



Small Steps Towards
a Big Difference

SOMETHING'S SPROUTING!

Our seasonal e-news updates are designed to share our current success stories that your donations have helped to make possible, because at Something Good in the World we believe that "small is beautiful, but beautiful is not small..." Please visit our website for more detailed information on all of our educational programs and projects: www.somethinggoodintheworld.org.

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www.somethinggoodintheworld.org

☀️ SPRING into SUMMER 2023

From seed to sprout, the power of seeds hold all the potential for what will grow out of them. At Something Good in the World we are experiencing firsthand how something so tiny can become something so powerful. Our motto has always been: "Small steps towards a big difference," but this concept goes far beyond words. Whether it's a child encountering the woods for the first time, and what that simple awareness causes in terms of awe and wonder; or a teenager with special needs tasting a fresh strawberry and having the revelatory sensation that comes with this brand new experience; or a Congolese refugee discovering that if you put seeds in a jar for 4 days, with the right amount of water and ventilation, you end up with edible sprouts, a nutrient dense meal that can help stave off malnutrition - the realization is the same. It's incredible what a seed can do, whether a literal seed in water or soil, or the seed of an idea that spreads to so many others. Please read on in our Spring-into-Summer report for more stories of the small but mighty works we are doing that you have made possible with your support, to realize what a ripple effect it has when we all take steps to become "solutionaries" for world problems in our very own backyards...





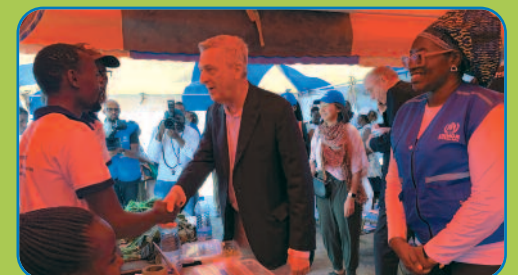
One of this season's most inspiring successes has been a humanitarian aid project called "Seeding the Future" that SGITW helped to start through a collaboration between the [Kalobeyei Initiative For Better Life \(KI4BL\)](#) in Kenya, and the international [Young Template of Peace \(YTop\)](#). SGITW Board Members first encountered members of KI4BL through a series of "Open Mind Passion" workshops with the YTop, and we were approached by several Congolese refugee members to find out if SGITW could help the [Kakuma Refugee Camp](#) with an initiative to grow their own food. Over the past 15 years, SGITW has had great success with farm-based health and nutrition programs for refugee youth in New York, and we were honored to take up the challenge to see what we might be able to do to assist the youth in Kenya.

After discovering the magnitude of the problems in the Kakuma Refugee Camp, of over 200,000 refugees from 14 different African countries, housed with their families in tents, lacking basic necessities, and suffering from malnutrition and in some cases starvation, we realized that growing vegetables in the ground or in containers was not enough. KI4BL was already successfully growing some food on their own, but the refugees who entered the camp needed immediate sustenance, and the World Food Program was only able to provide them with cornmeal or rice or soybeans or sorghum, and oil. In addition to emergency supplements for children of "Plumpy'Nut," (a peanut paste), what else could we think of that could help in the short term and the long term? A SGITW supporter in Hawai'i, Kady Foster, came up with an idea: what about growing sprouts as a nutrient-rich food that could be added to meals?

SGITW educator, Barbara Sarbin, suggested this idea to her Middle School students in Permaculture classes at the [Volcano School of Arts & Sciences](#), and they agreed to experiment with growing a variety of sprouts, to prove that it could be done easily, cheaply, quickly, and that the results would be safe to eat. After 4 days, the students discovered that growing sprouts was incredibly easy, and based on their successes, they decided to create a "How-To" video to show the youth in Kenya a simple way to get started. After multiple Zoom conference calls, KI4BL members agreed to give it a try! SGITW did a small fundraiser to be able to send literal seed money to this registered community-based organization (under the UNHCR), and very soon the Congolese refugees had procured seeds and containers to get the project started. Within a week, they too had radish, kale, and broccoli sprouts to eat! They did a second phase of experimentation, and figured out even better ways to grow the sprouts (larger containers, more ventilation, cooler conditions) and these results were then presented at a World Refugee Day exhibition! Little did we know that the High Commissioner of the UNHCR, Filippo Grandi, would be attending, as well as leaders of the Red Cross, the World Food Program, and the Kenyan government, and that they would not only inquire deeply about our Seeding the Future project, but they also tasted the sprouts themselves with surprise and delight!



