

2023 Spring Newsletter

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Our Program Areas:

Promoting Clean Water, Sanitation & Hygiene

Self-Help International (SHI) partners with communities to access safe drinking water to reduce waterborne disease transmission and improve the community's overall health and well-being.



Fighting Malnutrition

SHI offers nutritional support for expectant mothers and newborns during the first 1,000 days to prevent stunting so children grow healthy brains and healthy bodies. We also partner with schools to serve students a protein-rich breakfast to combat hunger and increase educational outcomes.



Empowering Women & Girls

Self-Help International programs support girls to stay in school, and offer women financial literacy training and micro-loans to start businesses and achieve economic self-sufficiency.

Improving Agriculture

Extension education programs teach improved farming practices to increase yields and help develop successful agricultural businesses. Farmers learn about and access crops that are biofortified with micronutrients that feed and nourish families.

Donations help expand our programming and make it possible to serve more families!

A MESSAGE FROM

THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Happy New Year!

As we head into 2023, we have much to look forward to at Self-Help International.

Here are just a few:

Thanks to your generous donations last year, we've been able to increase the pool of revolving funds available to loan out in both Ghana and Nicaragua. That means

more small business owners will be able to access financing at higher levels to keep up with the effects of inflation as they purchase ingredients for baking, or supplies to stock the shelves of their shops, and farmers will be able to finance the inputs they need to achieve yield potential and increase household income.

Self-Help is expanding agricultural extension services to northern Nicaragua. Several years ago, one of our long-time partners in southern Nicaragua relocated. At the partner's request over the past couple of years, Jorge Campos has periodically traveled up to lead training in improved agricultural practices to farmers living in northern Nicaragua. Beginning in 2023, we are formalizing that relationship and commitment to partner with farm families in the communities of Palacagüina and Condega. Nelson Martínez Morales has joined our staff as an ag extension agent based in the area to work more closely with farmers on improved practices to increase household food security and income, in addition to our ongoing extension work in the San Carlos and Ochomogo areas.

P.S. --- We're now recruiting for volunteers to join the planning committees for the spring gala in Waverly and the lunch to empower global women in Des Moines. Please reach out to me if you'd like to get involved in these volunteer opportunities or others!

We continue to assess how our organization can authentically share the impact of our work with our primarily USA-based donor base, while centering and uplifting the dignity of the families who partner with us in Ghana and Nicaragua.

As part of that process, you'll hear directly from SHI Country Directors in the upcoming 2022 annual impact report, and some staff roles and responsibilities previously based in the US have moved to the Ghana and Nicaragua offices. Program Operations Manager Lucia Vega has taken on expanded responsibilities in Nicaragua, and Bernice Agyekwena joined our team in Ghana as Communications Manager last quarter, the first time a member of our communications and development team has been based out of a core program office. Peter Canicius also joined our team in Ghana to facilitate monitoring, evaluation and learning for programs based in both Ashanti Region and Upper West Region so that we can more quickly adapt program design and delivery based on quantitative data and qualitative feedback from those most affected.

Thank you for your continued support as we work together to alleviate hunger by helping people help themselves. Each one of you plays a key role, whether offering financial support, volunteer support, expert advice, direct program service implementation, or a combination of all. We're grateful to be your chosen partner in impact!

With gratitude,

**Nora Tobin, Executive Director
(she/her)**

About the Cover Photo:

School is in session with teacher Emmanuel Boateng in the community of Kontomire, Ghana. This is a combined class of grades 1-3. Self-Help International promotes a School Feeding Program which works with farmers and schools to supply a breakfast porridge made with Quality Protein Maize for students. In 2022, over 850 children participated in the program.

From Client to Coach: Dora Learns about Health

by Bernice Agyekwena, Communications Manager in Ghana

Dora, a resident of Kukuboso in the Ashanti Region of Ghana, joined the Growing Healthy Food Growing Healthy Children (GHFGHC) Program when she got pregnant because she was determined to give birth to a healthy baby.

“SHI has really helped us ever since the organization came to this community. The program supported me and other pregnant women by giving us counseling and food supplements. This enhanced my nutritional status during my pregnancy and my hemoglobin (Hb) was always at the appropriate level because I adhered to all the advice given by the nutrition officers,” she said.

Under the program, Dora was introduced to the concept of exclusive breastfeeding for newborn babies for the first six months and she dutifully followed the practice when she gave birth to her daughter, Alice. “I was used as an example to demonstrate to lactating mothers the benefits of exclusive breastfeeding whenever I attended the Child Welfare Clinic in my community, and my daughter never suffered from Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) as was the case with some babies.”

