelbarrow. Humiliation darkened her face. "Look what has happened to me," she said. "I'm reduced to begging for food."

I explained about Heifer International. The woman immediately understood the idea behind Heifer. She stressed the importance of animals to the livelihoods of these mostly rural people.

It became clear to us, however, that Heifer couldn't work with just one group. For Heifer to achieve something lasting, something that could bring the hope of peace, we had to bring these groups together—a daunting task.

The villagers at first weren't prepared to form a multi-ethnic group to receive assistance. The scars of warfare were too fresh.

We persisted. We explained the principle of Passing on the Gift. A light came on. This was something that the villagers could agree to. When the time came that an animal belonging to a project participant delivered its first offspring, the participant would pass on this new life to someone of a different ethnic group.

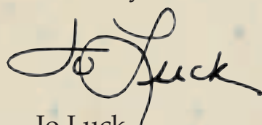
Neighbors who once had lived peacefully together, then turned on each other in hatred, would give and accept this new life. The act bestowed dignity on the giver and hope to the recipient, who eventually in turn would become a giver. Heifer was proposing a cycle of life and of giving, not one of endless retribution.

The world is still deeply troubled, even during what is usually considered the season of peace.

What can any one person do in the face of great suffering? You can give the gift of life—of geese or cows or goats—in the name of someone you love to someone you'll likely never meet.

You can help Heifer nourish the cycle of life. You can make a difference greater than you'll ever know.

Sincerely,



Jo Luck
President and CEO



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Cover: Jamie Tracy, age 10, shows off a ewe at Window Rock in the Navajo Nations, where Heifer is helping farmers improve the quality of their lambs and commercial wool.

Photo by Darcy Kiefel

Heifer International publishes World Ark quarterly for donors and friends. Heifer has helped more than 4.5 million impoverished families worldwide become more self-reliant through the gift of livestock and training in their care. A nonprofit

organization rooted in the Christian tradition, Heifer works for the dignity and well-being of all people. Heifer is a member of InterAction. Federal employees may designate gifts to the Combined Federal Campaign by writing in #0315. Heifer International

is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization and gifts to Heifer are tax deductible and are used as designated until current needs of those projects are met. Further gifts are applied to similar projects so that gifts begin helping people immediately.

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Dear Editor,

About 25 years ago, a young woman spent 19 days and nights living in my home. She's moved since then, but we've kept in touch, usually when one or the other of us needs encouragement or renewed direction. Recently, out of nowhere, she sent me \$100 along with a note that read, "I'm sure you will find a place for this money."

I'm below the so-called poverty level on Social Security, but I live in my own house with a vegetable garden and small flock of hens. World conditions being what they are, a neighbor and I are seriously discussing my again keeping rabbits and bees. That's work, but I know how to do it and could pass that knowledge along. My health appears good and I amazingly have more friends than I can count.

The gift presented me with a quandary. I could think of nothing I personally needed or wanted. Yet sometimes people put conditions on their gifts. I phoned her and asked if she would mind if I used it to make a charitable donation.

She said that whatever I wanted to do was fine, but asked about the fact that my cook stove had recently caught fire and needed to be replaced. I told her my son was coming to cart out

the old stove and buy a new one. Meanwhile, I have a microwave, three crock pots, a rice steamer and coffee and popcorn makers. How rich we Americans are without realizing it! I can't fry green tomatoes or toast cheese sandwiches, but I seem to survive despite those culinary crises. I even do a satisfactory peach cobbler. It's an interesting adventure, figuring out how to adapt.

And that's why I'm passing this gift on to Heifer for use in Afghanistan.

Louise Dorman Shannon
Chico, Calif.

Dear Editor,

Please give us more essays by Aaron Freeman, the author of "The Mule of Mississippi" (*World Ark*, Summer 2003). I recently was also very affected by his radio essay on NPR's "All Things Considered" about art and fear. The humanity that shines through his words is inspiring and humbling. His insights cause me to say, "Of course, that's it!" And how appropriate for his work to appear in a Heifer International publication.

Thank you for sharing his thoughts with me. I look forward to reading more in issues to come.

Jackie Parr
Olympia, Wash.
e-mail

Dear Editor,

Thanks for sharing information and plans for your new "green" building in "Building for a Green Future" (*World Ark*, Fall 2003). It is amazing what a little forethought can produce and shows that you are committed to "walking the talk."

The emphasis on freshwater, while dismaying, was excellent and brought together many facts that we have known for a long time intellectually, i.e., our needs, our waste, etc.

It all inspired me to begin a campaign of awareness. When I see advertisements touting the "good life" as requiring and acquiring "things" at the expense of our environment, our neighbors, etc. and using poor ecology practices, I intend to write the company and explain why I am offended by their ads.

Americans already use more than our share of resources. Companies are not dumb. We can get anything we want if enough of us demand it and are willing to invest to make it happen. Thanks.

Ann Lucas
Gainesville, Fla.
e-mail

Dear Editor,

I am 16 years old and a student in the 11th grade at Hoover High School in San

Diego, Calif. I am impressed by the job and effort that you contribute day by day for the needy families of other parts of the world where more violence, abuse and intolerable acts are taking place.

This is a global awareness project for my child development and parenting skills class. It is so shocking to see what is going on in parts of the world where you think everything is normal. I congratulate you on your mission.

Even though my contribution is not by money, I give all my heart and support to every needy family. I am thankful to have my own on a steady level. I just wish everyone could be like this. Thank you very much.

Flor Burciaga
San Diego
e-mail

World Ark welcomes comment from readers. Heifer International reserves the right to edit letters to the editor for clarity, grammatical errors, spelling and space. Letter writers should include a telephone number or e-mail address so that we can confirm the identity of the writer.

Write to: World Ark Editor,
1015 S. Louisiana St., Little
Rock, AR 72202.
E-mail: worldark@heifer.org.

Stories of Self-Reliance

Top the Chart

READER'S SURVEY

By Jan Cottingham, *World Ark* Editor

We asked. You answered. In the summer issue of *World Ark*, we included a survey asking readers to tell us at the magazine what you thought about the publication. More than 1,300 *World Ark* readers responded, many with insightful, creative and detailed suggestions.

We deeply appreciate all those who took the time to fill out the survey. The survey was not, statistically speaking, scientific because readers were not questioned at random. It did, however, provide food for thought.

So what did the readers tell us? They told us something about themselves: 86 percent of those who responded were female, 83 percent were over the age of 46, and 79 percent have a college or post-graduate degree.

The readers' favorite stories are those about Heifer's work helping families become self-reliant, 86 percent. Following were articles about policies and issues that affect hunger and poverty, 65 percent.

Almost half of those who responded, 49 percent, said they preferred information on steps they can take to change their own lives, while 53 percent expressed no specific area of interest. (The percentages add up to more than 100 because readers usually checked more than one category of story.)

The survey respondents said that they most often read feature articles about Heifer International's work around the world, consistent with their stated preference for stories of self-reliance. A little over 74 percent of the respondents read those stories most frequently.

Almost 58 percent read Heifer Around the World regularly, and 49 percent stick to those articles that interest them most.

Our readers are dedicated, the survey showed. Almost 46 percent read the magazine cover to cover.

Heifer, of course, serves people around the world. Survey respondents listed their areas of interest in this order: Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Asia and the South Pacific, North America (which includes Mexico, Canada and the United States) and Central and Eastern Europe.

The survey asked readers to rank their interest in nine issues. The rankings were close. They are, in descending order: sustainable development, hunger and self-reliance (tie), poverty and the environment (tie), community development, women's issues, globalization/economics and HIV/AIDS.

Perhaps one of the most interesting questions to be answered concerned whether *World Ark* should take positions on issues that affect hunger or poverty. A bare majority, 50.36 percent, said yes.

Because *World Ark* seeks to educate readers not only about the work Heifer does but about issues of poverty, hunger and the environment, we were pleased to see that 39 percent of those who answered the survey said that information in the magazine had changed their perceptions of hunger or poverty, or had persuaded them to make changes in their own lives.

The survey asked some open-ended questions that were hard to quantify, such as who readers would like to see write for *World Ark*. But a surprising and gratifying number of respondents took the time to make concrete proposals.

Some suggested writers: environmental writer Wendell Berry, John Grisham, Billy Graham, Pope John Paul II, President George W. Bush, former President Jimmy Carter, the Dalai Lama, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Maya Angelou, Heifer project participants, singer-activist Bono of the band U2, Tom Hanks, Bill Moyers and "anyone who writes well."

Some readers like celebrity endorsements; others say "avoid celebrities."

Although most of those who answered our survey enjoy receiving the magazine, some said it should have fewer pages or be discontinued altogether, freeing up money to purchase more animals and help more small farmers. *World Ark*, however, serves as Heifer International's primary purveyor of education and news. The information the magazine provides seeks to teach our readers about what Heifer does and what they can do to end hunger and preserve the environment. In doing so, we believe the magazine helps even more poor families develop self-reliance and improve their lives, and, through "Passing on the Gift," their neighbors' lives.

Although we know we can't make everyone happy, we do care what our readers think. We want to publish the best *World Ark* we can. Learning readers' views and taking them into account will help us strengthen the magazine. We thank you, the readers and donors, for helping us do that. In doing that, we hope to move further toward our mission of ending hunger and saving the earth, the mission that brings us together.

A Time of *Promise*

By **David Beckmann**, *President of Bread for the World*

This time of year is a time of waiting and promise. We wait for the coming of winter, for many of us a period of quiet contemplation. The holiday season naturally draws our attention to the promises of God, and we look forward to Christmas. For me, this is a time of gratitude for my family—the year we have enjoyed together and the promise of future blessing.

But hundreds of millions of people, including millions in our own country, struggle with hunger and poverty. These people are also full of hope and faith. But this period of economic problems and war is making life yet tougher for many of them.

According to U.S. Census data, 33 million people in this country—including nearly 13 million children—experience hunger or the risk of hunger. Right now, many more families are seeking emergency help from food banks and food pantries.

Worldwide, 840 million people are chronically undernourished. They don't get the calories they need to live active lives, and their children—weakened by hunger—die in large numbers. Diseases like AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria are rampant in poor countries, making it yet more difficult for people to grow food and provide for their children.

Still, I'm convinced that we can end chronic hunger in our lifetime. The resources, technology and knowledge needed to end this kind of routine, pervasive hunger that the world now tolerates are readily available. Faith-based and charitable organizations like Heifer International are working tirelessly to meet the needs of struggling families. We have made progress against world hunger over the last several decades, but right now it is, at least temporarily, on the increase.

But to make the progress that is possible, we also



need to get the governments of the world to do their part. The United States is the most powerful nation in the world, so our government plays a leadership role on questions of aid and trade that make a difference to millions of hungry people. Concerned Americans need to let our elected leaders know that we want our government to do its part to overcome hunger, poverty and disease worldwide.

September 11, 2001, convinced many Americans, including President Bush, that reducing hunger and poverty in far-off places is important to U.S. national security. As a result, President Bush has, on behalf of our nation, made

two promises to expand U.S. assistance to poor countries. He has promised a new Millennium Challenge Account that will channel assistance to poor countries that have managed to establish democratic, effective governments. The president has also promised to expand what our government does to help people around the world cope with AIDS.

Only one-half of 1 percent of the U.S. federal budget now goes to programs that help poor people around the world. But the president's two proposals would together double that amount.

These U.S. commitments are part of a larger set of promises among the nations of the world. The members of the United Nations, including the United States, have agreed to the Millennium Development Goals, chiefly to cut world poverty and hunger in half by the year 2015. All the industrialized countries, not just our own country, are in the process of increasing their assistance to poor countries. Many of the governments of developing countries have, as part of the same compact, promised to

focus more of their own resources on reducing poverty and hunger.

These are wonderful promises. They echo biblical promises of justice for poor and hungry people and of a day when there will be hunger no more.

Bread for the World is a nationwide Christian citizens' movement against hunger. We help concerned people influence Congress on hunger issues. Bread for the World members and churches have written about 125,000 letters to Congress this year in support of the Millennium Challenge Account. And Congress has moved forward with the necessary legislation and part of the promised appropriation.

Yet Congress and the president may well fall short of the commitments they have made. They are under tremendous pressures—the war in Iraq, tax cuts, ballooning deficits and hundreds of special interest groups. Our elected leaders need to hear from those constituents who believe it is a priority for our nation to keep its promises to hungry and poor people around the world. The new aid that has been promised can restore the momentum of progress against world hunger and, in that way, contribute powerfully to world peace.

Since President Bush called for the new AIDS initiative in his State of the Union Address last January,

more than 2 million people have died from AIDS. Nearly 6 million children under the age of 5 have died from hunger-related causes.

Bread for the World is already looking forward to its 2004 Offering of Letters campaign, *Keep the Promise on*

Hunger and Health. Thousands of individuals, hundreds of churches and scores of organizations will together work to win the increased funding that President Bush and Congress have promised—and to make sure that the money is used effectively to reduce hunger, poverty and disease.

Bread for the World also works on issues that are important to hungry and poor people in the United States. Our government has a long-standing commitment to help hungry people here at home through the national nutrition and other social programs, which are particularly important in times like this when unemployment is high. But budget pressures on our federal and state governments make vulnerable the very programs designed to help people work from poverty to promise.

As a Lutheran pastor, it is important for me to remember that

Christians and Jews are People of the Promise, heirs of the promises God made to a great cloud of witnesses from Abraham and Sarah to Moses, David and the prophets, and Jesus himself. As people of faith, we are keepers of God's promise to all people for a just and peaceful world. ✍

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Rev. David Beckmann is president of Bread for the World and Bread for the World Institute and also a Lutheran pastor. For more information about Bread for the World or the Keep the Promise on Hunger and Health Campaign, contact 1-800-82-BREAD or visit www.bread.org.

World Leaders' Goals for *Ending Misery*

By **Scott Morris**, *World Ark Associate Editor*

The Millennium Development Goals lay out an ambitious road map for rich and poor countries to follow as they work together to reduce human misery around the world.

A key feature of the goals—unanimously agreed to by 147 heads of state, including then-President Clinton, at the United Nations in September 2000—is that they set specific, measurable targets for reducing poverty, disease, illiteracy and other markers of human suffering.

Because the goals were framed in “concrete and easily measured terms, it will be possible to judge whether they are met,” Nancy Birdsall and Michael Clemens of the Center for Global Development wrote in a recent report. The center, based in Washington, D.C., is a non-partisan, non-profit think tank dedicated to reducing world poverty.

Developing countries have been asked to post progress reports with the United Nations Development Program, and some are already available on the Internet at www.undp.org/mdg/countryreports.html.

Reports posted to the U.N. site indicate that a few poor countries have met some of the goals, others are “on track” or “slipping back,” while still others are described as “far behind.”

The Millennium Development Goals are to:

1 Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. The target is to reduce by half the proportion of people who live on less than \$1 a day by 2015. An estimated 1 billion people currently struggle to survive on that amount.

2 Achieve universal primary education to ensure that all boys and girls complete primary school. As many as 113 million children do not attend school.

3 Promote gender equity and empower women. The targets for 2005 and 2015 are to eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education. Two-thirds of illiterates are women, and the rate of employment among women is two-thirds that of men.

4 Reduce child mortality. The target for 2015 is to reduce by two-thirds the mortality rate among children under age 5. Every year almost 11 million children die before their fifth birthday, mainly from preventable illnesses, but that number is down from 15 million in 1980.

5 Improve maternal health. The target for 2015 is to reduce by three-quarters the ratio of women dying in childbirth. In the developing world, the risk of dying in childbirth is 1 in 48, but most countries now have safe motherhood programs.

6 Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. The target for 2015 is to halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS and the incidence of other major diseases. At present, 40 million people are living with HIV.

7 Ensure environmental sustainability. The targets are to integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and to reverse the loss of environmental resources, to reduce by half the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water by 2015, and to achieve significant

improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020. More than 1 billion people lack access to safe drinking water, and more than 2 billion lack sanitation.

8 Build a global partnership for development, which involves rich nations promoting fair and open trade, providing access to affordable drugs, making available the benefits of new technologies, and dealing comprehensively with developing countries' debt problems.

“The Goals are not just another set of U.N.-sponsored development ideals,” Birdsall and Clemens wrote. “They represent a new partnership between poor and rich countries—a kind of mutual compact to do what it takes to fight avoidable poverty and human misery worldwide.”

World trends toward the goals are somewhat mixed, according to the United Nations Development Program.

The effort to halve poverty appears to be on track, according to the U.N. web site, until China is excluded. In that case, progress has been less than half the necessary rate, according to the U.N. The number of income-poor in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and Latin America, combined, has increased some 10 million each year since 1990, the world body says.

Cost estimates by UNICEF, the World Bank and the World Health Organization indicate that meeting most Millennium Development Goals by 2015 will require another \$50 billion annually in development assistance. That implies a doubling of current aid levels, according to the U.N. That number seems huge, but it is only about one-fifth of 1 percent of income in the donor countries, the U.N. says.

Travel with a Purpose

As we enter the holiday season, much of the world is troubled by violence of one sort or another—political, social or economic. Heifer works in many of these areas, seeking to end the poverty and hunger that sometimes lead to desperate acts of violence.

Bringing people together into communities that work cooperatively to solve these problems through peaceful means is what we are all about. In that way, Heifer is much like the great redwoods of California. Like those towering trees, we have intertwining roots that make it possible for our organization and our project partners to grow strong together. Our roots spread around the world, making clear to all of us that mutual survival depends on mutual support.

Our study tours help weave the world's people together, producing a greater understanding of the global community. We hope you will consider joining us in this adventure during the upcoming year.

For trip information during spring 2004, please check the web site at www.heifer.org or telephone our offices at 501-907-2957. If you would like to receive information on a specific trip and a tour leader is not listed, please send your request to studytours@heifer.org.

