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Positive News™

US Edition

from around the world

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A Great Step Forward Win Over Pesticides for Campaigner Georgina Downs

by Francesca Sandwell

LONDON, UK - A historic victory recently took place at The High Court of Justice, in London. Campaigner, Georgina Downs has won her landmark legal challenge against the government over its policy on the use of pesticides.

This case is the first time that Defra, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, has been directly held to account, with regard to its approach to crop spraying in rural areas. The High Court ruled that Defra must readress its policy and produce an assessment of the risks to people who are exposed.

The award-winning campaigner, who has tirelessly worked for the past seven years to highlight the UK government's failure to protect rural communities from toxic pesticides, was delighted with the announcement. Georgina, who initiated her campaign after long-standing health related problems, has been living next to regularly sprayed land for over 24 years.

"This is obviously a very significant and landmark ruling for the millions of residents throughout the country who, like myself, live in the locality to pesticide-sprayed fields," she declared, emerging triumphant from the Court.

"The fact that there has never been any assessment of the health risks from long-term exposure for those who live, work or go to school near sprayed fields, is an absolute scandal – considering that crop spraying has been a predominant feature of agriculture for over 50 years.

"Under EU and UK law, the absence of any risk assessment means that pesticides should never have been approved for use in the first place, for spraying near homes, schools, children's playgrounds and other public areas."

Georgina supplied crucial evidence in three very detailed Witness Statements. These clearly showed the government had knowingly failed to act. Furthermore, they had cherry picked the science to suit the desired outcome and had continued to issue grossly inaccurate information, misleading rural residents and the public.

In 2003, Georgina produced a DVD, gathering evidence from those

who had also experienced adverse health impacts through pesticide exposure. The DVD, which government officials and advisors had dismissed, played a crucial role in her court case.

Lord Justice Collins, the judge in the case, urged the government to change the rules, requiring all farmers to provide residents with prior notification before spraying, adding that there was a strong case for no-spray zones around homes.

"For this campaign, I put everything on hold," said Georgina, who often works from 9am to 3am. "I just decided to try to do everything I could to change the Government's policy on pesticides. This landmark legal victory is now the best chance we have to fundamentally change the system for the future of public health."

Georgina's contribution, commitment and dedication has been recognised with several outstanding awards – including winning the first ever Inspirational Eco Woman of the Year Award and in 2006, the prestigious Andrew Lees Memorial prize at BEMAs – the British Environment and Media Awards.

Contact: Georgina Downs
www.pesticidescampaign.co.uk
Story from Positive News UK



© Barbara Robinson

Georgina Downs celebrates outside the High Court, in London, following her inspirational victory against the current pesticide safety regulations.

Positive News Aims to



- Bring hope
- Exemplify solutions
- Inspire to action
- Connect with those who create positive change

We envision a world in which people treat each other with respect and kindness, where we consider the Earth to be our home to care for and to enjoy... And we know that this world is in the process of emerging...

Positive News is a reflection of this widespread emerging movement and tells its stories.

Coming This Fall to a Location Near You: Peace and Nonviolence

Marty Luster

Remember the old slogan, "What if they threw a war and nobody came?" Over the next several months that might well be changed to, "What if they held a peace march and everybody came?"

That's exactly what World Without Wars and other sponsors of the World March for Peace and Nonviolence are hoping will happen when this worldwide event kicks off on October 2, 2009 (Gandhi's birthday) in Wellington, New Zealand.

The March will take 90 days, ending in Punta de Vacas, Aconcagua, Argentina on January 2, 2010. It will pass through 6 continents, 90 countries and travel 99,419 miles through every climate imaginable, from temperate to desert to polar to tropical. In 90 days the March will twice pass through all four seasons of the year.

The March aims to achieve the eradication of nuclear weapons, the progressive and proportional reduction of



© Jolie Clifford

March kick off in New York City.

Some of the initiatives planned include:

- A "Peace Train" of people who will travel from Vancouver to Red Bluff, where they will connect up with members of the International team;
- A team of marchers will walk from Toronto, Canada to Buffalo, NY crossing the Peace Bridge, where they will be met by a team of Upstate NY marchers;
- A New England march to NYC;
- Hawaii march around Honolulu;
- Queens College in New York will be hosting a nonviolence film festival.

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Positive News

115 THE COMMONS
ITHACA, NY 14850
TEL: 607-330-4330
welcome@positivenewsus.org

POSITIVE NEWS
US EDITION

WWW.POSITIVENEWSUS.ORG

EDITOR:

Ilonka Wloch

CO-EDITOR:

Polly Wood

ASSOCIATE EDITOR:

Marty Luster

OFFICE MANAGER:

Lisa Woodruff

GRAPHIC DESIGNER:

Linda Holzbaur

SUPPORT TEAM:

John Hamilton, Lindy Clayton,
Neil Oolie, Lee Riddell, Cindy Golos

YOUTH TEAM:

Julia Pergolini, Cicely Kurtz, Gabe
Shapiro, Andris Goncarovs,
and Jordan Cosentini

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POSITIVE NEWS
UK EDITION
WWW.POSITIVENEWS.ORG.UK

EDITORS:

Shauna Crockett Burrows
Francesca Sandwell

GRAPHIC DESIGNER:

Sarah Wilkinson

POSITIVE NEWS UK

Telephone: +44 (0)1588 640 022
office@positivenews.org.uk
www.positivenews.org.uk

NOTICIAS POSITIVAS Argentina
Teléfono: +54 11 15 5739 8139
info@noticiaspositivas.org
www.noticiaspositivas.org

POSITIVE NEWS Hong Kong
Tel/Fax: 00852 2982 2807
Email: peterlloyd@netvigator.com

Coming This Fall: Peace & Nonviolence

Continued from Page 1

non-nuclear arms, the signing of non-aggression treaties among nations and the renunciation by governments of war as a way to resolve conflicts.

It is expected that about 1 million people will participate directly in the March with virtual participation by ten times that amount. According to the sponsors, because the March is "open to any person, organization, collective, group, political party, business, etc., that shares the same aspirations and sensibility, this project is not something closed. Instead, it is a journey that will be progressively enriched as different initiatives set their contributions in motion." An invitation is extended to all to participate freely, "so that wherever the March goes, the local people can contribute their creativity in a great convergence of multiple activities."

The World March for Peace and Nonviolence is scheduled to pass through the U.S between November 30 and December 3, 2009, with visits to New York City, Washington DC and San

Francisco before heading south to cross into Mexico.

In addition, December 2nd will be declared "National World March for Peace & Nonviolence Day." The development of local, state, and regional marches that may or may not connect with the international leg of the March are encouraged. They will serve to bring attention to the goals of the March and maximize participation throughout the country. It is also expected that numerous local events will take place during the event's 3-month journey, including but not limited to: forums, film festivals, civil disobedience, educational programs, concerts and performances, and other artistic and cultural events. It is hoped that events will occur in each of the 50 states.

Author, teacher and activist Noam Chomsky, one of the U.S. participants, has said that the March, "could hardly be more timely, and should serve as an inspiration to those who seek to fulfill the noble ideals that Gandhi's life and work symbolized in ways that are rarely approached."

Contact: www.worldmarch.info

From our reader: A Letter of Action



photo by
Catherine
LaFerme

**Brother
Lewie
(left)
shares
Positive
News in
his
home-
town of
Grass
Valley,
CA.**

In response to the Obama era of renewed civic activism – I hope I've amped up my own outreach to include doing more with each issue of my favorite newspaper [Positive News] than just reading it.

I hand out copies from my "bundle" I now order regularly, to folks in strategic places like outside our local co-op market, and ask them to read it proactively, that is when an article jumps out at them, opening the heart big-time, use the website or contact information given to support the action written about in some way.

I also copy articles to send on

to others who might support and/or spread the particular positive effort described. (I sent a copy of the Bogotá traffic cleanup by two mayors to a friend who works in a strategic position with San Francisco's environmental commission, for example).

The intention behind this is that any effort we make no matter what size will resonate with the universe's Good, and that "trickle-up democracy" (Amy Goodman's phrase) is changing the world one effort at a time.

~In Peace

Brother Lewie

Senate Expands Wilderness Protection



Zion National Park in Utah.

by Nick Boyar

On January 15, the US Senate approved the largest expansion in wilderness protection in the last 25 years by a vote of 73-21. Over 2 million acres in 9 states were designated as protected wilderness. The bill was a collection of about 160 lands-related bills sponsored by both Republicans and Democrats from over the last two years.

The passage of this bill, which occurred the week before President Obama's inauguration, may be an

early indication of a new cooperative direction in environmental legislation. The House of Representatives is expected to consider the bill and pass it in the near future, after which it will be signed by the President and become law.

The bill grants the highest level of government protection to a range of lands including California's Sierra Nevada Mountains, Oregon's Mount Hood, Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado, and Jefferson National Forest in Virginia. Additionally, lands in Idaho's Owyhee canyons, Pictured Rocks

National Lakeshore in Michigan and Zion National Park in Utah would be designated as protected wilderness.

Christy Goldfuss of the advocacy group Environment America said, "By voting to protect mountains and pristine wildlands, Congress is starting out on the right foot." The bill would also expand protections for dozens of national parks, rivers, and water resources.

With the addition of these new lands, protected federal wilderness will still remain around 100 million acres, or less than five percent of

the nation's total land. Critics remain concerned that the current practice of environmental protection does not sufficiently challenge the view that most land should be unprotected by law and open to resource extraction for profit.

After many years of weakened environmental regulation, however, the passage of this bill as one of the first acts of the new Congress sends a clear signal that a majority of the members of both major political parties are willing to work together with the new administration to support environmental protection.



at the last minute...



Sacred Site Saved

SAN CLEMENTE, CA— One of the most historically significant sacred sites of the Acjachemen people, Panhe and San Onofre State Park will remain protected thanks to a decision from the U.S. Department of Commerce issued this winter.

San Onofre remains one of the most popular state parks and is visited by nearly 2.5 million people every year. The toll road would have devastated Panhe and San Onofre. In February 2008, the California Coastal Commission voted 8-2 to block a six-lane toll road that would have caused severe harm to Panhe and San Onofre, the fifth-most visited park in California. When explaining her decision before the crowd of over 3,000, Coastal Commissioner Mary Shallenberger said that the impacts of the proposed toll road on the Acjachemen people were reason enough to deny the road.

Jewish Voice for Peace Supports Young Refuseniks

The organization Jewish Voice for Peace has launched a global movement on behalf of a group of over 70 Israeli high school seniors calling for Israel to recognize the rights of conscientious objectors. The students have refused to obey their legal requirement to serve in the military, and some have been jailed.

In December, the group, called the Shministim, launched an on-line campaign asking for letters of support. On December 18, they delivered 22,000 letters to the Israeli Minister of Defense in Tel-Aviv. The group has continued to receive an outpouring of support: a total of 50,000 letters have come in from around the world since the campaign started.

Source: YES! Spring 09

Brazil Agrees to Protect Rainforests

The Brazilian government made its first-ever serious commitment to Amazon rainforest protection this December, pledging to reduce the rate of deforestation by 70 percent over the next decade.

If the target is met, it will keep 4.8 billion tons of CO2 out of the atmosphere.

The announcement came just before the most recent international climate meeting in Poznan, Poland, where negotiators debated how to reward countries that reduce deforestation. Brazil's plan seeks international funding. Norway has pledged \$1 billion over seven years to the effort.

Source: YES! Spring 09

Rock Hero with a Conscience

Musician and songwriter Peter Gabriel was recently presented with the Amnesty International Ambassador of Conscience Award 2008 at London's Hard Rock Cafe.

"For more than 25 years Peter Gabriel has been at the vanguard of the struggle for human rights and justice around the world," explained Art for Amnesty's Bill Shipsey. "Peter's involvement with the pioneering Amnesty International music tours of the 80s, his establishment of and promotion of Witness and his more recent inspiration, which led to the creation of The Elders, are remarkable achievements from an even more remarkable man."

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, a member of The Elders, stated: "Peter Gabriel richly deserves the accolade. He has ubuntu – that marvellous quality which speaks of compassion, generosity and is all about sharing and hospitality."

The Award, in its fifth year, recognises 'exceptional leadership and witness in the fight to protect and promote human rights.' It was given to Vaclav Havel in



Peter Gabriel was presented with the Ambassador of Conscience Award, a Fender Amnesty International acoustic guitar, by Dave Evans, aka The Edge.

