



*A Catalyst for Development:
Where Communities Take the Lead*

Growth
Resources
Action
Community
Empowerment



GRACE Cares 2018 Annual Report



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Letter from the President

GRACE Cares 2018

GRACE Cares' mission is to partner with local heroes and communities on small- scale community development projects that make a difference by empowering people to improve their lives. We do this with respect to local cultures and traditions. This is accomplished by helping to build healthy, educated, just, peaceful and productive communities. GRACE Cares provides expertise, funding, and support for health, education, peace and social justice, cultural preservation, and economic development projects.

Growth: In 2018 we have seen all of our programs expand their vision of what they want for their community. This year, twelve amazing, strong women have graduated from the Community Health Leadership Program in Project Hearts. The Uzima Community Development Project that supports the well-being and development of the Watha people in the Galana region of Kenya was officially launched in December. B4 Peace has been working on an art show taking place in New Orleans, early 2018, which will focus on Building a Peaceful Community through art. Lucknow has been working hard on expanding their education and health programs. Mayan Traditional Medicine has been working with the Healers on their 2019 goals, including providing medical attention to local families and the cultivation of medicinal plants. Lastly, Kali to Kali has been diligently working in Rwanda to provide well expansion, offer more education initiatives, and cultivate gardens to make villages more self-sufficient.

Resources: These communities depend on financial support. We have been encouraging our programs to delve into their own fundraising and social media. This can be a challenge for some of our programs with limited resources. That is why we depend on our donors who continue to sustain our current programs and provide the impetus for new programs in 2019.

Action: This year we have become more active on social media – check out our Facebook Page! We also made a conscious effort to spread the word about our projects and our goals. In 2019, we are looking for additional board members to help provide fresh insight in this rapidly changing world. GRACE Cares has also taken on new leadership staff which will provide us more focus and expand our programs.

Community: Every project we collaborate with has local heroes who are passionate about strengthening their communities. These heroes work with their communities at a grassroots level to determine community priorities, ranging from providing sustainable agricultural programs and water systems to education, social services, and health care. The commitment of these heroes has illustrated what can be accomplished to make their communities a better place.

Empowerment: 2018 was the year the world became empowered. In the United States, where political and social change is abundant, B4 Peace has made the silent voices heard. And internationally, Project Hearts is empowering women in Baitoa, which is a male dominant society. All of our programs were inspired from these global changes and it is easily reflected in the growth of all of our projects.

With gratitude,

Zoe Kopp, PhD



B4 Peace

Background: GRACE Cares believes it is important to promote the arts and education projects that develop individual and community awareness on the importance of peacebuilding. By doing so, they join citizens across the globe to reflect on decisions that impact the lives of vulnerable people. We promote an agenda that respects the rights and responsibilities of humans: the right to be free and to live peacefully and to learn how to build peace within individuals, families, and communities.

Activities: We are proud of our B4 Peace Project which held an international peace art competition and exhibition ***Building a Peaceable Community*** in New Orleans in January and February 2018. Over 60 different artists from around the world submitted works of art on the theme of building peace. In a time of so many violent conflicts and divisions around the world, we wanted to inspire artists to work for peace.

B4 Peace wanted to share this work in New Orleans, a community which struggles daily with gun violence, where the message of building a peaceable community would have deep resonance. The show was a success, not only in inspiring the artists to create works that have meaningful connections with the community but also in moving many of the attendees on a personal level. We were honored to have a guest from Nagasaki, Japan, who survived the bombing as a child. She embraced each organizer individually and thanked us for our work and commitment. You can see some of the art from around the world at: www.b4peace.org.

The art exhibition included four separate shows. The ***"Building Peace"*** exhibit included accomplished artists from around the world who shared their vision of how together we can build a peaceable community. The First Prize winner was Clint Sleeper with a video entitled **The Fixer**. The video shows one man taking responsibility for his community by fixing broken swings and benches in a community park, exemplifying how we all can make a difference. Louise Whelan's ["Orange Breath"](#) won 2nd prize. This award-winning community activist and artist from Australia beautifully illustrates how we all breathe as one, no matter where we are in the world. The People's Choice prize went to Louisiana-based veteran and artist Rene Denet. His flute made from bullets shows us how we can transform weapons for peaceful purposes. All three prize winners donated their winnings to social justice and peace projects, continuing to spread the good work of B4 Peace.



Rene Denet (left), a Veteran, now makes beautiful sculptures out of bullets, shown here with Dean Gallea, a GRACE Care's Board Member

The second show ***“Prisoners of War in the Age of Desire”*** was a retrospective show by B4 Peace co-Founder Namaya Art Rat for Peace. This exhibit asked, “Are we prisoners of war of the military budget? What is more pornographic – Is it two people making love or is it the trillion-dollar military budget? How do we make informed choices? What is the cost of war for us as individuals and to our society?” The show featured Namaya’s iconic pieces such as Pentagon Man; Trillion Dollar Penis, a seven-foot-tall red, white, and blue penis with the cost of the US military budget; Lagrima, a sculpture made of M16s and an AK 47, 8-foot-long in a proscenium with bullet shells. Other works showcased included “Do Black Lives Matter?” with homage to Tamir Rice and other African-Americans who have been slain by the police. And the poem/sculpture “Meat Is Armed” on the topic of rape in the military. Opening night attendees voted Namaya’s majestic ***“Inevitability of Peace”*** as the best of the Pornography of War show. More on these works of art can be seen [here](#) and [here](#).



Namaya's Inevitability of Peace sculpture was the attendees' favorite.

"The Deadly Ambiguity of Guns" show asked, "Are guns toys or tools? A sport or weapon? Is it truly a civil right or is it a criminal possession?" The confusion is lethal. Local and international artists responded enthusiastically to this theme. The first-prize winner was James Flanagan for "Hands Up, Don't Shoot," a steel sculpture showing an abstract man with his hand up signifying innocence. Paul Roach's "Statue of Liberty?" a statue of Lady Liberty holding a list of all the places and dates of mass shootings, won second prize. And Pat Jolly's photo entitled "A man oughta do what he thinks is right" took third prize.



The fourth part of the exhibit was called ***“What you say! What I say!”*** The works were created entirely by the youth in El Aida refugee camp in Palestine, many of whom have grown up in the shadow of the wall between Israel and Palestine. This presentation shared their vision of peace building in painting and photos and dramatically reminded us that young people have a voice and want to be a part of the change.

The *Building a Peaceful Community* show was B4 Peace’s highlight of 2018. However, there were on-going presentations by Ayman Nijim at churches, synagogues, and community centers on Middle East peace as well as presentations of “War is a Racket” by Namaya. B4 Peace also won a grant from #quakersoutsidethelines to create a sculpture of Eisenhower’s Cross of Iron speech warning of the growing military-industrial complex.



Community Finance Guatemala

Background: Thousands of indigenous Kakchiquel Maya households throughout the Chimaltenango department (~counties) of Guatemala live with constant financial uncertainty and instability, which greatly diminishes their overall quality of life. Community Finance Guatemala (CFG) is dedicated to reversing this situation by supporting indigenous Guatemalan women with the necessary knowledge and tools to empower themselves to organize their own financial systems. Project founder and director Andrew Becker arrived in Guatemala in 2013 to consult for a local social business, Soluciones Comunitarias, which is dedicated to offering innovative services to alleviate many of the challenges faced by the indigenous populations throughout the country. By working directly with their local team and having countless individual and group discussions with constituents, Andrew designed what is now the CFG project. While Andrew was able to support and train a few savings groups on his own, CFG really didn't take off until in 2016 when he found two incredible local heroes of Comalapa, Doña Maria Sotz and Wilfred Son, to take over the training of the groups themselves. This dynamic duo has since taken over management of the project locally and has grown it to become more successful than Andrew could have ever imagined.



*Savings
group
members
“Semilla de
las Flores”
waiting
their turn to
save their
money*

Activities: 2018 has been the most exciting year for the project so far due to joining the GRACE Cares network in March. The financial and technical support received through GRACE Cares has allowed Doña Maria and Wilfred to feel secure in their pursuit of new groups and continued support of existing groups. Wilfred has stepped up with confidence into his new role as Local Program Coordinator, in which he is continuing to train groups directly while simultaneously coordinating the design and implementation of the strategic plan of the program. He has gained more help this year as well, training one of the savings group's directive committee members, Adelina Xubac, as a Program Promoter, a new role they are co-creating together.

This new trio has been responsible for the training of six new savings groups with a total of 68 members. These new groups (as of December 2018) had saved a total of Q20,932 (~\$2,790), had lent out Q58,000 (~\$7,733), with a 100% repayment rate, and earned Q9,492 (\$1,265) in interest- a rate of return of 16.4%.

Along with the training of these new groups, the local team continued to support the already existing nine groups that were trained in the previous two years. These nine groups continued their success from previous years, many with significant increases in savings, loans, and earnings as compared to 2017. In 2018 the 138 total members were able to save Q115,984 (~\$15,465), lend out Q193,388 (~\$25,785), with a 100% repayment rate, and earn Q27,297 (~\$3,640)- a rate of return of 14.1%.

As a part of their training, all group members receive financial literacy education to help them better manage their household finances. This training has helped new and existing members successfully invest in their weaving and handicraft businesses, purchase land for subsistence farming, and pay for their children's education. To celebrate the year's success the team organized the 2nd annual Christmas party where more than 200 CFG members shared a home cooked meal, coordinated and participated in their own friendly competitions winning various prizes, and shared their stories with one another about how CFG has changed their lives.

Future: In 2019 the Community Finance Guatemala team hopes to:

- Dive deeper with each existing group to better understand the impact the program has had on their lives and discover what other challenges the families are facing. Depending on the challenges they express the team hopes to leverage its organizational network to facilitate bringing other types of support to CFG families.
 - Potential projects in the making:
 - Partnership with Habitat for Humanity to build stoves for 30 families
 - Partnership with the municipal government's "World Fund" project to provide 50 Q2,500 (~\$333) zero interest loans to GFG members.
 - Partnership with the municipal government's low-income housing project to provide 15 CFG members with houses at a heavily discounted price.

- Continue to train new groups. However, with the focus shifting towards depth rather than breadth new groups will most likely be the result of previous outreach activities rather than the active pursuit of new groups.
- Expand into the region of Sololá by training two new Community Finance Advisors (CFAs). The new CFAs, with proper support from the local team, should be able to start one group of an average of 12 members every one to two months, expanding the program by an estimated 50 to 100 members in 2019. NOTE: This plan is dependent on the amount of funding received this year.



Board member, Danielle Huffaker, and Local Program Coordinator, Wilfred Son, laughing with the “Flor de Maria” savings group.



Kali to Kali

Background: Kali to Kali operates two projects—one in Pakistan and one in Rwanda. Kali to Kali aims to provide sustained education and wellness efforts in areas of need. These efforts are done by supporting local education systems and schools, providing access to clean water, addressing hygiene issues, as well as providing access to proper nutrition. Over the years, Kali to Kali has established long-term relationships with organizations overseas to ensure that sustainability can be continued. In addition, local workers are used to support and stimulate local economies.

Activities: Currently, Kali to Kali is maintaining the eight water tanks/wells and 150 fruit and vegetable gardens that have been constructed in the four villages in the outskirts of Kigali, Rwanda. Sustainability is always key. Thus, our team is constantly maintaining communications with our local partner ANA Rwanda to ensure the gardens are cared for with appropriate resources and that the water tanks/wells are monitored for quality control.

In addition to the maintenance of the gardens and water wells/tanks, we teamed up with our colleague and friend in Kigali who has been supporting and assisting us since the beginning of the project. By the end of December 2018, we initiated an educational project for the Irereo Nursery School in the Cyaruzinge village where the initial funding of \$3,000 has supported the renovation of the school, the construction of 30-45 vegetable/fruit gardens around the village, the funding of tuition fees for 27-35 students who could not afford enrollment fees, and the establishment of a basic English program for the students and two teachers.

Future: Due to most of us going back to school full time and studying in different parts of the world in 2018, our group huddles took a big hit and decreased a lot from previous years. Nevertheless, we plan to attend some national/local funding events/conventions in the USA, networking events, arts and entertainment events, schools, churches, mosques, and/or sporting events. Our team will be meeting once a week to discuss new ideas and to form strategies about which events to attend.

We are also hoping to get a researcher on the team with a nutrition background to help us establish a nutrition project to add on to our present and future projects. Malnutrition is still an ongoing issue in the rural areas of Kigali; thus, understanding what resources are available to locals in these communities will be vital to create a nutrition plan based on natural and local resources. Another option we plan to explore is teaming up with one of our

partnering teams in GRACE Cares to understand how to create an efficient English program to improve on English skills.

To improve on the accomplishments of this year, more marketing will have to be implemented to give exposure to the projects. Thus, this year we hope to raise \$30,000-\$50,000 in total to construct two to five more water tanks in our partnering villages and also to implement more thorough educational- and nutritional-based programs in the communities to improve and assist with health and basic needs.





Lucknow

Background: In 2008, Nazeela Nasserri, a U.S citizen of Indian descent decided to take action after recognizing the need for basic education and healthcare through a visit with her maternal grandfather to the Amethi region. Soon after she began travelling to India during the summer to teach English in the school for girls in Amethi. The Lucknow project was eventually established to introduce an Intensive English Program in the region's schools. Nazeela's sister, Afshan Nasserri, is now the director of the Lucknow Project.

Activities: In 2018, the Lucknow Project was able to hold two medical camps and a summer teaching session. Our first medical camp was conducted in May, led by Dr. Helene Mansaray, Dr. Pierre Filteau, and Nelly Odiette with the help of the on-site Shine India Team. The team was able to serve around 1,000 individuals throughout the outskirts and cities of Lucknow and Delhi. During the medical camps, Mrs. Odiette conducted English classes for students.

The team was able to make an impact in the following locations: Mission Inter College Lucknow, Srimad Dyanand Baal Siksha Sadan Orphanage Lucknow, Chowk Lucknow, Bonhra Vair district Delhi, Mahindra Society Delhi, Amethi Lucknow, JD Institute of Fashion Technologies, and Saidanpur. In addition to the free medical examinations, the doctors gave numerous talks at these locations about diabetes education, disease prevention measures, hypertension education, among other topics. We cannot commend this team enough for their amazing work accomplished!

In August, our summer education session in Amethi was led by Afshan Nasserri, with interns Rose Massey (California), Ayesha Nihal (Hong Kong/Lko) Amina Nihal (Hong Kong/Lko), and Rehan Siddiqui (Dubai). Three schools in Amethi were served on a daily basis, strengthening the English core but also introducing Critical Thought into the curriculum. During classes, a medical camp was held by Dr. Nasserri where around 250 patients were seen.

Future: In the future, the Lucknow Project is going to focus on emphasizing critical thinking in our education. Critical thought is an immensely important tool for changing attitudes and mindsets in rural areas, particularly areas like Amethi where there is little exposure to global and even national issues. By teaching confidence, gender equality, rights, and inner reflection, we strive to ignite change within our students, encouraging them to utilize their education to make a change in their communities and social worlds. When we piloted this subject this summer, we focused mainly on instilling these abstract topics into the minds of

older students, and we hope to now expand this curricular offering to younger students, employing learning methods such as journaling and discussion. As previously noted, we also hope to supplement these ideas of community by creating a community garden at the Mullah Jeevan school.

Here are our future goals: We are looking to raise \$3000 to distribute towards our garden, the maintenance of our garden, instruments to create the critical thought curricula (journals & materials), and to establish a “needs based camp” for families to get financial aid for personal matters.





Mayan Traditional Medicine

Background: In Guatemalan society, the two major health systems are the official or formal and the Mayan traditional medicine. The latter is still the most accessible in regard to the prevention and treatment of common diseases and illnesses. Although traditional medicine enjoys widespread popularity, the practitioners of traditional medicine still face difficulties of acceptance and recognition in the health care field.

Through research and activities in local communities, Mayan traditional medicine seeks to establish a place in Guatemalan society as a model for the practice of traditional Mayan health systems and an integral contributor to the wellbeing of the Guatemalan people.

Activities: In 2018 the leadership of healers and therapists was praised and recognized by the local communities in the Boca Costa region of Nahualá. This attention by the local community has led to greater emphasis on the role of time-keepers and Mayan spiritual guides and healers among community members and families.

Although there were limitations in regard to logistics and resources, the group was still able to achieve the following in 2018:

- On February 10, 2018 a Mayan Ceremony for Giving Thanks was organized for local communities. In accordance with the culture, God was praised for bringing the community together and guiding the group through difficulties with their projects.
- The delivery of sweaters to group members and to Venancia, an initiative that was begun in 2017 and completed in 2018.
- Therapists and healers provided medical attention to local families, especially families of scarce economic resources, for common Mayan illnesses. These families are especially vulnerable since they cannot seek medical attention in the village or in the community of Xejuyup and do not speak the Quiché language. The healers in many instances used the medicinal plants from their gardens and also performed several Mayan sacred fire ceremonies.
- The healers cultivated medicinal plant balms for each group member to use with their patients. See photos.

- Bi-weekly meetings were held that emphasized capacity building or organizational strengthening for the group.
- Materials were purchased for a medicinal plant processing workshop.

Future: With the growth of the gardens, the cultivation of the medicinal plants for each Mayan priest is expanding. They are creating workshops for the younger generations that focus on self-sustainability and the promotion and preservation of traditional forms of knowledge, particularly to the children of the community. The healers and therapists are also planning to solicit agricultural expertise on how to cultivate and harvest additional medicinal plants. They are creating a documentary video demonstrating cultivation, care, harvest, and preparation of medicinal plants.





Project Hearts

Background: Baitoa is a rural municipality located in the north of the Dominican Republic with a population of approximately 15,000 people. Due to its lack of infrastructure and social services, Baitoa suffers from problems like access to quality education and health care, sanitary forms of waste disposal, clean water supply, and employment opportunities.

Prior to being officially recognized as a Dominican NGO in 2011, Project Hearts existed informally in the personal service of founder Rubén Ottenwalder. Since 2011, Project Hearts has been refining its mission to ensure we are working in such a way as to truly empower our communities. For this reason, we are focused on addressing critical needs that fall into three primary categories: health, economic development, and education.

Activities: We were able to accomplish the following in 2018:

- W.A.S.H. (Water Access, Sanitation & Hygiene):
 - 39 water filters distributed, giving 126 individuals access to affordable, clean drinking water
 - 110 water tanks (“tinacos”) installed, allowing 326 people to store sufficient quantities of rainwater
 - \$15,896 (USD) reinvested in families via discounts on filters & tanks
 - 25 adults in four neighborhood associations & 60 students in three schools participated in our new interactive WASH workshops, which include Environmental Education
- Integral Education:
 - 304 youth participated in our educational activities & lessons
 - 319 adults engaged in weekly discussions related to spiritual, emotional, & mental health topics
 - 2 interns spent the summer with us, conducting surveys on mental health issues prevalent in Baitoa, then developing & teaching relevant lessons
- Community Health Leadership:
 - 12 women graduated as CHLs, meaning 120 new families have someone advocating for their health
 - 63 expecting moms received prenatal & family planning information
 - 22 health presentations have been taught throughout our communities

Future: In the coming year, we hope to do the following:

- Establish an interactive adolescent health workshop series which will include sessions on leadership, family planning, and setting goals.
- Offer financial management training classes to teach individuals and families how to spend and save their money wisely.
- Initiate a community recycling program to improve the overall health of Baitoa.