After experiencing at first hand the benefits of breastfeeding, Dora was excited about the outcome and could not bear to keep this information to herself,

but wanted to share it with new mothers in her community to encourage them to make the best choices on how to take care of newborn babies.

Ultimately, she signed up as a lactation coach with the program and has since been teaching other new mothers. “Now that I am a lactation coach, I will try my best to support mothers and encourage them to practice exclusive breastfeeding and appropriate complementary feeding after six months since children less than 2 years are in their critical stage of development and adhering to nutritional guidance goes a long way to help them.”

According to a USAID report, Ghana’s exclusive breastfeeding rate dropped from 63% in 2008 to 52% in 2014 (Breastfeeding in Ghana, U.S. Agency for International Development). This comes with dire consequences because children who are not exclusively breastfed for the first six months of life are more prone to diarrhea and pneumonia, which are the two leading causes of childhood deaths worldwide. In Ghana, this equates to nearly 4,000 preventable deaths of children under age 2 per year.

With continued financial support from donors, Self-Help can continue to change that trajectory, one child at a time.

Did you know? Self-Help International uses a multi-pronged approach in the Growing Healthy Food, Growing Healthy Children project, focusing on three major pillars: **empowering women** through community building, education and loans, providing **education on nutrition and facilitating access to nutritious foods**, and supporting long-term community food security by providing training, education and **access to agricultural techniques, crops and livestock**.



MAKE A DIFFERENCE

\$77 CAN PROVIDE ONE
KINDERGARTENER AT AN
ASHANTI REGION SCHOOL
A DAILY BREAKFAST FOR
A FULL ACADEMIC YEAR

\$140 CAN OFFER
MONTHLY NUTRITION
AND HEALTH EDUCATION
FOR NEW AND
EXPECTANT MOTHERS

Dora learned the benefits of exclusive breastfeeding through training sessions led by SHI. She practiced exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of her daughter's life. Alice is now two years old and on a healthy growth trajectory, and Dora serves as a breastfeeding coach for other new moms.



Antonio Meza Mejia from the Laurel Galán CAPS holds up a chlorine meter.

Measuring Chlorine Levels for Safe Water

By Orlando Montiel Salas, Clean Water Program Officer in Nicaragua

Access, availability and water quality in developing countries are important matters for the population, especially in rural areas. In Nicaragua, the Drinking Water and Sanitation Committees (CAPS), assume the task of supplying water to the people of their communities, and managing the rural aqueducts. However, the Ministry of Health (MINSa) recognizes that some water supply or systems are often contaminated.

Water quality is the main problem which has a direct impact on the health of the population. According to the public health center, about 80%

of health problems like diarrhea, conjunctivitis and skin problems, are linked to water. Self-Help International, through its Clean Water Program, is an educator, advisor and facilitator of water knowledge and technologies, so that CAPS and their rural communities can improve the quality of the water they consume. The Clean Water Program also facilitates a fund available to the CAPS, so that they can access financing to improve their water systems and increase water quality. With the implementation of technologies, clean water improves the health of people in rural communities, avoiding diseases that cause delay and lack of access to education for

WHAT CAN A DONATION DO?

\$350 CAN SET UP ONE
COMMUNITY CHLORINE BANK TO
DISTRIBUTE TABLETS TO MAINTAIN
CLEAN DRINKING WATER

children and economic losses for families. Self-Help International is committed to help educate and generate self-sufficiency in communities and to CAPS members by providing comprehensive technical advice to maintain the purification of water in rural communities.

The Clean Water Program provides CAPS members with technology to measure the concentration of chlorine in the water. This allows the directors and leaders of the CAPS to know exactly the necessary amount of chlorine that the water must contain to eliminate the contaminating microbes so that water is safe for human consumption.

The following communities have received chlorine meters including the communities within the Nueva Guinea municipality: Puerto Príncipe, El Serrano, Los Pintos, Río Plata and San Juan. Other CAPS using the meters include: in the municipality of El Castillo, Laureano Mairena; in the municipality of Morrito: El Sincoyal and Walter Acevedo; and in the municipality of San Carlos: Empalme de Cruz Verde, La Venada, Laurel Galán, and Nueva Armenia.

What exactly are chlorine meters?

