

Give a Girl a Chance – and she'll make the most of it!



Girls from Uvira, Congo, supported by NCP's Give a Girl a Chance fund

Life is hard in the DR Congo – and especially for young women: less than one-quarter of girls attend secondary school and over one-third are married before turning 18.

Thanks to Give a Girl a Chance, these girls are beating those odds. We provide scholarships (\$60 per girl per year), shoes, food, sanitary materials – whatever it takes for them to succeed.

*One thing it takes is you – individuals and groups stepping up so these young women can step ahead.*

**Give...till it helps!**

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As the World Turns...



“...turning the world upside down...”

Newsletter of the  
New Community Project

Ideas *that challenge us.*  
Experiences *that change us.*  
A community *that gives us hope.*

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**International LT's – they're baaack!**

An NCP Learning Tour went global for the first time in the Covid era, visiting Nepal in January 2022. Hosted by Shakti Samuha, the world's first anti-trafficking organization founded by survivors of the sex trade, the group met with Shakti staff as well as women and girls who have benefitted from NCP grants for microloan projects and scholarships.

While visiting Chitwan National Park (elephants, rhinos, tigers!), the team was briefed on environmental programs in the area, some of which NCP may support in the future.

One of the most compelling experiences was a visit to a newly opened shelter housing young survivors of trafficking or domestic abuse. Funds from NCP's 2015 post-earthquake But Not Forgotten campaign purchased the land for the shelter, and the local government recently built it. However, it lacked a wall to protect the 15 girls, ages 5-15, from harassment or attack by their former abusers. Shakti called this their highest priority, but no group had stepped forward to fund it. For our response, read on....

**Keep 'em Safe!**

When presented with the urgent need for a protective wall around a newly-built shelter for young sex abuse survivors by our Nepali partner Shakti Samuha, NCP did what it always does – we turned to our network. And you did what you do, giving generously to our Keep 'em Safe campaign, even after an initial estimate of \$25,000 was raised to a firm but higher \$30,700. We're closing in on the goal as we go to press – thanks for keeping them safe!

**The Way We Do the Things We Do**

NCP staff are doing their best to not only do a little good, but do this in a good way: respectfully, responsively, responsibly. Director David Radcliff responded to 55 virtual and live invitations in the past six months in congregations, schools and colleges in OH, VA, PA, MN, KS, IL, IN and NE. He also taught an online class at Elizabethtown College and led the Nepal Learning Tour.

In Harrisonburg, VA, our Jubilee Climate Farm is collaborating with farmers severely impacted by climate change in Jamaica and Guatemala through the Farmer to Farmer program, with Tom Benevento traveling to these areas to learn and to share his expertise.

Locally, 16 heritage chickens were donated to the Farm and 1000 trees are being planted. The school gardening program is off to a good start. A grant will extend the Northend Greenway to serve schools, a college and a retirement community.

Meanwhile, up in Vermont, Pete Antos-Ketcham had a busy winter helping folks stay warm via a community Woodbank and weatherization. He is also part of a state effort to create Clean Heat Standards, as home heating is Vermont's second leading source of greenhouse gas emissions.

NCP-VT is also involved in food security, including being the local hub each Friday for distributing 135 prepared meals, which in turn supports the local farms and restaurants that supply these.

**Tell Us What You Need campaign**

Thanks to the generosity of our network, NCP raised \$25,785 last fall for these needs of our neighbors:

- a beekeeping project in rural Malawi for income and nature
  - a tiny home for a Dineh family in New Mexico
  - a well to serve a Batwa community of 850 families in Congo, saving a 2-mile walk to the river
  - a girls' leadership development and sanitary products effort in Malawi
  - a grinding mill for a girls' school in South Sudan
  - a women-led fruit tree project and college scholarships in Rwanda
- Folks of all ages can go to visit these beneficiaries on upcoming NCP Learning Tours. See page 3.

**Two Million Trees?!**

Our Million Tree Campaign is now a Two Million Tree Campaign as enough support is coming in to plant 200,000 trees each year for 10 years! Thanks donors – and thanks partners in Africa, Asia and the Amazon!

**Believe It or Not**

It may be hard to believe, but all this goodness happens on a core budget of under \$120,000 to cover staff salaries, accounting, media, mailings, travel, etc. This doesn't include donations toward our Special Projects for girls, women and reforestation, which annually comes to around \$150,000.

Gifts from our supporters arrive in all shapes and sizes: by check or electronically, IRA distributions, donations of stock, estate bequests. They go into our core budget, the Special Projects or our Endowment Fund – pick your purpose!

*“We have other partners who provide more financial support, but we have a special place in our heart for NCP. We not only receive your grants for our work, but we feel you are in solidarity with us on our mission to end human trafficking. We so respect and appreciate our relationship and want it to continue far into the future.”*  
- Charimaya Tamang, president and co-founder, Shakti Samuha

**Backyard Fence—conversations about the new community**

When we were first exploring the option for the Jubilee Climate Farm outside of Harrisonburg, I made it a point to visit nearby farmers and residents. This seemed important, since we would be a bit out of the ordinary in terms of what we were doing there and who would be involved – college students, people from Mexico, Guatemala, Eritrea.

One of the people I met was Larry, the neighbor to the south of the farm. Larry said he said he liked the idea of people gardening and farming, but did not want "those people from other countries and immigrants taking over and being helped. We need to help our own, so I don't want you having them here."

These days you're not sure how to take a comment like that, but for Larry it meant regularly riding past our site in his little golf cart, keeping an eye on us. When he saw all the activity in the summer, and that we were all working hard and having fun, he felt more comfortable stopping in to talk.

Initially he connected with some of the interns, then he got to know Irma, Abarham, Maricruz – the international folks – and realized how enthusiastic and good natured they were. Not long after, he offered to come by and cut the tall grass around the gardens. So through the summer and fall he cut our grass for free.

Then one day late in the summer he came by excited to give us a prized book he had on his shelf, one of the first books on organic gardening by the Rodale Institute, truly a classic. So now he stops by most every week to see how we are all doing. He has even tried to say a few words in Spanish.

- Tom Benevento, coordinator, NCP Sustainable Living Center, Harrisonburg, VA

New Community Project Advisory Board: Robbie Miller (chair), Taona Makunje, Steve Brady, Jerry O'Donnell, Greg Davidson Laszakovits, Kim McDowell, Linetta Ballew, Hope Steele, Timothy McElwee, Alex Murphy

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## Justice—or Just Us

*Seeking fairness for people everywhere*

[We first met Mingma Sherpa on our 2018 Nepal Learning Tour. This past January our group visited her backyard farm in Kathmandu.]

Mingma came from a poor family of five in the mountainous and impoverished Sindupulchowk region of Nepal. When she was seven, she was sent to be a housekeeper in Kathmandu, where she and six other children earned \$5-6 per month working from dawn till past dusk for a wealthier family doing outdoor and indoor labor. She did not attend school, and now in her mid-40's is learning to read and write.

At one point in her early teens her older sister arranged her marriage to a man she had never met. It wasn't a happy union, and she eventually ended up in the entertainment sector, where male customers take all manner of liberties with the female workers.

Then Mingma heard about NCP partner Shakti Samuha, joined a group of women who had been in the entertainment industry, and enrolled in trainings to learn business skills and to improve her self-esteem. She soon began to move from shyness to being confident to raise her voice.



She had the idea for pig farming, took out a loan from the women's group of \$250 and bought 7 piglets, then \$300, then \$500. One batch died, but she persevered. She used her original pigs as breeding stock, learning how to do this by watching the vet. Now she has 66 pigs and has paid back all her loans (at no interest) to the group. (NCP provided the original funds to the group from our Give a Girl a Chance program.)

She brings in about \$3000 a year, of which she is able to save \$600 after taking out expenses for the pigs and running the household.

When we said that NCP was honored to play some small role in what she has done, she said, "It may seem small for you, but for me it was life-changing."

NCP's 2022 grant of \$16,000 to Shakti Samuha will help other women and girls have a better chance for a better life.

## Earth in the Balance

*Caring for the earth—as if our lives depended on it*

Of course our lives do depend on it, our caring for the earth, that is. Some cases-in-point:

- pollution from fossil fuel combustion will kill 1 out of 1000 humans this year – and shroud mountain vistas;
- sea level rise of as much as four feet by the end of the century will displace millions, but also destroy millions of acres of coastal rice paddies and leave seaside communities much more vulnerable to severe storms;
- excessive carbon in the atmosphere will not only warm up our world, moving crop zones and pollinators toward the poles, but food that is grown will have less nutritive value due to more carbon-fueled leaf growth stealing the plants' nutrients. And the list could go on.

What to do? Of course at NCP we always have a plan, and this one comes from the back of our One Earth, One Chance t-shirts. (By the way, have you ordered yours? We've got a striking new blue version....)

**Less** stuff. A personal choice we can easily make. How long can humans continue to extract 100 billion tons of the earth's bounty every year, while recycling less than 10 percent of it? Yep, a rhetorical question, but with practical solutions – just look in the closet, cupboard, garage, self-storage shed, trash can.

**Lower** on the food chain. There are few quicker and easier choices any of us can make with such immediate benefits: reductions in greenhouse gases (a ton or more per year per person), preservation of forests (lots less land needed), better health for us and fewer animals condemned to life on a feedlot or in a 12" by 12" cage.

**Lighter** carbon footprint. LESS: driving, lawn mowing, meat, consumption, fragility related to heat and cold (try windows and sweaters!). MORE: trees, bikes, gardens!

**Learn** from nature's ways. Nature is powered by the sun, eats seasonal local food, takes only what it needs, instinctively realizes that it is one piece of a whole, without which any part will not live long and prosper.

**Love** this earth. What have we done lately to nurture this relationship? Alaska and the Amazon are calling – and so is that stream, forest or desert nearby.