If you do not have access to e-mail, send a note or call 501-907-2957. Many of our tour leaders are members of the Heifer staff and often travel on business, so a reply to your request could be delayed.

2004 TOURS

PHILIPPINES

January 24-February 8

Leader: Dr. Rex Enoch
rex.enoch@heifer.org
501-889-5124

N. THAILAND/LAOS

Mid-February

Leader: Michael Haddigan
michael.haddigan@heifer.org
501-907-2954

This study tour will involve a higher degree of difficulty than most. Participants should be adaptable and in good physical condition.

NICARAGUA

February 29-March 7
Work/Study Trip

Leader: David Boothby
david.boothby@heifer.org
501-642-3096

CAMEROON

April 16-27

Leader: Elizabeth Elango
elizabeth.elango@heifer.org
501-907-4935

ROMANIA

May 17-24

Leaders: Pat Stanley
pat.stanley@heifer.org
508-886-2221
Dale Perkins
dale.perkins@heifer.org

TANZANIA

Late May/June

Leader: Bill Beck
billebeck@hotmail.com
209-574-9786

BOLIVIA

Mid-July

Leader: Jason Bergmann
jason.bergmann@heifer.org
320-584-0101

ECUADOR

September or October

Focus on women's issues in the Andes

SPECIAL ANIMAL MANAGEMENT

These tours are suggested for veterinarians and other animal scientists who want to learn more about Heifer's program in Improved Animal Management. Companions are welcome.

HONDURAS

January 28-February 8

Dr. Roger Ellis
rellis6@adelphia.net
518-642-9490

ROMANIA

September 7-23

Drs. Jim and Barb Geistfeld
emg23@frontiernet.net
845-758-1783 extension 11227

Other trips for 2004 with dates to be announced:

CHINA, PERU, HONDURAS, BROOKLYN DAY TRIP, UGANDA/RWANDA

Please check our website often for the most up-to-date information and a complete list of trips: www.heifer.org.

Approximate lengths of stay and costs for tours including international airfare, accommodations, meals and local transportation:

Latin America and Caribbean, 10-14 days, \$1,800 to \$3,500

Central and Eastern Europe, 10-14 days, \$2,800 to \$3,500

Africa, 17-24 days, \$4,000 to \$5,000

Asia and the South Pacific, 14-21 days, \$3,200 to \$4,500

North America (air transportation not included), 5-10 days, \$800 to \$1,500

Because of the uniqueness of our Study Tours, detailed day-by-day itineraries are not always available when tours are first announced. Our travel is determined by the projects we visit and is subject to change at any time.

If the contact is studytours@heifer.org, information will be sent when it is available. Once a Study Tour leader has been posted, we urge you to get in touch as soon as possible as Study Tours fill up fast.

Working for *Peace*

Heifer helps former enemies rebuild shattered lives in Kosovo.

Story and photographs by Darcy Kiefel



TOP *A destroyed mosque serves as a vivid reminder of the bloody 1999 conflict that pitted once friendly neighbors against one another in Kosovo.*

RIGHT *An ethnic Albanian woman, shown wearing a traditional head covering called a "lindhse," recalls the horrors of war.*

ORA BYTYCI RECALLS LISTENING in tears as her father, Ajet, told one of his many stories from days hiding in Pristina, Kosovo, during the 1999 conflict there.

Several times Bytyci and his wife, ethnic Albanians, had been ordered by Serbian authorities to leave, but Bytyci refused to abandon the land and home he loved.

One morning, after a night of gunfire and explosions, Bytyci pulled back the curtains of his bedroom window and saw a lone horse. Its hooves made an eerie sound as it

searched the burning debris for food. Staring out the window in dismay, Ajet Bytyci could not stop his tears.

What was to become of his people, of his homeland? How would he provide for his family now that everything was destroyed?

Ora Bytyci, an administrative assistant for Heifer International's Kosovo program, says that up until the time of her father's death two years ago of cancer, he told that story over and over.

"Each time it was expressed with such passion and emotion [that] it always made me cry," she says.

Amid *Ruin*

Scenes such as the one described by Ora Bytyci's father haunt the Balkans. Ethnic violence has killed thousands throughout Kosovo.

Kosovo, a nominally autonomous province of Serbia-Montenegro currently governed by the United Nations, is a multi-ethnic society. Serbian, Bosnian, Turkish, Montenegrin, Goran, Croatian, Hashkali, Egyptian and Roma (often referred to as gypsies) peoples all reside within its boundaries.

Heifer is playing a small but important role in restoring peace and families in Kosovo, regardless of ethnicity or boundaries.

In 1989, Slobodan Milosevic, a Serbian who was then president of Yugoslavia, revoked the autonomy granted to Kosovo in 1974. Most Albanians (who comprise over 90 percent of Kosovo's population) were fired from government jobs and other professions such as law, teaching and medicine.

Children were segregated in the schools and forced to use segregated toilets. The Albanian language was banned on the streets, where Albanians were constantly harassed and often beaten.

In 1999, during the Kosovo conflict, more than 900,000 people were forced by Milosevic's regime to flee their homeland. They emigrated to neighboring countries, with over 450,000 seeking refuge in Albania.

Between 20,000 and 25,000 people lost their lives; most of the victims were men and young boys. Thousands of homes were burned or bombed, and many farms were

destroyed. As a result, over 70 percent of the animals in Kosovo were killed, stolen or slaughtered by the Serbs and their collaborators.

The main source of income for families in Kosovo has always been agriculture and livestock. About 60 percent of Kosovo's citizens (2.3 million people) live in rural areas. And roughly 90 percent of some 150,000 rural households are engaged in agricultural activities. This represents about 140,000 farms and nearly 1 million people.

Since 1999, rural livelihoods have deteriorated significantly, and a large portion of the rural population is now living in extreme poverty, existing on \$1.50 per day while many more survive on as little as 81 cents per day. With little or no work to be found, emigration has become common.

After the war, over 500,000 people, mainly youths, searched for permanent or temporary employment in Western Europe to support their families. Kosovo is one of the poorest areas in Southeast Europe.

Immediately after the war, Heifer International initiated its first Kosovo project, the rehabilitation of small-scale farms, in four municipalities:



Prizren, Rahovec, Gjakova and Vitia. Under the direction of Heifer Albania, extensive training of farmers was organized in close collaboration with the livestock extension service and the Animal Production Department of Pristina University.

The most severe problem facing farming communities was the deteriorating quality and health of the animals that survived the war. Their shelters had been destroyed, and many animals were left to fend for themselves as families sought refuge in neighboring countries.

Because of small agricultural areas, a limited number of animals, deficient animal feed and poor breeding, livestock production suffered greatly while the price of



TOP Brenda Ramadani, who lost both her father and grandfather in the war, with her Heifer goat.

“Everything was taken away from us. We all prepared to die. We dug a big grave and just waited. But somehow we survived. After it was over, we had nothing until Heifer International arrived.”
—Jana Laskaj

dairy products rose higher in the Balkan area. Farmers lacked the financial resources to improve their breeds and care for their families.

As Heifer Kosovo Director Nuridin Mestani says, “After the war it was such a desperate situation. Instead of needing animals, the people were in need of a place to live.” And in the end, there was nowhere for them to turn. “There were victims everywhere.”

Isa Dina, vice president of the Rahovec group in the ethnic Albanian village of Krusha e Madhe, explains, “This presented a problem. Everyone needed help. Ninety percent of the houses in this area were burned and the conditions became so desperate. Almost every animal had been destroyed or stolen.

“The most devastating circumstance of all, however, was the fact that every family in our village lost one or more of their men,” Dina says. “The situation was unimaginable to those who heard our story.”

Krusha e Madhe, which is in the district of Rahoveci, is known

throughout Kosovo as the village most affected by the war. Over 206 villagers and 17 Roma lost their lives in the 1999 conflict.

Life continues in the village and the absence of men isn’t readily apparent. It’s in the privacy of homes, as in one in which seven or more women greet guests with a heavy heart, that the tragedy hangs heaviest.

Today, more than 6,000 families live in Krusha e Madhe and surrounding areas. When Heifer arrived in 2000, the project was able to touch only a few of the farming communities.

The impact, however, has been great. To date, 70 families in the Rahoveci district have received cows from Heifer, and the total number of recipients now exceeds 100 as a result of project partners passing on the gift. A total of 350 cows were distributed in four municipalities in 2002.

The stories of the people of Kosovo reveal the region’s devastation.

Xhemile Hoti of Krusha e Madhe, an ethnic Albanian, lost her husband and two sons in the war, even though they were not soldiers.

“We had a good life before the war,” Hoti says. “We were not wealthy but had a small plot of land where our men worked hard and agriculture was good. We had five cows, a tractor and the warmth of a home and loving family. During the war, they burned our cattle and told us women to take refuge in Albania.

“The military forced us to separate from our men, and when 20 young people tried to escape from the village, they were killed on the spot. This was in the morning. In the afternoon women were sent 10 at a time by trucks 15 kilometers away,

then lined up with guns pointing at our heads,” Hoti says.

“We thought we would be killed. They lowered their guns and forced us to walk to Albania. We had nothing with us because we left in such a hurry. I was so nervous for my daughter-in-law, who had given birth just four days before, that I wore one of my shoes and one of my husband’s.

“And then I worried about one of my daughters who had been separated from us,” she says. “But the real problem was my husband and two sons who had been captured.”

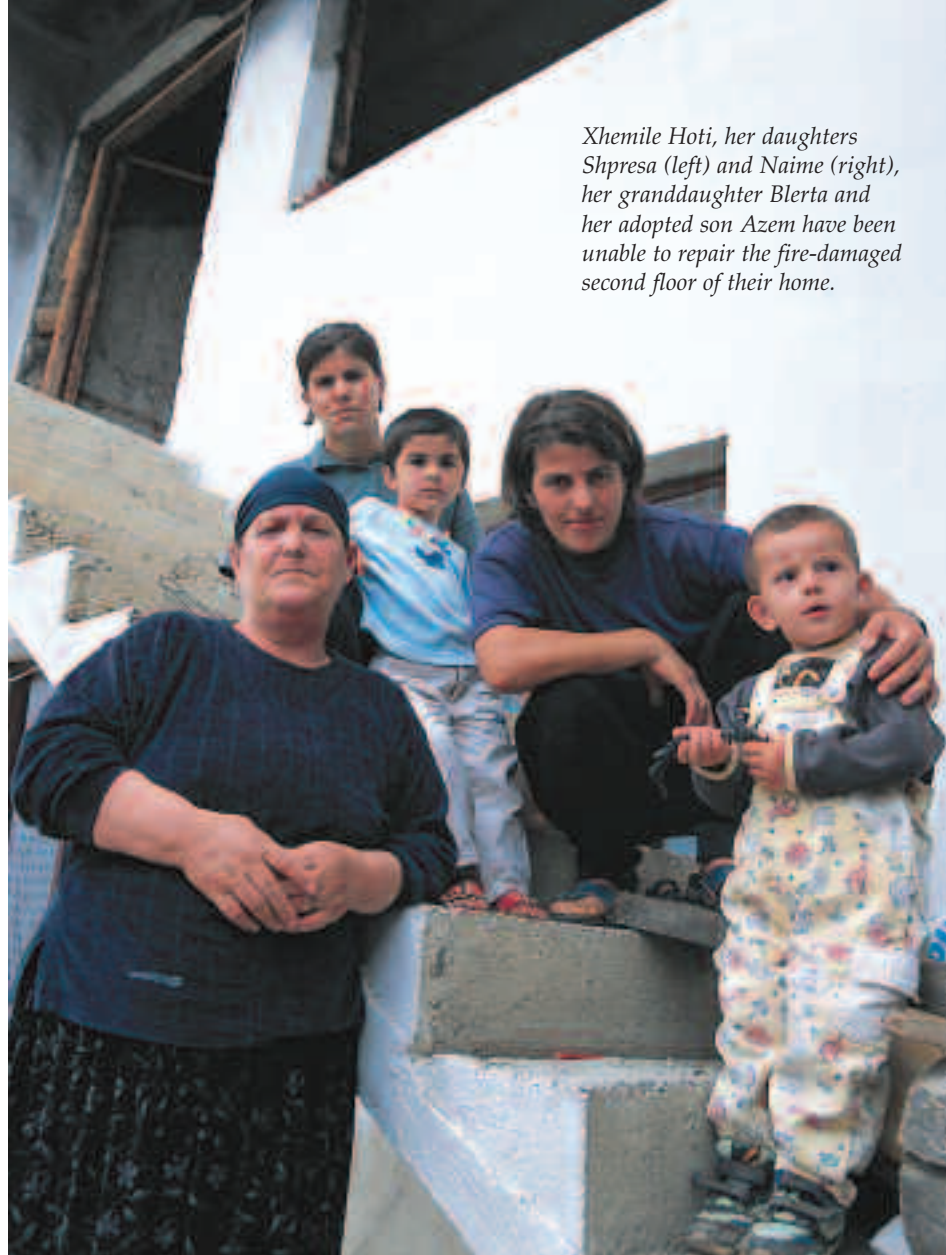
Hoti and her daughters lived as refugees in Albania for three months.

During an interview, family members wipe away tears as they recall the day they learned their men had been killed. “I didn’t even want to return to Kosovo because I knew my house would be empty,” Hoti says. “The first day we went in the fields to work without our men was the most difficult because it had always been the work of my husband and sons.”

Hoti gestures to indicate digging in the dirt and explains, “It was the land where I lost my family. I called to them for their response, but of course there was none. I used to talk to the mountains and say, ‘You managed to save five lives—how could you not manage to save my boys?’

“Our house was burned and today we live in the bottom floor. We have so many memories and I was so proud of our house and our family,” she says. “Today, if one of our men were still alive, we could rebuild what we have lost, but with only two daughters, it is difficult to repair or work in the fields. We have no income.

“I never thought this would happen, so I knew I had to be brave,” Hoti says. “My husband would



Xhemile Hoti, her daughters Shpresa (left) and Naime (right), her granddaughter Blerta and her adopted son Azem have been unable to repair the fire-damaged second floor of their home.

“This house is so empty. Life now is completely different. I look at it differently. To be brave is very difficult.”—Xhemile Hoti

expect it of me. ... To be brave is very difficult.”

Eventually, Hoti and her daughters received help from some of the village men, but she says with a big smile and her hand over her heart that Heifer gave the greatest assistance to the family.

“We had no donation until Heifer International arrived. The day our cow arrived was such a happy day.

After so much pain it was something good happening to us,” she says.

“We sell a little milk but consume most. The amount of money we make is very little, but it helps and we are grateful to Heifer International.”

Hoti’s daughter, 23-year-old Shpresa, who cares for the cow, explains, “All that I have learned with Heifer International training

**“Heifer never treated us differently and we will never forget this gesture of peace and harmony.”
—Ilmije Hiseni**



TOP Ilmije Hiseni is proud of the goats she received from Heifer International.

RIGHT Vuceta, a Serbian, praises Heifer's efforts to work with all ethnic groups to rebuild Kosovo.

I try to practice. I take better care of our cow now because, of course, it is most precious to us and our survival.”

Heifer Kosovo Director Nuridin Mestani agrees. “I believe we have already changed the mentality of our people and care of their animals,” he says.

“With these animals farmers not only secure family needs with milk, but receive additional income to send their children to school and provide them with an education. The project has had a tremendous impact on these villages and future generations.”

“Every family in this village lost brothers, sons, husbands, fathers,” Hoti says. “My husband was let go because he was old, but when he saw his boys killed he said, ‘Kill me, too.’”

“There are victims everywhere, but thank God we have an

organization like Heifer International to bring back hope,” she says. “It is all we have.”

Above the village of Krusha e Madhe, Heifer is providing training and goats to a small community of Roma who lost 17 family members during the conflict. In March 2003, 42 goats were distributed to families returning home after the war.

“Our village is known in all of

Kosovo as the most affected,” says Ganimete Mamutaj, who lost both her husband and son.

“When our people started returning from Albania, we came home, but our houses were burned and we had no goats left. The whole village was burning! We could not even find or recognize which home we lived in.

“We wished we had stayed with others but knew this is where we belonged,” Mamutaj says. “These Heifer International goats have become our new life, and we are forever grateful for those who cared.”

Mamutaj’s neighbor, Ilmije Hiseni, is visibly proud of the goats she received from Heifer, yet profound sadness darkens her eyes.

“When we returned to our village after the war, this is when we understood what poor means,” she says. “We heard someone was giving away biscuits. We took what we could, and that is how we survived for weeks. We received flour from our neighbors but had no pans or anywhere to cook,” she says. “We went around and looked in the rubbish and took what we needed.

“We had difficult times,” Hiseni says. But “even though we are away from the main village, Heifer International and Krusha e Madhe never treated us differently. We will never forget this gesture of peace and harmony between both our neighbors and foreigners who care.”

Heifer began working in the district of Klina, where 80 pigs from Heifer’s Irish partner, Bothar, were distributed in 2003. Until the 1999 conflict pitted them against one another, Klina’s Serbian and Albanian neighbors had enjoyed peaceful relations.

“We had a good life,” explains 75-year-old Jana Laskaj. “But when conflict entered our village, our

children were robbed of their childhood and we were robbed of our goods.

"They beat my 80-year-old husband and killed my 35-year-old son. Everything was taken away from us, including our lives," she says. "During this time, we all prepared to die. We dug a big grave and just waited. But somehow we survived.

families who own cows. Those without lack the funds to replace any animal lost during the war. That is why we feel Heifer International will be very welcome

"We are good people. We do not mean harm. We are now free, not at war, but we continue to need food and water to drink so our lives will be better."—Vuceta

"After it was over, we had nothing until Heifer International arrived. Even during the war, we saw help only from Americans. Heifer International and America have been our saviors and saved us from war and famine."