"For more than 25 years Peter Gabriel has been at the vanguard of the struggle for human rights and justice around the world."

2003, Mary Robinson and Hilda Morales Trujillo in 2004, U2 and Paul McGuinness in 2005 and Nelson Mandela in 2006.

The inspiration for the award comes from a poem written for Amnesty by the Irish Nobel prize-winning poet Seamus

Heaney, The Republic of Conscience.

Contact: www.artforamnesty.org

and www.amnesty.org

Story from Positive News UK

President Obama Announces Historic Clean Energy Budget

WASHINGTON, DC – In February President Obama unveiled his budget proposal committing to advance clean energy and cap global warming pollution. In response Wesley Warren, Director of Programs for the Natural Resources Defense Council, issued the following statement:

"President Obama's budget is the first in history to make critical in-

vestments in our clean energy future and tackle global warming head on. This is made possible by his unprecedented commitment to capping carbon emissions that will create new investments in clean, alternative energy and spur our economic recovery.

"The challenges we face have brought unique opportunities, and President Obama's bold call for a

clean energy economy will create jobs at home and restore America's place in the world as leaders and innovators.

"Following on this momentous announcement, we are ready to work with members of Congress to fund the president's ground-breaking priorities."

The Natural Resources Defense Council is a national, nonprofit organization of scientists, lawyers and environmental specialists dedicated to protecting public health and the environment. Founded in 1970, NRDC has 1.2 million members and online activists, served from offices in New York, Washington, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Beijing.

Contact: NRDC.org



at the last minute...



Parisian Radical Picnic Protests

This winter, a couple of dozen young French activists entered supermarkets in or around Paris, chose an aisle, unfolded tables, put on some music, took food from the shelves, and started a little picnic. The playful event is a flash protest against global capitalism, rampant consumerism, bank bail-outs, poor housing, expensive food, and profit margins.

"This is fun, festive, non-threatening and attracts the media. It's the perfect way of getting our message across," said Leïla Chaïbi, 26, organizer of the in-store picnics. So far reactions have been good, the group claims. In one supermarket in a suburb of Paris, the activists got a spontaneous round of applause from the checkout workers. Elsewhere, security guards have been "friendly".

Linked to a new left-wing political party committed to a renewal of politics and activism, Chaïbi's group has been gaining nationwide attention.

Vermont's Win over Auto Industry

The U.S. Supreme Court upheld Vermont's right to enforce stricter regulations on greenhouse-gas emissions for cars. Vermont's law calling for a 30 percent reduction in greenhouse-gas emissions for automobiles by 2016 had been challenged by the American automobile industry. The suit claimed that individual states must defer to the federal emissions standards set under the Clean Air Act.

Source: YES! Winter 08

World's Largest Bike Fleet in Paris

Paris will soon be home to the world's largest public bike fleet. This summer, the city joined Amsterdam, Oslo, and Copenhagen in offering low-cost bicycle rentals to help solve its traffic, pollution, and parking issues. Free for the first half-hour of use, the bikes can be rented and returned at more than 800 stations across the city. YES! Spring 09

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Who Is Michelle Bachelet?

by Heather Crawford

When Michelle Bachelet was elected President of Chile in 2006, she not only became its first female elected president, but also the first woman in Latin America to reach the presidency via direct election who was not the wife of a previous political leader. Who is



Michelle Bachelet, President of Chile.

this Michelle Bachelet and what has she helped her country achieve so far?

In the mid-70s, Michelle had lost her father under the dictatorship of Pinochet, and was herself mistreated and eventually exiled, along with her mother. Following her return to Chile, she began passionately striving for the re-establishment of democracy in the 1980s, and the rest is "herstory". Michelle is a mother of three children, a pediatrician & epidemiologist, and has served as both Minister of Health, and Minister of Defense. "I am a woman, a socialist, separated and agnostic—all the sins together," she says.

It's no surprise that high on president's list of priorities is increasing social benefits to help reduce Chile's gap between rich and poor. She also vowed that her government "will fight with all its capacity for the full exercise of women's rights." To this end, equal numbers of women and men are now serving in top government jobs, including her Cabinet. Women were for the first time



© Luca Galuzzi

Miscanti Lagoon near San Pedro de Atacama, Chile.

admitted at the naval academy. New laws have given women the right to breast-feed at work, stiffened the penalties for men who fail to pay alimony, and expanded the ability of courts to deal with rampant domestic abuse. Hundreds of nurseries have been established nationwide, along with domestic violence shelters.

Michelle is also setting an excellent example for other world leaders on the conservation front.

Her administration has taken a bold stance to ban whaling in their waters, declared numerous protected areas, and made upgrades to those already protected. They have also promoted the development of alternative energy like solar and wind power plants, together with increasing access to electricity in remote areas.

While there is much more work to be done, it appears that Chile is stepping up to the plate.

Dare to Hope

by Lee Riddell

Positive News wants to know what You find hopeful in the world today.

Seems like every single day I meet with new challenges and destruction of existing values. But when I step back, I have never seen so many people genuinely caring about what is really happening with nature and with our culture. There are incredible amounts of grassroots groups, neighborhood circles looking at "what can we do?" There are so many people implementing environmental sustainability, using modesty in their living, supporting organic foods and clothing, and helping others.

This is something that I have been struggling with for the last several years, trying to bring up my kids as responsible citizens in society drunk on "irrational exuberance" of previous years. I don't regret that we have less now. Every day when we wake up to face our responsibilities as society and humanity, we grow stronger and will rebuild anything, but this time with respect and reverence.

~Alina Bartell, Natural Clothing Company, Snohomish, WA

I'm hopeful because I know a lot of people who are working hard to save us and the planet, they're resourceful

and upbeat, and I feel very privileged to work with them. They inspire me and remind me that no matter the situation in which we might find ourselves, there is always something we can do.

No matter the situation that we find ourselves, there is always something you can do. I think of all the people who are very positive. I might give up for two minutes and then it comes to me what I can do.

~Jonathan Frieman, Transition Towns, San Rafael, CA



That the faiths of the world are joining together and teaching respect for each other. This is the most powerful vehicle for peace in the world.

~Neil Shulman, MD, Cofounder: Celebration of Spirituality, Decatur, GA

That people are more connected than ever before through the internet, conversations and community and sharing ideas for social change.

~Safiya Umoja Noble, School for Designing a Society, Urbana, IL



I see that we are in a time of ecological awakening and I see evidence of it in every sector and discipline. I'm encouraged by the vision and capacity and strength of young people arising into leadership and enthused to see their creativity manifesting across business, education, arts, and every aspect of our culture. I'm also really encouraged by the increasing interest in indigenous life ways in consciousness and spirituality because all of these things are evidence to me of our society rebalancing toward greater wholeness. In the 19 years since the Bioneers started we have seen a tremendous proliferation of work to transform our relationship to the Earth. And on a personal level, what most lights me up is women liberating their own capacity to live lives that are purposefully effective and joyful.

~Nina Simons, President and Co-founder of Bioneers



That natural cures for psychiatric disorders are working and that people are using them.

Roy Heilbron, MD, Caring Cardiology, Miami Beach, FL

Women Tell Obama 'Our Time Has Come'

by Ruth Robertson

Today women represent more than half the world's human potential! It goes without saying that they need to be at the heart of important discussions for the world's peace and security.

Soon after President Obama was elected, a group of global and domestic women's rights leaders gathered in New York. Their purpose? To frame a shared agenda for advancing global women's rights and to influence the creation of a peaceful and just world.

They crafted an open letter to Obama welcoming his "call to action" and emphasized that women are ready and willing to be involved in change in these historic times. They asked for Obama's help in several key areas including ensuring that women are allowed to take the lead in building lasting peace in the Middle East, in Darfur, and in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Their letter goes on to speak of the great inspiration that comes from knowing that there are women in key positions in America's political system. What a change from 100 years ago when US women first gained the right to vote! But, they remind our president, women represent more than 50% of the population and deserve more than marginal representation. Today only 14% of the US Congress are women, a fact, they tell the president, that must be part of the change he called for when campaigning to be the nation's leader.

The writers envision a future in which women and men are equal partners, standing shoulder to shoulder in confronting the world's many challenges, including environmental, financial, and social justice issues. The policy makers, activists, and researchers who crafted the open letter to Obama reminded the president that women are at the heart of all communities and families. They want to solve world problems, not just women's problems, as the two are integral. We women, they add, "literally carry the future in our bodies."

With a new administration's support we can look forward to hearing more women's voices in major discussions about world economics, education reform, and improved health care. After all, can the change we all look forward to be achieved without the equal participation of women at all levels of society? From the home to institutions of national and global governance, women hold up more than half the sky!

To read the letter visit:
www.feminist.com/news/openletter.html



Local Housing Program Echoes in Developing World

by Andris Goncarovs

Every month, Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services, Inc. (INHS), graduates a dozen income-qualified, mortgage-ready people from their First Time Homebuyer Education program. Often, the graduates find it difficult to find an affordable house to buy. Many end up in cramped, unsafe apartments, or in trailers twenty miles away from their jobs.

"It's bad for the family, it's bad for the community, and it's bad for the environment," says Jack Jensen, Co-Founder and Executive Director of Community Building Works! Inc. (CBW), a not-for-profit corporation, talking about the dearth of affordable housing in Tompkins County.

"At CBW, we have an action agenda - enough talking about the problem.

Let's roll up our sleeves and do something about it," says Jack. He and Program Director Sheila Squier have between them 50 years of experience in creating affordable housing.

Founded in 2006, with its first construction site in 2008, Community Building Works! Inc. is ready to take on affordable housing in Tompkins County and internationally. For every house they build locally, they will also build a house in a developing country. The organization's business model calls for the creation of low cost housing by use of volunteer labor. The difference between the price of the house and its cost gets plowed back into the organization for use in creating housing for low-income people in developing countries.

Before founding CBW, Jack and Sheila volunteered with an organization called JourneyWays in

Ecuador. The couple helped build a house for a family in less than a week, with a final cost of \$3,000, US. They were inspired and realized that they could run a similar operation in Ithaca.

"We had been trying to find a way to tap the energy, enthusiasm, and good will of the community to help create affordable housing for quite some time," says Jack. So, thanks to volunteers and Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services, CBW hopes to add four brand-new affordable houses a year - two in Tompkins County and two in developing countries.

Contact: www.communitybuildingworks.org

This article was written by Andris Goncarovs who became one of our Positive News student interns this semester.



© Marty Luster

Jack Jensen, Co-Founder of Community Building Works! (center) takes a break with volunteers Joe Decker and Steele Steffy.



Creative commuter in Portland, Maine, one of the Transition Towns.

Transition Towns Embrace Change

by Jenn Rego

Driven by a new vision of hope, cities and towns across the globe are transforming themselves. One by one, entire communities are making a positive, conscious choice to create a healthier, cleaner, more sustainable future. Inspired by Rob Hopkins, founder of Transition Network, these Transition Towns are actively working to reduce their dependence on fossil fuels, reduce carbon emissions, and foster a culture that utilizes local, renewable resources.

According to Rob, "[We] are entering the end of the age of cheap oil, called peak oil, the point beyond which world oil production enters a terminal decline, [and] we need to rethink a number of very basic assumptions about how we live."

Transition Network provides a catalyst for communities to proactively explore their own reactions to both peak oil and climate change.

The Network seeks to set an inspiring example of communities thriving under a new paradigm working with the Earth's natural resources and rhythms, rather than taking from them.

Stan Ward, Co-Founder of the Transition Hamilton-Wenham Initiative, was moved to engage his own community after reading Hopkins' book, *The Transition Handbook*. "[It is an] exciting and hopeful book about what can be done given a positive, but realistic vision of the future". To start his initiative, Stan attended a training program co-facilitated by Naresh Giangrande, a founding member of the first Transition Town, Totnes, UK.

These are more than small ecovillages; these are entire communities making a serious, long term commitment and taking real action. According to Jonathan Frieman, a Transition Town activist in San Rafael, CA, food security, local currency, and waste management are essential elements allowing com-

munities to close the loopholes which make them vulnerable to oil dependency.