**Let** your voice be heard. Saved the hardest one till last. We can simplify all we want to, but if we don't get others on board, things are only gonna get worse – and soon. Be the one others talk about – then grudgingly respect – then realize they can emulate. Push preachers and teachers and influencers to be bold – then back them up. Badger politicians to care about more than the next election and refuse corporate money.



## Truth...or Dare!

What we don't know *can* hurt us – especially in the long run. NCP doesn't shy away from facing the truth about our world, challenging all of us to dare to act for something better. Thus, this Truth...or Dare! segment: Book Learnin': Face the truth, dare to act!

Several books recently reviewed on the Reading List at the NCP website provide true-that information about how we live and what this says about who we are and what may become of us – if we don't dare to act.

• In *The Day the World Stopped Shopping*, JD McKinnon claims that our penchant for consuming and the manner in which our economic and social structures are built around the me/more/now culture – personified by the catch-all term “shopping” – will be our undoing if we don't quickly put on the brakes. To do so would mean not only a saner and more centered life for us, but a rejuvenation of nature – which to date has borne the brunt of our over-consumption. **Solution:** McKinnon holds up voluntary simplicity – combined with policies that build in the true cost of our ravaging of the planet – as the most tried and true means to regain control of our lives, inspire others, and perhaps save our planet. “We must stop shopping, but we can't stop shopping.”

• *The Last Winter* by Porter Fox is written by someone intimately familiar with snow and ice, having been a skier his entire life. Fox takes us to Greenland, the Rockies, the Himalaya, the Arctic and other key arenas where winter is literally melting before our eyes – with frightening consequences for the present and for the future. Not only are ski resorts having to reimagine themselves as something other, but entire nations that are dependent on high mountain snowpack being a reliable water supply for their life-giving rivers are having to think hard about how they will do without these primal – but suddenly fragile – ribbons of wetness that course through our civilizational veins. And did we mention cataclysmic sea level rise? **Solution:** act big and soon to rein in climate change; wake up those around you to the urgency “On average, winter has shrunk by a month...”

• Indigenous wisdom takes center stage in *The Dawn of Everything* by David Graeber and David Wengrow, who refute thinking that humans either fell from a pristine state or were never close to pristine, calling both an excuse to give up on fundamentally reordering society away from meanness and materialism and toward a more communitarian, relation-centered way of life. Native Americans and their values are held up as a searing critique of European invaders, revealing them to be self-centered, power-hungry and materialistic – and showing there are other ways to organize life. **Solution:** we must reinvent the way we are with each other and with nature “Our species' future depends on our capacity to create something different.”

## Experiential Learning

*Go. Meet. Learn. Grow. Be renewed. Change—yourself and your world.*

### Experience of a lifetime

Experiential learning is NCP's way of helping us see ourselves and our world in a different way. Visit our Sustainable Living Centers; invite a speaker to your school, club or congregation; join a Learning Tour (see *Backyard Fence*, page 4).

### 2022 Learning Tours

(Upcoming trips subject to COVID-19 situation)

*Africa: Malawi & Rwanda* (May 11-23) Experience African culture, vitality and natural wonders on this trip to two NCP partner areas. Visit schoolgirls, women's groups and reforestation programs supported by NCP; learn about the impacts of climate change and Covid; be wowed by wildlife in two National Parks.

*Ecuadorian Amazon: Deep Jungle* (May 29-June 4) Explore places deep in the rainforest where outsiders rarely venture, meet renowned shamans and all manner of amazing plant and animal life (monkeys, sloths, pink dolphins!), learn about threats to the forest, visit NCP preservation projects.

*Lybrook, NM* (July 3-9) Work alongside Diné (Navajo) elders and youth on community projects, including helping build a tiny house; talk with and learn from local artisans. Explore the culture and current challenges facing the Diné, including hydraulic fracking; visit Chaco Culture ruins.

*Denali/Kenai Fjords National Parks, Alaska* (August 2-10) Camp and hike in the Denali National Park, see bears, moose, caribou, a sled-dog demonstration – and hopefully Denali, the highest mountain in North America. Seward offers a cruise in Kenai Fjords NP to see whales, puffins and a calving glacier. Observe climate impacts first-hand and underfoot.

*Arctic Village, Alaska* (August 11-18) Visit this north-of-the-Arctic Circle community: Gwich'in by birth, caribou by culture. Hike and camp in sight of the Brooks Range. Learn about the threat to their way of life posed by oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and by climate change. Enjoy traditional foods and tales of native life and lore around the campfire.

*Nepal* (January 7-18, 2022) Travel to this beautiful but impoverished Himalayan country, hosted by NCP partner Shakti Samuha, an anti-trafficking group. Experience teeming Kathmandu, as well as rustic rural areas. Visit shelters for survivors from the sex trade as well as girls and women receiving NCP support. Go to an amazing vantage point to be wowed by the Annapurna Range and to Chitwan National Park, an inspiring conservation success story.