



2025 FALL NEWSLETTER

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A MESSAGE FROM THE Executive Director



Friends,

I love food. I love to eat it, to bake it, to grow it (with varying degrees of success). I love to watch cooking shows about how ingredients are combined to make something new and weird and wonderful. I love how sharing a meal can bring people together, and nourish our bodies and also our souls. Making a meal together can be a way of passing down family traditions from generation to generation, and it can be a way of exploring a new culture and learning another history. Sharing food can unite us all.

The absence of food—hunger, malnutrition—is a threat to our common humanity, wherever we may find ourselves in the world. Self-Help's teams of trained professionals work side by side with families every day to ensure they're not dependent on others and can achieve financial independence and food security. Your investments help ensure that when the unexpected happens, there's still food on the table, a roof overhead, and enough to pay school fees. During this season of giving thanks and sharing our bounty, let us all find ways to give generously to support our neighbors whether they're next door or around the world.

Self-Help remains a small organization doing what we can to make a difference in the world—and it's working! I want to sincerely thank everyone who donated in September during the Board of Directors matching campaign. The funds raised are making an immediate, direct impact on the people we serve for communities, like El Jícaro in Nicaragua where **115 homes now have safe drinking water**, for children in the Ullo Traditional Area in Upper West, Ghana who are now **recovering from acute malnutrition**, and for farmers in Nicaragua like Pedro who are **increasing their yields**. You can read more about these results in the pages that follow.

While we're making progress, there's more to do, and the Board of Directors has set some lofty goals for us to achieve by 2030 to further our mission of alleviating hunger by helping people help themselves. As we turn the page on the calendar into November and this season of giving thanks, I'm particularly thankful to:

- Our dedicated staff in Nicaragua who are constantly going the extra mile and jumping higher and higher to clear each hurdle as they carry out Self-Help's mission every day in a challenging environment—and persevering!
- Our *Tour de Ghana* participants, particularly Keith Swanson, and the staff in Ghana for bringing the inaugural *Tour de Ghana* to reality this past month—a feat that's been a year in the making that we hope to make an annual event.
- Our new team members in the US who will help us scale our fundraising efforts to scale our global impact
- Each one of you who enable us to carry out our mission day in and day out through financial contributions, programmatic advising, and moral support.

As you consider the philanthropic impact you want to have in the world this year, Self-Help International would be honored to be among your chosen partners in making that impact.

With gratitude,

Nora Tobin
Executive Director

Bringing People Together:

We had the pleasure of welcoming H.E. Prof. Jane Naana Opoku Agyeman, Vice President of the Republic of Ghana, to Des Moines in collaboration with the Ghana Association in Iowa during the World Food Prize Borlaug Dialogue in October. It is great to share with her the special connections between Iowa and Ghana.



The first ever Tour de Ghana:

A dozen participants traveled from the US to Ghana to ride "tricycles" across the country to raise funds and awareness for Self-Help's work from October 24th - November 4th. Those tricycles will be loaned out through the microcredit program to increase access to markets and health care for community members in rural Ghana. As funds are repaid, they'll be re-loaned to others. Many thanks to all who said "yes" and turned an idea into an adventure, particularly Keith Swanson, his fellow riders, and our leadership team in Ghana. Follow us on social media or join us at an upcoming event to see new videos featuring the people whose lives are better off today because of your support.



PS: If you missed the opportunity to donate during the recent matching campaign, or want to do more yet this year, the Board of Directors has generously agreed to match 50 cents of every gift up to \$500 donated to Self-Help now through December 2nd for #GivingTuesday! I encourage you to take advantage of this great opportunity to make an even bigger impact.*

**Gifts of up to \$500 will be matched by 50% up to \$20,000 until 11:59 PM on 12/2/2025 or until the matching funds run out, whichever comes first. Mailed gifts must be postmarked by 12/2/2025 to qualify for the match. If you think your gift will arrive after 12/2/2025, please contact us at 319-352-4040 or information@selfhelpinternational.org.*



83% of infants

fail to meet minimum dietary standards in Jirapa Municipality.



676 households

in the Upper West were provided nutrition training through SHI in 2024.