Heifer is also working in the Serbian village of Gojbula. Entering the compounds, one must pass the tanks of KFOR (Kosovo Force, the United Nations and NATO-led military peace-keeping force) and then two military checkpoints inside the community. Heifer France is training 16 community members who are anticipating the arrival of new goats.

The people of Gojbula have faced tremendous struggles since the 1999 conflict. Bratislav Kostic, president of the group, says, "We have a difficult life here. Most of the land in Gojbula cannot be used and all of our animals were stolen after the war.

"Most of the people in our village worked in factories, but they are no longer functioning, so very few in our community are receiving salary, wages or even pensions," he says.

"Today, there are, at most, 35

here. The need for animals is great."

Jugoslav and his wife, Lubica, resettled in the village of Gojbula after their home, two kilometers away, was burned to the ground during the war.

"I was a big farmer with 54 sheep," Jugoslav says. "During the war they were all destroyed. I have no sheep left. I only have my health. I have kept the bells of my sheep, so now I only need the goat to place them on.

"I think of the Albanian words 'to see a bright light with a good future.' This Heifer International project is a powerful force toward bringing together Serbs and Albanians. When together once again, we will take our goats to the field and perhaps play a little 'futbol!' This is my hope."

"Life was good before the war," Lubica says. "Albanians and Serbs were so happy together. I never worried to leave my door open. Politics have made such a mess, and now innocent people are suffering because of it.



"The anticipation for our goats is tremendous. There are none in our village at this time, and we truly believe our lives will change upon their arrival."

As Heifer representatives leave Gojbula, Vuceta, a recipient of Heifer help, bids farewell and, with a warm smile, says, "We are happy with Heifer International because of both sides working together to make peace happen no matter what religion, color or ethnicity. We hope the day will come when we can all live together once again in peace.

"My point to all of this is to please write down that we are good people," he says. "We do not mean harm. We are now free, not at war, but we continue to need food and water to drink so our lives will be better." 🐐

Darcy Kiefel is a Heifer International photojournalist based in Boulder, Colo.

Growing the *Future*

Story and photographs by Darcy Kiefel

Garden program builds community and confidence.



TOP Lester helps out in the lettuce patch at the Anchor School garden.

RIGHT Cedric Barton, 15, and Elizabeth Wilson, 14, serve a customer at the Gainesville outdoor market.

THE EAST SIDE OF GAINESVILLE, Fla., is a world apart from the city's middle- and upper-class sections.

Many families living in east-side neighborhoods survive on incomes below the federal poverty guidelines. Many of the east side's young people surrender to gangs and drugs or drop out of school. One out of every five young black men ends up in jail.

Many teenagers there lack a decent family life. Even more lack any motivation to change their lives. There are few, if any, alternatives to keep them off the streets.

These days, however, a small group of at-risk teens and schoolchildren living in Gainesville's east side are headed in a new, positive direction, one that is keeping them in touch with one essential source of sustenance—the soil.

The project propelling these youths was designed by Neighborhood Nutrition Network (NNN), founded in Gainesville in 1998. NNN, a program of the Florida Organic Growers, works predominantly in the African-American neighborhoods of eastern Gainesville to develop community gardens for schoolchildren and low-income neighborhoods.

Working with Kathleen Colverson, Heifer International Southeast director, and her staff, NNN hopes to help low-income families by increasing their knowledge of fresh and nutritional foods available in their communities. Heifer has also provided livestock, training and equipment for garden development and small-scale fish, worm and fruit tree production. Developing the leadership and technical skills of youth is the key project component.

Ellen Huntley, NNN program director, says, "These programs encourage our youth to truly believe in themselves and their environment, believe that growing food together builds community.



“This project is encouraging me to save lives and grow food for people who have nothing at home. It makes me proud that someone is taking my food home to save their children.”—Cedric Barton, age 15.

“This community then produces results that children and adults alike can see, feel, touch and taste,” she says.

During the last year, NNN created the Youth Entrepreneurial Farm and Food Preservation Project (FFPP) in an effort to teach at-risk teens not only gardening but also leadership skills.

Twelve high school students are selected each season to work at a community garden and market their fresh vegetables at the local farmers market. Proceeds from their sales are used to sustain the gardens and purchase supplies for their spin-off enterprise, “Le Jarr.”

Students involved with Le Jarr raise and glean produce to manufacture jams and jellies that are sold at the market. Both efforts involve the students working at least 12 hours a week.

Since October 2001, they have raised more than 500 pounds of produce and grossed more than \$1,500 from sales of Le Jarr jams and jellies. Excess produce is used to feed homeless families throughout the county.

“Some [area youths] believe an after-school job working at McDonald’s is successful,” Marty Mesh, NNN

executive director, says. “But our programs teach them about business, life and gender/racial sensitivity. Most importantly, they come closer in touch with the earth.” The students learn where their food comes from—the soil.

“We want to have a positive effect on the youth so they become the force behind their parents for healthy

eating,” Mesh says. “The nutritional level is critical to our program. We teach the children how to make and cook their homegrown squash, using fresh herbs for flavor and flowers to decorate the table.

“With these culinary and artistic skills, they may be hired in restaurants or just sit down for a nice meal with their families,” he says.

“This is my first job and experience as a hard worker,” says Elizabeth Wilson, 14, who joined the FFPP group in September 2002. “I think more about vegetables now and all the hard work and sweat and hours and hours of labor it takes to put food on our plate. My mom always tells me, ‘Stick with this job and you will someday help others.’

“I don’t think of this work so much as a responsibility but as an honor that I am helping others already in my life,” Elizabeth says.

Ellen Huntley remembers meeting 15-year-old Cedric Barton when he was a quiet, unassuming teenager unaware of his capabilities. “Cedric has experienced a lot of growth since joining our program,” Huntley says. “He has become quick-minded, clever

RIGHT Laurie Kirchman (right) takes strawberries from another Neighborhood Nutrition Network worker.



and challenged by agriculture, [seeing it] as a unique tool to help him be all he can be.”

“I think it is a good idea to get kids involved because we like to grow things,” Cedric says. “Some kids really want to be farmers and help out, so it is nice to have a program that can train us.

“My daddy drives a truck and my mom is a nurse,” Cedric says. “They support me in this work and encourage me to continue. It is preparing me for the future. It makes me feel good to grow and sell what I have planted with my own hands.”

With Heifer’s assistance, NNN has built eight community gardens in low-income neighborhoods throughout the east side of Gainesville and helped 12 schools develop after-school gardens where over 600 students have learned to garden.

In the past two years, NNN and Heifer have helped schoolteachers develop not only gardens but also enhance the diets of low-income families through the provision of fresh produce. A small miracle has occurred because of the gardens, according to several teachers and staff members.

“At the beginning, the majority of the children said they didn’t like vegetables, but since they grew, harvested and ate what they created, their tastes have changed,” says Kelli Brew, the Outreach and School Garden coordinator. “Just recently students shredded radishes, carrots, turnips and lettuce for a salad, and everyone asked for seconds.”

One of the 12 schools involved in the program is the Sidney Lanier Anchor School. The school serves children with special needs and is an “anchor” for kindergartners through fifth-graders who are at risk because their families move often.

Together, the teachers and students have grown and harvested vegetables and fruits on school property through the NNN-Heifer program. The produce is either sold to teachers or visitors, or taken home by the children for family consumption. The program has become so successful that most of the children ask to work in the gardens rather than go to the playground.

“Most of the year the students work in the gardens because it has become so popular for them to plant, nurture, harvest and sell their own produce,” Cathy Costello, principal of Lanier Anchor School, says.

“It is a magnificent program with a ‘hands-on’ learning experience,” she says. “The garden has become

so beautiful and big and the children are constantly receiving compliments. I have heard we have a magical garden and no one has flowers and vegetables as unique as ours. I heard it is because it’s grown by children.”

Marty Mesh, the NNN executive director, says that Heifer doesn’t need to look far in east Gainesville to find homeless or hungry children. “Most of the children at this school are living in severe poverty with severe disruptions in their family life,” he says. “The gardens have given them not only self-esteem but fresh foods and a safe place with people they know they can trust.”

“Heifer International training and philosophy are what we are most proud of, and the ‘Passing on the Gift’ through knowledge and understanding has connected these children with their community,” Kelli Brew says. “Today, we truly believe they will have a future because of programs like this.”

Fifteen-year-old Cedric Barton, selling his last bunch of basil to a customer at the Gainesville outdoor market, couldn’t agree more. “This project is encouraging me to save lives and grow food for people who have nothing at home. It makes me proud that someone is taking my food home to save their children.

“I believe this project will help me throughout my life because I have learned the value of a dollar,” Cedric says. “It is preparing me for my future, and I am now determined because I know it will be a challenge.” 🍌

Darcy Kiefel is a Heifer International photojournalist based in Boulder, Colo.

The Greening of *Red Hook*

By Wendy Jacques and Ben Jacques



Photos by Ben Jacques and Austin Haerberle

TOP The garden crew gathers: (front, from left) Beatrice Isabel, Denia Cuello, Misael Cuello, and (rear, from left) co-director Ian Marvy, Tevon McNair and John Wright.

NEXT PAGE John Wright weeds a bed of lettuce in the Far Rockaway garden.

IT'S SATURDAY. A tall, lanky youth with tight braids, glasses and earrings, wearing a clean white T-shirt and jeans, is weighing a bag of organic collard leaves before handing it to his customer.

"We sell a lot of collard greens and mustard," Tevon McNair says. "This is the first batch of collards from our own garden this year."

A woman with two girls in a double stroller and a little boy in her arms walks over to inspect the price list on the black board. Organic Spicy Salad \$2, Rosemary and Sage 75 cents, Kale \$1 a bunch. She buys two bunches of kale and then moves to the next table to buy eggs.

A typical farmers-market scene on a hot day in late June—but something is different here. This is no upscale community catered to by pricey food producers. Tevon, a high-school junior, is staffing a tent at the Red Hook Farmers Market, a half-moon of seven booths at the east entrance to one of New York's largest public housing projects. The six-story housing project is home to 75 percent of the approximately 11,000 residents of Red Hook, one of Brooklyn's poorest and most underserved neighborhoods.

Tevon not only sells vegetables at the farmers market; he has helped grow and harvest much of the produce, including 40 varieties of vegetables and fruit that range from Japanese eggplant to 10 different varieties of peppers. Joined by several farmers from New York state, who bring their produce to Red Hook, he and his associates also sell pasture-raised chicken, lamb and eggs. And they sell to local restaurants and donate to food pantries.

While organic food is often viewed as a luxury, the Red Hook Farmers Market is providing fresh, healthy produce at affordable prices to a community where low incomes are the norm. More importantly, the service is provided by Red Hook community members themselves, youths 14 to 19, who participate in an innovative urban development program supported by Heifer International.

The project partner is a "storefront" nonprofit called Added Value & Herbal Solutions, Inc. (AVHS). It was formed three years ago by two creative young adults to

address the widespread food insecurity, poverty and pollution in Red Hook.

Originally named for its hook-shaped waterfront and the red iron content of its soil, Red Hook historically mixed waterfront industry and housing. While a few industries and businesses remain, many others have left.

Today Red Hook is known for its problems—high unemployment, soil and air pollution, inadequate transportation and drugs. Its predominantly African-American and Latino population is isolated from neighboring communities and many city services by the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway. With a median yearly household income of \$9,500 and little public transportation, the residents of Red Hook have had to rely on high-priced and highly processed food from neighborhood convenience marts, or else take a taxi miles to a supermarket.

But things are starting to change, say AVHS founders

we had planted in bloom.”

At one point Marvy and Hurwitz, a licensed social worker, decided they could better serve the community in a different capacity. One day, Marvy recalls, he was in the garden chewing on a dandelion stem, and one of the kids started talking about how they could harvest dandelions to make and sell a medicinal tincture.

It was time, he realized, to start a business—a different kind of business that would grow young people as well as vegetables. They would build an agency to connect teenagers with their community, provide a wholesome product, and teach them skills to get their lives on track.

“Added Value is about creating connections between people and community, between sun and soil, about harnessing resources,” Marvy says. “Herban Solutions is about finding solutions in the urban setting, solutions that can be defined by the community.”



Ian Marvy and Michael Hurwitz, former juvenile justice employees who became disillusioned by the limitations of the system. Offending youths, assigned to perform community service, had little opportunity to learn from their work assignments, Marvy says. So he started a community garden.

“The kids found it a nurturing environment,” he says. “It was something where you could see the results of your work. Kids that had been in the court kept coming back to see how the corn had grown, to see the peach tree

Today AVHS works with a diverse network of nonprofit and community groups, ranging from Green Thumb, a New York City Parks and Recreation program, to Cornell University Cooperative Extension, which provides technical assistance in its garden programs. Heifer, the largest source of funding over three years, provides training and technical services, as well as equipment and supplies.

“The partnership with Heifer has been incredibly important,” Marvy says. Marvy and Hurwitz

acknowledge the “ancillary” benefits Heifer provides, including community advocacy, youth workshops and exposure to Heifer staff from around the world, who visit the AVHS site to talk with the youths.

So far AVHS has trained 30 teenagers in a three-year program, teaching them not only gardening and business lessons, but also media literacy and computer skills. The youths work 17 hours a week, earning \$250 to \$350 per month. Upon completing 60 hours of training, they use their new skills to give back to the community, by assisting in future trainings and donating a portion of the food they produce. In this way, they “pass on the gift.”

Jose Felix, 18, is a good example of how the program works. Now in his third year with AVHS, and having completed an eight-week “training of trainers” workshop,

With Heifer’s help, Brooklyn teens turn produce into progress.

Jose is in charge of the new kids in the program. He teaches them about gardening, tools, plants, how to run the Farmers Market and how to work as a group.

At the Farmers Market he is an expert on what sells best that day. “They always buy a lot of greens,” he says at his booth, “but the green beans are really very sweet now.”

For the last two years Marvy, Hurwitz and the teenagers have grown their produce in two places, a small city lot in Red Hook, and another lot, a quarter-acre 45 minutes away in Far Rockaway, Queens. Next spring, however, they will give up these sites and focus on a major urban gardening and education project they’ve initiated in Red Hook’s Todd Memorial Park.

Called A New Urban Landscape, this project will use over 30,000 square feet of abandoned playground space to grow food, build soil and teach young people about gardening, nutrition and ecology. What’s unusual about this project is the involvement of a broad spectrum of community organizations. The directors and youths have already constructed the first of up to 40 giant garden beds, measuring 8 by 128 feet. They will turn half of them over to other groups: Red Hook schools, Senior Center, Tenants Association, and partnering organizations like the

City Farms Just Food program. Two beds will be used to grow food to donate to the Sisters of Mercy Home for Developmentally Disabled Adults, the Calvary Baptist Church soup kitchen and City Harvest.

The complex will also include a 22-by-96-foot greenhouse, so food can be grown in the off season, and a vermi-composting project. Vermiculture, the production and use of worms to detoxify and enrich growing soil, is especially necessary in Red Hook where the original soil is poor and polluted by heavy metals. AVHS is now importing soil for the new garden beds, but will use vermiculture and composting to create safe, sustainable spaces for new crops.

Also included will be a solar-powered hydroponics project, ideal for educational programs. “Even young children can build a system, learn the basic sciences associated with the work and grow produce in a short time,” Marvy says.

As AVHS teenagers learn new skills and invest in their community, Marvy and Hurwitz encourage them to examine the relationships among health, nutrition, environmental degradation and poverty. Each youth is required to lead at least one community-based training program on these topics, as well as instruct on basic organic gardening and composting techniques.

A Power Point presentation that Tevon has helped create underscores this concept: “Added Value works to develop neighborhood youth’s capacity to understand the social issues affecting their community, to create real alternatives, and to build a sustainable world.”

Back at the Red Hook Farmers Market, customers drift by—mostly women with kids on their way in and out of the housing project. They stop to buy apples, cucumbers, chicken and eggs. Women receiving WIC support can receive goods from the Farmers Market as well as take part in the Community Sponsored Agriculture program, which sells shares for 22 weeks of the year.

Meanwhile, the youths continue to serve them. Tevon weighs lettuce, while a petite ninth-grader in her first year of the program, Elizabeth de la Cruz, arranges her carrots and beets just so. Jose works the plant stand for a while. Caring for plants from seed to market, the young people are learning how to care for each other, the community and the environment. 🌱

Readers can learn more about the Red Hook projects by visiting AVHS’s website at www.added-value.org, or by writing to Added Value & Herban Solutions, Inc., 305 Van Brunt St., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11231. Ben Jacques is a teacher and freelance writer living in Stoneham, Mass., and a frequent contributor to World Ark. Wendy Jacques lives in Maplewood, N.J., and provides consulting, writing and editing services for Amnesty International and other organizations.



Hundred

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A former staff writer for *The New Yorker*, McKibben writes regularly for *The Atlantic Monthly*, *The New York Review of Books* and *The New York Times*.

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By Bill McKibben.

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I've been called my share of names, but the only one that ever really stung was "grinch."

The year that a few friends and I started the Hundred-Dollar Holiday program through our rural Methodist churches, several business page columnists in the local papers leveled the G-word—we were dour do-gooders, they said, bent on taking the joy out of Christmas.

And, frankly, their charges sounded plausible enough. After all, we were asking our families, our friends, and our church brethren to try and limit the amount of money they spent on the holiday to \$100—to celebrate the holiday with a seventh or an eighth of the normal American materialism. There's no question that would mean fewer "Pop guns! And bicycles! Roller skates! Drums! Checkerboards! Tricycles! Popcorn! And plums!" Not to mention Playstations, Camcorders, Five Irons, and various Obsessions. Perhaps my heart was two sizes too small.