The HANNA Instrument brand meters are electronic devices that work with a small AAA battery to measure the parameter "residual chlorine" which is present in the water. The small device fits in a pocket and is easy to load and use with a digital LCD screen reader, which presents the results in numbers with great accuracy in parts per million (ppm) of residual chlorine, equivalent to milligrams of chlorine per liter of water. The device comes with two 10 milliliter (ml) glass containers that are used to collect water samples to test for residual chlorine.

Chlorine meters allow CAPS leaders to know exactly the amount of chlorine that has been added to the chlorinator or the amount of

chlorine that is present in the water tank as well as in the community water system. With the results, the CAPS can make decisions on reducing or increasing the amount of chlorine that is being added in the community chlorinator to ensure the elimination of microbiological contaminants and provide safe water for the people.

One of the primary objectives of Self-Help International and the Clean Water Program is to promote the self-sufficiency of the CAPS in rural communities with community water systems. This helps promote the self-sustainability initiative of the aqueduct, providing comprehensive technical advice, training, and knowledge transfer, as well as educating managers and beneficiaries of the water system. Leaders are more aware of the responsibility to contribute to the maintenance, operation and administration of the water system.



Clean water is essential for better health and wellness.

Ag on Display in Ghana

by Bernice Agyekwena,
Communications Manager in Ghana

Self-Help International's Agricultural Entrepreneurial Development (AED) program showcased innovations in agriculture to farmers and other shareholders at the annual District Farmers' Day celebration on December 3 at Kyereyasi in the Atwima Nwabiagya Municipality in the Ashanti Region of Ghana.

Aubergines (eggplants) and cabbage seedlings that were grown in soil-less mediums were on exhibit to demonstrate how to use soil-less medium to nurse and raise plants to reduce the incidence of diseases and pests. Also on display was a sack of rice husk which is common in the Ghanaian environment and can be used for producing biochar, which is created through the controlled burning of the rice husk under low oxygen, as well as biochar compost. Strawberries and tomatoes planted in used containers were also showcased in a bid to demonstrate how containers can be used to nurse and cultivate plants.

In order to promote the rearing of rabbits, a rabbit cage fabricated with galvanized metal mesh which is both durable and hygienic was put on show to help people interested in rearing rabbits to know how best to house them.

An orange plant cloned through air layering (a method of propagating trees and shrubs from stems still attached to the parent plant) was also exhibited. The advantages of using this method of propagation are that the clones produce fruits that are identical to the parent plant and also fruit at a faster rate than plants propagated through seed. Some of the people who visited the SHI stand left with young seedlings to plant on their own farms and gardens.



SHI staff educated people on new ways to cultivate plants and rear poultry and rabbits at the annual Farmers' Day celebration in Ghana.

\$75 SUPPORTS THE PRODUCTION & DISTRIBUTION OF BIOFORTIFIED CROPS USING BEST AG PRACTICES TO REDUCE INPUT COSTS.

\$300 CAN CREATE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR A WHOLE GROUP OF PEOPLE TO LEARN AND TRAIN ON AG PROCEDURES.

Participating in this year's Farmers' Day celebration not only offered SHI a chance to educate people on new ways of cultivating plants and rearing poultry and rabbits, but also provided an opportunity for people to test and benefit from these innovations by utilizing improved seedlings on their farms.

Expanding Business for Maralexia

by Yolanda Fletes, Women's Empowerment Program Officer in Nicaragua

Maralexia Olivera is an entrepreneur from La Venada, a community situated 28 kilometers (17 miles) from San Carlos, Nicaragua. One day, a local community leader invited Maralexia to a Self-Help International micro-credit training where Maralexia learned about new ways to earn money.

Self-Help worked with Maralexia to install an improved oven, and a week after its installation, Maralexia began promoting her baked goods business. With the new oven, she was able to bake twice a week, increasing production of her sweet bread, simple breads, empanadas, and corn flour buns.

Prior to working with Self-Help, Maralexia wasn't sure how much her business was earning. Self-Help's training helped her analyze her income and realize that she was not earning a business profit. She was also interested in incorporating her crafting activities into her business, but she didn't know how and lacked the financial resources to expand.

