



# Self Help

INTERNATIONAL

*Helping People Help Themselves Since 1959*



## *Holiday Gift Guide*

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### CHLORINATOR CLEANSSES LA CULEBRA



Miguel and his family in La Culebra

**By McKenzie Thompson**  
**Clean Water Project Intern**

Miguel and his wife Griselda live in a compact cement house in La Culebra, Nicaragua, a rural village, home to just over one thousand people. In July of 2013, Miguel petitioned the people of La Culebra to install a CTI-8 water chlorination system after attending a purification demonstration presented by Self-Help International employees. He promptly called a meeting amongst all 228 houses in the area, citing rampant acute diarrheal disease and other water-borne illnesses as dire concerns for the well being of the entire community.

"We immediately held a meeting and voted on the purchase of the system... people were sick of being sick... they were sick of seeing their children sick," he says sternly. His three children, ranging from ages 4 to 10, shoot marbles on the floor of the house as he continues, pausing between thoughts. "We have all had diarrhea and rash breakouts from drinking the impure water," he states, gesturing to the children. "It was filthy... everyone's children suffered the same symptoms... it was always worse for them than the adults."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

### ALMOST LEFT OUT



Yaw before (L) and after (R) joining the school feeding program

**By Deborah Asamoah**  
**School Feeding Program Officer**  
In rural Ghana, quite a number of children spend time idle at home or with their parents on their farms rather than in school. The importance of formal education has still not dawned on most parents within Beposo community in the Atwima Mponua District despite the nationwide push for primary education.

Esther and Simon have been married for seven years and have four children; Eric (5), Paul (4), Akwasi (3) and Monica (1.5 years old). They are subsistence farmers growing maize, cassava, and plantain in Beposo.

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**Self-Help International does not sell nor  
 share its donor list with other organizations.**

## WELCOME SUSAN CORNFORTH



Susan Cornforth, Administrative Assistant, joined Self-Help in September. She is working toward her MA in International Development from St. Mary's University of Minnesota, and recently worked as a volunteer for a year in Bolivia. A seasoned national and international traveler, she understands

that the needs are great and that the work is important, and she is excited to join SHI staff and volunteers fighting hunger. In her free time, Susan volunteers for local hunger organizations and as a youth leader for the Episcopal Diocese of Iowa. She is a voracious reader who enjoys spending time with family, and she sings in a local rock'n roll cover band just for fun!

## GIFTS OF KINDNESS

In memory of Evelyn Elliot  
 by William & Annette Elliot

In memory of Kaisa & Otto Huhta  
 by Wendi Denham

In memory of Marvin Zehr  
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In memory of Gene L. Davis  
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In memory of Vivian Volker  
 by Peter & Mary Jo Hall  
 by Irv & Jan Carbiener

In honor of Joe Legg,  
 65-Year Anamosa Rotarian  
 by Varlyn & Jane Fink

## GIFTS IN MEMORY OF JEAN FREDRICK

Jean Fredrick, mother of Dave Fredrick, board member and longtime friend of the organization, recently passed away, but her legacy lives on. Thank you to those who donated a gift in her memory.

Irv & Jan Carbiener  
 Bert & Diane Schou  
 Randi Ellefson  
 Margaret Phelps  
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 Chris & Mary Schmidt  
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Dale & Mary Harpstead  
 Jon & Gloria Tehven  
 Nancy & Roger Hubbard  
 Edgar & Verona Zelle  
 Fran & Howard Mueller  
 Dave & Cherie Souhrada  
 William & Annette Elliot  
 Peter & Mary Jo Hall

## WOMEN SHARE KNOWLEDGE, EMPOWER ONE ANOTHER

The women from Cruz Verde and El Empalme de Cruz Verde, Nicaragua embody self-sufficiency and empowerment through education that Self-Help International's women's micro-credit program promotes. In November 2013, seven women from Cruz Verde joined the micro-credit program and began participating in the training sessions Self-Help offers in order to learn how to make the best use of their loans and improve their entrepreneurial skills to help them better provide for their families. Nine women from the neighboring village of El Empalme de Cruz Verde (El Empalme) followed suit and joined the program in August of the following year, eager to learn and access loans to build their businesses.