Of the 134 official Transition Towns, 13 are in the US and include Boulder, CO, Montpelier, VT, Portland, ME, Sandpoint, ID, and Santa Cruz, CA. If you are interested in starting an initiative, the first step is to review a list of 16 criteria designed to help assess how ready your community is. Afterwards, there is a twelve step process that begins with one inspired person, like Stan, who brings together a small startup group of 4-5 individuals ready to educate and raise awareness within their community. The Transition Network provides resources, training, networks and other assistance for those interested in learning more or starting an initiative in their own community.

Contact: *Transition Towns*
www.transitiontowns.org
info@transitionnetwork.org

Viva Veg Scraps: Composting in San Francisco

by Jen Sotolongo

First it achieved the highest recycling rate in the country at seventy percent, next it established a target rate for 2010 of 75 percent, and now, in its quest to become a zero-waste society by 2030. San Francisco is poised to implement the nation's first mandatory composting program.

The first large city in the U.S. to initiate citywide food collection, San Francisco began its pilot composting program in 1996, which expanded across the Bay Area by 1998. While composting is not yet mandatory, San Francisco Environment has drafted an ordinance that is currently under review.

"We're looking to have mandatory composting in residences, multifamily or commercial properties, restaurants and at public events," said Alexa Kielty, Residential Recycling and Special Project Assistant as SF Environment. "We anticipate that the ordinance will be implemented one year from now, after it passes and the city goes through a year-long phase-in education program."

In order to attain participation among constituents during initial stages of composting, mailings and detailed brochures were mailed out in multiple languages including Spanish and Chinese. Residents have also been provided with incentives such as wheeled carts to hold recyclables, compost and trash, 2-gallon kitchen pails for food scraps and compostable bags to

line the pails. Some participants go even further. "I am a San Francisco resident who uses the curbside compost program," says Kazoo Shearman. "It is wonderful! In an effort to encourage more of my friends to compost I have gone as far as buying them their own kitchen compost bins." Composting and recycling will be more economical as well since participants will only be charged for the amount of trash produced.

"As a resident, you can get unlimited recycling and composting. There is no associated cost with recycling," said Alexa.

The three hundred tons of compost waste that are collected each day are delivered to a composting facility that converts yard trimmings, food scraps and other compostable materials from San Francisco

homes, hotels, restaurants and other commercial businesses into a high-grade, nutrient rich soil to be used mainly by organic farmers and wineries, who supply food and wine back to the restaurants who originally provide the compost.

San Francisco serves as a model to cities throughout the country by proving that a major metropolis can successfully achieve a closed loop composting system.

Contact: *Joanne Wong*
Residential & Special Projects Recycling Associate, San Francisco Environment
Tel: 415.355.3754
Email: joanne.wong@sfgov.org



© GlobalGiving

Tsunami affected women in India learn new skills thanks to donors participating in GlobalGiving.

Global Giving

by Julia Pergolini

Global Giving is a non-profit online marketplace founded in 1997 whose vision is to “unleash the potential of people around the world to make positive

change happen.”

The organization provides an opportunity to support and become involved with the causes that we care about. This happens by visiting www.globalgiving.com, selecting the project to support and making a tax-deductable donation.

Programs of support are divided by countries or categories. Some examples of projects in need include sending rural girls to school in Zimbabwe and protecting forests in Mexico

Contact: www.globalgiving.com

Be Kind— You're It!

by Julia Pergolini

Ever hear of “paying it forward?” Well now you really can. Since September 2003, smile cards have been appearing all around the world. They are markers of a newfangled game of tag, where “you're it” because someone has done something nice for you. Then it's your turn to do something nice for someone else and, in the process, pass the card along.

It's really simple. Your only task is to do something nice for someone else, and if you can't think of something, the organization will provide a list of good ideas for random acts of kindness. For example, buy a stranger dessert at a restaurant. or leave some flowers on your neighbor's doorstep with a smile card attached. And like a ripple effect, thoughtfulness becomes contagious.

You can order cards at www.helpothers.org. They come in a variety of languages and designs. Already 450,000 cards have been printed. Join the crusade for kindness.

This article was written by Julia Pergolini, our Positive News intern this semester.

smile.
You've just been tagged!

Experiments in Anonymous Kindness is the name of the game.
and now- you're It 😊

Economy from the Heart

by Anya Lapham

Would you believe that there is another economy underlying the one spoken about by administration economists, CEOs and public policy specialists? It is the economy which provides us our most basic needs - child rearing, familial support and community giving. There is, in fact, an economy alive and well underneath all the scarcity and fear economics – the gift economy. And there is a modern movement as it continues to thrive, like an undeterable dandelion, through sidewalk cracks of capitalist markets and seemingly all-powerful global economics.

The gift economy is not a new idea. Traditional societies have been practicing and sustaining themselves within a gift-giving economy for a very long time such as the Pacific Northwest's potlatch ceremonies. As our “free” market's lack of human care and equity is exposed, and new research questions

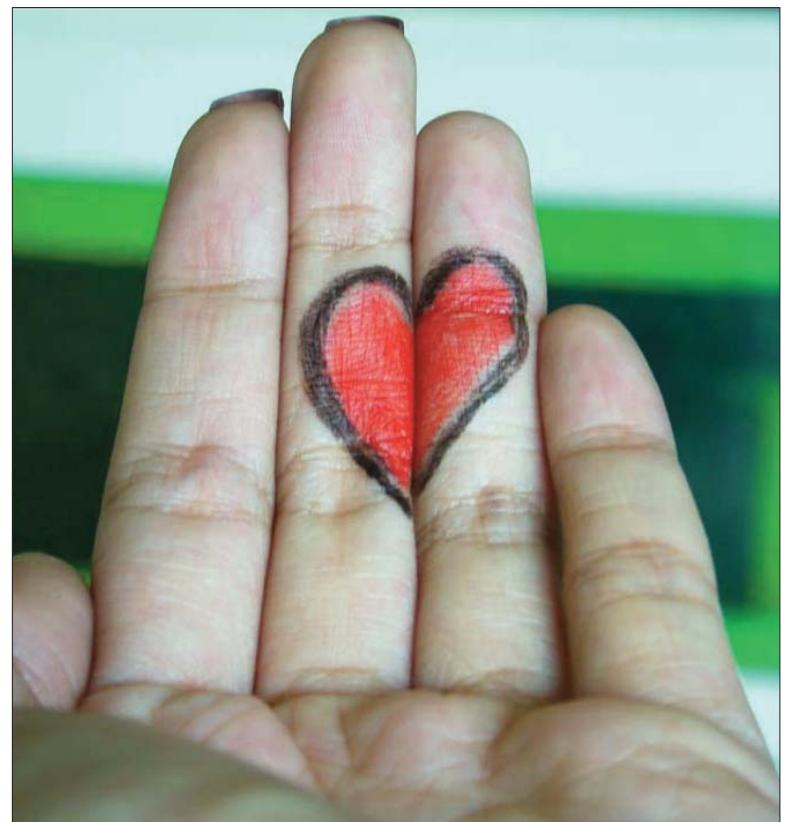
if this recent crash would've been different if women were running Wall Street, we can choose to return our focus to the economics which will never abandon us or run out of resources. This is because the gift economy or gift-giving as a basis for an entirely different economic system operates according to human need not greed as it arises out of women's nurturing.

Feminist gift economy theorist Genevieve Vaughn's work states that we are already, as is the exchange economy, dependent for survival on the gift economy, yet we don't acknowledge it. Gift-giving is an economy entirely sustained by gift not exchange. How else are workers who produce our Gross Domestic Product (GDP) reared if not from the gift of their parents raising them? Words and ideas that are freely shared fuel culture and language. If global economics crash, will we still have these things? Will the Earth still grow food for us, families and communities take care of each other and

share wealth?

At a time when economic hard times threaten our lifestyle and fear hits, the strength of the gift economy shows through as families move in together and share what resources they do have. Community members and non-profits advocate for shared and equal access to housing, food and health care and provide free services.

President Obama's stimulus package depends upon this continued gift-giving of families and communities in order for the country to recover. Modern and ancient gift-giving abound such as free networks like Freecycle and Wikipedia, open source software, blood banks, organ donations, religious spiritual celebrations, rituals, and meals which feed an entire community, giving alms, charity and the countless ways in which we nurture and care for one another regardless of reciprocity. This economic system will not fail us, rather grows stronger as we need and use it.





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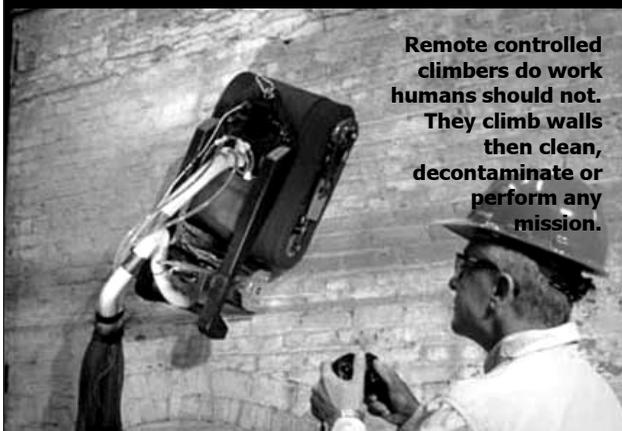
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The Gift of Simplicity

Katherine Jamieson

Traveling in the back of a pick-up truck in the remote interior of Guyana, in South America, we stopped in an Amerindian town, near the border of Brazil. The savannah stretched before me, dotted with straw huts and bony cows; the Kanuku mountains rising up in massive peaks at the edge of the horizon.

As we pulled away, I saw a young girl running towards the truck. The driver rolled down his window. "Could you take this to Aloma?" she asked, "in Lethem?" She handed him a folded piece of paper. "Yes," he said smiling. "She'll have it by night time." She stood back as we set off down the one-lane highway.

The image of this young girl waving, returns to me even now, ten years later. I marvelled at her faith, relying on a stranger to deliver her precious message. I imagined this Aloma passing her responding note to another driver—a circle of words, journeying back and forth, from hand to hand, across a silent plain.

For two years, I had this simplicity. After being warned of Guyana's poverty, I had braced myself to live without air-conditioning, hot water or reliable elec-

tricity. My possessions soon succumbed to tropical rust or mould. I did not own a car or bicycle. A piece of foam served as my mattress and a pipe jutting from a cement cell was my shower.

These privations however were minor, compared to the destitution of families living in their makeshift shacks in the squatter areas. The teenage girls at the school where I taught, barely had money for uniforms, yet managed to keep them

clean and ironed every day. If I left my ballpoint behind, one of the girls would run after me, yelling: "Miss! You forgot your pen!" What I lost, they protected. What I assumed would always be available to me, they never took for granted.

I studied under the tutelage of a no-throw-away economy. My host mother dug my empty toothpaste tube out of the rubbish bin, then cleaned and transformed it into a kitchen appliance. A country where everyone knows how to clear a drain with a straightened wire hanger and any garbage is picked through for scrap metal, roofing, the missing piece needed to resurrect a radio, a car.

I had not realised what a relief simplicity can be. Life was indeed harder sometimes, less convenient and much slower. It forced me to be patient. I also began to enjoy the freedom of my limited and unchanging wardrobe. I had no computer or newspaper subscription and my only books were the ones I had lugged along with me.

The gift of Guyana was one of limited options. The one film showing in town was the one that you

saw. The dinner on offer at the rum shop on the corner, was what you ate that night—one beer, one kind of cheese, no apples.

Previously I had always imagined that more choices were better. I had never expected to find relief in what I could not have.

My return to the States was rocky. Plastic metro cards strewn about the New York City subway platform seemed a wild extravagance. Why couldn't they be reused. Where would all this excess go? Wise words echoed back to me: too much of one thing ain't good for nothing! In my home country

My host mother dug my empty toothpaste tube out of the rubbish bin, then cleaned and transformed it into a kitchen appliance.



© Katherine Jamieson

Amerindian children in a dugout canoe.

there seemed to be vastly too much of everything.

I tolerated the high cost of living and the people who sold me groceries without looking at my face because I thought this was the cost of life in the States. I had access to everything I had been 'missing' but I now found that I did not need or even enjoy much of it. I could not satisfy the yearning I felt for the quiet years spent in the developing world. It was however, impossible to explain this to anyone; my nostalgia was illogical in a country where less is rarely good, never better.

