

An Ark for Modern Times

I've been thinking a lot lately about the planet and the people on it. There is definitely some room for improvement and it is clear to me that focusing on the problem will only create more of it. The opposite of that it seems to focus on what we want which is being part of the solution.

While doing some research recently I was excited to learn that there are many organizations out there doing loving things for our beautiful blue planet. I'd like to share one of my favorite with you today.

Allow me to introduce [Heifer International](#) and the innovative (common sense) visionary that founded it.



Dan West
1944

From the Website:

A Midwestern farmer named Dan West was ladling out rations of milk to hungry children during the Spanish Civil War when it hit him.

“These children don’t need a cup, they need a cow.”

West, who was serving as a Church of the Brethren relief worker, was forced to decide who would receive the limited rations and who wouldn’t – literally, who would live and who would die. This kind of aid, he knew, would never be enough.

So West returned home to form Heifers for Relief, dedicated to ending hunger permanently by providing families with livestock and training so that they “could be spared the indignity of depending on others to feed their children.”

In 1944, the first shipment of 17 heifers left York, Pennsylvania, for Puerto Rico, going to families whose malnourished children had never even tasted milk.

Why heifers? These are young cows that haven't yet given birth – making them perfect not only for supplying a continued source of milk, but also for supplying a continued source of support. That's because each family receiving a heifer agrees to "pass on the gift" and donate the female offspring to another family, so that the gift of food is never-ending.

This simple idea of giving families a source of food rather than short-term relief caught on and has continued for over 60 years. Since 1944, Heifer has helped 8.5 million people in more than 125 countries.

Sounds a lot like teaching a person to fish doesn't it? Or rather teaching 8.5 million people to fish... What an empowering mission, to teach people to feed themselves rather than to feed them.

Today, Heifer offers cows, sheep, llama, water buffalo, goats, ducks, chickens, geese, trees, seeds, fish, worms, honey bees, pigs and rabbits to impoverished and malnourished families around the world, including in our own back yard.

In North America for example, there are many Heifer sponsored community projects created to teach the hungry to feed themselves through sustainable start up farms, 'buy local' marketing campaigns, youth programs offering agricultural opportunities and heritage food processing courses. There is so much more, it is impossible to list them all. The animals and resources are provided not only for food but also as work animals, resources like wool, and fertilizer providing multiple opportunities for economic sustainability.

The recipients of Heifers mission are not only given livestock and other resources to assist them to feed themselves, they are also given training on how to make it all work. They are taught things like sustainable farming, sustainable grazing practices and soil preservation. Pretty cool eh?

And it grows... Part of the Heifer program is a 'pay it forward' philosophy. When a family gets the gift of live stock and training, they agree to donate some of the offspring and what they've learned to other families in their village. This part of the program has been so successful

that some past recipients were part of the solution for neighboring people in China after the recent earthquake. :-)

That is one bright and shining example among many quieter ones and it gets the point across. Heifer is making progress in expanding the potential of humanity and this beautiful planet we live on. It is truly amazing what can happen when folks band together in a spirit of love.

More from the Website:

International Aid and Sustainability

Helping Hungry Families Feed Themselves

Heifer International does so much more than put food in the mouths of hungry people. Heifer helps people feed themselves.

The goal of every Heifer project is sustainability – project partners achieving self-reliance.

And year after year, as partner families “pass on the gift” of knowledge and one or more of their animals’ offspring to others in need, they become links in a network of hope, dignity and self-reliance that helps hundreds of others care for themselves.

Get an insider’s view of our non-profit organization, which has offered tangible, effective and long-lasting ways to make a real difference for almost 60 years.

Heifer's Mission to End Hunger

Heifer Envisions...

A world of communities living together in peace and equitably sharing the resources of a healthy planet.

Heifer’s Mission Is...

To work with communities to end hunger and poverty and to care for the earth.

Heifer's Strategy Is...

To “pass on the gift.” As people share their animals’ offspring with others – along with their knowledge, resources, and skills – an expanding network of hope, dignity, and self-reliance is created that reaches around the globe.

Heifer's History...

This simple idea of giving families a source of food rather than short-term relief caught on and has continued for over 60 years. Today, millions of families in 128 countries have been given the gifts of self-reliance and hope.

I love donating and contributing what I can. It makes me feel abundant and alive. If ever there was an organization that felt worth contributing too, this is the one for me. They are definitely focused on what they want and therefore they are definitely part of the solution.

Next time you are planning a gathering at work or in your community, why not see if you can raise enough to buy someone a cow or a goat? It's a great community builder, both for your community and for the community that receives the animal. :-)

Apparently, one man can make a difference, by starting a wave of loving energy. Just ask Dan West and [Heifer International](#).



In Honor of All of the Loving People Doing Amazing Things!