



Small Steps Towards
a Big Difference

SOMETHING'S CONNECTING

For this issue of our Something Good in the World e-newsletter, in which we offer updates on our activities as our best way of thanking our donors and supporters, we wanted to let other voices speak. This summer and fall, we received recognition and feedback from the teachers, students, and directors of programs that tell the story from their perspectives. So here we go, letting the many photos, writings, and videos show you what you are supporting when you donate to www.somethinggoodintheworld.org. ☺

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FALL into WINTER 2024

On October 29, 2024, Something Good in the World was honored to receive a Loving Arms Award from [Abbott House](#) for our work with their refugee youth in the TRC (Transitional Resources for Children) program. The award recognized SGITW's Director, Barbara Sarbin, as a "Friend of Abbott House," but with a slight change to the name of the award when it was presented live! As it was crafted by Doris Laurenceau, Senior Director of the TRC program, in her beautiful, off-the-cuff presentation speech, SGITW's Director was given a "Super Hero Award." To quote Doris directly:

"Why is she a super hero? What is her superpower you're asking me?... She connects!... She's a connector, her superpower is connecting. She did the very basic, she connected humans to the very basic earth. If you know anything about the nuances of grieving and letting go of stress, it's important to just stop, slow down and connect to the earth. 'How does she do this?' you ask. Well she does this in various ways. In the TRC program, she has a garden. She's got these kids from Central America and different parts of the world who are excellent farmers, connecting to the earth and putting seeds down... they're digging and something is growing and we're all benefitting, because we're seeing vegetables come out... and our cooks are using them to cook for the children... and the children for one moment, for that brief moment... they're going back home but in a safe place here at Abbott House... The other reason I think is amazing... She looked at our population that is changing and she said what brings people together, what helps people get over the nostalgia... because all of these kids come to this country because they have to come for a better life, but you still love where you came from, it doesn't matter why or what horrible things are going on, you are connected to that, and what is something that connects you?... FOOD! Food! So what did this wonderful Super Hero do? She looked at this population, which changes drastically, and she said this week you have a lot of Central American children, so this particular month, I'm going to find people who migrated into the United States, worked hard, opened up their restaurants, have conversations with them,

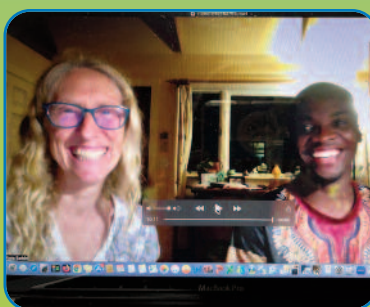




and ask them nicely to close their restaurants for two hours to provide these home-cooked meals that are from their country, by their people. How amazing is that? But then we take it a step further... she took the time to connect to these children with their language... what happened, stuff is happening all over the world, so our population is changing, now our population went from 90% Central American kids to 50% Central American and 50% from West Africa. Did that stop Miss Barbara the super hero? NO! She used her super power, she connected! She went around, found these West African owners of restaurants and brought our kids there. And let me tell you something, because previously, historically the program was mostly Central American, most of my staff are Central American or spoke Spanish, so when these kids come in, they're not connecting too much, and we're struggling, trying to connect, and here she comes with this wonderful, simple idea, and guess what? She broke barriers that day. So even though this is a Friend of Abbott House Award, I'd like to take over and change this a little bit, and this a Super Hero Award. To Miss Barbara Sarbin, thank you very much from the bottom of my heart and from the program and Abbott House all together."

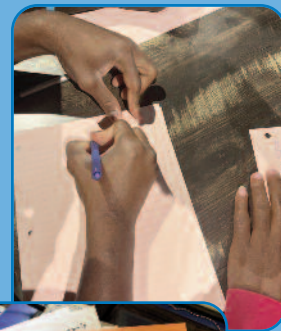
SGITW thanks Doris Laurenceau for her delightful and often humorous speech, and acknowledges that she, Kristina Papa, Kate Giscombe, Jimmy Armstrong and all of the TRC teachers and staff are indeed themselves super heroes and should receive a Loving Arms Award for their superpowers! There are so many people who get this great work done, against unbelievable obstacles, working around so many systems of oppression. And it takes a whole team, there is no one person leading the way. That is the strength of inter-support, that it makes connection possible.

Please click here to watch a beautiful and very moving video made by Abbott House for the Loving Arms Award, which features not only Something Good in the World but also one of our collaborators, Agi Shah of [Amaze In Pottery](#). The video explains the purpose of working with refugees better than we could do with words.



Thanks to the generosity of the [St. Faith's House Foundation](#), refugee students from Central America and West Africa were treated to educational workshops and meals at [Longhaul Farm](#) in Garrison, [Cabbage Hill Farm](#) in Mt. Kisco, [Brother's Fish and Chips](#), [First Village Coffee](#) in Ossining, and [Ofori World Cuisine](#) in Peekskill. The refugee youth in our programs are encouraged to write letters to the farm and business owners of every site we visit, to tell them what they learned, and what the experience meant to them.

As part of our work with the refugee youth, we ask them to write creatively, by thinking about their home countries that we know they miss so much, and telling their countries what they love about those places, what they miss most, what they are proud of. These letters are very moving, and we wish we could share all of them with you, but here is a sample of letters translated from many different languages. Here are just a few of the many letters that we received, which tell their story of the summer and fall experiences better than we could:



Translated from Punjabi:

Dear Punjab,

I am G. S. I have lived in Punjab for many years with my parents and my family. I studied at a school here. I love my village very much. Whenever I have gone out of the village, I have always missed my home. The fields of Punjab and the hardworking farmers bring pride to my heart. I feel very connected to the traditions and culture of Punjab. I always want to keep Punjab in my heart and serve my people.

With respect,
G.

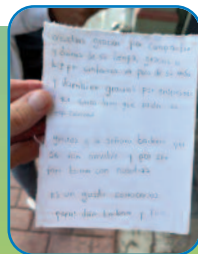
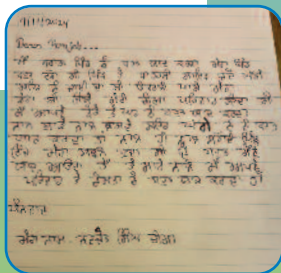


Dear Guatemala,

Today, on this day that I am no longer in my home in Guatemala, I wanted to tell you how much I miss your beauty. I miss playing in the fields with my friends. I miss watching cars pass by in front of my house, kicking up dust. I also miss going to the store every morning, ringing and ringing the store bell until someone came out to help me. I miss the food I used to eat at home. When I was there, I didn't value the food I had, but now I miss it dearly.

I also miss the traditional celebrations, like September 15, when we celebrate Independence Day. I loved going to the races. Last year, I took first place in the race, but this year I won't be able to compete because I'm here in New York and no longer in Guatemala. But, well, I wanted to tell you that you are the best country in the world.

Sincerely, D. E.



Dear Honduras,

I know that where I am today is not the same as being there, but this is how my fate turned out, and I will follow it wherever it takes me. I know it's difficult to be an immigrant, living under different laws. It's hard when you're young and don't yet know which path to take, and you find yourself confined when back home you were free. It's tough to wake up and see the same things every day, but even so, we have to keep going in order to help our families and those we care about.

When I arrived in the United States, I couldn't find my way because I missed everything—the food, the atmosphere, the way Hondurans dance. It was very hard to adjust, but over time, you begin to get used to it. The hardest part is missing your family, but with the same strength with which we miss them, we must hold onto hope that one day we will return to our country. So I tell you, don't give up—keep moving forward.

Sincerely, B.L.



Translated from an indigenous dialect of Guatemala, the Q'eqchi' language:

Chi na usil Guatemalaal ("This is how Guatemala is")

Here in our land, we live in the town. We have our customs, and we speak the language of our ancestors. We work and care for the land, which gives us life. The elders teach us, and we listen to their wisdom. Our traditions are important, and we maintain them with respect. We care for the mountains and rivers because they are sacred to us. Together, we build a good community, and we help one another. We are thankful for what we have, and we live in peace. Our ancestors protect us, and we honor them. We walk with dignity, and we work for our future. Here, we live with joy, and we are united. This is our way of life in Guatemala.

-E.

To my dear Guatemala,

I miss the food from my Guatemala. I miss playing soccer on Saturdays and Sundays on a field with my soccer teammates. I miss going to the Ocosito River with my cousins and the fun we had together. I miss my mom calling me to eat tortillas with cheese. I miss my three sisters and the beautiful afternoons when we would go out for a walk to run errands. I miss my friend and the times we would go together to the store on the corner.

Sincerely, M.A.R.



Dear Guatemala,

I still remember the last time I was in my town, eating tortillas with beans and herbs grown from the land, as if it were yesterday. When we used to go to church with my parents and little siblings, I would always argue with my mom because I took too long to get dressed. It was so nice because I felt safe in church. When the prayer began, it was beautiful, and when we finished, we would stop by the center to eat tacos. I know it wasn't fancy food from a restaurant, but I was so happy to be there with my whole family. And the laughter always lifts the sadness from your heart because the most important thing isn't money, but the happiness of being together with family.

I remember going to school with my brother and two friends, walking together to get there. That always made me happy, because as we walked, we would play soccer along the way to pass the time until we got to school. I miss the food back home because it's not the same here. I miss the potatoes and the pupusas, the tacos, enchiladas, snow cones, and mangoes with lots of chili. But I know that one day I will go back and be a fully educated person with a degree, making my country proud. I went through struggles on this journey, but one day it will all be worth it.

I have no regrets about being born in Guatemala because it's such a beautiful, wonderful place, with so many amazing places to see. I know I'll go back someday, and until then, I'll keep fighting to get ahead. I love you, Guatemala. You're a marvelous country.

Sincerely, M.

Dear Honduras,

I am in another country, but even though I'm in a different nation, I will always carry your five stars tattooed on my heart. I brought with me all those beautiful memories—the moments with my family, the times spent with friends, and the laughter we shared. I remember it all as if it were yesterday. I carry everyone with me in my heart. If I die in this other country, I want to be buried in my homeland, my beloved Honduras, in the place where I was born and raised.

I am in another country, and yes, I miss the place where I was born and grew up—the sound of roosters crowing in the morning as the sun rises, sitting with my siblings under a tree to eat mangoes, sitting with my mom to talk and joke, and meeting up with friends to work on our tasks and homework. I have all of it etched in my heart. In short, I will never forget where I'm from and where I come from. And if someday this message is read to other children, I want to tell them that if they're in another country or another nation, they should never, ever forget where they come from and who they are. Always carry with you those beautiful memories from your homeland.

Honduras, my beloved homeland, My name is K.R.R.

We are happy to share this report from the [Kalobeyei Initiative For Better Life](#), a community-based education organization on the ground in Kenya's Kakuma Refugee Camp and Kalobeyei Settlement. Thanks to support from individual donors over the past two years, our idea for the "Seeding the Future" project continues to expand and grow! The original seed of the idea for growing sprouts in the refugee camps came from SGITW supporter and Earth School (Kula Honua) parent, Kady Foster. The seed money for the pilot project came from supporters from all around the world, including the [YTop \(Young Template of Peace\)](#). The success of this project is due more than anything to the powerful, overarching vision of the educators and leaders at KI4BLi in Kenya, and their determination to feed their community, help women and youth develop autonomy, and increase the health and well-being of refugees in their camps and potentially around the world. Here is their report, in their own words, from the video they created about the project:

"Sprout farming is a hydroponic technique introduced to the Kalobeyei community, providing nutrient-dense food for malnourished children and lactating women, rich in vitamins B, C, and proteins, benefiting 74 participants across three villages by June 2024. In late 2023, Ki4BLi's sprout farming initiative was recognized globally, being selected by the UN Innovation Fund among the top 26 projects from over 3,300 entries, highlighting its potential for sustainable food solutions in refugee settlements. The sprout farming pilot, launched with funding from Something Good in the World, aims to empower refugee families by providing a consistent, nutrient-rich food source while also promoting potential livelihood opportunities for local communities. By June 2024, sprout farming training reached 74 participants, primarily women, including 72 women and 2 men from three Kalobeyei villages, further separated by nationality into South Sudanese, Burundians, and Congolese beneficiaries. Each training session took place in three villages, with Village 1 and Village 3 each hosting 25 beneficiaries and Village 2 training 24 beneficiaries, showcasing equitable community participation across Kalobeyei's different settlement areas."

The Seeding the Future project, thanks to the United Nations Innovation Fund grant, has now spread successfully to secondary schools in the camps, with 407 high school students recently trained in sprout farming. Where will this go next?!

[Click here](#) to watch the KI4BLi's video with footage of the women in action, preparing a healthy meal with the sprouts they've grown, combined with rice and a traditional food called "ugali," in the Kakuma Refugee Camp and Kalobeyei Settlement in Kenya.



Because of the generous grants from the [Jack DeVito Foundation](#), and the St. Faith's House Foundation, students from the [Ossining High School](#) Special Education Life Skills Class were able to go on weekly field trips this summer out in nature, in addition to working in their Mindfulness Garden at OHS! Most of the students have never been in the woods, and rarely have the opportunity to spend time in nature, so these were very new experiences for teenagers with special needs. Rather than tell you about it ourselves, here are reflections from their teacher and from the students themselves:

"As a group, the class was able to recall from each trip the many activities they participated in and things they learned. This is impressive because it is a difficult skill for most of the students. This activity was done on the last day of Summer Academy. My students were able to recall all 4 weeks of adventures! This speaks to how hands-on experiences impact learning and recall. From the teacher's point of view it was an excellent summer. The students were talking about their experiences throughout the entire 4 weeks. We all learned and went home very tired by Friday, which is a good thing!" - Patricia Guerin

The students expressed their personal likes. Here were their favorite field trips this summer:

J Liked the Hudson River Walk, because she found treasures.

K Liked the Croton Dam, because he loved the falls and thought they were peaceful.

D Enjoyed our woodland hike. He talked about it all summer. He enjoyed exploring and testing the different plants.

K Enjoyed the Croton Dam and the Hudson River Walk. He liked seeing the fisherman catch a catfish.

J Enjoyed our woodland hike and tasting the vegetation we foraged.

C Enjoyed smelling the different plants on our woodland hike.

J's favorite place was the Hudson River Walk because she liked exploring the beach.

E Enjoyed the woodland hike and looking at the trees.

G Was not thrilled with any of the activities, but he did participate in all. That is impressive!

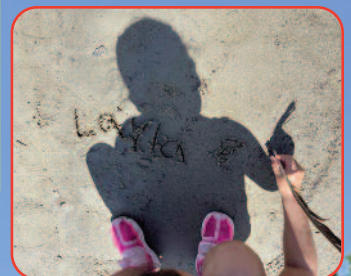
Students described their favorite things in the Mindfulness Garden:

Tasting strawberries, watering the plants, harvesting from the vegetable garden, feeding the birds, smelling the flowers.



This summer and fall, the [Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation](#) and the St. Faith's House Foundation supported our nature-based programming for the [Ossining Children's Center](#) Kindergarten. As always, most of the children had not been in the woods before, had not touched the Hudson River or waded in the Hunterbrook watershed. Learning about the water cycle indoors is a flat thing, but experiencing each part of that cycle with your senses is dimensional. While we often hear indoor classroom teachers say to their students, "Don't touch that you'll get dirty!" our outdoor educators call out instead, "Yes you can touch that and go ahead and get dirty!" The Earth School philosophy is that learning happens best with all of the senses; when children experience nature with their whole bodies, they love it and remember it, and are much more likely to respect and care for it.

Because pictures and videos speak so much more eloquently than written words, [Please click here](#) to watch a delightful 2 minute video, created by SGITW educator Maeve McGee, reporting on some of our work with the Ossining Children's Center this fall!

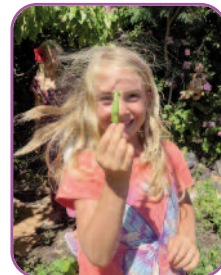




Something Aloha is the name of our projects in Hawai'i, where [Earth School](#) (Kula Honua) and the [Children's Peaceful Garden](#) (Ka Mala Maluhia) workshops and programs take place from August through May! Thanks to grants from the [Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation](#), the [Hawai'i Institute for Public Health Initiative](#), the [Malāma 'Āina Foundation](#), the [Jane Goodall Institute's Roots & Shoots Program](#), and the [NOAA Ocean Guardians School Program](#), free programming is offered to Pre-K through Grade 8 at the [Volcano School of Arts & Sciences](#). All of the gardens that are cared for by each grade are expanding and growing, and with all of the support we have received, the students are now caring for fruit trees, plants for dyeing cloth, and creating a new rain garden.



The Kula Honua students, Pre-K through Grade 2, are blessed to have [support from individuals](#) around the world. Thanks to these individual supporters, students are able to receive full or partial scholarships, and attend the hands-on, [GET \(Golden Education Template\)](#) Earth School programs that have been the delight of hundreds of children in North America over the past 25 years. This kind of place-based, Hawaiian-focused, experiential learning in the field is unique and special, and nurtures young children to become world citizens with a compassionate mindset. Mahalo nui (many thanks) for making this possible!



From time to time, we love to share quotes from those who have benefited from our GET Earth School programs, and in this case, the reflections come from a current parent who attended our series of parent workshops this year. Here are just a few excerpts from her letter:

"...I'm the parent of a child (my 7 year old daughter) who attends Earth School... The meetings you have with us are so masterfully planned... to create a safe space for each person who attends and share some of the magic you create for all of our children when they are inside a teaching space (whether indoor or outdoor) with you... You have such a deep love for and commitment to this educational approach, and you aren't afraid to show that. I love how you directly address fears we (parents) might have and explain your philosophy and the GET approach in light of those. I love how you don't shy away from comparing the Earth School experience to the one children might find elsewhere, and how you are unapologetic (and instead, enthusiastic) about the ways it is different. I think it takes a lot of skill and care to create an environment where parents feel safe, heard, inspired, and encouraged. Where you simultaneously acknowledge their potential struggles or fears, encourage them to stretch out of their comfort zones for the sake of their children, and build community and solidarity around the GET/Earth School (Kula Honua)..."

-Flora Krivak-Tetley



From November 12 through December 11, Something Good in the World is partnering with the Farm-Based Education Network for "Digging In!" a conversation in 4 parts, supporting nature-based educators around the United States in their endeavors. Want to join us? [Register here, it's free!](#)



Throughout the month of December, the [Stop and Shop](#) in Peekskill, NY, is giving \$1 to SGITW for every reusable bag purchased. Please stop in and support our educational programs by doing your grocery shopping!



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

To Donate Visit:

<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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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.