Francisca, the leader of El Empalme, took the initiative to connect with members from Cruz Verde's micro-credit group, in the hopes that the women from each community could each share some of their skills in an open-forum seminar. Many of the skills/trades, such as preparing jams, piñatas, funeral wreaths, cakes, baked/cooked goods, and others, were learned in various training sessions hosted by Self-Help International. To create a fun and collaborating atmosphere for the seminars, Francisca even used a portion of her profits to host a cooking class at El Empalme de Cruz Verde. After the class, participants ate in celebration of a group member's birthday (photo above)!



In addition to learning skills at these seminars, women are able to compare notes on good business practices during these meetings. For example, Vincenta has had more success selling her product door to door in her community, while Francisca sells the various baked goods from a small store front. Both have become popular treats in their pueblos.

As the groups now seek to collaborate for the sake of mutual betterment they embody

the self-sufficiency and empowerment that Self-Help International promotes. Though the first meeting only consisted of three attendees, it has since grown to an average of nine participants, with meetings taking place as often as twice a week. Many women bring their daughters so they can begin learning the nuances of the different businesses and share in mutual success.

They serve as ideal examples of not only the direct benefits of micro-credit lending - earning enough to support their families while responsibly managing their debts - but also the indirect benefits of using their businesses to create new jobs in the community by teaching profitable skills and trades to new employees and other community members. This shared knowledge is one of the greatest impacts that Self-Help's program has created in these various Nicaraguan communities.



**Piñatas are sold for various events, including birthdays, church ceremonies, and graduations.**



*Give the gift that keeps on giving: **DIGNITY***

*Support Self-Help International's micro-credit program to make micro-loans and learning opportunities possible for more women like Francisca and Vincenta so they can achieve the dignity and self-satisfaction of being able to provide for their families. Sponsor twelve months of training sessions and an initial loan for \$245.*

Give the gift that keeps on giving: **NUTRITION**

Young children's brains cannot develop properly without sufficient nutrition, especially protein. The school feeding program helps ensure that children who might not otherwise get a morning meal start the day off right: with a protein-packed breakfast so they can concentrate in the classroom and start the day well-fed. Your \$55 donation will ensure that one of the nearly 500 children Self-Help serves gets at least one healthy meal a day all school year.



## ALMOST LEFT OUT

### CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Eric is in kindergarten (KG) 2 at Beposo D/A Basic School while Paul is in KG1 at Beposo Islamic Basic School. For unexplained reasons, Akwasi does not attend school and suffers from malnutrition, loneliness and lack of necessary parental care.

Akwasi wanted to be in school just like his elder brothers, Eric and Paul, but unfortunately, he was left alone in the house and sometimes wandered through the Beposo community while his parents worked on their farms. There were times his elder brother Paul would sacrifice going to school in order to keep him company. Akwasi would occasionally sneak in and join his brother Paul in the KG1 classroom despite the displeasure of the teachers since he was not enrolled. Yet each time he went to school, he was sure to receive a nutritious cup of Quality Protein Maize (QPM) porridge.

In February 2015, SHI intervened and Akwasi was enrolled at Beposo Islamic Basic School. He is happy to be attending school to learn and is making friends. His teachers tell SHI he never misses school and one of the things he enjoys most is the QPM porridge for breakfast.

Thanks to four months of eating a nutritious daily meal of QPM porridge at the school feeding program, Akwasi has shown significant improvement in his health and confidence.

Esther and Simon have openly expressed their appreciations to SHI, especially the staff in charge of the quality protein maize feeding program, for renewing their thoughts and restoring their confidence in their son Akwasi ("Yaw" for short). Akwasi has since received a school uniform and a backpack, and the family is happier than before.



THANK YOU - THANK YOU - THANK YOU  
YOU - THANK YOU - THANK YOU

Thank you to St. Luke's United Methodist Church in Newton, Iowa for including Self-Help International in Vacation Bible School this summer! We loved speaking with you about the importance of clean, safe drinking water as part of our care for God's creation and service to our brothers and sisters in Nicaragua. Thank you for your generosity in raising enough funds to install 5 more chlorinators in rural Nicaraguan villages!

*Would you like a speaker from Self-Help to share our story with your church, civic or service group? Give us a call! 319-352-4040*



**Did you know?**

Self-Help seeks skilled volunteers to help plan the spring gala, re-design our website, and create videos to tell the SHI story. Contact the office if you're interested in sharing your skill set to alleviate hunger!



*Looking for  
holiday gifts?*

**Check out our Holiday Giving Guide  
on the back of this newsletter.**

## CHLORINATOR CLEANSSES LA CULEBRA

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"*Granos de piel por agua*" is the local name for the rash contracted by ingesting or washing oneself with contaminated water (pictured, right). Affected areas can be local, or cover the entire body. Symptoms include itchiness and moderate pain. If irritated, the rash can lead to more serious infection. The ailments came as a result of fecal particles tainting La Culebra's water supply.



Self-Help International's Water Program Officer, Orlando Montiel Salas, conducted a basic demonstration of contamination levels by collecting water samples in petri dishes and then having samples analyzed in a nearby laboratory. The untreated sample that the community had been ingesting came back from the lab with 14 fecal cultures. Contamination levels between 10 and 100 are considered to be an extreme health risk. Each dot in the petri dish is a thriving colony of fecal bacteria from La Culebra's initially non-chlorinated water source.

After viewing the fecal content of the crude water, over 90% of the community immediately voted in favor of the purchase of the CTI-8 system, recognizing the effectiveness and the low cost of production and maintenance. Since the assembly, Miguel has become the leader of the Clean Water Committee [*Comité de Agua Potable y Saneamiento*, or CAPS] in La Culebra, a volunteer group dedicated to ensuring basic levels of local water sanitation. He says that a variety of people within the community have similarly volunteered to clean and maintain the purification system. "Every month of purified water now costs each household only 30 Cordobas [roughly USD \$1]... other systems are more expensive and the water tastes strange."

While Miguel speaks fervently and fluidly on the functions of the CTI-8 system, as well as the duties of CAPS members, his wife Griselda is more interested in discussing how her life, and the lives of her children, have been changed as a result of Self-Help International's water purification initiative. Bobbing her youngest son on her lap, she states, "We knew it was necessary, but we did not think we could afford it until Self-Help came for the demonstration... I feel safe knowing my children don't worry about getting sick from drinking or washing themselves. It has been one and a half years since the installation; it has been one and a half years of comfort."

Recently, Miguel and Griselda have received increasing amounts of positive feedback and interest from visitors in neighboring communities. With a proud grin, Griselda states, "A teacher I work with travels all the time and says the water in La Culebra is the best in the region!" Miguel nods his head in agreement, explaining that men from surrounding villages have begun asking about La Culebra's water, "Word of mouth travels quickly here, very quickly. When the CTI-8 is this efficient and this cheap, why wouldn't you want it?"

Affordable access to potable water is often taken for granted amongst more developed populaces, but the people of La Culebra still celebrate this recent innovation. Miguel concludes very simply, "It has changed our lives and bettered our community."



CLEAN WATER

*Give the gift that keeps on giving: **CLEAN WATER***

*In Nicaragua, 60% of children under the age of 5 have been treated for diarrhea in the past two weeks alone. With a new water chlorinator, incidence of acute diarrheal disease is cut in half.*

*Make a donation of a water chlorinator to purify water for a community for \$150.*

*Your \$1,500 sponsorship of a community ensures that hundreds of people living in a rural community have access not only to clean water, but also to training and education about handwashing and other sanitary practices so they learn how to make the best use of this precious new resource to lead healthier, more productive lives.*



*Iowa Advance Special #229  
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## FALL HARVEST EVENT: WINE & TAPAS



Self-Help International hosted a Fall Harvest Wine & Tapas event on Wednesday, November 11, at the Tendrils Rooftop Garden, Waverly Health Center. The event brought together about 90 people for an evening sipping great wines, nibbling delicious appetizers created by Len Swiatly of Moment in Thyme, and great conversation! During the program, Lucia Vega, Nicaragua Program Operations Manager, was awarded the Merry Fredrick Leadership Award and accepted the award by video. New this year was a mystery wine garden, featuring six cases of moderately priced wines intermingled with six vintage wines donated from the private collection of Bob & Betty Hellman. Each bottle was wrapped in a colorful bag handmade by Ghanaian seamstress and micro-credit beneficiary, Diana. Attendees could purchase the packages for \$40 per bottle/bag, and had a 1 in 13 chance of winning one of the vintage wines. Congratulations to all who participated, as everyone received an excellent wine and a beautiful new eco-friendly gift bag. Silent auction items and flat-price items were for sale, including CDs donated by Waverly pianist Jean Hilbert, who provided the music for the evening. Many thanks to the planning committee who made this event possible: Maria Maixner, Joanne Jones, and Shelby Soeder.

Also, many thanks to the crew of volunteers who helped the event go smoothly, performing above and beyond the call of duty: Candi Brittain, Jeff Cornforth, Erell Francois, Amanda Groff, Jean Hilbert, Lindley Jones, Nathan Link, Aimee Menhusen, Jen Rea, and David Soeder.

# Thank You to Our Fall Harvest Event Sponsors



## DONATE TO SELF-HELP NOW!

Simply scan the QR code to the right using your phone or mobile device and be directly connected to our donation page. If you do not have a QR code scanner, visit <http://get.beetag.com/> to download a free app.



*Save the Date*  
**Spring Gala**  
*April 15, 2016*

SAVE  
THE  
DATE



DECEMBER 1

#GIVINGTUESDAY

## Celebrate Self-Help Nicaragua's 16th birthday!

What are we asking for? What every 16 year-old asks for, of course! You guessed it, a vehicle!

We can't transport clean water chlorinators to rural communities in need if we can't get there! This #GivingTuesday, help us raise \$25,000 for a pick-up truck for SHI-Nicaragua.

***We are pleased to share that an anonymous group of donors have offered a 50% match on all donations made on #GivingTuesday, up to \$7,000.***

So mark your calendar for Tuesday, December 1st and make a donation to Self-Help International via mail, check, or credit card online to make your giving go even further and help us reach even the most rural and remote areas of Nicaragua!

## TED WAITMAN RECEIVES GOVERNOR'S VOLUNTEER AWARD



Ted Waitman received the 2015 Governor's Volunteer Award from Governor Terry E. Branstad during a special recognition ceremony on June 11 in Cedar Falls. Waitman was honored with an Individual Volunteer Award by Self-Help International for volunteering his time to plan the annual Lags Memorial Golf Tournament benefitting Self-Help's work to alleviate hunger in Ghana and Nicaragua.

"Iowa is recognized as a national leader in volunteerism and service because of the steadfast devotion of our volunteers," stated Governor Terry E. Branstad. "I am pleased to have an opportunity to personally thank this year's Governor's Volunteer Award recipients for contributing their priceless time and talent in ways that make an enormous difference in our state."

"The people selected for these awards have gone well above and beyond what's expected in their quest to help others," said Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds. "Their hard work and dedication have encouraged other citizens to become more engaged, which makes stronger communities."

"Each year, Ted donates hundreds of hours of his time and expertise to organize the annual Give a Hoot for Self-Help Weekend, and each year he manages to make it bigger and better," said Self-Help Executive Director Nora Tobin. "He's raised nearly a quarter million dollars over the years to alleviate hunger through the golf tournament and surrounding events."

According to Tobin, funds raised with Waitman's assistance have enabled hundreds of families to get the training, education, and loans they need to improve their quality of life. He has offered mothers and fathers around the world the dignity of being able to feed their own children.

Tobin said, "Ted's hard work and dedication to this mission is inspiring. Self-Help simply wouldn't be able to make the same impact worldwide without him."

The Governor's Volunteer Awards (GVA) program was created in 1982, with inaugural awards presented in 1983. What began as a small program for state government agencies, has expanded over the years and now provides all Iowa non-profit, charitable, and government organizations with way to honor their volunteers with a prestigious state-level award.

# Thank You

The Waverly staff and Board of Directors would like to take this opportunity to thank Maria Maixner for her outstanding service and dedication to Self-Help International. Maria has served on the Board of Directors for nine years in various leadership roles including vice president, secretary, and development chair. Most especially, over the past six months, Maria has dedicated countless hours volunteering in the Waverly office and reporting for duty several days a week to manage day-to-day operations when key staff persons were out of the office and working overseas, as well as taking on special projects including updating our accounting procedures, integrating our new donor database, chairing the Fall Harvest Wine & Tapas fundraiser, and ensuring our governance procedures are up to the highest standards within the non-profit community. Maria, thank you for sharing your time and talents with us to improve the overall quality of our work to alleviate hunger – we truly could not have done it all without you!



# SOLOMON TURNS AGRICULTURAL WASTE TO PRODUCTIVE USE

By Benjamin Kusi  
Country Director, Ghana



Many farmers in Ghana engage in rice farming for both personal consumption and as a cash crop. After harvesting the rice, much of the rice straw remaining is considered waste. Some farmers throw away the rice straw, while others burn it, just as farmers before them did, unaware of the environmental impact. After completing training sessions at the Fran Mueller & Virginia Lageschulte Young Adult Training Center (YATC), Solomon found a more productive use for this “waste”.

Solomon completed training at Self-Help’s training center in February 2015, where he learned about mushroom production. Just like the other graduates, he



learned how to compost using sawdust, another common “waste” product from the mills. However, sawdust has not been as readily available lately due to rolling power outages in Ghana which have led to lumber mills producing only a fraction of the outputs, and therefore a fraction the sawdust.

Already a rice farmer, Solomon decided to diversify his business pursuits by adding in mushroom production. In order to maximize returns on his investment, he explored an innovative idea: to tap into this wasteful material he had ready access to on his farm, and turn the rice straw “waste” into compost for his mushrooms. In March, Solomon started a pilot study by collecting most of the straw produced nearby to test out his theory that rice straw could be used in place of sawdust for compost for mushroom production.



Despite the rice straw substitution, the mushrooms grew and he was able to successfully start up a new enterprise. In fact, the yields of oyster mushrooms were higher than those produced using sawdust compost. He found that the straw produces mushrooms much bigger in sizes than the sawdust, and that consumers prefer the larger mushrooms to smaller ones.

Mushroom production is now a family business. The enterprise supports the livelihoods of both Solomon and his wife, Abigail, who was previously unemployed, but is now the salesperson for their home business, and enables them to better

provide for their son.

Self-Help has adapted the mushroom production training to include rice straw as well as sawdust as options for composting, so that all future trainees are able to make the most informed decision about how to re-purpose readily available materials in their mushroom production pursuits.



*Give the gift that keeps on giving:*

## EDUCATION



EDUCATION

*Support the Young Adult Training Center in its mission to alleviate youth unemployment in Ghana. Your \$150 donation will ensure that young people like Solomon can access a training course and the start-up capital they need to begin a new enterprise and achieve independence and self-sufficiency.*

## VOLUNTEERS DESIGN, PLANT DEMONSTRATION PLOTS IN NICARAGUA

For farmers, the field is the classroom. However, farmers in Ghana and Nicaragua often have limited or no access to the knowledge and resources needed to increase yields. These factors make the Quality Protein Maize (QPM) demonstration plots at the Fred Strohbehn Training Center in Nicaragua and Fran Mueller & Virginia Lageschulte Young Adult Training Center in Ghana so much more important. At the training centers, farmers learn improved methods to increase yields, and how to dry and store grain to reduce post-harvest loss.

QPM has become an important source of protein, so learning how to maximize yields is critical. Many subsistence farm families cannot afford traditional sources of protein like meat, dairy, and eggs. Quality Protein Maize (QPM) produces higher yields, tastes better than other corn varieties and has 90% the digestible protein as skim milk. By planting and growing Quality Protein Maize (QPM) Nicaraguan farmers can provide better nutrition and additional income. QPM is used to feed the family, make tortillas and breads to sell, and saved to plant next year, for a lasting improvement in both the family's and communities nutritional intake and finances.

In March, a group of four volunteers traveled to Nicaragua to help design the demonstration plot to be planted on the training center grounds. Board Member and Nicaragua Committee Chair, Bert Schou, led the trip and introduced Brian Foster and William and Jane Edwards to Self-Help's work in Nicaragua. The team spent their days on farm tours of Los Chiles coop and Ochomogo seed bank members, participating in micro-credit workshops, and planning and laying out demonstration plots, a trial comparing both QPM and non-QPM varieties as well as the impact of differing levels of nitrogen treatments.



The staff in Nicaragua prepared the land by laying drip irrigation so the plots could be planted even before rainy season officially began, and a second group of volunteers traveled to Nicaragua in May to help the SHI staff plant the demonstration plot area.