Watha

Background: The Uzima Community Development Project supports the wellbeing and development of the Watha people in the Galana region of Kenya through development programs in education, health care, water access, and human rights training. The Wathas primarily inhabit four villages within the Kisiki sub-region with a majority living in Garisemuke Village in the Galana area. Most Wathas earn a living through farming, hunting, or charcoal burning. In addition to natural disasters and cyclical climate events like droughts, the Wathas have encountered the following developmental problems that have had adverse effects on their daily lives:

- Access to clean water: As a marginalized community, the Watha have historically confronted difficulties in securing access to their own clean water supply. In addition to the history of discrimination, the Watha have had to deal with frequent crocodile attacks which have made the acquisition of water even more difficult.
- Poor infrastructure: The Galana region is considered an undeveloped area with poor or under-paved roads that become impassable during the rainy season. Many residents live in simple huts with thatched roofs and mud floors and walls. As with the differential access to water, the lack of infrastructure in the Watha community seems to be an endemic problem.
- Healthcare: The nearest dispensary is located in the town of Bombi, a 4-5 km walk for many residents. Beyond the distance, the dispensary lacks adequate health facilities, equipment, and medications with only one on-call nurse. Mobile health services run by the county government of Kilifi have only been available on a sporadic basis, and the majority of people have had to rely on traditional herbal medications without proper access to medical care.
- Food security: The Galana community depends heavily on subsistence farming and charcoal burning with very little opportunity for livestock husbandry. However, since the region tends to be very arid and susceptible to floodwaters, it is very difficult to raise crops consistently. The problems are exacerbated by the rate of deforestation to produce charcoal.
- Education: The level of illiteracy is much higher within the Watha community compared to other neighboring communities. The residents not only suffer from a lack of resources (e.g., schools, teachers) but also face economic pressures that compel families to keep children at home.

Activities: On December 22, 2018, the first organizational meeting was held in Garisemuke Village to introduce GRACE Cares to the elders and to present the proposed water project (see photo).

Future: In addition to the water project, there are plans to form women's groups that will include livelihood training, microfinance programs, and development-building activities.





Zambia Youth Land Project

Background: The YOCUPA project (Youth Cultural Promotion Association) works to alleviate gender and financial inequality in Zambia while protecting indigenous culture. Beck Banda is Director of YOCUPA, which has over a decade of successful experience in a wide variety of projects.

Beck and YOCUPA are partnering with the senior Chieftainess of the Chungu District in the northern province of Zambia to improve access to land for youth. Currently the practice is that the youth can only acquire land through inheritance, after the death of the male parent. But the local leader, senior Chieftainess, has agreed to partner with YOCUPA to shift the paradigm. She will give 21 hectares of land in each of the 377 villages she oversees of Luwingu to youth so that sustainable agricultural production can be developed to address food security.

Activities and Future: This project was launched in 2018 and our initial fundraising target is \$10,000 for a project that can help people in 377 villages.



Financial Statement

In 2018, GRACE Cares had a total operating budget of \$129,639.77 received from donations. We gratefully received \$52,923.32 in individual donations, \$13,216.45 in corporate donations, and other major donations received equaling \$63,500.00. Our total expenditures in 2018 were \$128,651.45.

We are proud to say that \$118,108.03 of our income went to programs. That is, 91.8% of expenditures went directly into our programs. Of the remaining expenditures \$10,543.42 went to administrative, management, and contract costs.

Our detailed financial review is available upon request at info@gracecares.org.



*A Catalyst for Development:
Where Communities Take the Lead*

Growth
Resources
Action
Community
Empowerment



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