My life became a desperate search for the elusive 'simple'. It was no longer a matter of walking down the dirt road to the open-air market and accepting a ripe mango from the same sinewy hand that had picked it that very morning. I became a follower of Voluntary

Simplicity—the lifestyle component of the environmental movement. I soon realised that the philosophy was missing the point of the real simplicity I had seen in Guyana. I was paring down to reject the consumerist society but it was not just about material things. What I craved was simplicity of mind—to regain the stillness and silence of those long, hot Guyana days. Days where nothing was needed and nothing was extra.

I went to a meditation centre and in the hours of silence realised that it was not so much the country itself I missed but the kind of mind that the landscape had allowed me to develop. In Guyana, I had dwelled in natural beauty, dwelled in my friendships, dwelled in my life. It was this that I was missing so painfully when I came home.

Guyana haunts me still. The girl

on the road and her little note in the driver's hand. My meditation practice has shown me that simplicity is always available, although I must consciously choose it, where once it was granted to me by circumstance. Each morning I light a candle, burn incense, lower my eyes. In my mind, I wait for the girl's note to be delivered. I wait to be able to grasp its meaning. "Stop waiting," her words whisper from the page. "You choose your life."

An excerpt from Katherine Jamieson's memoir about her experiences living in Guyana which won first prize in the Lantern Books Essay Contest.

Contact: Katherine Jamieson
katherine@simplylivingwell.net
www.simplylivingwell.net
Reprint from Positive Living

Tina Quits Her Day Job

After six years in the tech industry, Tina Su found the more money she made, the less satisfied she became. So she quit her job and appointed herself Chief Happiness Officer of her own life. She had three goals: to complete a triathlon, to learn French, and to live every day fully.

Her website thinksimplynow.com was born of her enthusiasm to share the daily joys she discovered in being master of her time. She blogs about passive income, the four-hour workweek lifestyle, and empowering mindsets. While the audience was originally intended to be family and friends, that circle now includes people in 197 countries, 9,000 subscribers, and 200,000 online visitors a month.



Tal Ben-Shahar.

Tal Teaches Happiness at Harvard

Tal Ben-Shahar teaches the Happiness Class at Harvard University. He says it starts with readings in the research on "how to get happy." But it doesn't stop there—students then apply tested techniques to their own lives to try to increase their happiness.

The class has become the most popular at Harvard. Ben-Shahar said he achieved personal happiness by taking himself off the tenure track—because not having to publish makes him happy.

Reprints from "Sustainable Happiness," the Winter 2009 issue of YES! Magazine.
www.yesmagazine.org

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Less is More

The Schumacher Lectures

The Schumacher Lectures take place every autumn in Bristol, UK and attract many inspirational speakers from all over the world. This year marked the 30th Anniversary of Ernst Friedrich Schumacher's death, so the organisers ran the event a little differently. It was not so much a line-up of lecturers, as a celebrated sharing of new ideas from passionate advocates of change, out-spoken controversialists and people reshaping society from the ground up.

The theme, *Less is More: Can We Really Live Better by Consuming Less?* was at the heart of the day's debates. Issues covered

climate change, injustice, peak oil, the 'credit crunch' and food security.

Positive News UK covered many of the day's seminars, including the annual Schumacher Award ceremony. This special prize honours individuals and grassroots organisations whose work is making a significant contribution to human scale sustainable development.

Below are samples of the day's events.

Contact: The Schumacher Society
www.schumacher.org.uk



© Marc Leverton

The Schumacher Lectures were held at the Bristol Council House.

During the conference, poet Matt Harvey penned a poem based on the event's theme...

Can less be more, can more be less?
Well, yes and no, and no and yes
Well, more or less...

More bikes, fewer cars
Less haze, more stars
Less haste, more time



Poet Matt Harvey.

Less reason, more rhyme

More time, less stress
Fewer miles, more fresh (vegetables)

Fewer car parks,
More acres of available urban soil
More farmers' markets, less produce
effectively marinated in crude oil

Less colouring, more taste
More mashing, less waste

Fewer couch potatoes,
More spring greens
Fewer tired tomatoes,
More runner beans

More stillness, less inertia
Less illness, more Echinacea
More community, less isolation
Less just sitting there,
More participation!

More wells (not oil ones, obviously),
Fewer ills, fewer clean fingernails,
More skills

More co-operation, less compliancy
Less complacency, more self-reliance

Less competition,
More collaboration
Less passive listening,

More participation!

Less attention deficit...,
More concentration
Less passive listening,
More participation!

(Less repetition)

Less of a warm globe
More a chilly'un
More of a wise world, at least 34
fewer parts of CO2 per million

Less stress-related cardio-vascular
and pulmonary failure, more nurturing
quality time in the company of a
favourite clematis or dahlia

More craftsmanship,
Less built-in obsolescence
More political maturity,
Less apparently-consequence-free
extended adolescence

More believed-to-be-beautiful,
known-to-be-useful things
Less cheap, pointless,
Petroleum-steeped stuff

So Yes, less is more –
and enough's enough...

Contact: www.mattharvey.co.uk
Reprint from Positive News UK

The Schumacher Award '08

This year, the Schumacher Award went to Rob Hopkins, for his pioneering work with the Transition Towns Movement. This popular decision was greeted with a standing ovation.

"It is a real honour and a pleasure to be the recipient of the Schumacher Award," Rob said. "Although it has been presented to me, I think it is really for everyone who has been involved in getting this powerful and timely movement embedded in communities around the world. Since the very beginning of the Transition Movement back in 2005, the concept has spread with amazing viral momentum, driven forward by ordinary people, living ordinary lives, in ordinary communities. Yet, what they have begun to create is quite extraordinary.

"By choosing to look peak oil and climate change square in the eye, rather than run from it,

they have discovered great dynamism and power – what I like to think of as engaged optimism.

"It shows great vision on behalf of the Schumacher Society that they saw, in the Transition Towns Movement, an embodiment of E.F. Schumacher's ideas. Indeed, I often argue that we have moved beyond discussing if 'Small is Beautiful' or not and are now in the realms where 'Small is Inevitable'. The Transition Movement is attempting to address the practicalities of that. So, I am deeply honoured and delighted to be recognised in this way and see it as a powerful endorsement of an idea whose time has come."

Contact: www.transitionculture.org

For information on Transition Town Movement in the US turn to Page 5.

Ann Calls for a Green New Deal

by Marc Leverton

Ann Pettifor is a political economist and author of *The Coming First World Debt Crisis*. Ann's book, based on an article she wrote in 2003, not only predicted the current 'credit crunch' but also highlighted Iceland as being particularly at risk.

Ann Pettifor's seminar was incredibly timely and the audience was overflowing to hear how the current financial 'mess' was created.

Ann's belief is that it is now time for a 'Green New Deal'. The public has been let down by the banks and by a succession of US governments. Since 1971, the banks have been creating credit, based on their own guarantee rather than on actual gold reserves, which had always been the traditional approach.

Around the same time, former US President Richard Nixon started to create an international version of the same idea by issuing a 'Treasury Bill'. This Bill moved the US away from being a manufacturer, to effectively becoming the world's banker, which helps to explain their phenomenal trade debt. Readers may have caught sight of the US debt counter, which recently ran out of digits – at the time of writing it was in the region of 10 trillion dollars.

Mrs Pettifor is best known as the co-founder of Jubilee 2000 – the worldwide campaign that succeeded in the cancellation of 100 billion dollars worth of debts from the world's poorest countries. This seminar was delivered with such courage and conviction, it left me in no doubt as to how she was able

to get such pledges of support from world leaders.

Her argument was radical and thought provoking. Many in the room wanted to know more about how we had ended up here. "What is money?" asked a member of the audience. "It is not a commodity. It is man made," Ann replied, before the chair intervened to encourage everyone to refocus again on solutions for the future.

Ann argued for a return to regulation, which is based on a Keynesian model of economics. It would, she said, involve a much greater accountability of banking directors and less reliance on credit.

Contact: Ann Pettifor
<http://debtonation.org>



© Ann Pettifor

Ann Pettifor discusses the Green New Deal at Schumacher Lectures.



World Class Volunteering

by *Francesca Sandwell*

Platform2 is a new and exciting, global, volunteering experience, fully funded by DfID, the Department for International Development. The programme is run by Christian Aid, Islamic Relief and the non-profit organisation, BUNAC, who have been helping young people to work overseas for more than 46 years.

Platform2 empowers 18-25 year-olds to make a positive difference to projects in Africa, Asia and South America. The vol-

“Since arriving home, I’ve been able to reflect on my experience and it has helped me to be happier and more appreciative with what I have.”

unteers get the chance to learn about development issues, as part of a diverse team. They experience new cultures and improve their practical, communication and organisational skills.

Nikky Norton recently volunteered to work with young people in the village of Mamre, 50 kilometres north of Cape Town. During her stay, she noticed how little there was to do in the area, which seemed to be obviously linked to some of the area’s problems, such as underage pregnancy, drug or alcohol abuse. These were all recognisable predicaments that she also saw in her area of Manchester, UK.

Nikky decided to use her drama skills and her involvement in youth activities to

tackle some of the problems head on. “Being aware of the parallels, meant that I could apply my expertise to empower the youth in Mamre,” said Nikky. “I set up drama and dance classes and then worked towards writing a play, inspired by stories that the young people wanted to tell.

It was a great experience and a real success. I got to see them grow in confidence and use drama as a tool of expression, as well as creativity. It made me realise too,” Nikky continued, “that there are areas in my own life where I have the choice to make change. It was a valuable experience.”

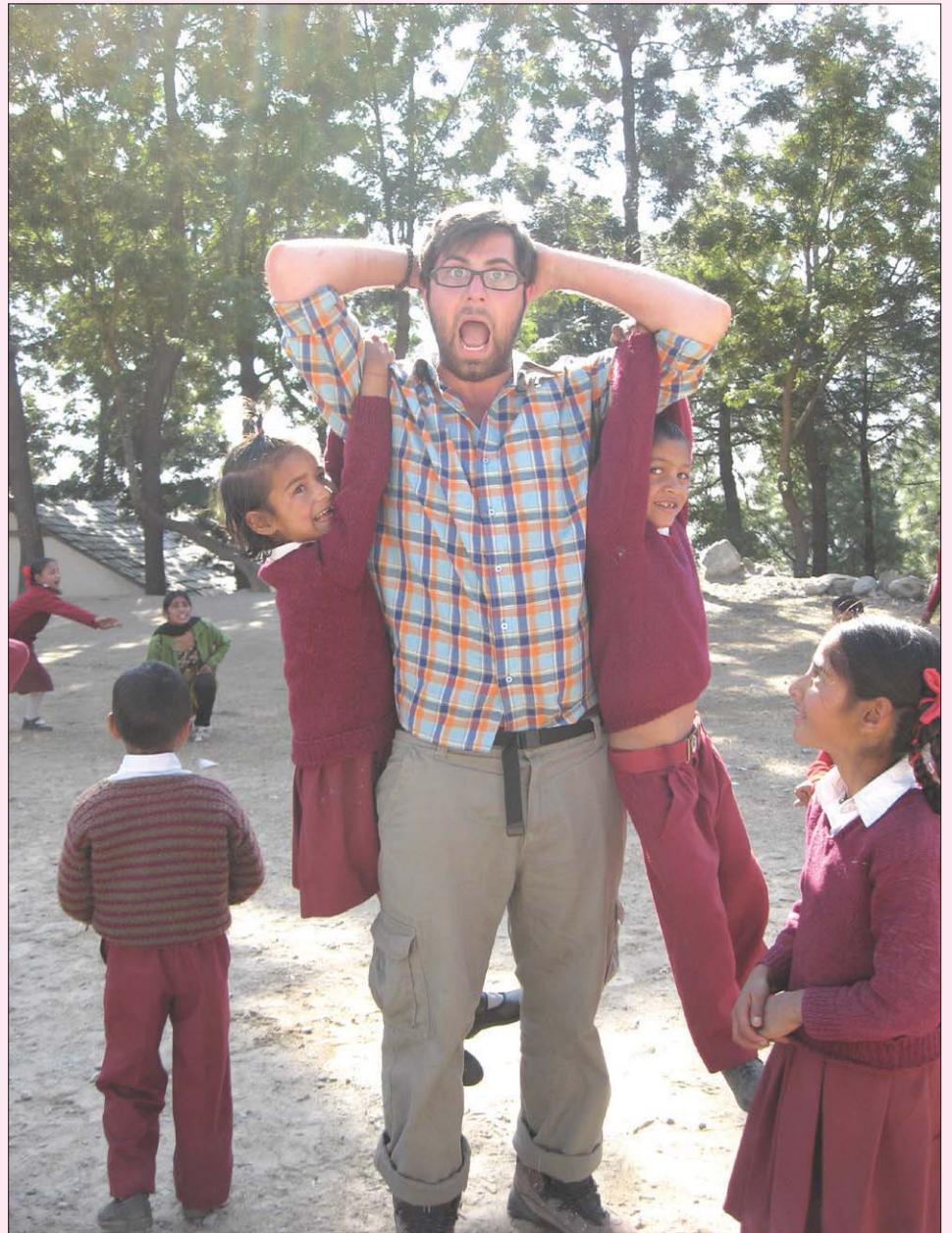
Spending 10 weeks in India, teaching the subjects of Mathematics and English to primary school children, helped to change Clarke McKenzie’s perspective on life. “Since arriving home, I’ve been able to reflect on my experience and it has helped me to be happier and more appreciative with what I have,” Clarke reveals. “Even though we have entered a recession, we all think we have it hard but really it’s only our greed that makes life tough for us. If we were less encompassed with desire, then we wouldn’t be experiencing these current difficulties.