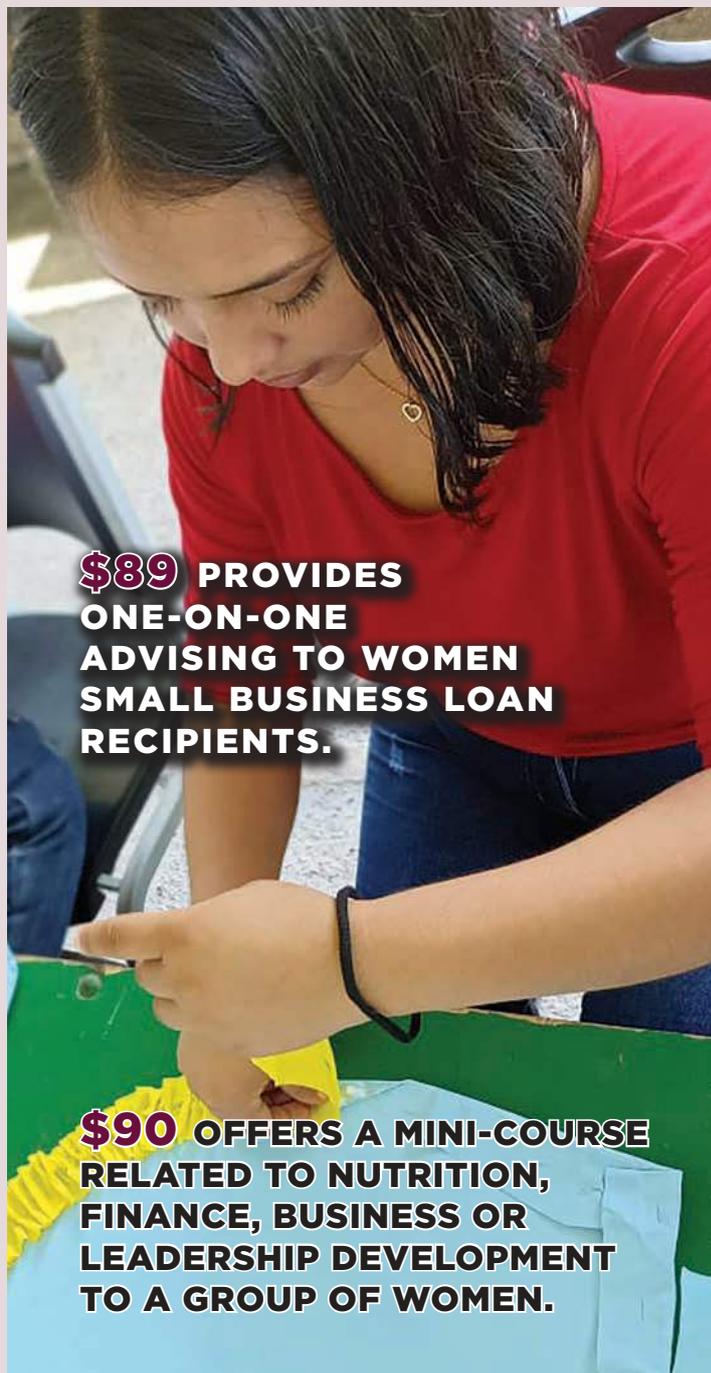
When Maralexia received her initial \$400 loan from Self-Help, she wasn't sure how best to invest it, but through the trainings, she learned where the opportunities were and when she was issued the



Unique and hand-crafted flower crowns

loan, she was able to use it effectively to increase her earnings. Self-Help's training showed her how to complete a cost analysis of her crafts, which included flower crowns she makes for Nicaragua's

holiday Día de los Fieles Difuntos (All Souls' Day). In analyzing the cost of materials and her own labor, Maralexia was able to appropriately price her flower crowns based on size, material, and labor costs. Now, Maralexia keeps track of her income and expenses, and she realizes that her business has become very successful within her community. Maralexia's products are in high demand, and she is very happy



\$89 PROVIDES ONE-ON-ONE ADVISING TO WOMEN SMALL BUSINESS LOAN RECIPIENTS.

\$90 OFFERS A MINI-COURSE RELATED TO NUTRITION, FINANCE, BUSINESS OR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TO A GROUP OF WOMEN.

Maralexia learned how to incorporate her crafting and baking skills into thriving business with SHI training.

about her business success. She is very thankful to the people who helped her dreams come to fruition. Her dream is to have a small family business that generates work to help her family and community members. With her profits, she plans to purchase more supplies to make vases. She was already commissioned to make 1,000 crowns and 300 vases. She is so happy that her contributions to her household are improving the living conditions of her family.