[Click Here to see a video about this project!](#)



The members of KI4BL are currently educating families in the Kakuma Refugee Camp and the adjacent Kalobeyi Settlement in how to grow sprouts on their own. They have applied to the United Nations for an Innovation Fund grant to be able to expand this educational program to include everyone in the refugee camps, as well as to feed the incoming families who enter the reception centers, as they are suffering the most from hunger and malnutrition when they arrive. KI4BL also wants to help the host country, where drought has been a persistent issue and Kenyan children are also struggling with issues of hunger and malnutrition. With KI4BL's goal of Zero Hunger, and their vision of peace and self-reliance for sustainable development, this collaborative Seeding the Future project has the potential to bring real results in terms of health and nutrition to the refugee families. We will keep all of our donors updated on how this project progresses, with a report in a few months on whether the addition of sprouts as a nutrient-dense food is able to prove itself as a health benefit, especially for children.

Our greatest thanks and admiration to the KI4BL heroes, Samuel Binja, Akso Kaposho, and Seleus Nezerwe for leading Seeding the Future in Kenya, and gratitude to the Apple Employee Giving program for their initial donation to this project, to Rommy Urrutia for editing the video, and to all those who have given individual donations – thank you for believing in the power of youth, education, and seeds!



As you know, SGITW's educational programs are all given free of charge to children of all ages and backgrounds, primarily those from underserved and impoverished areas, from Title One schools, shelters, day care, public schools, and students who are considered vulnerable. Without the support of foundations, none of this would be possible, so we always give a shout out to the organizations who get what we are doing and want to make sure we can keep doing something good in the world. Some of these donors prefer not to be named, and there is one anonymous family foundation that has been giving annual grants to SGITW's farm-, garden-, and nature-based programs since 2006! This spring, the foundation funded our Hawaiian "Something Aloha" programs, which take place in "Ka Mala Maluhia" (The Children's Peaceful Garden) at the Volcano School of Arts & Sciences on the Big Island. With a large Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander population, and located in the Ka'ū district, where over 37% of the residents live below the poverty line, SGITW's programs focus on sustainability in terms of growing one's own food, making healthy food choices, eating local and seasonal, and conserving energy and lowering costs by using renewable resources.

This spring, Pre-K students designed their own Fairy Gardens, Kindergartners tended their own Butterfly Garden, First Graders grew their own Herb Garden, Second Graders maintained their own Veggie Garden, Third Graders planted a Bee Sanctuary Garden, and Fourth Graders were responsible for the Native Plant Garden - and every class had the opportunity to harvest and create healthy snacks to eat! Parents were amazed that their children were not only eating broccoli at school, but were coming home with extra broccoli that they had grown themselves and that they actually wanted to eat at home! Parents asked us how did we do that?! We know from over 20 years of experience, that when children grow their own food, they want to eat it, and they naturally make healthy choices. We have seen over and over that when they are trusted to be responsible, they take ownership of their gardens, and the whole creative process really takes off. We never expected fairy gardens to come about, that wasn't part of the whole permaculture/sustainability model, but our [Children's Peaceful Garden](#) promotes imaginative play through intimate spaces, and the students came up with the fairy garden plans on their own! It's a testament to VSAS teachers, and to the Hawaiian educational model of "āina-based" (earth-based) learning, that no one stopped the students from exploring, discovering, getting their hands and feet muddy, making a "mess," and building something of their own design.





In addition to the outdoor learning component that is essential to SGITW's "Earth School" approach to education, we also are known for integrating the arts into everything we do. Students at VSAS were treated to theatrical enactments using elements from the Earth School store of costumes and props, as well as to the songs and dances of Paul and Melanie Zeir's "[Talking Hands Talking Feet](#)," and the many visual arts and poetry workshops that SGITW is known for, to help students stay connected to nature throughout their lives. We are so grateful to the farmers in Volcano who generously volunteered their time and shared their expertise with our students of all ages all year long, like Jeff and Claudia McCall of McCall's Farm, and Jordan Westerholm of Hawai'i Regeneration Farm. And our thank you's would not be complete without mentioning the Friends of VSAS, who did the fundraising to bring our Earth School Envira Pod to Hawai'i, and this year donated to keep it in top condition: have a look at the photos of how our Envira Pod has transformed with repairs to rotting wood (lots of rain in this high altitude, volcanic, tropical environment) and a brand new coat of paint. Thank you to carpenter Kerry Young for bringing the Envira Pod back to life this spring!

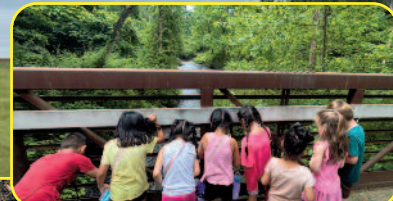


From Kenya to Hawai'i to New York, Something Good in the World gets a lot done! This spring and summer, we have been so fortunate to receive funding from the [St. Faith's House Foundation](#), the [Jack DeVito Foundation](#), and the [Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation](#) to support our educational programs and projects at the [Ossining High School \(OHS\)](#), the [Ossining Children's Center \(OCC\)](#), and the [Abbott House](#) shelter for refugee youth (unaccompanied minors seeking asylum, and safely housed while awaiting legal resettlement in the U.S.).