So it was with some trepidation that I carefully reread my daughter's well-worn copy of the Seuss classic. There on the cover was the Grinch, red eyes gleaming as he plotted the sack of Whoville. He hated the noise of the kids with their toys, and he hated the feast of rare Who-roast-beast, and most of all he hated the singing. "Why, for 53 years I've put up with it now! I MUST stop this Christmas from coming! But HOW?" Simple enough, of course. All he had to do was loot the town of its packages, tinsel, trees, food, even the logs in the fireplace.

But of course it didn't work. That Christmas morning, listening for the wailing from Whoville, the Grinch heard instead the sound of singing. Christmas had come. "It came without ribbons! It came without tags! It came without packages, boxes or bags!" The Grinch was forced to conclude that Christmas came from no store.

And so I breathed a sigh of real relief. Not only was I not a grinch trying to wreck the meaning of Christmas, it was abundantly clear who the grinch of our culture really are: those relentless commercial forces who have spent more than a century trying to convince us that Christmas does come from a store, or a catalogue, or a virtual mall on the Internet. Every day, but especially in the fall, they try their hardest to turn each Cindy Lou Who into a proper American consumer—try their best to make sure her Christmas revolves around Sony or Sega, Barbie or Elmo.

But Dr. Seuss's message went deeper for me. When we'd begun thinking about Hundred-Dollar Holidays, it was mostly out of concern for the environment or for poor people. Think of all that wrapping paper, we said, all those batteries, all that plastic. Think of all those needy people who could be helped if we donated our money to them instead. Think of all those families who went deep into debt trying to have a "proper" Christmas.

All those issues are important. But the more we worked on our little campaign, holding evening meetings at small rural churches like the one I attend, the more we came to understand why people were responding—indeed, why we had responded to the idea. It wasn't because we wanted a simpler Christmas at all. It was because we wanted a more joyous Christmas.

The holiday season had become something to endure at least as much as something

-Dollar Holiday

to enjoy—something to dread at least as much as something to look forward to. Instead of an island of peace, it was an island of bustle. The people we were talking to wanted so much more out of Christmas: more music, more companionship, more contemplation, more time outdoors, more love. And they realized that to get it, they needed less of some other things: not so many gifts, not so many obligatory parties, not so much hustle.

The Real Reason to Change

This is not an exercise in nostalgia. What are the problems peculiar to the moment that we might ease by changing some of the ways we celebrate Christmas? Well, the environment, surely that's one. Our enormously increased populations and levels of consumption are filling the air with carbon dioxide, changing the very climate. I've spent my career dealing with these issues, and they are urgent. But they aren't fundamental. The damage we're doing to our atmosphere, our water, our forests, stems from deeper dilemmas, I think—and so does the damage we're doing to the poorest people in our nation and around the world.

So the reason to change Christmas is not because it damages the earth around us, though surely it does. (Visit a landfill the week after Christmas.) The reason to change Christmas is not because it represents shameful excess in a world of poverty, though perhaps it does. The reason to change Christmas is that it might help us to get at some of the underlying discontent in our lives. It might help us see how to change every other day of the year, in ways that really would make our whole lives, and maybe our entire culture, healthier in the long run.

For the moment, forget the effect all this stuff that we buy has on the environment, though of course it's enormous. (According to the Worldwatch Institute, North Americans have used more natural resources since the end of World War II than all of humanity used in all the time before.) Forget all the figures about debt and bankruptcy and our failure to save for our old age.

Consider only the effect of this stuff on us. Up to a certain point, it's delightful—we live in comfort, which is a new and still not widespread phenomenon. But past that point, and most of us are miles past it, there's

something oppressive about our gear, our equipment, our trappings, our stuff. If nothing else, despite our ever-larger houses, we have no place to put it.

We have so much stuff that a pile of presents is no longer exciting, no longer novel. And we don't get so excited by stuff—or, rather, we do, but not for long. We've been so carefully trained to buy more that we find ourselves shopping when we're bored or depressed, but the lift from the new thing hardly lasts the drive home.

The Long-lost Silent Night

But that's not the real culprit. Much more it's the way all the noises that we choose to listen to have infiltrated our minds. We're caffeinated, buzzed, wired, plugged-in. In one survey, only 19 percent of Americans said they wanted a "more exciting, faster-paced life." Excitement can't excite us anymore.

What can excite us is the prospect of a lull, an interlude. Stillness scares us (that's why the TV goes on when we walk in the hotel room) but it attracts us, too. If there's one thing we'd really like from Christmas, I think, it's a little of that "season of peace" that the greeting card writers are always promising. It's one of the reasons "Silent Night" is the all-time favorite carol. There's a moment when we sing it each year at the end of the Christmas Eve service, with the lights out and everyone holding a candle that frames their faces with soft light, and that marks for me the absolute height of Christmas.

If there's one way in which the world has changed more than any other since 1840, it's that we've become such devout consumers. That consumption carries with it certain blessings (our lives are long and easy by any historical standard) and certain costs (first and foremost the damage it causes to the rest of creation).

But the greatest cost may be the way it's changed us, the way it has managed to confuse us about what we really want from the world. We weren't built just for this life we find ourselves leading—we were built for silence and solitude, built for connection with each other and the natural world, built for so much more than we now settle for. Christmas is the moment to sense that, the moment to reach for the real joys.

20 Tips For a Simpler,

1 Slow down! Have a family meeting to plan what everyone wants to do. Mark decisions on a family calendar and limit yourself to these activities.

2 If you know a single parent, offer to take his or her children shopping, or to baby-sit while he or she shops.

3 Hold down spending. Talk with your family about the power of advertising to promote wants over needs. Add up all the things you all plan to spend money on this holiday season—from the total, subtract 20 percent and decide together how to share it with someone who truly needs it.

4 Ask the oldest adults you know to tell what Christmas or Hanukkah was like when they were young.

5 Count your blessings: make a list of all the joyous things that have happened to your family this year. Offer a prayer of thanks.

6 Make an audio or videotape to send to someone who is far away who would love to hear from you.

7 If you have to venture into heavy holiday shopping traffic, stay courteous, keep in mind what the holidays are about.

8 Draw names for gifts rather than giving a gift to everyone on your list. Give children one thing they really want instead of many gifts.

9 Make family coupon books with coupons for services you are willing to provide, to be “cashed in” when the recipient needs them.

10 When the family gathers to celebrate Hanukkah, Kwanzaa or Christmas, sit in a circle and ask each person to begin a sentence with “I am glad that ...” The family responds to each statement with “We are glad!”

11 Promise to teach a new skill to someone in January, e.g., a child to ride a bike or an older person to use a computer.

12 Force fruit or flowers to blossom: plant a sprig of plum, apple or lilac in wet sand Dec. 1. Place in a sunlit window and water regularly. December is about waiting, so keep watching!

13 Look through the snapshots you took last summer. Add funny captions and send to friends instead of cards.

Holiday Budget Calculator



Consider spending 20 percent less and giving that amount to charities during the holidays.

Don't want to do the math? Visit www.heifer.org/calculator

PRESENTS

Aunts / Uncles.....	\$ _____
Cousins.....	\$ _____
Grandparents.....	\$ _____
Grandchildren.....	\$ _____
Nephews / Nieces.....	\$ _____
In-laws.....	\$ _____
Other Relatives.....	\$ _____
Boyfriend / Girlfriend.....	\$ _____
Neighbors.....	\$ _____
Co-workers.....	\$ _____
Friends.....	\$ _____
Teachers / Classmates.....	\$ _____
Service Providers.....	\$ _____
Spouse.....	\$ _____
Mother / Father.....	\$ _____
Children.....	\$ _____
Brothers / Sisters.....	\$ _____
Subtotal.....	\$ _____

More Meaningful Holiday

14 Go as a family to help serve a meal at a homeless shelter. Place a candy cane and a handwritten greeting at each place setting. Talk about the experience on the way home.

15 Take the whole family, including the family pets, to visit a nursing home. Practice in advance some questions to ask and some jokes or poems to share.

16 Declare one night a week as family work night. Make this a time for baking cookies, creating and addressing greeting cards, singing carols, doing a craft project.

17 Take someone who can no longer drive for a ride to see the holiday decorations around town.

18 Ask an immigrant family or an international student to tell about

holiday celebrations in the country they come from. Mark your calendar for a date in January when you will connect with this person again.

19 Reach out in friendship to forgotten people in your community. Invite them to go with you to see the holiday displays in store windows or a live nativity. Or invite them to attend a worship service or a concert or to watch a TV special with you.

20 Make a few changes this year; add more the next. That way, you'll gradually build a tradition of simpler, less stressful celebrations that everyone in the family can enjoy.

OTHER PRESENT COSTS

Wrapping Paper.....\$ _____
Tape, Ribbons, Tags.....\$ _____
Shipping Presents.....\$ _____
Shopping Costs
(Parking, Eating, etc.).....\$ _____
Subtotal.....\$ _____

DECORATIONS

Christmas Tree.....\$ _____
Christmas Tree Lights.....\$ _____
Outdoor Lights/Decorations.....\$ _____
Ornaments.....\$ _____
Subtotal.....\$ _____

HOLIDAY CARDS

Greeting Cards.....\$ _____
Postage.....\$ _____
Subtotal.....\$ _____

ENTERTAINMENT

Holiday Baking.....\$ _____
Christmas Dinner.....\$ _____
Candy.....\$ _____
Entertaining.....\$ _____
Subtotal.....\$ _____

TRAVEL

Airfare.....\$ _____
Hotel.....\$ _____
Car/Gasoline.....\$ _____
Subtotal.....\$ _____

OTHER

New Clothes.....\$ _____
Events/Plays/Performances.....\$ _____
Parties.....\$ _____
Total Expenditure.....\$ _____
20% of Total.....\$ _____

Hope for Sale



Online holiday shopping—it sounds like such a good idea, right? Until you find yourself facing too many confusing websites ... too many shipping charges ... too many late deliveries ... and, after the holidays, too many returns.

This holiday season, why not give a gift that not only is never returned, it's given over and over again—to people who really need it?

When you log on to www.heifer.org and select an animal from The Most Important Gift Catalog in the World™, you're sending livestock and resources that enable hungry families to lift themselves out of poverty—permanently.

Your loved one receives an eye-catching printed or e-mailed card telling him what's been given in his name; the family you help receives life-sustaining food and income through the animal's milk, eggs, wool or draft power, and they, in turn, pass on the offspring and training to other families in need.

It's a circle of giving that never ends, and all it takes is a few clicks of your mouse. Visit www.heifer.org today, and start changing lives around the world—including your own.

Read to Feed

Expands Program

Read to Feed, Heifer International's popular global education program, is on schedule to expand its optional curriculum offerings.

Plans are to make fifth- and sixth-grade curricula available in the spring, said Tim Newman, Heifer's manager of school programs.

Currently, the basic program—which encourages children to read books and raise money to support Heifer's efforts to end world hunger and poverty—involves about 50,000 children in 2,000 classrooms.

In addition to this basic program, Heifer has provided an optional, standards-based curriculum that teachers can use to explain civics, economics, science and geography to students in the third and fourth grades.

This existing curriculum, based on standards set by professional associations representing the various academic disciplines, incorporates the true story of Beatrice Biira, a Ugandan girl who dreamed of an education her family could not afford. After Heifer International gave her family a goat, which produced milk that she could sell, Beatrice was able to attend school. Her story is told in the book "Beatrice's Goat" by Page McBrier and Lori Lohstoeter.

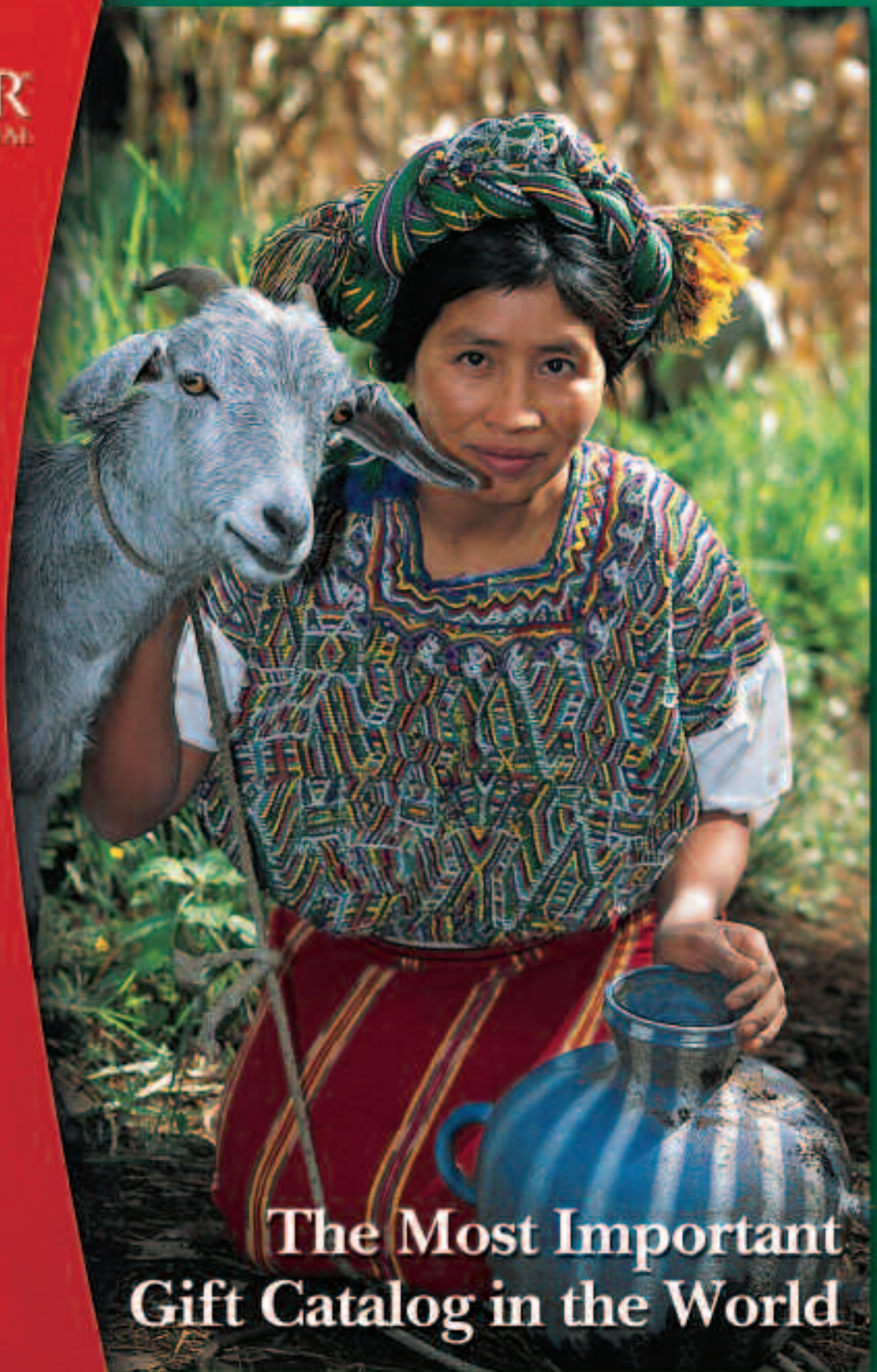
The new Read to Feed curriculum for fifth- and sixth-graders will be based on Heifer projects underway in Ecuador, Newman said. Staffers in Heifer's education department traveled to Ecuador and interviewed project participants in order to craft the curriculum.

One lesson will draw upon Heifer's efforts to encourage farmers to use more effective terracing methods in their fields to prevent soil erosion. Another will be based on the substitution of alpacas for sheep in an environmentally fragile zone. A third involves raising guinea pigs.

Teachers can use a lesson plan focused on Heifer's work with terracing, for example, to teach geography, Newman said.

"The world is becoming a smaller place every day, and teachers are looking for ways to explain that to their students," Newman said. "Our curriculum has been successful in bringing global education to the classroom in a way that's fun and easy to understand."

Read to Feed materials may be obtained free online at www.readtofeed.org, or by calling 1-800-422-0474.



**The Most Important
Gift Catalog in the World**



For a World Without Hunger

Dear Friends,

What better gift is there to give someone than self-reliance? When you give through this catalog, you make it possible for women and men around the world to help themselves have better lives, to feed and school their children and provide shelter from the storms of poverty and hunger.

And when you make this symbolic gift in honor of someone on your holiday list, you enable your friends or loved ones to be a part of something bigger than themselves—to be a part of making the world a happier place.

And isn't that what this season is all about? Bringing joy to the world?

You'll bring smiles to the faces of those desperately in need of hope and nourishment as well as to those you honor. And the recipients of your generous spirit will one day know the same feeling of unselfish giving when they share their gift with another struggling family. That's because each Heifer International recipient promises to pass on offspring of their gift animal to another in the community.

Since 1944, Heifer has reached out in friendship and assistance to 128 countries, including 38 U.S. states, helping 4.5 million people overcome their dire situations and start a path to a brighter future.

This century we will do even better...with your loyal and devoted help. Perhaps we'll even celebrate together the end of hunger and the beginning of a world full of joy.

Sincerely,

Jo Luck
President and CEO

Make This a Meaningful Holiday



Why not take part in a growing holiday tradition by giving gifts that help those in need?

Here's how:

1. Instead of material gifts, choose gifts from this catalog to honor your friends, family or business associates—gifts that will help struggling families lift themselves out of poverty. You can also use the catalog to make a regular charitable gift.
2. Use one of the easy ordering options below.
3. Present your honoree with one of our attractive holiday gift cards that explains Heifer's mission and how the gift you made in their honor will make a difference to a family in need.

What Your Honoree Receives...



This year, instead of sending material gifts to your friends and family, send them this delightful gift card to let them know that, in their name, you've given the gift of self-reliance to a struggling family.



Gift Card Delivery Options

Fastest: Order online at www.heifer.org, then select and print one of the cards provided or send an e-mail honor card electronically to your honoree.

Fast: (telephone orders only) For an additional charge, we'll ship your cards to you 2nd Day Air or Next Day Air.

Standard: Order before December 6, and receive delivery in about two weeks via the U.S. Postal Service.

Four Easy Ways to Give

Call toll free (800) 422-0474

24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
Credit card orders only, please.
Fill out the Order Form next to page 32 for your record.

Fax (501) 907-2902

24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
Fax the completed Order Form next to page 32; keep for your record.
Include credit card information.

Order on-line: www.heifer.org

24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
Print out a Gift Card;
keep a Gift Receipt for your record.

Mail the completed Order Form with your check to:

Heifer International
P. O. Box 1692
Merrifield, VA 22116-1692

The prices in this catalog represent the complete livestock gift of a quality animal, technical assistance and training. Each "purchase" from this catalog is symbolic and represents a contribution to the entire mission of Heifer International. Donations will be used where needed most to help struggling people.

Heifers for the Holidays

Growing up, you took fresh milk for granted—good for you and delicious! But some children never get milk to drink. They don't grow as they should, and they're often sick.

Back in 1944, Heifer International realized there was an alternative to endless hunger and poverty. Why not give families the means to become self-reliant through food- and income- producing farm animals? Dairy cows can give as much as four or more gallons of milk a day—enough for a family to drink, make into yogurt or cheese and sell.

Plus, as each family passes on offspring of their gift animal to another family in need, the whole community benefits. Do things differently this year. Honor someone special with the gift of a heifer given in their honor to help a struggling family.



Your gift of a heifer means better nutrition and hope for children in the Philippines.



Gift of a Heifer: \$500
Share: \$50

Goats...the Perfect Gift

Did you know that more people rely on goats for milk than cows? They're a great alternative for families who live in rocky mountainous areas or own little land. Goats often give about four quarts of milk a day—just the right amount if you don't own a refrigerator. Goat manure makes a fantastic fertilizer for increasing vegetable crops and, often giving birth to two kids a year, they provide a steady source of income.

Heifer International goats help families look forward to a better life. When you honor a friend or family member with the gift of a goat sent in their name, you're choosing a simpler, more meaningful way to celebrate the season—and that's a better life!



Gift of a Goat: \$120
Share: \$10

"I am empowered," said Lydia Mbnaya (left) of Kenya, who serves as vice chair of her Heifer International women's group.





Sheep: A Sure Thing

It feels good to pull on a wool sweater when the weather's chilly. In cold climates, many indigenous people rely on the warm clothes and blankets they can make from sheep's thick wool. And subsistence farmers depend on sheep for income.

Heifer International participants learn how to care for their sheep so they will improve fragile grassland with their droppings and not over-graze it. Heifer International quality sheep give three times as much wool as local ones. And with one or two offspring a year, a flock soon grows and a steady income is ensured. Honor your friends or family member who always wear natural fibers; send the gift of a sheep to a family in need. It's a warm-hearted choice!



Gift of a Sheep: \$120
Share: \$10

Sheep are helping children in the Ukraine, like Luda Moldavchuk (pictured left), keep warm with the wool they provide.

Chicks: The Right Choice

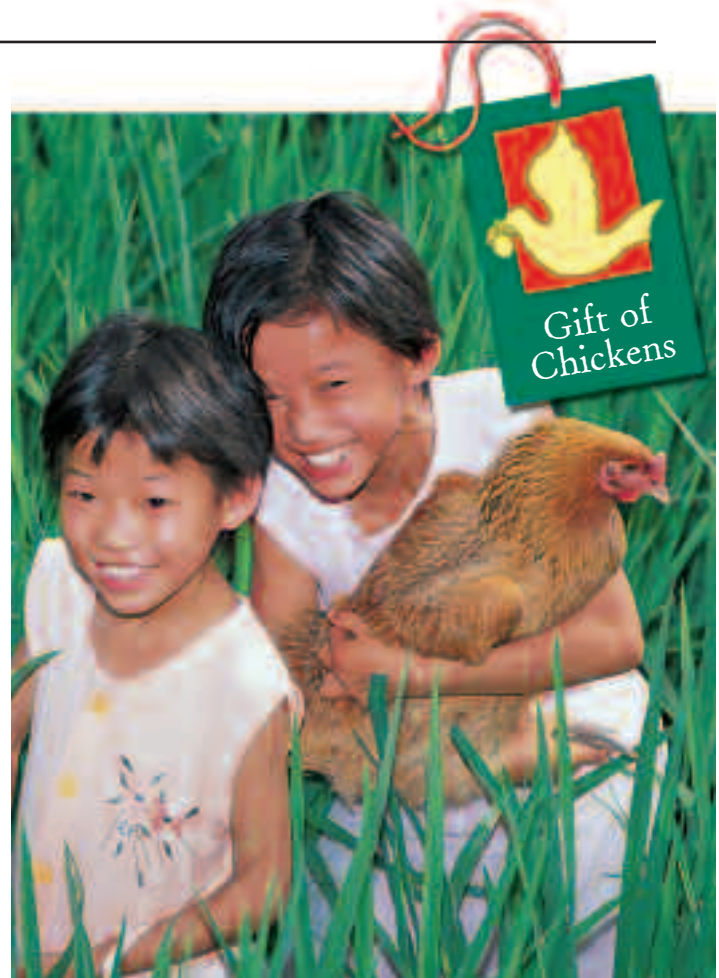
Chickens are a real value. Starting at six months, they can lay up to 200 eggs a year—a reliable source of protein for children who otherwise subsist mostly on starches. Extra eggs can be sold to pay for school, clothes and medicine. And in the vegetable garden, chickens peck at bugs and weeds, scratch up the soil and enrich it with droppings.

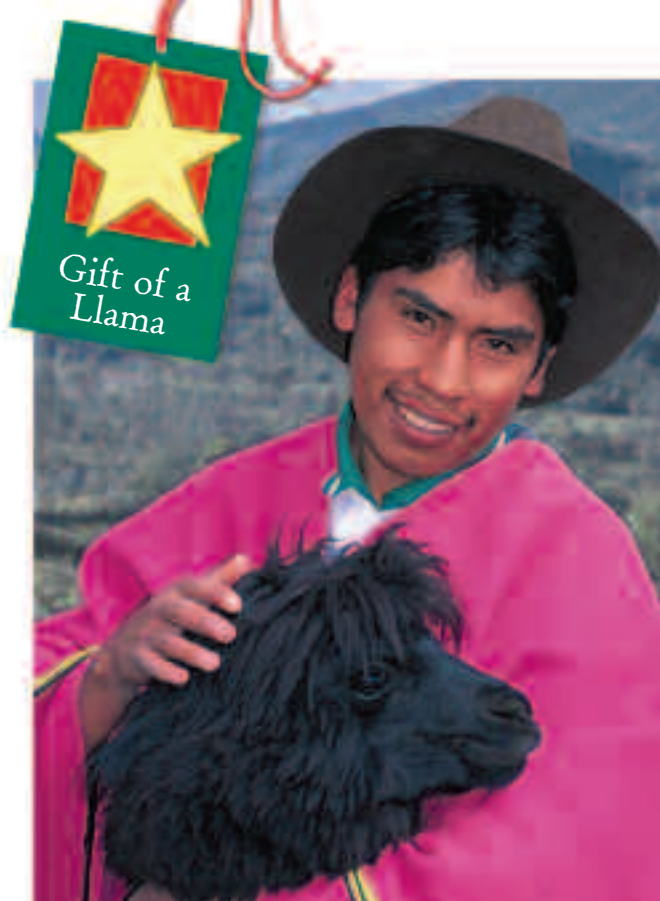
Chicks are an excellent solution to improving a family's crops and their diet—and to the dilemma of what to give your socially aware friends this season.



Gift of Chicks: \$20

Sisters Zhang Xia and Zhang Tao (right) of Xuanhan County, China, know the value of their Heifer International chickens and the protein and income their eggs supply.





Fa-La-La-La Llamas

Domesticated by the Incas 6,000 years ago and selectively bred for their gentle nature and fine fiber, llamas appear intelligent and serene. They play a pivotal role in the cultural life of indigenous communities on the high plains of Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru.

Women weave their llamas' fleece into warm clothing to wear or sell. They load them up with goods for market and trek with them across rugged slopes at high altitudes. As they travel, llamas' padded feet don't damage the fragile terrain and their selective browsing doesn't destroy sparse vegetation.

Heifer International llamas can make your holiday gift-giving more intelligent and serene, as well. You'll be strengthening the recipients' income and their cultural traditions—and starting a tradition of your own. Honor your friends and family with a gift of llamas sent in their names to an indigenous Latin American family.



Gift of a Llama: \$150
Share: \$20

In Peru, llamas are a traditional source of wool and help families in the high plains of the Andes to earn an income.

Profiting from Pigs

To help hungry, undernourished families put protein back in their diets at little cost, Heifer teaches farmers how to raise healthy pigs even with scant resources. A farmer who may not be able to manage cows can raise pigs.

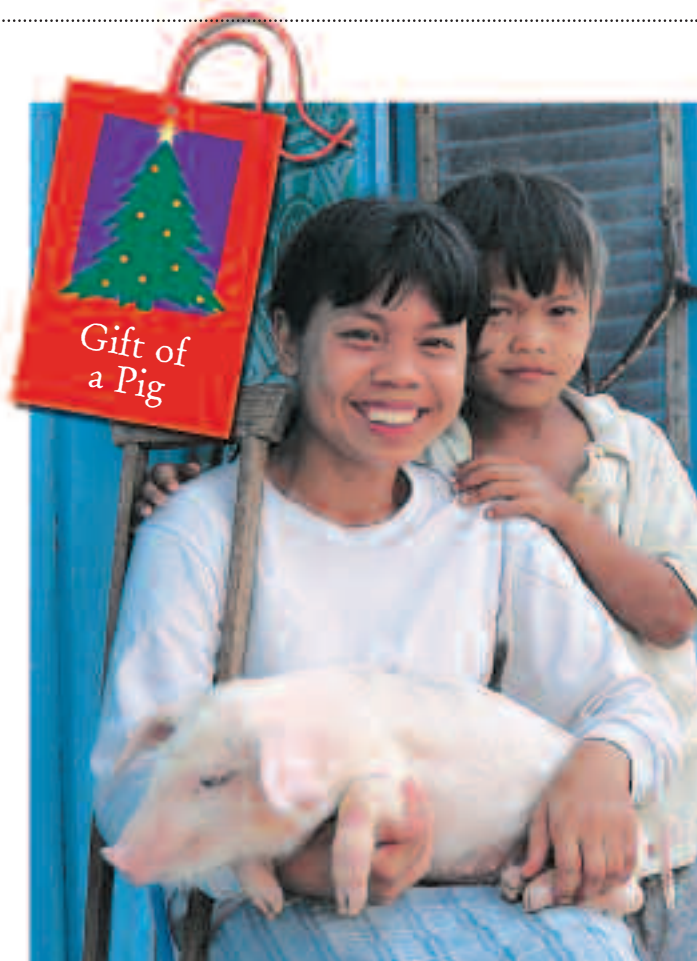
In Latin America, pigs eat rejected bananas or damaged yams that otherwise would be wasted. They grow to market weight while producing manure that improves crop production. Around the world, using resources once considered worthless, impoverished families supply themselves with the protein and income they need to build better houses, put their children in school and improve their lives.

No wonder families smile over their Heifer pigs. Your friends and family members will smile, too, when you send a gift of pigs in their name to a family in need of a boost in nutrition and income.



Gift of a Pig: \$120
Share: \$10

Heifer pigs are providing nutrition to Uk Phirum and Srey Pouw in a Cambodian orphanage.



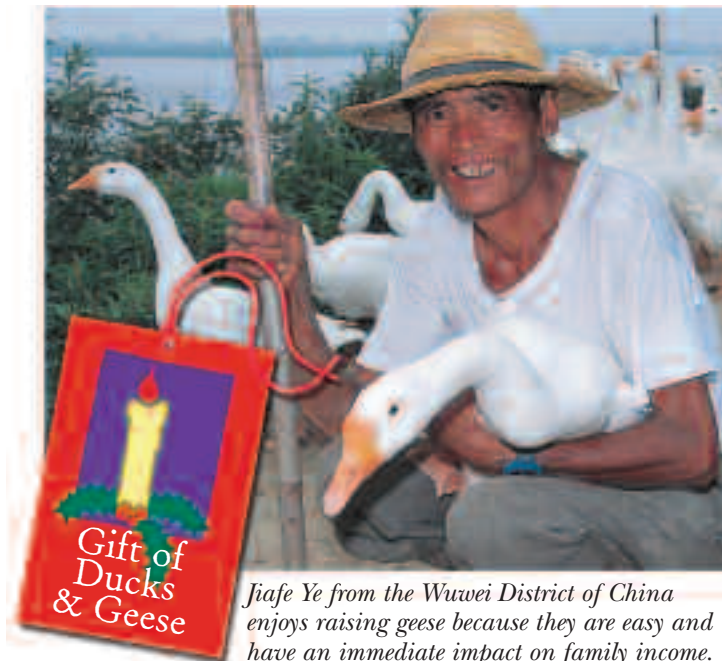
Ducks and Geese Get Results

When it comes to holiday gift-giving, things quickly get out of hand. It's easy to spend too much on things that mean too little. There is an alternative.

Honor a friend or loved one with a flock of Heifer International ducks or geese sent in their name to a family in need. Ducks and geese add vital protein to the diet and much-needed money in the pocket from selling eggs as well as ducks and goslings. And they make food crops better by removing weeds and bugs and adding fertilizer.



**Gift of Ducks
& Geese: \$20**



Jiafe Ye from the Wuwei District of China enjoys raising geese because they are easy and have an immediate impact on family income.



Heifer is teaching beekeeping to farmers in Peru and around the world.

Bees Are a Sweet Gift

The way bees work together is a lesson for us all. They produce food, care for the young, recycle waste and create an effective, efficient community. They pollinate fruits, flowers and vegetables in the process—a benefit for us all. Bees can as much as double some fruit and vegetable yields. A package of Heifer International bees and a hive give a family better crops, candle wax, pollen for medicine and honey to eat and sell. Honoring a friend or family member with bees sent in their name is a honey of a gift that shows you cherish both people and the environment.



Gift of Bees: \$30

Trees for a Green Future

Trees are essential to life on earth. They breathe out oxygen and breathe in carbon dioxide. They hold water in the soil and moisture in the air. They reduce global warming. They provide food and medicine for birds, animals and people.

That's why planting fast-growing trees that put nitrogen back in the soil, serve as wind-breaks and provide animal feed, fencing and firewood is often the first step in a Heifer project.

Honor friends who love the outdoors with gifts of trees sent in their names to families who will treasure the difference they make.



**Gift of Trees: \$60
Seedlings: \$10**



Jacinto, with his daughter Naomi, is planting seedlings to improve his small farm in Guatemala.



Rahar Balami with an angora rabbit: "Heifer International has changed our lives and the future of our children. My blessings and thanks to them for their support."

Rabbits Bring Rapid Reward

Why rabbits? Because even a family without the land or resources to raise cows or even goats can find a warm dry spot—in a hutch on a back porch or perhaps even in a cool burrow dug beneath a garden planter—where rabbits can thrive. They can be fed with vegetable waste and kitchen scraps, so they conserve farm resources as they grow.

And, like other livestock, rabbits are sources of healthy protein to help feed the hungry. Their nitrogen-rich manure makes excellent fertilizer to put on crops as compost. And everyone knows how rabbits proliferate. Here's a gift that multiplies! With as many as 40 offspring a year, a trio of rabbits can provide a family with a steady source of protein and income.

Rabbits can be just the right thing for a family that needs food and income where resources are scarce.



Gift of a Rabbit Trio: \$60
Share: \$10

Buffalo Bring in Bushels

Nothing's more satisfying than finding exactly the right solution to a problem. That's the good feeling you get when you give a subsistence farmer a water buffalo. These powerful yet gentle creatures can plow through mud that would stall a tractor. They take narrow terraces on steep mountains in stride. They feed on crop residue and produce milk for consumption and manure to increase crop yields. Plus, they pull cartloads of crops to market with ease. A gift of a water buffalo can lighten the load of a struggling family in countries like Nepal, Cambodia or the Philippines. A gift of a water buffalo can lighten the load of decisions about what to give everyone on your gift list as well.



His water buffalo has allowed Fred Sarilla (above) to plow much more of his farmland than he could with his hands, providing more food for his family and to sell.



Gift of Water Buffalo: \$250
Share: \$25



Fighting Hunger —Two By Two

Take the Challenge

Wouldn't you really rather give a camel? Or some donkeys or guinea pigs or oxen? With Heifer International's Gift Ark, you don't have to choose because with a gift of \$5,000 you get a whole ark full of animals that help promote self-reliance to as many as 30 families around the world. Challenge your company, civic club or congregation to get on board.

Gift Ark animals may include:



2 SHEEP

can help United States families produce wool.



2 TRIOS OF RABBITS

can provide food and income to families in Uganda.



2 PIGS

can enable families in Thailand to attain greater self-reliance.



2 OXEN

can pull plows and carts in Cameroon.



2 FLOCKS OF CHICKS

can help Honduran families improve nutrition and replenish their land.



2 BEEHIVES

can help families in Mexico earn money through the sale of honey and beeswax.



2 TRIOS OF DUCKS

can help families in Ecuador generate income through the sale of eggs and birds.



2 GOATS

can help two Romanian families provide milk for their children and earn extra income.



2 TRIOS OF GUINEA PIGS

can help Peruvian families add protein to their diets and earn income.



2 WATER BUFFALO

can help Filipino families increase rice production through animal draft power.



2 COWS

can bring milk and income to a village in India.



2 LLAMAS

can improve livestock bloodlines and produce wool for Bolivian families.



2 DONKEYS

can supply animal draft power for farmers in Zimbabwe.



2 CAMELS

can help families in Tanzania earn income by transporting agricultural and industrial materials.



2 FLOCKS OF GEESE

can help two families in China improve their nutrition and income through the production of protein in eggs.



Gift of an Ark: \$5,000

The price of a Gift Ark includes the purchase/transport of quality animals and the training/support Heifer International gives recipients. Contributions to the Gift Ark program are symbolic and represent a contribution to the entire mission of Heifer. Donations will be used where needed most to help struggling families.

CERES CENTER

2004

April 30-May 1 **New Date!**

Heifer Hunger Happening

United Methodist Church-sponsored event including hands-on activities with animals and gardening for junior and senior high youth to learn about Heifer International's program to end world hunger and save the earth.

May 22

Pancake Breakfast **New Date!**

Great food and videos with tours of the center.

June-August

Service Learning

Weeklong "mission trips" for youth groups that include both service to the Ceres Center and learning opportunities for youths.

June 5

Yard Sale and Picnic

Community event with tours and food available.

June 7-11, 21-25

Day Camp

Hands-on program for youth ages 6-12 will include farm-type service as well as cottage industries such as candle-making.

July 12-16

Day Camp

Hands-on program for youth ages 6-12 will include farm-type service as well as cottage industries such as candle-making.

Year-Round

Field Trips

Learn about Heifer International and Ceres Education Center through a video, cart ride, walking tour and hands-on experience in the barn.

Global Village

Get a taste of the real world with this overnight experience.

Meeting Facility

Have your meeting or gathering "down on the farm" and learn about Heifer International's mission to overcome world hunger and poverty.

HEIFER RANCH

2004

February-April

Alternative Spring Break

Become a part of the solution through these weeklong Service Learning programs for youth groups.

Adult Work Groups

Fight hunger through service with these opportunities for adult groups.

Global Explorers

Become a Global Citizen in this two-day residential program for middle school groups.

Feb. 19-22

Heifer University at the Ranch

This unique experience focuses on helping you help Heifer International in your community and region. Get the tools you need to promote Heifer.

Feb. 22-27

Cottage Industry Elderhostel

Learn appropriate technology from around the world. Explore how a business and its products would vary among project sites around the world and create samples of each skill product.

April 15-18

Heifer University at the Ranch

This unique experience focuses on helping you help Heifer International in your community and region. Get the tools you need to promote Heifer.

April 18-23

Service Elderhostel

A wonderful service and learning opportunity exclusively for the 55-plus crowd. Be a part of the solution by working in our Global Village, organic gardens or with the livestock.

June-August

Service Learning

Weeklong "mission trips" for youth that include both service to the Ranch and learning opportunities for the group.

Year-Round

Field Trips

Take a day trip "around the world."

Global Village

Get a taste of the real world with this overnight experience for youth or adult groups.

Challenge Course

Learn the ropes of teamwork

and community building for youth or adult groups.

Cottage Industry

Youth and adult can discover value-added products of plants and animals.

Conference and Retreat Facilities

Reflect on your place in the world in modern lodges, meeting rooms, a dining hall and an international gift shop.

OVERLOOK FARM

2003

Dec. 13-14

Living Nativity

A live nativity presented hourly, international gift shop, sleigh rides, hot cider and more.

2004

Feb. 1-6

Peace and Justice Home-School Camp

A residential camp for home-schooled youth ages 12-18.

Feb. 20-22 **New Date!**

Winter Heifer University, East

A full program of information and speaker training for people interested in taking Heifer International to the streets of their hometowns.

March 6, 13, 20 and 27

Pancakes at the Farm

Enjoy a hearty pancake feed featuring our own pork sausage and see our maple sugaring operation from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Please call for reservations.

April 30-May 7

Women's Lambing Experiences

Two- or three-night programs in which women share in the lambing experience and learn more about Heifer and the challenges women face relating to hunger worldwide.

May 23-28

Participatory Development Home-School Camp

A residential camp for home-schooled youth ages 12-18.

June 26 and 27

International Fair

Features the Global Village with international sites, entertainment and fresh farm-grown food. Fun for the whole family.

July 5-Aug. 20

Summer Day Camp

Seven week-long sessions for children ages 7-12.

Sept. 12-17

Sustainable Agriculture Home-School Camp

A residential camp for home-schooled youth ages 12-18.

Year-Round

Day Education Programs at Overlook Farm

Full- and half-day education programs for groups that include a video and tour, and may include a Peasant Meal in the Global Village, a hunger education session, a farm work experience and a horse-drawn hayride.

Multi-Day Service Learning Program at Overlook Farm

Two- to five-day stays in which groups enjoy farm work and hunger/sustainable agriculture education sessions. Global Village overnight stay included. Get a taste of life around the world.

Field Trips

Learn about Heifer International and Overlook Farm with a video, guided tour and hayride.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Ceres Center

Ceres, California
Sandy Groll
877-841-7182

or cerescenter@heifer.org

Heifer Ranch

Perryville, Arkansas
Victoria Jackson
501-889-5124 or
ranch@heifer.org

Overlook Farm

Rutland, Massachusetts
508-886-2221 or
overlook.farm@heifer.org

All locations are open year-round for drop-in visitors or schedule a field trip for your group.

Heifer Helps Navajos

Bolster Sheep Herd

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY DARCY KIEFEL



THE NAVAJO NATION is a land under siege. More than half the population lives below the federal poverty line. Both the overall population and the workforce are shrinking as young people in particular leave the reservation, resulting in an increase in economic instability and a decline in traditional ways of life.

Especially troubling is the deterioration of the sheep industry, which is vital to both the Navajos' economic future and their spiritual well-being.

Heifer International has joined in an ambitious project to improve

the quality of commercial wool and lambs produced by Navajo sheep farmers. Heifer is the primary supplier of rams that are being used to improve the genetic diversity of the herd.

"Heifer International has been just a wonderful partner wanting to help from day one," said Bob Racicot, an environmental and agricultural resource consultant and member of the Dinéh Bi Ranchers Roundtable and Development Inc.

The roundtable initiated the ram exchange partnership with Heifer. The U.S. Department of Agriculture rural development program



FACING PAGE A rancher herds his sheep under a volcano in the Seba Delkai community in the Navajo Nation.

LEFT Roy Kady, a traditional male weaver, hopes Heifer's training will help to restore the Navajo culture by bolstering their sheep herd.

RIGHT Belinda Johnson and her 12-year-old daughter Janie carry on the weaving tradition outside a hogan in the Dinnebito community.



approved a matching grant to cover program costs, including veterinarians, a coordinator and a program technician. One hundred families in 10 communities in Arizona and New Mexico each received a top-quality ram in fall 2002.

Most Navajo families rely on sheep for income and for wool to preserve the spiritual practice of weaving. After years of continuous over-grazing, however, much of the Navajo land has eroded and couldn't continue to support a sheep industry of sufficient size.

Constant in-breeding has reduced the quality and number of mature sheep and goats. Fewer than 550,000 head now exist, and as a result, in the last 15 years Navajo wool production has decreased to one-third its former volume.

Because Navajos depend on weaving for income, it's critical that economic returns per animal be increased. Ranchers Roundtable and Development Inc. was organized in 1991 by a group of Navajo families relocated from Hopi territory to a planned community in Arizona called New Lands.

The group works to educate

Navajo ranching families in conservation and development of their agricultural and natural resources while maintaining tradition and culture. The group has held monthly educational meetings, participated in training and created a marketing association.

"Dinéh bi' iina'," say the Navajos. "Sheep is life."

In addition to the 100 ram exchange families, 10 members of the Future Farmers of America from Valley High School in Chambers, Ariz., have received one ewe each. At least three other FFA groups from other Navajo Nation schools will become involved through the Heifer principle of Passing on the Gift.

The FFA-Heifer element of the exchange program will provide youths the opportunity to follow in the traditions of their parents.

Mike Everett, Heifer Southwest field coordinator, said, "Heifer Southwest believes that in the future we will see youth from Heifer International projects become

political leaders in the Nation as well as leaders by example. They will show how the Nation can regain some of its pride and honor.

"I think many of this generation feel they have missed a lot by not following the traditions and practices of their ancestors," Everett said. "I hear them say, 'My grandpa did this in the fields.' Now those fields are full of weeds. Hopefully, the youth will bring those green pastures back along with their traditions."

Shannon Scott, a 16-year-old FFA member, appreciates the opportunity to participate in the project. "The Navajo are different from others. We offer our seat, our food, our home. But as a community we must gain each other's trust. If we cannot trust, how can we work together?"

"Through this Heifer International project I have learned to trust and work beside others," she said. "I have also received my first sheep ever. I know it will remain in my life because now my motivation has turned to agriculture and livestock like my grandfather."

Ranchers Roundtable and Heifer International hope to see the value of livestock and the quality of wool



TOP Mary Ann Morris, 84, keeps a watchful eye on her sheep in the Seba Delkai community.

BOTTOM Spider Rock rises dramatically from the Navajo Nation landscape.

increase by 50 to 55 percent within the first three years of the program.

About 750,000 pounds of wool, or one-fourth of the total annual production on the reservation, are woven by men and women into rugs and blankets. With proper education and top-quality wool, a profitable market can be developed and the Navajo tradition of weaving can once again take its place of honor in the culture.

Roy Kady, one of the Navajo Nation's best-known male weavers, lives far from the Ranchers Roundtable but remains close to its objectives. Kady understands, firsthand, the importance of quality sheep to weave a product of which he can be proud. He is a member of the Dinéh bi' iina' group (Sheep Is Life) and has dedicated his own life to the beloved Churro sheep, as well as to the tradition and spiritual art of weaving.

"Everything I know I learned

from my mother—my history, my identity. Many of our youth do not want to sit down with the elderly, and once away, the more difficult it becomes to relate back to your culture," Kady said. "In our lives, sheep have been the most important. Herding sheep provides you with the opportunity to learn about the earth—rocks, land formations, plant life."

"I saw straightaway that Heifer International is different from other organizations," Kady added. "When I observed how they work and their philosophy, my eyes grew bigger.

"Perhaps through their efforts and our own communities we can benefit once again and the next generation will have the cultural life I was given as a child," he said. "Maybe we can learn technical training with our ancient cultures through Heifer International."

As early as 1976, several current members of the Ranchers Roundtable had been forced to move from their

“My view is that Heifer International has saved us. Our people want quality and good production, and it happened only because of the ram exchange.”—Gloria Todachinnie

birthplace. Many of the Navajo resettled in the New Lands, and today they hope this new community will bring new life to their people.

“In 1974, Congress decided our county belonged to the Hopi,” said Gloria Todachinnie, a Heifer-Ranchers Roundtable coordinator. “We were forced to move; we had no choice.

“What drives me today with my volunteer work is the tragic fact that my people were forced to leave their birth land,” she said. “In Navajo tradition, our umbilical cord is buried in our livestock pen, and that is where you remain until your death. Many tears were shed; there were so many memories, which we still feel and always will.

“It has been difficult to tell our people to keep moving forward with all the tragedies they have faced,” she said. “Yet we understand it does not take an educated person but one with a big heart to help. It is all about dedication. Heifer International and the Ranchers Roundtable have brought us all together.”

Wanda Begody, a Heifer recipient, understood at an early age that she would dedicate her life to raising sheep. As a little girl, she dreamed of going to school, but her parents said that taking care of sheep would serve her well. Begody raised her animals the best she could, but eventually noticed a decrease of both

size and quality.

Many of her ewes had trouble breeding, and their offspring were weak and small. Since joining the ram exchange program, she has been trained and now understands the dangers of inbreeding.

“I enjoy this program and have learned so much,” Begody said. “Before the ram exchange, I did not know about the production of sheep. But in one year we have taken some of our stock in for replacement, I have exchanged feeders, learned to vaccinate and given our sheep the proper care they deserve.”

Before joining the exchange program, Begody felt fortunate if any of her ewes gave birth to one lamb. Much has changed since she entered the program.

“When my favorite ewe gave birth to triplets, it was the happiest time for me and proof of all my hard work,” she said. “I first thanked the gods, then the ram, and then Heifer International who provided us with the gift. To receive both numbers and quality has made it all worthwhile.”

Rigoberto Delgado, Heifer Southwest director, shares Begody’s sentiments.

“Some of our recipients cry when their ram arrives, and claim it is the best gift they have received in their life,” Delgado said. “These families are very independent and like to do things their own way, and Heifer

understands because of mutual respect. We only ask that the recipients understand and incorporate our training.”

“My view is that Heifer International has saved us,” Gloria Todachinnie said. “Our people want quality and good production, and it happened only because of the ram exchange. ... Heifer International communicates with our people even in our own language.”

Ray Castillo, an Agriculture Department extension agent, said, “Our people want to preserve our culture, which we are losing at a rapid rate. Our land is being taken over by residential areas and so we must find a way to preserve our resources.

“Livestock is the lifeline of our people and brings harmony to families, keeping them together,” he said. “Our biggest resource today will be our youth. If you look into the eyes of our children, you will see there is so much hope to preserve our Navajo culture.

“Today, with the help of Heifer International, this is being restored. Together, we hope to change the path of our people and bring back the tradition of livestock and agriculture to the Navajo Nation.” 🐑

Darcy Kiefel is a Heifer International photojournalist based in Boulder, Colo.

Bringing Back the Sacred Sheep

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY BEN JACQUES



“We celebrate the Creator who gave us sheep, especially Churro sheep. They are sacred animals.”—Annie Kahn, Navajo storyteller.

FOR ANNIE KAHN, a Navajo storyteller, the baa-ing of her sheep is music. And in the tap-tap of her comb on the weft threads of the loom, she hears her people’s drums, calling rain.

Kahn was recalling a life spent among sheep before a gathering of shepherds, weavers, artists, wool producers and others from the vast Navajo Nation and beyond.

She spoke at the seventh annual Sheep Is Life celebration organized by the Navajo Lifeway to strengthen the traditional role of sheep in Navajo culture and art, held in Tsaile in the Chuska mountains in northeastern Arizona.

After a dinner of mutton and fry bread, Kahn retold the origin of what many Navajos call the Real Sheep, the Old Ones, the Churros. This breed was once the foundation of Navajo pastoral life—food, clothing, economics and art.

By the 1970s, however, the Churro breed had been nearly wiped out on Navajo lands. From the beginning of efforts to save the Churros, Heifer International has shared the vision of their return, said Rigoberto Delgado, Heifer Southwest director, at a meeting with project partners. While continuing several agro-pastoral projects, Heifer is stepping up its efforts to bring the ancient sheep back to families on

the reservation.

The Navajo people, or Diné, as they call themselves, prize the wool of the Churro. The outer coat provides long-staple fibers known for their luster and durability. And the wool contains little lanolin, or grease, requiring less water to clean than commercial varieties. This quality also makes it easier to hand card and spin.

"The Churro sheep are considered the Navajo sheep, especially with the elders," Delgado said. "They have a traditional, cultural and spiritual value."

Kahn shares that reverent view of the sheep.

"We celebrate the Creator who gave us sheep," she said, "especially Churro sheep. They are sacred animals."

The four horns of the Churros represent the four sacred mountains marking the Dinétah, or Navajo homeland.

Hardy, adaptive, efficient foragers, the Churros also come in four colors: creamy white, representing the East; gray,

representing the South; brown-red, representing the West, and black, representing the North.

"Four is a sacred number," Kahn said. "This was always very important to me."

Navajo mythology says the sheep were a gift of their creator spirit, Changing Woman, and that Spider Woman, a deity who resides at Spider Rock in nearby Canyon de Chelly, taught the Navajos how to weave.

Secular accounts say the sheep arrived in the New World with the Spanish, and were introduced into the Southwest by Juan de Onate. Departing Mexico City in 1598 on a colonizing expedition, de Onate led some 400 families, soldiers and priests north, along with horses, cattle, goats and 4,000 sheep.

These sheep were an Iberian breed known as churra. Unlike the fine-wooled Merino and the Rambouillet later introduced on the reservation, the churra were a utility breed, sent to feed and clothe the Spanish armies. Their wool was relatively coarse, but strong. It

served well for outerwear, blankets, saddle blankets and cinches.

Although their weaving was influenced by the Spanish colonists, Navajos were taught to weave, historians say, by their neighbors, the Pueblos, who were driven to live among the Navajo by the Spanish after a revolt in 1680. Among Pueblos, who had earlier cultivated cotton, men were the weavers, but among Navajos, weaving became the specialty of women.

Roy Kady, a master weaver from the Four Corners region who is reestablishing a male role in textiles, says Navajos began weaving wool even before the Spanish arrived, collecting tufts left on bushes and snags by mountain sheep.

Regardless of who taught whom, the Navajos had become master weavers by the 18th century. In 1795 the Spanish governor of New Mexico wrote that the Navajos "work their wool with more delicacy and taste than the Spaniards."

In the next century a visitor to Fort Defiance wrote that "their blankets are the wonder of all who

LEFT Dr. Lyle McNeal (in cowboy hat) judges Churros in a ewe lamb contest at the Sheep Is Life festival.

RIGHT Skeins of yarn show the many natural colors of Churro wool.



see them.”

Warm, durable, designed in broad or narrow bands, a Navajo blanket was as valuable as a horse. The blankets drew the attention of Plains Indians and European settlers, who purchased them from the Navajos.