“I’ve become more thoughtful about the things I do in my life and how I can help others,” Clarke continued. “This experience in India has led me to begin volunteering work on other issues, such as HIV/AIDS and Fairtrade, along with other global development issues.”

This is your platform to change your world, so jump aboard and get involved.

Contact: www.myplatform2.com
Email: nikkynorton@yahoo.co.uk

Story from *Positive News UK*



© Clarke McKenzie

Clarke McKenzie, who spent 10 weeks teaching children in India

Get Silly with Young Speakers

UK - ‘We Are What We Do’ is a community action movement spreading the powerful idea: small actions x lots of people = big change. To that end, it is also the creator of the books *Change the World for a Fiver*, *Change the World 9 to 5* and *Teach Your Granny to*. These books promote 130 simple actions to change the world. One of these actions is ‘spread the word’ and now the organisation is spreading the word through its Young Speakers project.

During the summer, 200 young people came together with one common aim – to change the world. Over an intensive weekend, they trained up on their facts, stats and world-changing delivery, learning how to successfully captivate, uplift and inspire an audience.

Said Sarah Varey, a student at Darwen Academy, in Lancashire: “I can see this being the start of something amazing and life changing – not only for me but the world. Being a Young Speaker means everything at the moment because it is the one thing I can really focus on to make my existence worthwhile. It makes me feel counted, as though I can do anything.

“I know, if by being a Young Speaker I affect just one person, it’ll really make a difference. ‘We Are What We Do’ really gives me hope that I can and will achieve my ambitions of improving people’s lives and the society we live in.”

This fall, the Young Speakers continued to



© Ann-Marie Olufuwa from MeWe Art & Education

Young Speakers entertain with a message at Green Lane Primary School.

“I know, if by being a Young Speaker I affect just one person, it’ll really make a difference.”

spread the word. Already they have reached thousands by doing presentations in their own colleges, going to local primary schools and other community groups, as well as reminding relatives and friends of the power of their small, everyday actions.

Twenty-five members of the team have developed an interactive play, which is touring around London. After the performance, the actors hold a workshop with their audience to get them to think about what actions they want to start taking. Then, they ask the children to do role play around those choices.

Other members in the Young Speakers team are viral, virtual activists, corralling communities online through Facebook, MySpace and YouTube. Together they are changing the world.

Contact: *We Are What We Do*
www.wearewhatwedo.org/youngspeakers
and www.youtube.com/wearewhatwedouk
Story from *Positive News UK*

Young Swede Saves Fins

Six year old Marcus Marcus, from Stockholm in Sweden, was so outraged when he heard about sharks having their fins cut off to make soup, that he decided to take action and start his very own Save the Shark Campaign. "You must do something," Marcus explained. "That's what it's all about. You must do something."

"My goal was to show my son that one person, even small people, can make a difference," his father, Fredrik Marcus told us. A web designer, Fredrik helped set up Marcus's informative and easy-to-use campaign website, which is gaining more

twice as many sharks as there are today," said Marcus. "Of the biggest sharks – like the hammerhead shark, the tiger shark and the blue shark – 95 per cent have disappeared – and soon the hammerhead will be put on the list of endangered species too."

The day before the opening of the Beijing Olympic Games, Marcus delivered a petition to the Chinese Embassy containing 10,010 signatures, demanding that shark fin soup be removed from restaurant menus. "I hope they gave a call to the food minister!" Marcus added, who plans to deliver another list of signatures next year.

In fact, he has vowed to continue his petition until the shark fishing stops.

Although only six, this determined little boy has caught the attention of animal welfare organisations and shark scientists from across the globe. Twice, he has been interviewed on Swedish television – gaining a thousand signatures within an hour of being broadcast. He has also spoken on Radio Stockholm, as well as appearing in the country's major newspapers. Recently, Marcus was nominated as a 'Swedish Hero' and chosen by the council of Stockholm to be 'Stockholmer of the Month'.

"Eating Shark Fin soup is cruel and unnecessary," announced Marcus. "Eat broccoli soup instead!"

To add your name to the petition contact:
Marcus Marcus, President Save The Sharks Club www.savethesharks.se
savethesharks.info@gmail.com
Story from Positive News UK



© Marcus Marcus

Marcus Marcus and his Save the Sharks Campaign

international recognition every day. Soon to be translated into a fourth language, the site contains a page where people can add their name to an already 20,000-strong list of protesters from 58 different countries. His recently launched facebook group has also gathered over 1,000 members.

"When my mum was little there were

'El Sistema' Means Music to Their Ears

A revolutionary music project developed in Venezuela more than 30 years ago, is now being trialled in Scotland. Maestro José Antonio Abreu's El Sistema network of youth orchestras has transformed the lives of an estimated quarter of a million underprivileged children living in South America's barrios.

Mr Abreu believes that if children are provided with the opportunity to learn an instrument and play it with others, their lives can be positively transformed. The Scottish project similarly aims to inspire enduring social change, by immersing young people in a musical environment.

"The experience in Venezuela is that the structure of the symphony orchestra offers a chance for everyone to play their part, be challenged and learn together," said Dr Richard Holloway, Chair of Sistema Scotland. "It's an activity which touches the entire community. Everyone is welcomed, accepted and contributes."

The power of music and playing as an ensemble, helps children to improve their skills and attainment. It also encourages communities to feel a greater sense of cohesion and mutual respect.

Six professional musicians trained in Venezuela, before returning to Raploch, Scotland last summer to teach about 40 students, aged between five and eight. The older children receive their classical tuition at an after school club each week, while the younger Primary pupils have three hours tuition during school time.

The project is long-term. Its strategy is to first establish a string orchestra. This will grow in size as the children move up through school and are joined by new intakes at the start of each spring term. By the third year, the idea is to have introduced all the instruments belonging to a Symphony orchestra – string, brass, woodwind and percussion.



© Peter Sandground

Sistema Scotland's Big Noise orchestra launch concert.

"Both adults and kids work as hard as they can," said George Anderson, Big Noise orchestra spokesman. "No effort is spared. If any kid wants to play in the orchestra, our music teachers will do their utmost to make it possible for them and to make it fun. In the 'Take a Musician Home' project, our teachers will go to a child's home, take tea and cakes and perform for their family. All our children are really positive and excited by the whole project... They are learning to be good citizens through music."

If the pilot proves successful, Sistema Scotland aims to roll out three more Big Noise orchestra centres in Scotland by 2013. In Harmony, England's answer to El Sistema, is also underway, with the cellist, Julian Lloyd Webber, chairing the steering committee and a proposed start date of January 2009.

Contact: www.makeabignoise.org.uk
and www.inharmonyengland.com

Story from Positive News UK

Change Makers on Campus

Anke Wessels

Recognizing that universities can play a powerful role both in helping to solve the problems of today and in building up a generation of leaders that is fully equipped to tackle the problems of tomorrow, Ashoka has launched a year-long partnership with four universities – Cornell, Johns Hopkins, George Mason, and the University of Maryland. The partnership is designed to accelerate the change-making potential of universities and the students, faculty, and staff who occupy them.

Ashoka, a global association of the world's leading social entrepreneurs, launched this Campus Changemaker Initiative in the fall of 2008 to build universities as incubators for social change.

Teams of select faculty, staff, and students from each school are working together to create, refine, and implement an innovative plan to strengthen social entrepreneurship teaching, research, and student engagement on their campuses. "I am involved because I would like to create a culture of social innovation on campus, and to encourage students that feel alone in their endeavors," says Jessica

Prue, a student at Cornell University.

At Cornell, students from across its 7 colleges have joined with faculty and staff from the Center for Transformative Action, the Center for Sustainable Global Enterprise, and Entrepreneurship at Cornell. Encouraged by their President, David Skorton, who recognizes that this generation of students will provide needed leadership in the field of social entrepreneurship, this team has three goals: To celebrate student and alumni changemakers by telling their stories; To ignite social innovation, creativity, and problem solving through inspired teaching; and, To strengthen the effectiveness of students who want to be part of the solution to pressing social problems while on campus and after they graduate.

Senior, Lauren Wein, explains that the Cornell Changemaker team "allows me to engage with some of the most innovative, hard-working, passionate students and faculty on campus. The energy you get in bringing all of these people together is truly amazing, and it has helped me in my own personal, academic and extracurricular pursuits".

The end goal of Ashoka's Campus Changemaker Initiative: a network of campuses that



© Amil Husain

Campus Changemakers on retreat with Ashoka almost ready to get on the bus.

foster a culture of innovation and social change, and a generation of students who will be empowered to test out new thinking and new approaches to tackle today's toughest global problems.

Contact: Ashoka
www.ashoka.org/changemakercampus
Tel: 703.527.8300
Contact: Center for Transformative Action
www.cresp.cornell.edu



Freedom Behind Bars

by Rachael Sanborn

"I'm beginning to understand the different states of mind and the type of mind that led me inside of here. And thanks to programs like this I'm very hopeful I can break the habits that lead to suffering and one day obtain the peace of mind of the Compassionate Buddha to help others in my current position," says Lamar Jefferson in Tennessee. Although you might expect to hear these words from any aspiring Buddha, these words were uttered by a prison inmate. Meditation is finding a home in prisons!

Vipassana meditation, one of the leading meditation techniques introduced in correctional facilities, is structured in ten days of silent retreat with an average of ten hours sitting per day. Vipassana was first introduced in Tihar Jail, India's largest prison, where 1,000 inmates together participated in the program. Based on their success, Vipassana prison meditations have been introduced in countries as varied as Israel, Mongolia, New Zealand,

Taiwan, Thailand, and the US.

Lucia Meijer, the administrator of North Rehabilitation Facility (NRF) in Seattle, WA, has played a key role in introducing the courses into North American prisons. She and her staff overcame the many administrative hurdles to arrange the first course in November 1997.

The first ten day Vipassana course to be held in a US maximum-security prison took place in January 2002 at the WE Donaldson Correctional Facility in Bessemer,

"The officers were amazed with what was going on before their eyes and their respect and admiration for the inmates grew as the days continued."

Alabama. Approximately half of the 20 inmates taking the course were under a life sentence, some with the possibility of parole, others without hope of parole.

The course was held in the prison's gymnasium. Partitions made out of blue tarps strung on wires created divisions within the

large gym space for a meditation hall, a dorm room, and a dining hall. The teacher and course assistants slept in an adjacent room overlooking the gym. Each night a correctional officer (CO) locked them in after the inmates had themselves retired. They were well aware that this was possibly the first time ever that "free world people" had entered a maximum security prison and were locked down with inmates for such a long period of time.

Three correctional officers, one of them a Vipassana meditator, took turns guarding the course site. The officers were amazed with what was going on before their eyes and their respect and admiration for the inmates grew as the days continued. They became important allies in protecting the silent and focused atmosphere. Barriers were lowered when the officers began to sit down at the tables and eat with the inmates. When the weather turned cold, COs throughout the facility scrambled to find cardboard to block a drafty vent close to the meditators' beds. These correc-



© Dhamma Brothers

Meditating inmates at Alabama maximum security prison

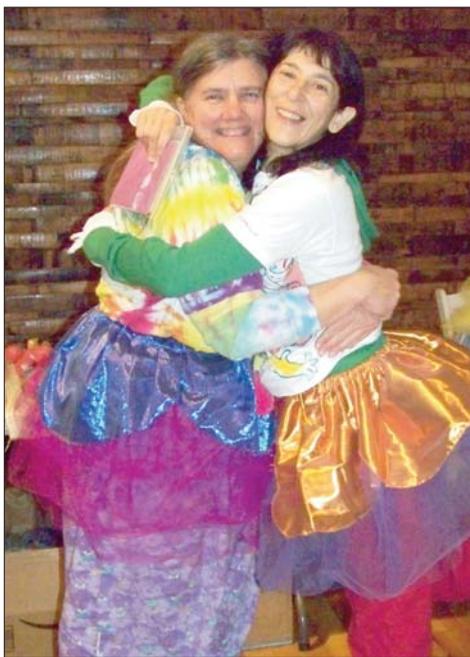
tional officers, who may well have used force on some of these inmates, were now supporting them with care. During a particularly quiet group sitting, an announcement came over the radio from the on-duty officer during a routine head count..."West Gym reporting... 20 inmates, all meditating".

Studies on Vipassana in Washington State and Alabama concluded that inmates completing the course feel more optimistic, hopeful about their future and have a 20

percent lower recidivism rate than inmates who did not participate in the course. For prisoners whose paroles are far into the future, or have no hope of parole, meditation can lend a much needed sense of inner peace, forgiveness and hope.

Contact: www.prison.dhamma.org
To find out about "Dhamma Brothers" a movie documenting Vipassana meditations in a maximum-security prison visit: www.dhammabrothers.com

Laughter is the Best Medicine



© Lee Riddell

Two participants of *Thinking Outside the Box* Conference share a happy moment.

by the Gesundheit Team and Lee Riddell

BALTIMORE, MD - With ten years of success in educating health care practitioners and the public and addressing global health crises since the hit movie "Patch Adams" was released, Patch Adams, M.D. has become the international household name for compassionate medicine.

Dr. Adams, along with the Gesundheit! Institute, have called for an overhaul of the U.S. health care system while building and inspiring models for how health care could be delivered differently. This February they described their approach to health care reform at the Health Care Intensive produced in collaboration with the School for Designing a Society held at the American Visionary Art Museum in Baltimore, MD.

Susan Parenti, Educational Director of the Gesundheit! Institute facilitated the conference, and said, "Most efforts to change the health care system focus on the outside. The fixation in the United States around the financial aspect of the health care system—

around the question 'who pays'—attests to this." Susan's design of the Health Care Intensive is reflected in her suggestion that, "While we support these efforts, we also ask ourselves: Could significant change happen from the inside—the caregiving relation? Could care-givers and the healing relation be powerful contributors to health care systems change? More importantly, what kind of health care system do we want and how can we get it?" This is a part of the motivation for bringing together medical students, health care practitioners and experts in systems design to the Health Care Intensive.

Currently, the Gesundheit! Institute receives over 40,000 unique visitors a month to the website (www.patchadams.org). Dr. Patch Adams personally responds to hundreds of letters each month from people interested in health care reform or who are in need of care. Patch also spends 300 days a year on the road lecturing on compassionate care-giving. He delivers the art of "compassionate clowning" and organizes humanitarian response teams to places in need, such as El Salvador, Haiti, Peru and Afghanistan, to name a few.

Over the past ten years, the Gesundheit! Institute has built five buildings on land purchased in one of the poorest counties in West

Virginia—Pocahontas County, and will soon be breaking ground on a Teaching Center and Free Clinic there.

Patch continues to issue the challenge: "Help us build an alternative model that can serve as a model hospital for care giving that can train doctors and health care providers from around the world." He puts out a call for help pouring the foundation for the Teaching Center, Clinic and Hospital this summer. "We have the architectural drawings, we have the crew and the volunteers lined up. We are well organized, and only in need of 9 million dollars to finish the building on the land," says Patch.

This project is led by architect Dave Sellers, regarded as one of the top 100 architects in the world. The project uses the latest practices in sustainable design and green building techniques. It is truly a remarkable health care undertaking, with hundreds of health care practitioners from around the world waiting for an opportunity to serve in the facilities upon completion.

Contact: Gesundheit! Institute
www.patchadams.org

To get involved giving@patchadams.org
or call 217.278.3933 ext. 12

Friends Serving Friends

by Donna Beckwith

Tompkins County, NY - After six weeks of almost daily radiation therapy, a now cancer-free patient called every single driver who had given him a ride to therapy and thanked them for being part of his healing.

The drivers were all volunteers for FISH, Friends in Service Helping. Started at the turn of the last century in England, FISH came to the US after World War II. The organization began in Tompkins County, NY in

1966 as a program which tried to address whatever need was apparent. Recently, FISH has evolved to simply offering free, confidential, private rides to medical services. FISH mostly serves the poor, physically challenged and elderly. It is part of RSVP, Retired and Senior Volunteer Program, and is funded by United Way.

Volunteer driver and board member, Sally Taylert, says, "FISH is a quiet, little grassroots organization that has just kept working through time." Volunteers, which include drivers and phoners, stay with the program for

20 or 30 years. As they serve their clients, they chat and relationships develop. Drivers pick up a client and either wait for them, or return when the client is finished. Phoners are in charge of communication and scheduling.

Right now FISH has 26 volunteers in Tompkins County. In order to serve more folks in need, they are inviting more volunteers to join them.

Contact: Retired and Senior Volunteer Program
Tel: 607.273.4545

Right: Volunteer Carolyn Boronkay (L) assists Pam Haynes as she arrives at Cayuga Medical Center for her regular dialysis treatment. Photo by Marty Luster.





by Global Oneness Project

We Are All the Other

World Travelin' Gal Opts for Trust and Connection

People call Denise Zabalaga brave for traveling to places with cultures very different from her own. She has visited and lived in Afghanistan, Syria, Damascus, Iran and Tajikistan. From her original home in Switzerland she moved to the US where she lived alone in Harlem and worked in the Bronx in New York. Here too she documented her experience encountering interesting new people. People often ask her, "How is it that a you aren't afraid to travel the world alone?"

Denise has a couple of secrets in her bag of tricks. One of her secret remedies against fear and mistrust is her camera.

While admitting that a young woman traveling alone can sometimes find herself in tight situations, Denise says that meeting a stranger is, "first of all, an opportunity rather than a danger." Sometimes people don't want their picture taken, and in some cultures having one's likeness appear in a photo or painting is forbidden. So Denise always makes sure that she doesn't overstep boundaries when she shoots photos on the streets where people gather; she is careful to ask permission if it looks as if there will be a concern.

Even when asking, "Mind if I take your picture?" Denise finds that her camera becomes a powerful tool to break down barriers. And even if someone answers, "No thanks," that interaction becomes a bridge to discussion. Denise recounts how once when she was in Harlem a man challenged her about taking photos saying, "Hey, you aren't allowed to do that!" What started out as what many would see as a confrontational interaction actually became a door to friendship.

Growing up in Switzerland

with her Italian mother and Bolivian father, Denise felt perfectly natural speaking two languages at home and she has never been afraid to try to learn new languages.

As it turns out, a gift for language learning brought with it another opportunity. As Denise says, "I don't want to have anything between me and the people I meet," so she made her best effort at communication, learning new languages as she traveled.

When she first visited the Middle East she arrived in Tehran. Speaking of that experience she said in a recent interview, "Iran is a 21st Century country. It's a modern world." But the first order of the day was to learn the language so she could speak with the people on the city streets. Her visit originally meant to be only a few days turned into a long months of intense study, study that paid off when she went to Afghanistan and was able to use her knowledge of Farsi, a variant of Arabic, to communicate with people in rural areas and villages. Denise learned that just by showing a willingness to try to speak another's language, allowed for barriers to come tumbling down.

Denise has an amazingly vast portfolio of photos from around the world for someone so young (she is in her early 30's). Recently a fan of her photography wrote to Denise, complimenting her for showing a path to a unified world. In her email she said, "Thank you for your openness and boldness to go into situations that most others wouldn't dare." But Denise doesn't feel like a huge risk-taker. Armed with her camera and her willingness to connect, she shows the world that 'we all are the other' and mistrust of other cultures can indeed be overcome!

A Little Money Goes a Long Way

by Francesca Sandwell

Kem Pharin from Cambodia and Rob, who resides in Canada, have never met before. Recently however, Rob loaned Kem a small amount of money, as part of the 625 dollar loan she needed to ex-pand her business selling water spinach.

The loan allowed Kem and her husband to buy more seeds and a motorbike cart to take the spinach to market. They also used the loan to rent one more hectare of land to help increase production. Now Kem will be able to set up a stall at her local market and generate even more income, which will substantially increase her family's quality of life.

This account is just one of the many thousands of success stories from Kiva, the world's first person-to-person micro-lending website. To date, thousands of individuals have been empowered to send more than 66 million dollars to unique entrepreneurs in the developing world.

By lending this way, you are directly helping a real person make great strides towards economic independence. From the time that the loan is made, you will receive email journal updates and be able to track repayments. When the amount is repaid, usually between 6 to 12 months, you can re-lend it to someone else and continue the cycle.

Contact: Kiva Microfunds
www.kiva.org
Story from Positive News UK



© Karen McKeown

Kem Pharin in Cambodia

Wolf Teachers

by Jordan Cosentini-Jensen

BEARSVILLE, NY - In 1969 someone brought a wolf puppy into John Harris's home. Little did he know this new addition would lead to a national recognition of wolf advocacy. Eventually John developed a wolf rescue center, and with the wolf named Jethro he began teaching at public events. John taught about



© Hans Westerling

wolf advocacy as well as environmental preservation.

In 1978 John met Pam Brown through a mutual friend. Pam was clear that John's work with wolves was exactly what she wanted to be doing.

Pam traveled with John and his wolves all over the U.S. They made appearances in schools and even at Carnegie Hall and the Smithsonian. They taught the world what is means to be an animal advocate. They talked about the difference between survival hunting and trophy hunting and explained the vital role wolves play in a habitat.

Pam Brown stressed this point in a recent interview with Positive News. She described the damage to the ecosystem in Yellowstone National Park when the wolf population was wiped out. "Everything is linked to each other, and the wolf is a major link. Without predators things fall apart." She described how deer break down habitats so nothing can live. She also explained that wolves naturally balance the coyote population in shared territory. "The purpose of wolves is to cull the weak and old deer and to control populations of coyote."

John and Pam's project was featured in three National Geographic hardcover collections. After John passed away, Pam retired the wolves and moved to Mexico, where she developed a slide presentation of everything she and John taught.

While traveling with her presentation, she met Kent Weber, who had started "Mission Wolf." Mission Wolf is virtually the same program that John and Pam ran for so long. Kent had the wolves and the passion, he just needed the training. She began working with Kent, taking him around the country and teaching him how to work with the wolves and the audience.

Pam, Kent, and a new partner, Tracey Brooks, occasionally tour together sharing the message of respect for wolves throughout the country. They will present at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY on October 15.

John Harris is remembered everyday for his compassion and generosity. His legacy lives on while more and more people acquire a deeper understanding of what we can learn from wolves and how we can support their admirable species.

Contact: Wolfteacher.com
845.679.7519

This article was written by Jordan Cosentini-Jensen, one of our Positive News student interns this spring.



© ucdcms.ucdavis.edu/solar

Artist's rendition of solar farm concept

Salt Adds New Flavor to Solar Power

One of solar power's biggest drawbacks is its inability to generate electricity at night. It struggles even on a cloudy day. Part of the problem is that electricity is quite difficult to store and batteries are not efficient enough to contain energy on a large enough scale. However, new approaches being explored by the solar power industries, could soon eliminate the problem.

Power towers – water tanks on stilts, surrounded by hundreds of mirrors that tilt on two axes – will follow the sun as it moves across the sky during the day and continue to track it over the course of a year. Beneath each tower will be a large tank, containing tens of thousands of gallons of molten salt.