The Mindfulness Garden project at Ossining High School serves the entire student body of over 1,500, as well as the staff and teachers. This relatively small courtyard at the center of the building has been transformed over the past 6 years from an unused, litter-filled space, to a recreation of our Children's Peaceful Garden design with an intent to teach students about environmental science and the principles of sustainability and permaculture. Thanks to the ongoing vision of Interactive Ecology teacher Danielle Jackson and SPED teacher Pat Guerin, the Mindfulness Garden has been lovingly maintained to all year long. When SGITW arrives on the scene every spring, our job is to help them expand the garden design each year by adding more native plants, and adding one new raised bed or other project, so that the overall garden keeps growing and accommodates more students. This spring, in addition to workshops on strawberries and honeybee products, the Interactive Ecology and the special needs students added a new veggie garden! Thanks to Agi Shah at [A Maze in Pottery](#), the SPED students were able to use their own fingerprints for their garden sign – and these signs were given a special mention in an article on community gardens in [Westchester Magazine](#) in June that featured the OHS Mindfulness Garden!



As this newsletter is being written, not only are the free educational workshops with SGITW continuing with OHS, they are also well underway with the Ossining Children's Center Kindergarten. These essential programs have been taking place on farms and out in nature with OCC for over 12 years! Every spring and summer, while learning about the water cycle, Kindergartners head into the woods to learn about healthy stream and pond life, to follow their water source to the Croton Reservoir and over the Croton Dam, until it comes to rest in the Hudson River. Not only do the students discover wildlife firsthand, but for many of them, this is their first time ever in the woods. We hear them tell us every day how they want to stay in the stream forever, how this is the most beautiful place, how happy they feel, and even though we know they will grow tired and hungry after awhile, how they never want to leave. This year, the Kindergarten visited [Fable Farm](#) in Ossining for the first time, thanks to farmer Tom Deacon, and really enjoyed meeting the goats and chickens, and learning about the origins of their foods. Thank you also to Trish Vasta and [Hemlock Hill Farm](#) for the generous donation of seeds so the students could plant their own veggies in mini-greenhouses to bring home. What amazing and beautiful places exist in the Westchester community and how thankful we are for donors and foundations that make it possible for children to access these spaces, where learning is always fun.



At the same time as OHS and OCC are in the gardens and out in nature, the Abbott House refugee students are discovering a new life in the U.S. through our programs that introduce sustainable agriculture and healthy eating. Thanks to Jason and Jocelyn of [Longhaul Farm](#), groups of boys and girls from Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador are treated every spring to the wonders of fresh strawberries, peas, radishes, lettuce, and herbs. This year, refugee students from Bangladesh, Senegal, Ecuador, and Mexico also joined us from Abbott House, and added to our Spanish-English learning experience with more languages and cultural traditions to share.

Our experience of refugee youth in America is that they add greatly to the “salad bowl” of our collective culture, and Jason and Jocelyn always make a specific point to let them know that they are very welcome to be here. We have never encountered teenagers who are more excited to learn information, to listen intently to every lesson, to participate fully in every activity, to try new things with a good attitude, to practice speaking English, and who are so brave and yet so humble. Whether they were helping to catch chickens or to harvest fruits and veggies to prepare into a healthy snack, these students lifted all of our hearts and made us smile constantly. One of our favorite aspects of these programs are receiving letters from the students afterwards, to tell us what they learned, what stuck with them that they will always remember, and we always like to include a few of these here.

SGITW is also incredibly grateful to Ossining business-owners Luis Corena and Elmer Oliveros, who opened up both [First Village Coffee](#) and [Brothers Fish & Chips](#) to the refugee students. Luis and Elmer shared their own stories of leaving El Salvador and Guatemala at young ages, seeking asylum in the US. It was so important for the students to hear how these men had studied English, followed their dreams, and opened their own highly successful cafe and restaurant. The students were enormously inspired, and the warmth that passed between everyone was as nourishing as the delicious food and drinks that they were treated to.



Jason and Jocelyn, Long Haul Farm
 Thank you very much for inviting us to your farm God bless you abundantly and give you strength to continue forward and take care of the farm. Your farm is a wonderful and relaxing. It's a place that reminds me of other places (back home). Your crops taste amazing. I loved the strawberries, radishes, garlic, juice, and lettuce. It was super delicious. Thank you very much.