The planting was done, the same way the Nicaraguan farmers do it: by hand. Volunteers used simple sticks to measure the distance between kernels for consistent spacing and mark the space where a hole should be dug. Since the rains hadn't come, digging holes was hard work, but the team persevered. After each hole was dug, the next person in line dropped a seed in the hole, then covered it with the loose soil. Small plots were planted within demonstration area and marked to indicate which variety of corn was planted.

While planting by hand may seem basic, this method of planting in a straight row with even spacing is improving yields for farmers over the traditional method of simply scattering seed. The eldest volunteer in the group, Kelly Tobin, is an 83 year old farmer from southwest Iowa who reported that despite farming all his life, it was the first time he'd ever planted corn by hand. Volunteers gained a new appreciation for the labor intensive work the farmers engage in each growing season to produce enough food to feed their families, saying, "I've never been so hot or worked so hard!"



The plot included both quality protein maize and other non-QPM improved seed varieties. During the growing season, farmers were able to see and compare the different varieties of corn planted beside each other, and see first-hand the impact of applying different rates of fertilizer on the growing plant and the yields. The initial fertilizer application was 15-15-15 (NPK) and later the SHI staff applied 46% urea. Farmers could easily make comparisons when they visited the plots and learn about the economics of each plot area to help them determine which option would work best for their personal circumstances.

Thanks to these volunteer trips, American volunteers gained new appreciation for the daily challenges faced by Nicaraguan farmers and shared their expertise to teach hundreds of farmers to improve yield through the practical demonstration plot area. This education, paired with micro-loans for inputs and post-harvest storage, empowers farmers to improve their quality of life and take important steps toward self-sufficiency.

*Interested in joining an upcoming visit to Ghana or Nicaragua? Site visits are primarily focused on cultural immersion and an opportunity to meet the people Self-Help is empowering first-hand and develop new friendships. For skilled volunteers, there may also be opportunities to work with SHI staff members to "train the trainers." Current volunteer needs include expertise in mushroom spore/spawn production, early childhood nutrition, and basic data entry. Participants must be in good physical health since many villages are past the end of the road and involve a bumpy ride. Contact our office to join the mailing list for upcoming trips!*



## NICARAGUA TRIP VOLUNTEERS

March: Bert Schou, Brian Foster, and  
Jane & William Edwards

May: Beth Grabau, Keegan Kautzky, Keith & Nancy  
Swanson, Fr. Chuck Tobin, Jim Tobin, Kelly  
Tobin, Nora Tobin, Susan Tobin, Terry Tobin

# Holiday Gift Guide

Give the gift of self-reliance this year. Choose from gifts of clean water, nutrition, education and economic development, and watch those gifts fight hunger and alleviate poverty as they change the lives of real people in Ghana and Nicaragua.



Give the gift of **clean water**. See pages 1 and 5 to learn how installing a chlorinator and educating communities about clean water improves the health and productivity of an entire village. **Sponsor a village for \$1,500**



Give the gift of **education**. See page 6 to learn how education puts critical research and development skills in the hands of rural farmers as they learn to improve their own practices. **Sponsor training sessions for a farmer or young adult: \$25 - \$250**



Give the gift of **nutrition**. See pages 1 & 4 to learn the difference better nutrition can make in a child's life. Your donation ensures one of the nearly 500 children SHI serves eats at least one healthy meal per day during the school year. **Sponsor a child for a year for \$55**



Give the gift of **economic development**. See page 3 to learn how providing training and micro-credit loans help women improve their families' lives and their own dignity. **Sponsor micro-loans and twelve months of training for a rural woman for \$245**

## Looking for other ways to give?

### Fight Childhood Malnutrition

20 Sippy Cups	\$10
Health/Growth Charts	\$25
Kitchen Supplies	\$150

### Community Health

Water Chlorinator	\$150
Workshop on hand-washing & sanitation for a whole village	\$250

### Empower Women

2 Rabbits	\$25
Initial start-up loan	\$50
Chicken Coop	\$100
Double Barrel Oven	\$200
Screw Press	\$300
Shed Materials	\$500

### Empower Farmers

QPM Seed Pack	\$10
16-Bushel Silo	\$65
Drip Irrigation	\$150
Vocational training	\$200
QPM Storage Shed	\$2,000

***Interested in making a major gift? Contact our office to learn more about how you can make a lasting impact.***