The salt, which is non-flammable and non-toxic, melts at 220 degrees celsius and can be kept liquid at 290 degrees in an insulated storage facility. When electricity is

needed, the salt is pumped out of the storage tank to the top of the tower, where concentrated sunlight heats it up to 565 degrees celsius. The hot salt then produces superheated steam and is piped into a series of turbines, causing them to spin and make electricity.

The uniqueness of this solar system is that power can be generated even in periods of cloudy weather or at night, by using the stored thermal energy in the hot salt tanks. The containers are well insulated and could store energy for up to a week. The towers will supply 540 megawatts of heat and in turn, produce 250 megawatts of electricity – enough to power a city.

Solar Reserve plans to have the first molten salt solar power plant up and running by 2010.

Contact: www.solar-reserve.com
Story from Positive News UK

Solar Cities

Cities require heavy duty infrastructure and this includes underground cabling – usually aluminium and copper – for telephone and street lighting systems. However, supplying such infrastructure to developing nations would be financially unviable and ecologically damaging.

Developing economies are driven by cities: often huge, rapidly expanding conurbations such as Mumbai in India, São Paulo in Brazil and Shanghai in China. These places require basic infrastructure aimed at keeping citizens safe and helping them to make a living.

StarSight is an innovation that provides sustainable urban infrastructure. Based on a solar powered street light, it features a solar powered wireless broadband network, providing internet and telephone connectivity, as well as emergency service communications.

Because the lights do not use standard electricity generated by power stations, it is estimated that 500 tonnes of carbon dioxide are saved per 1,000 street lights per year. This is on top of the saving in electricity charges.

StarSight has been designed with the Kyoto Protocol and the United Nations Millenium Development Goals in mind. The UN Goals aim to end hunger, provide universal education, gender equality, child and maternal health, combat HIV/Aids and bring environmental sustainability through global partnership.

In line with these UN Goals, StarSight International aims to make appropriate education packages available through its communication systems. One of their first installations in northern Nigeria is already delivering solar

powered internet services to remote schools.

A StarSight network is in operation in Istanbul, Turkey. Designed to be earthquake resilient, each street light features power storage. This means that lighting can continue for up to five days without any sunshine. Because the wireless communication system is self-healing, in that if one part should break down, signals will be automatically rerouted. Emergency communication systems will continue to work in disaster situations.

While the developing world is an obvious market for StarSight, it is hoped that already developed nations, such as the UK, will be taking it up as part of the solar revolution.

Contact: www.starsightproject.com
Story from Positive News UK



©Starsight International

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Debt for Nature

A historic commitment has recently been announced between the governments of France and Madagascar, with £14 million allocated in the largest debt-for-nature swap agreement.

Burdened with high levels of debt, Madagascar's rather limited resources have been sadly diverted away from the preservation of its wildlife. However, the debt-for-

nature scheme will now allow the country to fund extensive conservation activities and protect its unique and globally significant biodiversity.

This ambitious national effort is all part of President Ravalomanana's recent pledge to triple the size of Madagascar's protected areas. This means the future of nearly 98 per cent of the country's land mammals, 92 per cent of its

reptiles and 80 per cent of its plants, all of which can be found nowhere else on Earth, will be secured for future generations.

Finance will be managed through the Foundation for Protected Areas and Bio-diversity, a conservation trust fund set up by WWF, Conservation International and the Government of Madagascar, to support the country's distinct ecosystems and its extraordinary wildlife. The fund has already reached its endowment target of



© Howard Buffett/WWF-US

Ring-tailed Lemur of Madagascar

£35 million.

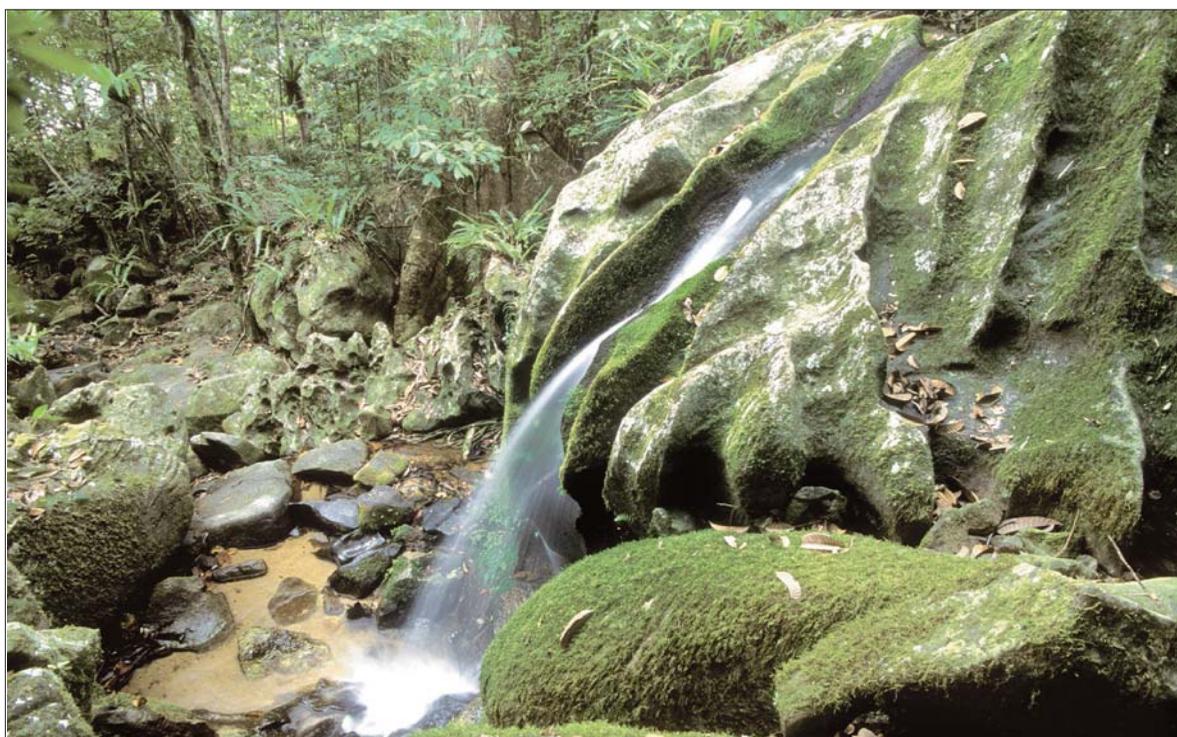
"The initiative is an excellent example of innovative financing for sustainable development," said the acting regional representative for WWF-Madagascar, Nanie Ratsifandrihamanana. "Increasing funding to the Foundation's endowment, means support for the protected areas' recurrent costs would be available long term. Stable and predictable revenues are critical if we are to win the battle against deforestation and biodiversity loss."

The Madagascar Foundation for Protected Areas and Biodiversity was set up in 2005. Its aim is to protect, maintain and also expand the country's 'protected areas network', including buffer zones and

ecological corridors. Ultimately, the project seeks to reduce dependence on external assistance. It is already widely recognised as a 'model' for Africa and an anchor for the sustainable financing of Madagascar's protected areas system.

The agreement is not the first of its kind. WWF have overseen similar exchanges in Peru and Cameroon. These debt-for-nature swaps serve as a prime example of the success that can be achieved when two countries commit to protecting the world's precious flora and fauna.

Contact: www.worldwildlife.org and www.conservation.org
Story from Positive News UK



© Kevin Schafer/WWF-US

Small waterfall in Nosy Mangabe Reserve.



© Trees Have Rights Too

Polly Higgins with the banner at the Climate Change March in London

Trees Have Rights Too

by Francesca Sandwell

LONDON, UK - Recently, the world celebrated the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Now, Polly Higgins, a barrister and environmentalist, tells us it is high time we addressed the rights of the planet as well.

In November 2008, Polly presented her call for the Universal Declaration of Planetary Rights, at the United Nations Climate Change conference. A lawyer herself, she knows that an international, global, binding agreement is needed, if the protection of Earth is to be ensured. Polly believes that the United Nations is uniquely placed to implement the necessary foundations to create a new world, where prevention and preservation stand hand in hand.

In an exclusive interview with Positive News, Polly spoke passionately about the campaign. "I really believe a system of Planetary Rights would work," she said. "At the moment we treat the world as a piece of property, taking from it what we need. However, if the Earth were to be given its own rights, this would remove the automatic assumption that we

can just use and destroy the planet for our own requirements."

Under the new Declaration, it would be made internationally illegal for large corporations to pollute the environment and enable governments, organisations and individuals to take action on behalf of the planet's protection. Polly is well aware that this is by no means an easy task. However, she has great faith in the remarkable force of people power.

To make the Bill of Planetary Rights a realisation, the campaign needs further support. As well as a series of upcoming fundraising events, there is also an online newsletter and an interactive map on the website. Here, people can document their involvement in environmental projects and thereby build a 'great global forest of activity'.

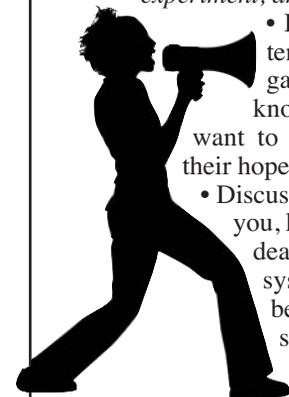
Polly believes it is very important to take people with her on this journey, to watch the campaign grow. "We need to become a world of campaigners," she said. "The planet has been enslaved and we need to give it back its rights."

Contact: www.treeshaverightstoo.com
Story from Positive News UK

Tools for Change

by Doug Orbake

In the upcoming issues of Positive News we will share with you a toolbox of some simple, effective tools for change. Have fun, experiment, and create change.



- Before you talk, listen. Attend community gatherings. Get to know the people you want to reach and listen to their hopes and fears.
- Discuss things that connect you, like being a parent or dealing with healthcare system, to build trust before bringing up issues that might spark disagreement.
- Highlight others' points of view.

- For example, talk about how an Afghani villager feels about us attacking their country.
- Avoid attacks on politicians or others who hold different views.
- Focus on why the issues matter to you. Speak from your heart and experience.
- Avoid jargon-filled language. Ask yourself if you come across as friendly or as a know-it-all.
- Avoid emphasizing problems. Suggest actions people can take, and talk about examples of success.

Source: Fall 2008 YES! Magazine www.yesmagazine.org



Fish and Greens from your Living Room

by Sarah Wilkinson

French designer Mathieu Lehanneur is renowned for his exquisite modernist designs that boast an equally important ecological purpose. His latest creation, recently displayed at the Artists Space Gallery in New York, is Local River, an indoor, self-contained, living ecosystem. The unit breeds freshwater fish, that share the space with kitchen vegetables housed in floating glass pods. The plants extract nutrients from the fishes' nitrate-rich waste and also act as a natural filter, purifying and maintaining a vital balance for the environment in which the fish live.

Mathieu drew inspiration for his design from a gathering of culinary adventurers known as The Locavores. The group's aim is to only eat food grown within a 100-mile radius of their homes. In doing so, they avoid the pollution inherent to the transportation of food stuffs, while also ensuring product traceability, safety and taste freshness.

"Our food now travels an average of 1,500 miles before finally ending up on our plates," says a Locavores member. "This globalisation of the food supply has very serious consequences for the environment but also for our health, our communities and our tastebuds."

Mathieu's Local River is essentially a conjoined DIY fish farm and miniature vegetable patch, based on the principle of aquaponics and focused on the exchange and interdependence of two living organisms, plants and fish. This same technique is used on large-scale, pioneer,



© Mathieu Lehanneur

aquaponic farms, that raise Tilapia – fish from the Far East – and grow lettuce in trays on the surface of the same ponds.

"Local River responds to an everyday need for fresh food that is 100 per cent traceable," says Matthieu. "It bets on a return to farm-raised freshwater fish – trout, eel, perch, carp, etc – given the dwindling supplies of many saltwater species due to over-fishing. It also allows fish-farmers to deliver their stock alive to a private consumer, with a guarantee

of optimum freshness – impossible in the case of saltwater fish that's been netted."

Mathieu hopes that his beautiful-cum-functional fish hatchery and 'veg' patch could eventually replace the decorative but useless television aquarium – and for those who do not have any outdoor space to grow their own, this may be an effective solution to the food dilemma.

Contact: www.mathieulehanneur.com
and www.locavores.com
Story from *positive News UK*

Earth Matters on Stage

'Earth Matters on Stage' was set up to bring focus and further development to an emerging genre of theatre, known as ecodrama – any play, comedy, drama or musical with an ecological theme.