For the Diné, however, the encounters with the Spanish, Mexicans and, later, the Americans proved tragic. Massacred by the Spaniards in Canyon de Chelly in 1805, the Navajos were again attacked in 1863 by the Americans, who had taken control over New Mexico and Arizona after the Mexican-American War.

Under Gen. Kit Carson, who had orders to subjugate and relocate the Navajos, soldiers entered Canyon de Chelly, set fire to the Navajos’ hogans, orchards and crops, and slaughtered their sheep. Those who resisted were shot. Finally, weakened and starved into submission, Navajos began reporting to Fort Defiance for deportation. It was to be known as the Long Walk, a 350-mile trek to Bosque Redondo in New Mexico, where the survivors faced four years of bitter camp imprisonment.

“They wiped out everything,”

Kahn said. “No food, no sheep, no fresh milk. Our thinking failed.”

Four years later, when their “resettlement” on the Pecos River became an obvious and expensive failure, more than 7,000 remaining Navajos were allowed to return to their homeland between the four mountains.

Finding remnants of their old sheep, and with additional livestock supplied by the government, the Navajo people solidified an agropastoralist culture. Once again they began to thrive, and their brilliant textiles found markets across the country and beyond.

By 1931, according to the late Navajo Councilman Ned Hatahtli, Navajos owned 2 million sheep. In 25 years, however, their sheep stocks would be reduced by the government to a fraction of that number, and livestock income would plummet.

Concerned that grazing lands were being depleted, the federal government imposed mandatory reductions on livestock. At first Navajos were forced to sell many of their sheep and goats. Later, agents simply arrived on Navajo land and shot the animals, leaving them to rot.

Because the Churros were considered of less value than commercial breeds, they were often the first to be destroyed.

Livestock reduction brought restrictions not only in numbers, but also in traditional movement and grazing rights. And it meant near extinction for the Churros, the most efficient sheep in the Southwest because they require less food and water than most other breeds.

By the 1970s, when Lyle McNeal, a University of Utah professor and veterinarian, became interested in the Churro breed, only a few hundred remained, tucked away in remote regions of the reservation.

McNeal recognized the unique genetic resources of the Churros. Through his friendships with Navajos and his widening knowledge of their culture, he came to understand the Churros’ significance, as well, in Navajo life and art. Unless something was done, he realized, they would disappear.

McNeal started the Navajo Sheep Project in 1977. He was aided by the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy, which recognized the Navajo-Churro as a distinct breed



LEFT Roselala Lee, 12, of Pinion, Ariz., weaves with her grandmother at the Sheep Is Life festival.

RIGHT Roy Kady, a master weaver, demonstrates wool washing in the traditional way, using the soapy roots of the yucca plant.



and placed it on the endangered list.

Scouring the mesas and canyons of the 25,000-square-mile reservation—extending east into New Mexico and north into Utah—McNeal gathered Churros for a breeding herd that would later be used to resupply them to Navajo, Hispanic and other farmers in the Southwest.

Today he estimates there are 6,500 in the United States. Additional flocks survive in Canada and Mexico. Their rapid comeback

so far has led the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy to move them up one step on its watch list, from endangered to rare.

Once he had established a secure breeding herd, McNeal, working with Navajo sheepherders, began returning Churros to the Navajos. In October 2002, the Navajo Sheep Project celebrated its 25th anniversary by distributing more than 300 rams, ewes and lambs. More Churros were distributed in 2003, bringing the total number returned to the Navajo Nation to more than 2,000.

Connie Taylor, a sheep rancher and wool broker in New Mexico, is the registrar for the Navajo-Churro Sheep Association. So far she has registered more than 3,000.

"I'm seeing really good stock" among both Navajo and non-Navajo sheep farmers, she said. "More Navajo-Churros are in the hands of more people. This is good, because it leads to more genetic diversity."

Evident throughout the Sheep Is Life conference was the valuable niche that Churro wool has found in fiber-arts markets. "Churro wool is value-added at every phase," Kady said.

Mark Peterson, president of the

Navajo Sheep Project, agreed.

"Clipped Churro wool can sell for \$1.65 per pound. Commercial grades are one-tenth of that."

Heifer International's support for projects among Navajos has gone beyond diversified-livestock grants, and has included training in animal care, land restoration and marketing.

"Sheep is our essence, a part of us. But we're losing it, along with our language. If we can save the sheep, we can save our language."—Joe Shirley

Last May, Heifer conducted a grant-writing workshop for a number of organizations, including Navajo Lifeway, the Navajo Nation Department of Agriculture and schools.

In one of its youth projects, Heifer funded the purchase of 10 ewes and one ram for Future Farmers of America students at Shiprock High School. Students raise, breed and show their sheep in fairs. Last year Shiprock students won the grand prize at the Navajo Nation Fair in Window Rock, reported Mike Everett, Heifer field coordinator, and one student was named the FFA farmer of the year. It was the first time that honor had gone to a Navajo.

From the sale of lambs, Shiprock students raised money to attend the national FFA convention in St. Louis. "It was the first time these students got in an airplane," said Heifer's Delgado, who has seen self-esteem increase among participating youth.

Heifer also supports a project for Navajos resettled after a land dispute between Navajos and Hopis, working with the Navajo Ranchers Roundtable. In this project, 100 families in 10 communities received rams to improve the quality of their

sheep. Other projects will involve Churro sheep, pastured poultry, dairy cattle and turkeys.

For some Navajo herders and weavers, the Churros are only something they heard their parents talk about. "My mom used to talk about the four-horned sheep," said Ilene Long, a weaver and Navajo

Lifeway treasurer. "As a child, I wondered what they were." Now she has Churros.

Today the number of Navajos working with sheep and textiles is a fraction of what it once

was. Yet in a society that struggles against drought, unemployment, poverty, alcoholism and cultural disintegration, the collective memory of sheep is strong. It's a part of their language and history. Will it be a part of their future?

"Sheep is our essence, a part of us," asserted Joe Shirley, president of the Navajo Nation. "But we're losing it, along with our language. ... If we can save the sheep, we can save our language."

In the Navajo life way, disharmony can be restored through memory, through the curative songs and ceremonies that restore balance and beauty. The Navajos believe their sacred sheep have a role to play in that restoration.

In hard times, Annie Kahn recalled, the sheep were literally the Navajos' medicine. They would eat the flowers, the medicinal herbs. "When you ate the mutton, it was medicine," she said.

She believes the return of the Churros will be good medicine. 🐑

Ben Jacques is a freelance writer living in Stoneham, Mass.



Families Seek to Promote *Peace* with *Gift Arks*

Heifer's Gift Arks traditionally have been donated by companies, civic clubs and congregations, but now families are taking up the challenge.

The \$5,000 cost of a Gift Ark is manageable, these donors say, when it's spread over several generations of an extended family. And the impact of a Gift Ark, which symbolizes animals and training that can help as many as 30 families around the world achieve self-reliance, makes the effort worthwhile, they say.

"I encourage other families to do it," said Ronald Wells of Bridgeport, Conn., whose family donated an Ark last summer.

Jody Bryan—who along with her husband, Charles, gave an Ark this year as part of their 50th wedding anniversary celebration—said the scope of the good done by a Gift Ark made it especially appealing.

"The decision [to give an Ark] was one that made us feel good," Bryan said in a telephone interview from her home in Weaverville, N.C. "When you think of others, you do yourself a world of good."

Gift Arks can have a positive

influence around the globe. Chickens, for example, can help families in Honduras improve nutrition and replenish their land while oxen pull plows and carts in Cameroon.

Training in animal management and in the care of the environment precedes the arrival of Heifer livestock. Local community groups select animals that are appropriate to their goals, and each partner family that receives an animal agrees to pass on the gift.

Ronald and Patricia Wells can trace their ties to Heifer back to the organization's first shipment of livestock.

"We were close friends with [Heifer founder] Dan West," Ronald Wells said in a telephone interview from his home. "We had worked together. I first heard of Heifer when Dan West conceived the idea."

Nearly 60 years after that first shipment to Puerto Rico in 1944, Wells and his family remain dedicated to Heifer and its mission to end hunger and protect the environment. This year, the couple and their two sons donated a Gift Ark as they celebrated

Ronald and Patricia's 65th wedding anniversary and their 90th birthdays.

Ronald Wells, a former American Baptist minister, college president and professional fundraiser, hopes other extended families who support Heifer will also consider giving a Gift Ark.

The Bryan (left photo) and Wells (right photo) families hope other Heifer supporters will encourage their extended families to give Gift Arks.



He favors the creation of an "Arkivist" Society to honor families that donate Arks.

Wells feels it's especially important to support nonprofit organizations like Heifer at a time when the world is racked by terrorism.

"Heifer is one of the most creative things we've ever conceived of for bringing peace," he said.

When Heifer supplies livestock to a destitute village and the villagers are told the animals were purchased by Americans who care about them, it helps to improve relations between the developed and developing worlds, Wells said.

"This is what peace is all about," he said. "We first have to clarify the perception of America that's been

created by terrorists. That's why I say Heifer is a worldwide peace initiative."

Jody and Charles Bryan decided to give an Ark to celebrate their 50th anniversary after concluding they didn't want a big party in their honor. They considered making a family trip to Switzerland or chartering an Amtrak car for a journey around the U.S., instead, but ultimately abandoned those ideas because they seemed inappropriate given the world situation.

Jody Bryan—who learned about Heifer years ago when a friend brought a copy of *World Ark* to a gathering—suggested they make a contribution to the organization. Her husband, Charles, she recalled, went her one better and said, "Let's just do an Ark."

"With the money we had saved by not taking an elaborate trip, we could give an Ark and confer upon each person [in their family] the joy of being an 'Ark-angel,'" Jody said.

The family celebrated their Ark during a six-day trip to Callaway Gardens in Georgia, Bryan said. She made sure the couple's daughters, son-in-law, and grandchildren received honor cards and that the entire family played a game in which they were challenged to locate on a map the countries where Heifer sends animals purchased as part of an Ark.

"Heifer is our favorite charity," Bryan said. "It really does such good work, good work that spreads out. It's like the proverbial pebble in the pond."

A Teen's Good Deed

As her Bat Mitzvah approached, Wendy Simon-Pearson found herself deeply moved by a book describing the entrenched poverty that plagues Haiti. She had been assigned to do a "good deed" as part of the Jewish religious celebration, so she decided to embark on a project to help feed the Haitian people.

She generously gave up some of the traditional gifts she would have received as part of the ritual and asked that that money be sent to Heifer International instead.

For Wendy, involving Heifer in her good deed was a natural choice.

"My parents have been donating gifts to Heifer for many years now, and I've just always loved the organization because it does such good work," the 13-year-old said in a telephone interview from her home in Burlington, Mass.

She began the project late last year, intending to raise enough money to purchase five goats, which would have cost \$600. After a conversation with her father, Monty Pearson, Wendy decided to sell T-shirts. She came up with a slogan—"A gift of milk lasts a day ... A gift of a goat lasts a lifetime"—and a friend from



Wendy Simon-Pearson models the T-shirt she sold as part of her effort to raise \$2,500 for Heifer.

school, Shauna Leva, drew a goat to decorate the front of the shirt. Each shirt sold for \$10.

So that she could donate the full proceeds of her sales to Heifer, Wendy asked 16 local businesses to pay for the T-shirts. Seven chipped in, more than covering the cost of 75 shirts.

By last fall, she had sold 63 of the shirts. In addition, she gave friends and relatives attending her Bat Mitzvah in June the option of contributing to the Haiti project rather than giving her a present. Many of them made "very generous" contributions, she said.

In the end, Wendy raised \$2,500 for Heifer.

She credited the success of her project to her parents, Monty Pearson and Martha Simon. They helped her write letters, drove her to visit local businesses and helped her stay on schedule, Wendy said.

Monty Pearson expressed his pride in Wendy and added he was glad she'd chosen to involve Heifer because its programs enable recipients to become self-sufficient.

"Heifer is a solution rather than a Band-Aid," he said.

Heifer, Freschetta Team Up

Heifer International and Freschetta have cemented a partnership aimed at boosting the nonprofit organization's efforts to end world hunger.

Photo by Darcy Kiefel



Sheryl Crow performs at the "Freschetta on the Rocks" music festival, where the frozen pizza company's partnership with Heifer was announced.

The partnership was given a highly public kick-off at the "Freschetta on the Rocks" music festival at Red Rocks, a natural amphitheater located in a picturesque canyon 30 minutes from Denver. Sheryl Crow, a nine-time Grammy Award-winning musician, was the festival's main attraction.

John Beadle, president of global operations for Schwan Food Co. Inc., which produces Freschetta pizza, presented a \$25,000 check to Tom Peterson, Heifer's vice president of Communications. Beadle said that Schwan's charitable giving had been community-focused for more than 50 years.

"As Schwan's has become an international business, its community has become larger," Beadle said, "which is why Schwan wanted to work with Heifer to help end world hunger."

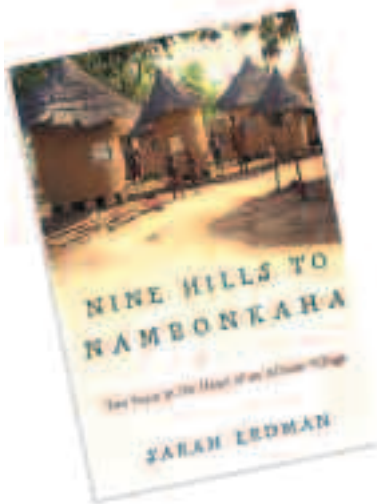
"We are very excited about our partnership with Freschetta," Peterson said. "This contribution will help many, many families around the world move toward self-reliance with sustainable food sources and agricultural training."

Tom Bierbaum, Freschetta's national brand group manager, added, "We felt it was important to partner with Heifer to fight hunger at a global level and provide ongoing, sustainable resources to families in need."

All of the more than 12,000 people who attended the concert were given Heifer literature. Heifer staff and volunteers were on hand to answer questions about the organization's work.

Before the concert, the partnership was announced to the crowd, and Heifer's logo was shown on three large screens.

Freschetta® pizza is produced by Schwan's Consumer Brands North America, Inc., a division of The Schwan Food Co., Inc., a privately held company based in Marshall, Minn., that was established in 1952.



'Nine Hills to Nambonkaha: Two Years in the Heart of an African Village'

By Nicolaas van Boeckel, *Heifer Business Systems Analyst*

Sarah Erdman
Henry Holt and Co.
Cloth, \$23, 336 pages

There is something universal about a village. We all once were villagers. When we return there, we feel at home.

Peace Corps volunteer Sarah Erdman arrives in Nambonkaha, a small village on the African savanna in the north of Ivory Coast, well prepared and with a clear mission. She wants to teach the poor people of Nambonkaha how to improve their health. Although her teachings succeed after many patient rounds of trial and error, it's the life lessons she learns and shares with her readers that make "Nine Hills to Nambonkaha" a treasure.

At first everything seems foreign and Erdman a foreigner. But both sides observe and adapt until there is enough common ground to establish a relationship. Most tourists never get this far because they don't stay in foreign lands long enough to observe, much less adapt.

The children of Nambonkaha are the first to bridge the gap, followed by those who stand to benefit from a relationship with a toubabou (a white person, in the local language). Fortunately, Erdman does not stop here. Instead, she reaches out to those whose lack of education does not allow them to speak French, to those whose position in society does not permit them to speak to strangers, and to those who are never spoken to because no one ever seems to have any reason to.

Erdman's 300-page account of her stay in Nambonkaha reads like the logbook of some intrepid explorer venturing into the unknown, only that unknown turns out to be surprisingly familiar. She describes a wide array of characters living in, passing through or visiting the village.

There are stories about the leaders who become authorities and cease to lead and instead feed on the community. There are also leaders who initially seem mere servants of protocol, but later reveal themselves as having the courage and insight to empower their people.

There is the boy who gets least but gives most. The

proverbial cobbler whose children go barefoot. The adolescent who never finished school but proves to be a more effective health worker than his city-trained counterparts. The Bill Clinton fan who fails to understand the fuss about Monica Lewinsky, the 10-year-old who intends to marry Chelsea, the greedy governor, the agricultural agent with ideas on the use of pesticides for fishing, the well-informed taxi driver, the village president, the illiterate mayor, the river-dwelling ancestors and many more.

As Erdman becomes a villager herself, her perspective changes and her insights deepen. Seemingly timeless traditions of sorcery, the early morning pounding of the pestle in the mortar, female circumcision, polygamy, moonlit evenings, community and the extended family are blended slowly with today's electricity, classroom education, elections, photography, arms, modern medicine, radios, stereos, TVs, mass transportation and French-dubbed Mexican soap operas, among other trappings of the 21st century.

At her farewell feast Erdman wonders whether she should return home to the United States or stay home in Nambonkaha. "One after another they grabbed my arms to hold them up, appearing before my eyes like a slide show, like a documentary of these two sweet years, the closing images as the credits roll. Kinafou, who slapped mosquitoes off me one long night while we waited for childbirth. Assiatou, who got up the courage to ask about birth control. Alimata, who made motherhood her best work. The imam's fifth wife, who never stopped laughing at me. Mariam, whose baby I helped deliver. Dramane, whom I believed in. Oumar's beautiful mother. ..." And the credits continue. "Maybe I'll never do better than this. Maybe I'll never be this good again."

Perhaps unintentionally, Sarah Erdman has written a guidebook for community development workers. It is not a prescriptive manual but rather a series of stories and reflections by someone who has done the actual work. Rather than another book about management theory, "Nine Hills to Nambonkaha" is a vibrant account of the experiences of a successful and committed manager.