HOW YOU CAN HELP

\$15

can provide one month of nutrition and health education to a new or expectant mother.

\$120

can train a lactation coach to support other mothers nursing their infants.

Reducing Malnutrition in the Ullo Traditional Area

In 2019, the Paramount Chief of the Ullo Traditional Area in Upper West, Ghana invited Self-Help International (SHI) to bring its programs to the region. Roughly two years later, SHI staff began executing a project that pairs microloans with financial management education and agricultural demonstrations, all designed to help families improve their incomes.

Shorter growing seasons caused by climate change and high inflation following the COVID-19 pandemic have led to sharp increases in food prices in the region, which in turn have made it harder for families to feed their children. In November 2024, 18 children were diagnosed with Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) and 32 were diagnosed with Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) in the Ullo Traditional Area. Over the next 8 months, 15 more children were identified with malnutrition.

To address this crisis, SHI began to procure and prepare a therapeutic porridge flour—made from roasted and milled maize, sorghum, pearl millet, soybeans, ground nuts, and dried herring—which was distributed to four Ghana Health Service (GHS) facilities to feed the most at-risk children. Extra porridge was also sent home in vacuum bottles for feeding throughout the rest of the day.

In order to build local knowledge, two GHS nutrition officers trained twelve Mentor Mothers from participating villages to serve as lactation coaches, advocates and monitors. The training proved to be very successful; the Mentor Mothers identified at-risk children early, referred families for further care, and taught parents how to safely prepare and feed the therapeutic food to the malnourished children.

By May 2025, 76% (38) of the original SAM and MAM children had either fully recovered, or had traveled with their families and were not able to be served. Twelve of the children (24%) were still on the nutrition recovery journey: four (8%) remained severely



Ernestina feeds her daughter Keturah.

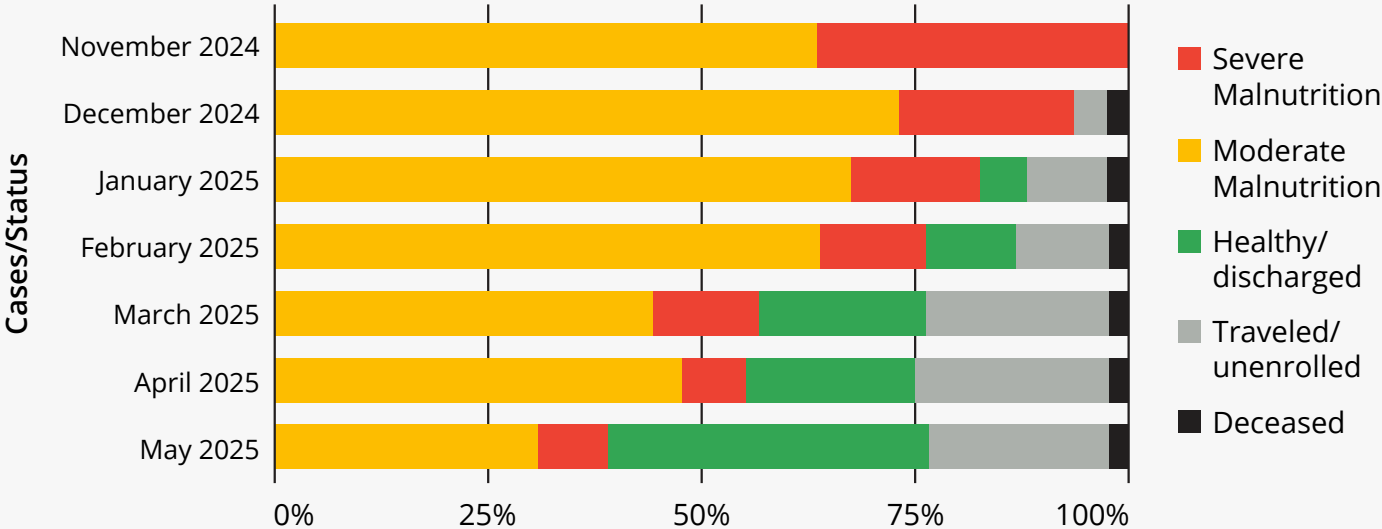


malnourished, while eight (16%) were experiencing moderate malnutrition. Unfortunately, one SAM case passed away shortly after she was identified.

In addition to reducing malnutrition in the children of the Ullo Traditional Area, the pilot project helped to break the stigma around child malnutrition. SHI and GHS heard stories from families who had hidden severely malnourished children out of shame, sometimes until it was too late. Through this intervention, families learned that recovery was possible.

Today, the microcredit and agricultural support programs remain open to both women and men, and SHI is continually working to address the underlying contributors to food insecurity. Future plans include increasing the energy and protein content of the porridge to promote faster recovery.

Health Status of Malnourished Children in Ullo Traditional Area





“What I like most about the Self-Help organization is that it provides useful tools to low-income producers to produce more on less land.”

PEDRO, FARMER IN NICARAGUA



HOW YOU CAN HELP

\$25

can provide the seedlings and drip irrigation for one family to start a home garden.

\$85

can train one farmer on improved agronomic management practices for maximizing planting area and water management.

Helping Farmers Adapt to Change

My name is Pedro. I live in the community of Esperanza N°1, located in the Department of Rio San Juan, Nicaragua. I have been a farmer for approximately 44 years. I enjoy working the land and taking care of it.

The many trainings from Self-Help International in which I have participated have helped me a lot in the face of all the challenges that nature presents. With the support of Self-Help International's trainings, field days and other talks, I understand that it is necessary to use new varieties of certified improved seeds that offer higher yields, are more resistant to pests and diseases, and are adapted to the weather in this area.

Each season I experiment, following the advice of the Self-Help technician and looking for options on my own, but I will not change from the Quality Protein Maize (QPM) promoted by SHI for another variety; my daughter says it tastes good in tortillas.

I thank the Self-Help organization and its donors for supporting the agricultural sector in our area, on behalf of those who make up the group of farmers of the Esperanza N°1 community.

Clean Water for the People of El Jícaro

With the assistance of Self-Help International, the **115 households and 446 people who live in the community of El Jícaro, in Nicaragua, have had access to clean water for the past year.**

El Jícaro is in one of the most remote and difficult to reach areas in southeast Nicaragua. The region's tropical climate means that rain is constant and abundant, but the community's drinking water was contaminated.

The directors of the local Clean Water and Sanitation Committee (CAPS) began to look for options to correct the community's long-running problem with poor quality drinking water, so the people of El Jícaro didn't continue to suffer health problems.

They ultimately decided to partner with the Self-Help International Clean Water Program because of the low upfront and ongoing maintenance cost of the systems SHI helps communities install, and because of the education Self-Help provides to community members who are interested in learning good management practices.

In mid-2024, the CAPS directors in El Jícaro reached out to Self-Help's Clean Water Program technician Orlando Montiel and requested his help to obtain a water chlorination system.

Orlando responded immediately. The chlorination system installed in El Jícaro is made with PVC materials and is designed to capture water from two sources, one by gravity and one using a pump. The two water sources can be chlorinated simultaneously when they enter a distribution basin, which allows the purification of approximately 18,370 liters (4,853 gallons) daily. The clean water is then distributed by pipe to homes in the community.

El Jícaro has benefited from clean water since September 2024.

The extensive water management training provided by Self-Help has also resulted in an improvement in the water system's financial resources; now water consumers pay according to what they use, rather than a flat fee per person/household.

Because of Self-Help, the people of El Jícaro now feel that they have the tools and knowledge to manage their own safe drinking water.



A technician adds a tablet to a water chlorinator.



HOW YOU CAN HELP

\$15

can sponsor five chlorine tablets.

\$150

can buy the parts to construct one water chlorinator unit.

\$500

can sponsor a share of clean water for a village of up to 1,000 people.



135,804 people

have accessed clean water in collaboration with SHI Nicaragua since 2012.

Why I Give



KATHY FOLKERTS

Monthly Donor from Waverly, Iowa

"I've always been sensitive to the fact that there are people around the world who have very little and struggle to even have enough to eat. Many don't have access to education or opportunities that can lift them up. If I can do a small part to help them help themselves, I want to do that as much as I can. **The impact Self-Help provides families spans generations and everybody wins.**"

JOIN KATHY BY INVESTING IN OUR MISSION WITH YOUR ONGOING, MONTHLY SUPPORT.

For many people, giving monthly is the easiest and most convenient way to give. It's like a streaming service, but instead of binge-watching the latest hit show, you are providing resources, training, and opportunities to a family to live their lives with dignity.

Visit selfhelpinternational.org/donate or give us a call to set up your recurring donation. Recurring donations can be stopped or changed at any time.

What Could Your Monthly Gift Do?



\$15/month

can sponsor enough chlorine tablets to ensure clean water for a town in Nicaragua for a year.



\$20/month

can cover a year of monthly financial literacy training for women microcredit clients.



\$40/month

can sponsor a 4-H style youth agriculture club in Ghana.

Donate

BY MAIL

Send checks, made payable to Self-Help International, to:

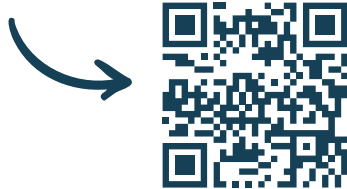
Self-Help International
207 20th St. NW Ste. A
Waverly, IA 50677

BY PHONE

Call us at 319-352-4040

ONLINE

Visit selfhelpinternational.org/donate or scan the QR code



QUESTIONS?

For more information about all the ways you can give to Self-Help International, contact Kassi at kassi@selfhelpinternational.org or call us 319.352.4040.

Your donations help people like Juana, a small business owner in Nicaragua.



EMPLOYER MATCHING GIFTS

Thousands of companies and organizations offer matching gift programs for their employees, spouses, and retirees. Many companies will match your gift to SHI one-to-one, doubling your impact, but some even match two-to-one or three-to-one! Contact your human resources department for more information.

PLANNED GIFTS

Leave a legacy by including Self-Help International in your estate plans. You can make a profound and enduring impact on our mission through a charitable bequest in a will or trust, by designating Self-Help International as a beneficiary of your life insurance policy or retirement fund, or by utilizing a number of other vehicles. We encourage you to reach out to an estate planning attorney for more information.

Be sure to make your year-end gift by Dec. 31 so that you can reap any applicable 2025 tax benefits!



\$50/month

can feed 15 kindergarteners in Ghana a daily nutritious breakfast for an entire year.



\$125/month

can provide clean water to an entire village in Nicaragua, including training and installation.

Memorial and Honorary Gifts

March 26, 2025 - November 3, 2025

In memory of George Cummins

*By Daniel Beane
By Vonda Cummins
By Erwin and Yoshiko Johnson*

In Honor of Mackenzie Dierks and Matt Helland

By Jerry and Peggy Perkins

In Memory of Carl Dillon

By Patricia and Michael Daubs

In honor of William and Jane Edwards

By Martin Limbird

In honor of Alaina Gebel

By Tami Gebel

In memory of Jeff Hathaway

Shane and Jill Wheeler

In memory of Laura Hemmes

By Bill Hemmes

In memory of Marc Hemmes

By Bill Hemmes

In memory of Marilyn Jackson

By Dendievel Langkau

In memory of Deborah Legvold

By Steve Legvold

In memory of Kathy Aileen Leichty

By Julie and Clarence Leichty

In memory of Steven P. Luty

By Peg Luty

In honor of Pat Martin

*By Mary Hultman
By Elizabeth Kennedy
By Donna Paulsen and Tom Press
By Maureen Roach Tobin and Terrence Tobin*

In honor of Becky McDonnell

By Kathy Eastman

In memory of Tom Michel

By Paula Michel

In memory of Karen Y Miller

By Pamela Bleckwenn

In memory of J. Howard Mueller

*By Barbara and James Anderson
By Judy Anton
By Sherrill and Donald Barr
By Mark Bohner
By Monte and Laura Bowden
By Lois and Dean Buhr*

J. Howard Mueller continued

*By Gloria and Carl Campbell
By Vonda Cummins
By Barb and John Dahlby
By David and Phoebe Drape
By Teri Edman
By Carolyn and Dan Eggers
By First Bank
By Jason Gomes
By Barbara and Dale Hatinger
By Charles and Louise Infelt
By Clark Kilgard
By Shirley Koehn
By Mark and Jerilyn Mueller
By Fran Mueller
By Karlene and Richard Neal
By Lois Novak
By David and Mary Jane Oakland
By Beth Olson
By Kathy Olson
By Margaret Phelps
By Helen and Marvin Schumacher
By Kathleen Schuhmacher
By Dan Slattery
By Donna and Kenneth Speake
By Jon Tehven
By Mary Thompson
By Maureen Roach Tobin and Terrence Tobin
By Charlotte and Duaine Westpfahl
By Anonymous*

In memory of Floyd and Justine Epley

By Karlene and Richard Neal

In memory of Bill Northey

By Rod and Eileen Swoboda

In honor of Mary Jane Oakland

*By Betty and Tom Barton
By Roxanne Clemens
By Barb Liebl
By Anonymous*

In memory of John O'Malia

By Karen O'Malia

In honor of Jerry Perkins

By John Schmidt and Deb Wiley

In memory of David Kacmarynski

By Carol and Lyle Rasmussen

In honor of Redeemer Lutheran Church

By Shelby and David Soeder

In Honor of Paul Schickler

By The Massop Family

In honor of all past & present Board and Staff

By Mary Jo and Peter Hall

In honor of SHI Ghana staff

By Nick and Michele Taiber

In Memory of Mary Stuart

By Ann Santoro

In memory of Varlen Carlson

By Nanette Stubbs

In honor of the Swanson Family

By Ike and Ellen Kier

In memory of Gloria Tehven

By Jon Tehven

In Honor of the Tobin Family

By Sircy and David Wright

In memory of Maurice B. Tobin

By Joan F. Tobin

In honor of Nora Tobin

By Maureen Roach Tobin and Terrence Tobin

In Memory of Freda Vande Berg

By Pamela Chester

FAREWELL TO A GIANT

This fall, we bid farewell to a giant in Self-Help's history, J. Howard Mueller, who served on Self-Help's original Board of Directors and traveled with Dr. Norman Borlaug to Ghana, West Africa, during Self-Help's transition period from distributing Self-Helper tractors to training farmers.

It was fitting that his celebration of life was held on World Food Day, October 16.

A photo from Howard's trip to Ghana is pictured on the right.

Leadership

Nora Tobin, *Executive Director*

Benjamin Kusi, *Ghana Country Director*

Jorge Luís Campos Solís, *Nicaragua Country Director*

Growing Our Impact: Meet Our New Staff

IOWA



Keegan Kautzky has joined our team as International Program & Grants Manager to help grow our partnerships both in the US and abroad.



Melissa Johansen, our new Development and Communications Specialist, will grow our capacity to share our impact and raise funds to support our mission.

GHANA



Denis Tankpaa is helping to expand our nutrition program in Upper West as our new Nutrition Support Staff.

NICARAGUA



Crisbell del Socorro Ávalos Rodríguez, our new Women's Empowerment Program Officer, is helping us expand our programs to San Miguelito.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Pat Martin,
President

Richard Neal,
Vice President

Barbara Hatinger,
Secretary

Will Erken,
Treasurer and Ghana Chair

William Edwards,
Nicaragua Chair

Julie Pennington,
Development Chair

Nick Taiber,
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Dorothy Masinde,
Member

Doris Montgomery,
Member

Mary Jane Oakland,
Member

Jerry Perkins,
Member

Carol Richardson Smith,
Member

Keith Swanson,
Member

Emeritus Members:

David Fredrick

Deb Giarusso

Robert Hellman

Jerry Larson

Maria Maixner

Fran Mueller

J. Howard Mueller*

Dr. Warren Prawl

Dennis Preslicka

Dr. Bert Schou

Jon Tehven

Dr. Jim West

**We are grateful for the time and talent contributed by the late J. Howard Mueller.*



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**See page 3 for details*

Alleviating hunger by helping people help themselves since 1959.

Self-Help International

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Cadbury Hall
Kumasi, Ghana

NICARAGUA
Quinta Lidia, frente al Km. 288 (Este)
Carretera a Managua, San Carlos
Río San Juan, Nicaragua

UNITED STATES
207 20th St NW Suite A
Waverly, IA 50677
United States of America

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