Hi Jason and Jocelyn, thank you for the invitation to the farm. Thank you for everything, I loved it all because I learned many things like turnips was one of the things i had not seen before plus I learned how to make butter. And I learned many other things and I am astonished that you don't need material possessions to thrive and have such a beautiful farm. Thank you for everything i loved it and it was a pleasure to meet you. I loved the outing and to spend some time with you. Thank you again for everything. Sincerely, D.P.

Dear Jason and Jocelyn, thank you for meeting you and for showing us the vegetables, mint tea, the farm, the chickens, and turkeys, and how to do organic farming. It's going to be organic, but the vegetables will be thrown on top of the chickens and the garlic, and the strawberries, the dog, if it has too much, you remove it to make it bigger and prevent the branches from breaking. As for the bees, there are 60,000 bees in one hive, and there's a queen that lays 2,000 eggs a day. Thank you for making butter and teaching us about it. That's why you have to take care of the flowers, so you don't pour poison on them. If the bees die, we will die in four years. Thank you, here at Abbott House.



And what new things are happening? Well how about the fact that our Greenroof Chicken Coop, originally funded by the [Deupree Family Foundation](#), has found its new home at [Green Chimneys](#) in Brewster and also got a lick of paint and is now the shed for... not chickens anymore, but... for a pair of emu! We never expected that! But they sure look happy and we are so pleased that Green Chimneys is taking such good care of our donated Greenroof.

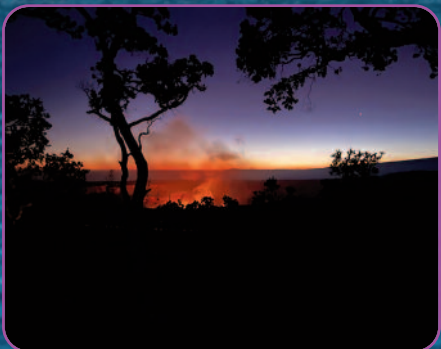
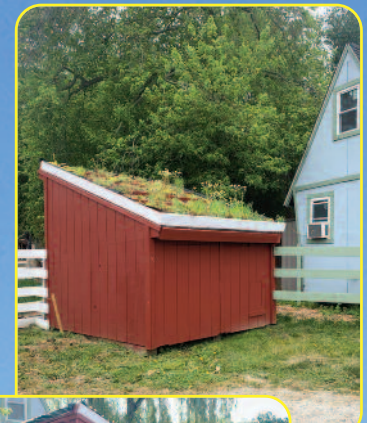
Be on the lookout next for more reports from us on:

- A NEW Children's Peaceful Garden at Abbott House
- Seeding the Future sprouting project expanding at Kakuma Refugee Camp
- More free educational workshops for OCC and OHS summer programs
- Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation funding "Something Aloha" in Hawai'i

And last but definitely not least, we always like to share letters from our Earth School alumnae. This year, here is an excerpt from the college essay of Julien Siegel, who attended Earth School from Pre-K through Grade 4:

Until fifth grade I was homeschooled on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and the rest of the week I attended a program called Earth School. We learned about biology in the wetlands, physics in the woods, history through acting out Shakespeare scenes, and the Renaissance from painting mini ceiling frescoes. My friends and I spent hours exploring the farm and surrounding woods, reading by the fire in the common room, and climbing the huge metasequoia that towered over the main lawn. Earth school was, and still is, a huge part of who I am. It taught me to love finding a creative approach to every problem, to treasure questions that I can't find the answer to, and to cherish learning. The environment that I learned how to learn in, has defined my current self, and the dreams that I have for my future.

- Julien Siegel, Earth School alumnus



You can also follow all of the current news and events of Something Good in the World on Facebook!

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<http://www.somethinggoodintheworld.org/donate/>

The following people donated their time, energy, and creative skills to the production of this newsletter:

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- Photography: Barbara Sarbin, Saskia Sarbin-de la Cruz, Emily Ross, Dale McBeath
- Writing: Barbara Sarbin
- Artwork: Mark Siegel

MISSION STATEMENT: The mission of Something Good in the World is to provide a safe and enhancing environment wherein children may be promoted to achieve their highest potential in learning and development, and to prepare them toward becoming responsible human beings ready to take on the challenges of life.

We are committed to upholding a genuine value for humanity, and are steadfast in our dedication towards creating a new and better template for education in the 21st century, that integrates nature, the environment, and the practices of sustainable living.



We welcome your letters and responses! Please feel free to write to us any time by e-mail: somethinggooditw@aol.com, or by regular mail: Something Good in the World, Inc., 624 Croton Avenue, Cortlandt Manor, NY 10567.