



COURTESY PHOTOS

Members of the Davis-based Teach Peace Foundation gather with Liberian villagers and some of their new goats during a recent visit. The foundation has established a self-sustaining livestock program in Liberia, allowing villagers to produce a chain of economic growth, from person to person and village to village.

Hearts full of grace

Teach Peace Foundation brings love, and life-saving projects, to Liberia

By Dave Dionisi

SPECIAL TO THE ENTERPRISE

In three short years, the Davis-based nonprofit Teach Peace Foundation is making a difference both here and abroad.

A Teach Peace team of six people working on our Africa Peacemaker program recently returned from Liberia. The trip was a huge success. We were able to provide 44 goats, 270 chickens, eight micro-businesses, three clean water projects and lifesaving food aid.

Liberia, a country of 3.3 million people on the west coast of Africa, has made tremendous progress since the civil war ended in 2003. This progress, as illustrated by the transition from children soldiers in 2003 to peaceful students in 2009, is a result of a new approach to economic justice.

This focuses on the heart of the country, its villages, where families are caught in the cycle of severe poverty after 14 years of civil war. The civil war ruined farms and robbed people of everything they owned, including their animals.

Imagine families living in small stick-and-mud houses and with no access to clean water. Add to this difficult situation disabled children and no safety net to assist them. To make matters worse, disabled people are viewed as "witched," and without a hand up, they awaken each morning only to face another day of hunger and persecution.

Martin Luther King Jr. could have summed up our Africa Peacemaker program when he wrote, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

Here is a brief summary of three success stories:

Self-sustaining livestock program

Teach Peace started a livestock program to help mothers and families struggling to feed their children.

Clement and Frieda Chiang led the effort to raise much of the funds for this program. Once in Liberia, they led the

program implementation and Clement designed a self-sustaining formula that is the most innovative and exciting we have seen. We formed community-based businesses in four villages and expect to be in at least six more villages within a year.

The three-step self-sustaining formula is:

- With the village chief and council formally agreeing, the village receives six goats and 45 chickens. The first three goats and 15 chickens produced, along with the original animals, continue to be owned and shared by the village.

- The next nine goats and 60 chickens are raised to maturity to help people in another village and pay the intermediary a respectable wage for managing the program.

- For each village, the intermediary earns three of the goats and 15 chickens. In return, he provides all forms of assistance necessary for the program to thrive, including expanding the program to a new village.

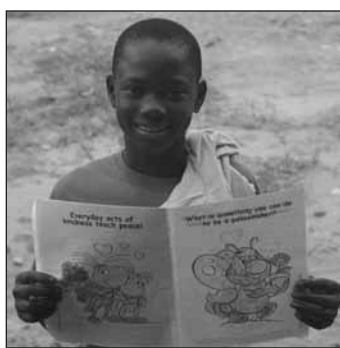
The end result is a self-sustaining chain of economic growth, person to person and village to village.

Micro-businesses

Every two minutes, a child dies from drinking bad water. Knowing this, we brought water purification systems that can produce enough chlorine to purify large quantities of water for several years.

The process works by using an electrical current provided by a rechargeable 12-volt battery to convert water mixed with salt into chlorine. We learned from first-hand experience that a small plastic bag of chlorine sells for 10 Liberian dollars, or about 6 cents.

Benedict Himmie, a Liberian running a clean water micro-business, is now hard at work providing for his family by making chlorine to help thousands of people



obtain clean drinking water.

Micro-businesses make a big difference in the day-to-day lives of people. For example, Christlam Duor received a \$1,500 investment in May 2007 to start a food grinding business. He now employs five people and earns \$3,600 a year making peanut butter.

While \$3,600 may not sound like much in the United States, the annual average income in Liberia is about \$450.

Christlam had a big smile the entire time he gave Teach Peace President Mary Wind a tour of a market where dozens of merchants sold his peanut butter.

Photo story project

Renee Chiang, a high school student, filmed the stories of the war orphans and poor children. You can view Renee's stunning pictures, which show life in Liberia from the children's perspective, at http://www.teachpeace.com/photo_story.htm.

One of the best gifts Renee gave was her willingness to share many hours talking and playing with the children. Remember this if you are interested in visiting and wonder what skills you have that could be put to good use. To enrich your life by volunteering, visit <http://www.teachpeace.com> or contact us at (530) 554-7061.

As Martin Luther King Jr. said: "Everybody can be great ... because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. ... You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love."

We thank each of you who have helped the Teach Peace Foundation in our work to teach peace here at home and in faraway places. Together we can and do make a difference!

— Dave Dionisi of Davis is the founder of the Teach Peace Foundation.

Lost in the blur of slogans

By Ishmael Khaldi

SPECIAL TO THE ENTERPRISE

For those who haven't heard, the first week in March has been designated as Israel Apartheid Week by activists who are either ill-intentioned or misinformed. On American campuses, organizing committees are planning happenings to once again castigate Israel as the lone responsible party for all that maligns the Middle East.

Last year, at UC Berkeley, I had the opportunity to "dialogue" with some of the organizers of these events. My perspective is unique, both as the vice consul for Israel in San Francisco, and as a Bedouin and the highest-ranking Muslim representing Israel in the United States.

I was born into a Bedouin tribe in northern Israel, one of 11 children, and began life as shepherd living in our family tent. I went on to serve in the Israeli border police, and later earned a master's degree in political science from Tel Aviv University before joining the Israel Foreign Ministry.

I am a proud Israeli — along with many other non-Jewish Israelis such as Druze, Baha'i, Bedouin, Christians and Muslims, who live in one of the most culturally diversified societies and the only true democracy in the Middle East.

Like America, Israeli society is far from perfect, but it lets us deal honestly. By any yardstick you choose — educational opportunity, economic development, women's and gay rights, freedom of speech and assembly, legislative representation — Israel's minorities fare far better than in any other country in the Middle East.

So, I would like to share the following with organizers of Israel Apartheid Week, for those of them who are open to dialogue and not blinded by a hateful ideology:

You are part of the problem, not part of the solution: If you are really idealistic and committed to a better world, stop with the false rhetoric. We need moderate people to come together in good faith to help find the path to relieve the human suffering on both sides of the Israel-Palestinian conflict. Vilification and false labeling is a blind alley that is unjust and takes us nowhere.

You deny Israel the fundamental right of every society to defend itself: You condemn Israel for building a security barrier to protect its citizens from suicide bombers and for striking at buildings from which missiles are launched at its cities, but you never offer an alternative. Aren't you practicing yourself a deep form of racism by denying an entire society the right to defend itself?

Your criticism is willfully hypocritical: Do Israel's Arab citizens suffer from disadvantage? You'd better believe it. Do African-Americans 10 minutes from the Berkeley campus suffer from disadvantage — you'd better believe that, too. So should we launch a Berkeley Apartheid Week, or should we seek real ways to better our societies and make opportunity more available?

You are betraying the moderate Muslims and Jews who are working to achieve peace: Your radicalism is undermining the forces for peace in Israel and in the Palestinian territories. We are working hard to move toward a peace agreement that recognizes the legitimate rights of both Israel and the Palestinian people, and you are tearing it down by falsely vilifying one side.

To the organizers of Israel Apartheid Week I would like to say:

If Israel were an apartheid state, I would not have been appointed here, nor would I have chosen to take upon myself this duty. There are many Arabs, both within Israel and in the Palestinian territories, who have taken great courage to walk the path of peace. You should stand with us, rather than against us.

— Ishmael Khaldi is deputy consul general of Israel for the Pacific Northwest. This piece originally appeared in the San Francisco Chronicle.

What do you think?

What changes have you made for a greener life?

Asked in downtown Davis

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Jeff Dimock
skydiving instructor,
Davis:

"I just gave (Mishka's Cafe) the coffee sleeve so they could reuse it."



Ashton McGinniss
fighter, Sacramento:

"I cut down on light usage at my house and recycled my plasma TV."



Bill Greenwood
retired, Fresno:

"We turned down our thermostat and conserve water."



Shari Greenwood
retired, Fresno:

"I share a car with my husband to reduce gasoline and try to get on bikes more often."



Dorothy Yerxa
registered nurse, Davis:

"We turned down our hot water heater and use recycle bags for shopping."



Karen Schelegle
registered nurse, Davis:

"We put on solar panels, changed all the light bulbs and bought a hybrid car."