At the very core of the project is the Ecodrama Playwrights' Festival, an international playwriting competition. The event seeks to broaden the understanding of ecodrama through work that addresses environmental justice and also deepens a sense of place. Playwrights, artists, scholars, film lovers and theatre buffs, activists and interested members of the community are invited to share their work and ideas at the Festival on May 21st-31st 2009, at the University of Oregon, in Eugene.

The Playwrights' Festival is calling for new stage productions that respond to the current ecological situation or that explore our relationship with the more-than-human world. The winning plays will be chosen by a distinguished panel of theatre or film company artists from Canada and US.

A concurrent Symposium is asking for people to come and share their ideas and views about how theatre and performance might participate in maintaining a more sustainable society.

The entire event will involve ten days of performances, workshops, readings and round-table discussions, dedicated to nurturing the sort of theatrical work that rises out of our connection with the Earth – the place we all share and love.

Contact: *Earth Matters On Stage*
Tel: 541.346.1789

www.uoregon.edu/~ecodrama
Story from *Positive News UK*

"...Festival is calling for new stage productions that explore our relationship with the more-than-human world"

Beauty and the Dirt

by Cicely Kurtz

Have you ever drawn a smiley face on the back of a dirty car? Maybe wrote 'wash me'? What about taking it to the next level? Scott Wade of Wimberly, Texas has. He loves nothing better than a dirty car. He creates amazingly detailed images

in the window dust of his car. "I love trying to reproduce the old masters' paintings, but really I'm willing to try almost anything. To me it's not so much the subject, but the beauty of the medium that attracts me," says Scott.

When asked how he decided to make intricate drawings in dust he



Scott Wade at work.

explained "I lived on a long, dirt road in Central Texas for over 20 years. Since our cars were always dirty, I would often "doodle" in the dust on the rear windows of our cars. I started experimenting with ways to get shading. At first I would use the pads of my fingers and brush very lightly to get "grey" tones. One time I was chewing on a popsicle stick, and I tried using the chewed up end as a brush. I liked the effect, so I started trying paintbrushes."

Quite possibly the best part of his artwork is the reaction. People are fascinated with the story behind the drawings on the back of his car. He has been stopped while running errands in his small town by curi-



ous folks armed with cameras and questions. Once a man actually blocked him from leaving the super market so that his wife had time to buy a disposable camera.

This sustainable art form requires simply a dirty car window and a bit of imagination. Next time

you look at a dust covered pane, imagine the possibilities.

Contact: www.dirtycarart.com

This article was written by Cicely Kurtz, our *Positive News* intern this year.





The Curitiba Story

by Paul Ellson

Story excerpts from
Positive News UK

When things aren't working out, it's wise to deal with the root of the problem. This often takes courage but when we get the basics right, the rest flows naturally. This is true for any aspect of life and it works on any scale. Take cities for instance: the typical city is a huge, clogged network, designed long before mass motoring and now jammed with vehicles, their emissions and noise.

Usually, the average planner's response is to make more room for traffic, leading to even more vehicles and pollution. However, three decades ago, one city, Curitiba in Brazil, boldly addressed its traffic problems at root and consequently found that, with vision and willpower, all aspects of city life could be improved.

Transport

In 1972, the traffic and pollution in and around the city centre had reached unmanageable proportions. At this stage, planners would normally analyse traffic volume and then invest in creating more capacity – wider streets, overpasses, underpasses, or even an underground, subway, rail system. Curitiba's officials though, decided that people should come first, not cars. They decided to be innovative and to take one step at a time. The first would be to close the busiest street to cars. The shopkeepers were angry; they had no experience of pedestrian precincts and fearing loss of trade, they vowed to fight the change.

Acting quickly, the City transformed the street into a "people

friendly" environment. Shopkeepers discovered they were getting more business, not less.

Creating a subway system at 100 million dollars per square kilometer, was out of the question, so too, grand scale road works. Instead, architect Rafael Dely designed the Trinary Road System with dedicated public transport lanes.

In 1979, Mayor Lerner introduced the Rede Integrada de Transporte – RIT, an integrated bus transport system, where citizens pay once to go anywhere in the city. Also, under this scheme, the companies running the various buses are paid, not by the travellers but by the city, at a rate per kilometer, travelled by each bus. Passengers pay prior to embarkation at 'tube stations' along the routes and there are

that these newcomers should be integrated into productive city life as soon as possible and that, for rich or poor, there should be no ghettos. Low-income developments were therefore brought close to the city centre.

Having designed the road system so well, as the routes expanded, the planners were able to integrate new housing and business developments more easily. They focused on affordable housing, free business installations, free training and other innovations including Autogestão, where the population participates in housing development and planning issues.

As the city's population increased, commercial development grew along the roadside radiating from the centre. The municipality

"...and we don't have the right to sacrifice future generations." ~Curitiba Mayor, Jaime Lerner

bus stops every 500 metres.

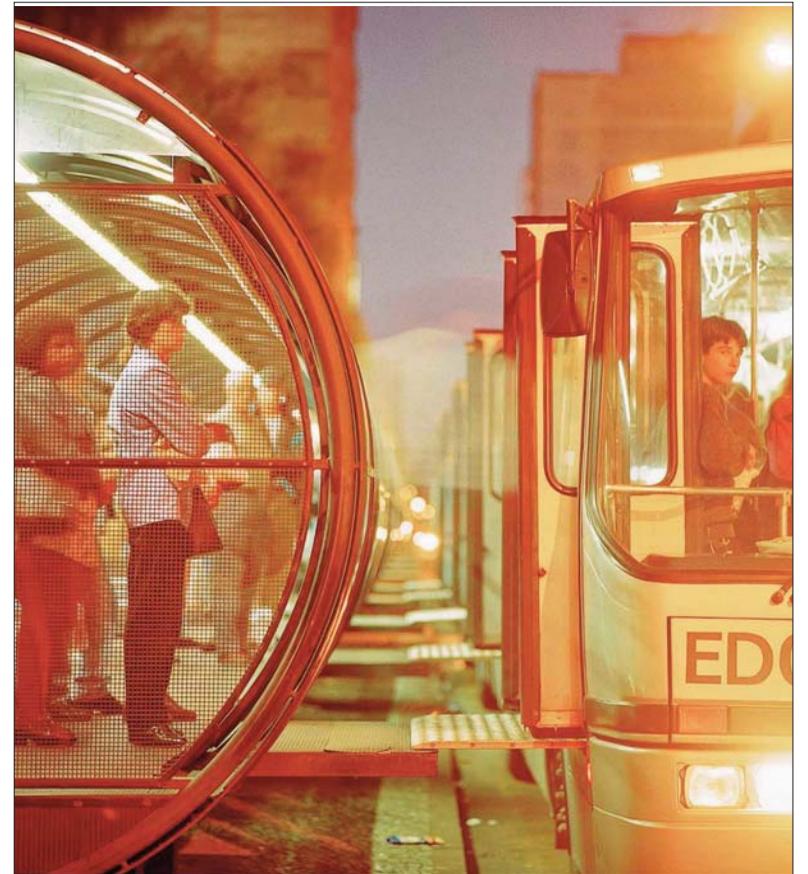
In 1992, to further emulate a subway system, larger biarticulated buses— 25 metres long and capable of carrying 270 passengers—were brought in. Already cheaper than car travel, public transport became even more efficient, reliable and easier. It flourishes to this day, operating like a subway system. At peak times, there is a bus every 50 seconds!

Housing and Education

Like most cities, particularly in South America, Curitiba has grown rapidly over the recent decades. During fast growth, shanty towns develop where people without skills find themselves in a poverty trap. Curitiba's planners decided

provided schools, clinics and day-care centres. Special warehouses were also built as 'business incubators'. Many newcomers had no job skills - here they received free education with classes designed to meet workforce needs. They were trained with guaranteed employment upon course completion and could open their own businesses within the 'incubation' warehouses.

Housing developments also included specially designed homes for those who wanted to start their own business. Budding entrepreneurs were allowed to buy their own place and received free training and assistance for up to two years. In these properties, the commercial space is located on the



© Volvo Bus Image Gallery

Buses stop to pick up passengers waiting in bus tubes, which speeds the boarding process.

ground floor with the accommodation above.

[To enhance the quality of life in rural areas] the city buys excess crops and exchanges them for recyclable materials that are collected by the city's shanty town dwellers. The city's poor receive food and the region's farmers make a living. With the introduction of Cambio Verde, city rubbish collection increased with no extra cost to the municipality.

Recycling

As Curitiba's shanty towns expanded, they spread along riverbank areas liable to flood. Access for garbage collection vehicles was difficult and the city did not have the resources to adequately increase their collection fleet.

Civil Engineer Nicolau Klüppel came up with an idea that was to win him a United Nations award. His idea was to get shanty dwellers to collect waste in exchange for bus passes. This was feasible because the bus operators were paid per bus-kilometer rather than per passenger journey. There was a great response, so a waste recycling centre was created and a campaign called 'Trash that is not trash' was launched. Today, the recycling business in Curitiba has reached maturity, with 80 per cent of recyclables collected by the poor, who then sell the materials on to private companies. Many earn twice the minimum wage for their efforts.

Parkland from Floodplain

Each year, in the rainy season, areas of Curitiba suffered from flooding as the local rivers broke their banks. By 1966, there were already shanty towns on the riverbanks; this was a dangerous

situation. Having realised that forming canals and embankments would transfer flood problems downstream rather than stop them, Nicolau Klüppel proposed turning floodplains into seasonal parks. Floodplain dwellers were given compensation that enabled them to move elsewhere and work began.

In 1960, the green area of Curitiba was measured at 0.5 metres square per inhabitant but now, it is 80 metres square per inhabitant – more than three times the minimum amount recommended by the World Health Organisation. With more recreational space, tourism has increased too. It is calculated that all this has been achieved for just 20 per cent of the cost of canalisation. As with the transport, housing and recycling projects, the seasonal parks have been an extremely effective investment for the city.

A Convenient Truth

Curitiba has lessons for all other urban conurbations. A poor city has been transformed into one of the greenest and most livable cities in the world.

"If every city implemented solutions like those in Curitiba, we would not be having the current climate problems," says Mayor Jaime Lerner. "We have to work fast because we don't have a lifetime to do things and we don't have the right to sacrifice future generations waiting for projects to be completed."

Story from 'A Convenient Truth: Urban Solutions from Curitiba, Brazil' – a film by Giovanni Vaz Del Bello, produced by Maria Terezinha Vaz.

Contact:

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Ireland's First Eco-village

by Paul Ellson

The Village, Ireland's largest eco-building project, is set on 67 acres in the lush green of County Tipperary. The infrastructure is established for 120 lots, two-thirds of which are already sold and the rest likely to be taken up soon.

Every lot owner gets to design and self-build their home under The Village guidelines. There are plans for detached, semi-detached, terraces, apartments and also live/work homes, where the working space is the ground floor. The upcoming construction will be done in clusters of houses with neighbours all co-operating with one another.

The project began in Dublin in 1999, when a group came together to found a sustainable community. After years of searching, the ideal site was bought in Cloughjordan, North Tipperary, in 2005. Local politicians and planners proved very supportive – once a thriving town, Cloughjordan had become a backwater.

All the decisions and administration comes under a democratic, co-operative community organisation – an educational charity known as Sustainable Projects Ireland Limited. Here, even the newest members can have an immediate and equal say in the future of the project.

The Village will feature two social centres; one focusing on education and the other on celebration. An Enterprise Centre will be offering shared secretarial services and other resources for start-ups and small businesses. A local bookstore and coffee house, Sheelagh na Gig, will be the very first commercial enterprise on site followed by The Environmental Construction Company.

When it is completed, The Village will boost the local population by around 40 per cent. In fact, 35 families have already moved into the area in readiness for the construction phase. This has meant that, even before a single brick has been laid, a community has already been firmly established, with horticultural courses, yoga classes, a cinema club, writer and poetry groups, as well as



© Eoin Campbell

Some of the future residents come to work on the land

other societies.

Says Dave Flannery, of Sustainable Projects Ireland Limited: "Soon we will be demonstrating that living sustainably can be more economical, fulfilling, rewarding and fun!"

Contact: Sustainable Projects Ireland Ltd., www.thevillage.ie

Story from Positive News UK



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