Making Moo-sic

Dan Zanes dedicates children's CD to Heifer.

By Ray White, Heifer Public Information Director

IT WOULD HAVE BEEN HARD TO PREDICT in the 1980s that Dan Zanes, then lead singer of the hard-rocking Boston-bred club band the Del Fuegos, would wind up producing a series of whimsical children's records.

Sandra Bernhard, Nell Campbell, Bad Company's Simon Kirke, guitarist G.E. Smith and Dar Williams, among others.

And today, among his other interests, Zanes supports Heifer International. He encourages his fans to learn about Heifer

on his website, danzanes.com, and distributes Heifer literature at his live performances. He is also contributing a portion of the proceeds of his third children's CD, "Night Time!" to Heifer.

And he recently paid a visit to Added Value, Heifer's Brooklyn project site at Red Hook, with his wife, Paula, his daughter, Anna, and her friend, Elizabeth Perkins. There they toured an urban garden and met young people excited because the New York City Parks Department had just given them title to

a two-acre lot for an urban agriculture project.

Zanes said Heifer appealed to him in part because its message was understandable to children, especially his 8-year-old daughter. "We were talking about it today . . . about how many people die of hunger every day

He's matured while his music has gone pre-adolescent.

Zanes, 41, is the unlikely mastermind behind a series of hip children's music CDs featuring an impressive list of guest celebrity artists—Aimee Mann, Suzanne Vega, Philip Glass, Lou Reed, Rosanne Cash, Loudon Wainwright III, actress

ABOVE Dan Zanes (right) visits with project participant Jose Felix at the Red Hook garden.

FACING PAGE Dan Zanes is donating a portion of the proceeds from his CD "Night Time!" to Heifer International.





and what it means to get an animal—that they get the goat and have milk, and if there are any babies they get passed around to others in the community. It’s something I can explain to her.”

Zanes got into children’s music partly because he wanted some good, noncommercial music for his family. On a shopping trip looking for records for his daughter he noticed that “everything was sort of corporate.”

“The first children’s music I did was just a cassette to give out to kids in the neighborhood.”

He thought about the kind of music he enjoyed as a youngster and “it seemed more innocent, and it didn’t seem to be interested in any grownup approval So I just called my friends and neighbors together—Sheryl Crow and Suzanne Vega were among them—and people just came down and we had this almost steam-powered studio, and I had my West Indian friends come in, just whoever was around, because what I wanted was the sound of the neighborhood.”

He has put out four children’s CDs under his own Festival Five Records label. One critic described the music as “way hipper than most kids’ records.”

On his disks you can hear Zanes and Sheryl Crow sing “Polly Wolly Doodle,” or Suzanne Vega putting her spin on “Eerie Canal.” Bad Company’s Simon Kirke contributed a children’s animal song he wrote, “All My Friends Live in the Woods.” Original songs sit next to standards like “Bushel and a Peck” and “On the Sunny Side of the Street.” All cross generational lines; they’re folksy and fun and have a homemade quality that is appealing to adults and children. And they’re fresh. It’s as if you’re hearing lines like Polly Wolly Doodle’s “My Sal she am a spunky gal” for the first time.

Zanes said he became particularly interested in hunger after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. Some months after the tragedy, he was reading an article that told how many people died every day from hunger, he said, “and I asked myself how could we fool ourselves into thinking

this could ever be a safe world for anyone if thousands of people were dying of hunger every day?”

“That was when,” he said, “I realized that there was a tremendous amount of work to be done in that area. The front lines of so many of the tragedies of today’s world are in the area of hunger.”

Not long ago Zanes sat down with his daughter to watch Heifer’s video “Legacy for Efrain,” which tells about hunger and Heifer’s solutions using agricultural development—solutions that came too late for Efrain, who died of hunger-related causes. Zanes said he found watching the video “a very moving experience,” and that, though his daughter sometimes had trouble understanding complex environmental issues, “there wasn’t anything about the video that she didn’t understand, and it was so clear in the end that even someone like her and her friends could do something to participate in Heifer, because it’s appealing on different levels.”

Zanes enjoys making the records for children. “I love it that I get to sing a duet with Lou Reed or have Philip Glass play a little portable hundred-year-old pump organ. These things make it fun and it gets people engaged, and I’m always trying to say it’s just some friends getting together trying to make a song sound cool, and they could do it too.”

So Zanes encourages others to make their own music in their communities, take part in community theater, even encourage community-supported agriculture.

He said he recently read that Pete Seeger was feeling optimistic because he had seen a resurgence of grassroots groups recently. “His advice for making the world a better place is to start in your local community and join one of those groups.”

“And if I can get interested and involved, anybody can,” Zanes said. “I feel that I’m at the beginning of all this. And one of the many things I’ve appreciated about Heifer is that it is an opportunity to learn more and find ways to help out. The unfolding of all this seems fairly limitless.”

Heifer Partners with *Eziba*



Heifer International and Eziba, a leading retailer of hand-crafted items produced by artisans from around the world, have joined forces to help those artisans market their crafts while raising money for Heifer's programs to end hunger in a sustainable way.

Eziba, founded in 1998 by Amber Chand and Dick Sabot, began as an on-line business but has expanded into catalog, retail store and wholesale sales. Eziba seeks to "offer spirited, handmade objects while enabling artisans worldwide the ability to sustain their crafts through an expanded global market."

Through the company's "Gifts That Give Back" program, Eziba will specify a particular product whose net proceeds from sales will go to Heifer. Another facet of the partnership involves Eziba's website. If a visitor goes from Heifer's website (www.heifer.org) to Eziba's (www.eziba.com) and buys any item, Heifer receives 10 percent of gross sales.

"We at Heifer are particularly happy that Eziba is also giving added value to this partnership by providing Heifer and its project-holders with cottage industry

expertise," said Miller Davis, Heifer's senior vice president of External Relations.

For example, project partners who want to market handmade crafts in the United States will receive the help of Eziba.

"A part of our mission is to celebrate beauty on the planet by presenting unique objects made by the hand of artisans around the globe," Chand said.

Chand said that the company was set to launch its Heifer partnership in November, through its Gifts That Give Back program. "Eziba is proud to present the raku giraffe set from Zimbabwe, with partial proceeds going to Heifer," she said.

Eziba sells articles made by skilled artisans in more than 70 countries, primarily in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Eziba's suppliers must adhere to a code of conduct, which includes respecting the intellectual property rights of artisans, requiring that wages comply with local laws and that artisans receive a fair market price for their products and prohibiting exploitation of labor.

Eziba is a business friend of the Fair Trade Federation. For more information about fair trade crafts, visit www.fairtradefederation.com.

North America Program Chief Named

Catherine Knott has been appointed director for Heifer's North America Program.

"Catherine has a wealth of knowledge on key Heifer issues, including sustainable agriculture, natural resource management and gender studies," said Jim DeVries, vice president of International Programs.

Knott graduated cum laude from Yale University with a bachelor of arts degree in English literature. She holds a master's degree in anthropology/natural resources/education and a doctoral degree in anthropology/natural resources with a

minor in education, both from Cornell University.

She has more than 17 years of professional experience, including six years co-managing a 600-acre ranch specializing in timber, livestock and orchards.

Prior to joining Heifer, Knott was director of a nonprofit organization she created to promote the exchange of information and ideas between communities interested in sustainable agriculture and natural resource management. She has also worked with USAID, CARE and the Peace Corps.

Passing on the Gift in *Uganda*

Zam Zam was facing a difficult life.

Married with seven children, she was also caring for three orphans whose parents had died of the HIV/AIDS plague that swept Uganda. Zam Zam had to feed,

clothe and pay school fees for the children while also meeting the family's other basic needs. The family's main source of income came from selling extra food crops such as cassava, sweet potatoes, beans and local chickens that are sold seasonally.



Jo Luck, Heifer president and CEO, presents certificates to Zam Zam, a beneficiary of a pass-on Heifer.

Zam Zam learned about Heifer's Kirinya Women's Club through members who had received cows. She joined the group in 1999 and started receiving training. In 2002, Zam Zam began preparing to receive a pass-on heifer.

She planted pastures and started constructing a shed, but she suffered a setback when she ran out of money. As a result, completing the shed took a long time, but with the help of her family members the task was eventually accomplished. In December 2002, she received a pass-on from Hawa Kadumye in a ceremony presided over by Jo Luck, president and chief executive officer of Heifer.

Zam Zam named the heifer Jauhala, meaning "the precious gift." She and her family members have joined hands to care for Jauhala. For example, they are using the heifer's manure as fertilizer in their gardens.

Now Zam Zam and her family look forward to passing on the gift to another needy family in the future.

Heifer Addresses U.N. Delegates

Heifer International representatives last summer described for United Nations delegates the aid the nonprofit organization has provided to indigenous people in Nepal.

"These are people living in the worst poverty conditions in the world," said Jim DeVries, Heifer's vice president of International Programs. "Being able to talk to the people who represent them is a great opportunity to make a connection and offer possibilities of partnership."

DeVries and Mahendra Lohani, a Nepal native who is Heifer's area director for Asia and the South Pacific, spoke to a group of about 70 U.N. delegates

attending an environmental program at U.N. headquarters in New York City in August.

The event was jointly hosted by the U.N. Environmental Program. It provided Heifer an opportunity to screen the short film "Remedies: Healing the Earth" by the award-winning producer Dick Young. The film shows farmers who have benefited from Heifer's work in a range of countries. The farmers improved their livelihood while also improving the environment.

Following this introduction, Heifer briefed program participants on its work over the last 59 years to address hunger, poverty and environmental degradation in grass-roots communities by providing livestock and training.

By Janet K. Ginn, president
Heifer International Foundation

NAVAJO NATIONS JOURNAL: Accountability to a Nation

PASSING ON VALUES and accountability are two things with which I am well acquainted. As president of Heifer International Foundation, I know these are the guiding principles that are most important to our donors. By establishing lifetime gifts with the Foundation, donors pass along their values and set examples for their children and the world at large. In turn, when Heifer supporters establish a gift with the Foundation (such as an annuity, trust, endowment or by including us in their will), they expect us to be

accountable for making sure that their gift is used for their intended purpose. Recently, though, I had an opportunity to visit with some Heifer recipients who give new meaning to these principles.

I had the rare privilege of visiting with 12 of the 100 families that Heifer is currently working with in the 28,000 square miles of the Navajo Nation in the Four Corners area bordering Utah, Colorado, Arizona and New Mexico. It is no secret that many of our Native American reservations are located in the most barren, desolate stretches of land that exist in this country. What you may not know is that Heifer is working

with members of the Navajo Nation to raise sheep whose quality of wool is highly desirable in marketing their native blankets that fetch prices as high as \$1,500 each. What you also may not know is that the Navajos are cultivating gardens in an area where there is only sand as far as the eye can see.

But this project is about more than just feeding their families, sending their children to school, putting roofs over their heads and building better lives. It's about accountability to the earth, the passing of their values to the next generation, and, just as important, it is about preserving the rich culture

of the Indian Nations. The Navajo culture is disappearing along with its youth as they migrate to the cities. However, Heifer has been working with families in the Navajo Nation for over 11 years to help them to return to their native roots in shepherding



TOP Sheep provided by Heifer International enter a pen at Chambers, Ariz., in the Navajo Nation.



LEFT Leroy Begay appreciates the generosity of Heifer's donors, which makes the organization's work in the Navajo Nation possible.

RIGHT Jamie, a Heifer recipient through her 4-H Club, has received a ram and a Black Angus calf.



and wool production. With the introduction of higher quality rams into their herds, they are able to produce exceptional wool that yields record prices for their hand-woven rugs and blankets.

The Navajo people arrived on the plains in the southwest sometime around 1000 A.D. and survived by hunting, gathering, farming and shepherding. Today they are still shepherds and they are proud of their animals and proud to be sheepherders. Sheep have long been at the heart of this culture. However, sheep production has been in decline on the reservation due to the land issues and the seven-year drought they have endured. Navajo wool production has decreased to one-third of what it was 15 years ago. That is the reason the ram project is introducing higher quality stock into these areas. This project will increase the quality of wool, enabling farmers to sell it at a higher price.

In addition, the project will address years of overgrazing, which have contributed to soil erosion and

left the land incapable of supporting a sheep industry of any significant size. To accommodate the growing sheep population, Heifer is providing pasture poultry, information about crop rotation, and training for area participants that can help restore the earth to its original form.

On my second day on the reservation, I had the opportunity to meet Leroy Begay, one of the tribe's elders. He was thankful and shared his deep gratitude for the work Heifer had done with the Navajo Nation. As an elder, he expressed his concerns about the future generations of the Navajo Nation. But he now knows they are not alone. He recognizes that Heifer is a concerned partner. By working together, we can help to restore Mother Earth so that the next generations can also live peacefully upon the land.

Begay said that it is a privilege to work with livestock. He never expected to see the dramatic improvement in the Navajo livestock now being accomplished by the introduction of Heifer's new rams.

Now he feels that he has the livestock to build the future for next generations. He said that he is grateful for the better genetic stock that has improved the wool's quality. He sees the people of the Navajo Nation going back to their customs of weaving wool and rugs.

As an elder who has weathered many of life's trials, Begay knows that the future is always uncertain. I explained to him how the Foundation's Indian Nation Endowment was there to support Heifer's long-term commitment. He said he prays every morning that nothing will take Heifer away because we are working together to secure the future of the Navajo Nation.

"We don't know what storm will come our way, but we know that with Heifer as a friend, we will be OK," Begay says. "Money is the force of a donor's gift and through this gift the Navajo can have better lives."

He also acknowledged that donors work very hard for what they have, and that it must be satisfying when people have enough to share with others and to see lives and livelihoods change. He also knows what it is like

to become a donor through "passing on the gift." Though he did it willingly, he knows the sacrifice involved in giving up that gift to another family. By following the example of the donors and being an elder, he wants to make a positive impression on the next generation.

During our conversation, Begay was very emotional while expressing his feelings about Heifer's work. "I know that once again the Navajo can be a proud people because the rams have come into our community and upgraded our stock. People are once again coming to the Navajo for help."

Throughout my visits with the project recipients, I was struck by their dedication to accountability in fulfilling their obligations, not only to Heifer, but also to the lasting effects they have on the earth and on future generations. One of the things I tell people in my planned giving seminars is that there is nothing worse than promising to help someone and then not following through with it. There is a sad history in America of broken promises with the Indian Nations. We have so much to learn from their rich culture and historic knowledge of our land. Lack of accountability has cost many lives and continues to diminish the existence of our Indian Nations.

Heifer International Foundation's Indian Nations endowment exists because donors have dedicated their resources and are committed to long-term support for the work Heifer is doing to alleviate poverty. As long as there is a need, Heifer Foundation endowments will be there to address it ... and be accountable.

To learn more about Janet's visit to the Navajo Nations, visit us online at www.heiferfoundation.org, or to establish or add to an existing endowment, send in the attached form or call (888) 422-1161.

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The Last Defense

By **Scott Morris**, *World Ark Associate Editor*

Dripping sweat, I stood surrounded by bulging trash bags on my parents' porch. It was July, deep in the dog days, when the South's damp heat seems heaviest. It was not, I thought, an ideal time to be moving.

My parents, who a month earlier had celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary, had lived in this house for nearly as long as they'd been married. Now in their 70s, they were sorting through their belongings for the first time since they had moved in all those years ago.

Back then, my parents hadn't owned an air-conditioning unit, a washing machine or enough furniture to outfit their new living room.

Now, as they prepared to move to a smaller house, they had more furniture, dishes, tools—more stuff—than they needed.

At the end of a day spent filling trash bags with odds and ends that everybody had agreed should be thrown out, I was too hot and tired to feel sad about closing up my childhood home. Besides, the items in those bags—the burned-out Christmas lights, the dusty eight-track tapes, the wooden tennis rackets—didn't invite emotional attachment.

Nor, I realized to my surprise, did the house itself. When I drove away for the last time, I felt only the lightest touch of melancholy. I understood that we were simply passing through a transition, and that while it was important—and hinted at more difficult transitions to come—it was also natural and right.

As epiphanies go, this was fairly banal, though maybe all such insights are pedestrian. After all, what truly new thing about human nature are we likely to learn at this late date in our collective run? Still, there's a difference between knowing a thing in the head and knowing it in the guts.

Maybe the lesson sunk in, just a little. One week later,



I made an offer on my first house. I wasn't particularly excited or unnerved. Maybe I had the moment in perspective, or maybe I was just exhausted after six weeks of looking at houses.

As the dog days loosened their grip and summer limped gratefully toward fall and the promise of cooler weather, I discovered one small problem after another with my new home.

At first, I was outraged. I hadn't intended to buy a fixer-upper.

Why hadn't the previous owners told me that the faucet in the half-bath dripped, that a regulation-size washer and dryer wouldn't fit in the laundry alcove? That the storm door, nailed to nothing more substantial than a strip of insulation, would fall off the house if anyone actually used it?

Fuming, surrounded by still-unopened boxes of my belongings, I swore I would never move if I got these and a thousand other petty problems fixed. The house would truly be mine then, I told myself. And that, pretty much, is when I started to laugh.

In the long run, of course, the house is no more mine than the fat squirrels gathering acorns under "my" oak trees. Sooner or later, one way or another, I'll be leaving this house. It'll pass on to someone else, who'll live here five or 50 years before she, too, moves on.

Is it too simple to think there'd be more peace on earth if we gave up the need to defend our houses, our plots of earth, our sense of ownership? Ownership, after all, is ultimately foolhardy since everything, without exception, eventually goes away.

How many times do we have to be presented with the lesson of impermanence? Until we get it, I'd guess, or until we die. Whichever comes first.

Have I learned the lesson? Maybe. Though I wouldn't bet the house on it.

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