Memorial & Honorary Gifts

Received Sept. 1, 2022 - Jan. 20, 2023

In memory of Paul and Doris Beetz
by Leslie and Richard Althaus

In memory of Vera Bunger
by Anonymous Friends
and Family Members
by Carolyn and Dan Eggers
by Duaine and Charlotte Westpfahl
by Edie and Fred Waldstein
by Fran and Howard Mueller
by Gregory Bunger
by Joe and Carol Jahnke
by Jon and Gloria Tehven
by Karen Dickman
by Kathe and Mike Sherer
by Lynn and Kathy Olson
by Mary Jo and Pete Hall
by Rev. Larry and Lois Trachte
by Shirley Koehn

In memory of William Bunger
by Merry and David Fredrick

In honor of Jorge Campos
by Merry and David Fredrick

In honor of the Clark family
by LaRue Clark

In memory of Addison Gilbert Cook
by Sherri Dressel

In memory of Gene L. Davis
by Frieda Davis

*In honor of
Dr. Janice Dressel's birthday*
by Gayle and Tim Skubick

*In honor of
Stacie, Angie and Gabi Dressel*
by Dave and Jan Dressel

*In memory of
Margaret Smythe Emmons*
by Susan Emmons, Esquire

In memory of Jean Carran Fredrick
by Merry and David Fredrick

In honor of Merry Fredrick
by Norman and
Mary Alice Schlesener

In memory of Walter Fredrick
by Merry and David Fredrick

In memory of Alfred Happel
by Larry Happel

In memory of Milo Harpstead
by Dale and Mary Harpstead

*In memory of
Harmon and Leona Hildebrandt*
by Pastor Audrey Westendorf

*In honor of all past and present
SHI Staff and Board Members*
by Pete and Mary Jo Hall

In memory of Susan Johnson
by Merry and David Fredrick

*In memory of
Bob and Verna Kern*
by K. Robert Kern II

In memory of John Walter Kidd
by Eunice and Bruce Bassler

In honor of Karianna Klassen
by Kjersten Walker

In honor of Benjamin Kusi
by Merry and David Fredrick

*In memory of
Dave "Lags" Lageschulte*
by Ken and Donna Speake
by Mike and Natasha Speake

*In memory of
Ray and Virginia Lageschulte*
by Mike and Natasha Speake

In honor of Pat Martin
by Kristin Cooper

In memory of Eugene McAlexander
by Toni Kerns

*In memory of
Marcella M. McCormick*
by Kelly McCormick

In memory of Walter V. McCormick
by Kelly McCormick

*In honor of
Fran and Howard Mueller*
by Steve and Jaci Mueller

In honor of Karlene Neal
by Wesley and Jerusha Neal

In honor of Richard Neal
by Wesley and Jerusha Neal

In honor of Tyson Neukirch
by Paul Neukirch

In memory of Gene Novak
by Lois Novak

*In honor of
Mary Jane and Dave Oakland*
by Betty Barton

*In honor of
Rev. Dr. Mary Jane Oakland*
by Dorothy and Steven Prater

*In memory of
Mary Ellen Olson*
by Shelby and David Soeder

In honor of Jerry Perkins
by John Perkins

In memory of Diane Peterka
by Merry and David Fredrick

In honor of the Popplewells
by the Rev. Liane Nichols

In memory of Helen Roach
by Anjela Shutts and Pete Kitundu
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and Fritz Weitz
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by Prameet Kumar
and Helen Tobin
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by Shawn Burke and Paul Scott
by Susan Boe

*In honor of Barb Smith and
Rod Hoffman*
by Bob and
Carol Richardson Smith

*In honor of Bob and
Carol Richardson Smith*
by Barb Smith and Rod Hoffman

*In honor of Doug and Kate Smith,
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by Bob and Carol
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by Jonathan Taiber

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by Nancy Thayer

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Cynthia Thorland*
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by Frances Berger

In honor of Maureen Roach Tobin
by Constance Cohen
by Donna Paulsen

In honor of Nora Tobin
by Elizabeth Beck

In honor of Paul R. Walther
by Frieda Davis

In memory of Joann Wehner
by Nelson Wehner

In honor of Nadine Weisbrod
by Pamela and Garry Bleckwenn

**YOU CAN SEND A GIFT
IN MEMORY OR IN HONOR
OF A LOVED ONE ANY TIME
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Alleviating hunger by helping people help themselves since 1959

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Río San Juan, Nicaragua

IN UNITED STATES
207 20th St NW Suite A
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UPCOMING EVENTS:

April 2023

Spring Gala Fundraiser
Waverly, IA

Summer 2023

Lags Memorial Golf Tournament
Waverly, IA

Wednesday, Dec. 6

Empower Women Luncheon
Des Moines, IA

Where we work:

