

VOL. 1 | ISSUE 3

Faithful Neighbors

M A G A Z I N E

How you're
**HELPING
REFUGEES**
around the world

Responding to
**Ukraine
Crisis**



LUTHERAN
WORLD RELIEF

HOME GROWN
HOPE
IN GUATEMALA



HOW MANY PERSONAL CARE KITS WILL YOU MAKE?



OUR NEIGHBORS IN CRISIS NEED AS MANY AS YOUR CHURCH CAN SEND.

Share God's love with your neighbors this summer. Put your faith into action and join us today. By making **Personal Care Kits**, your congregation can deliver tangible hope to our neighbors in need around the world.

Go to lwr.org/care to access all the information and resources you need for your congregation's Personal Care Kit drive or to make a much-needed financial gift.

FIND RESOURCES AT
LWR.ORG/CARE

You'll also find a **new video** to share with your congregation showing how your generosity is making a difference and **spreading hope** in the world.



*Personal Care Kits can
be assembled as a
group or at home!*



LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF

Faithful Neighbors

MAGAZINE

Volume 1, Issue 3 (2022)

EDITOR:

Niki Clark

ON THE COVER:

Dayana Rachel Solis Castro, 2, sits outside her family's home in the Western Highlands community in Guatemala. Her family farm, led by her grandfather, experienced significant loss in previous years because of the lack of water. With the support and technical training of LWR and local partner FundaSistemas, the family installed an irrigation system and now their crops flourish all year round.

We want to hear from you!

Thank you so much for being a Faithful Neighbor. We want to learn more about you! Tell us about your family, your church, your work, your vision! We'd love to hear what you love most about the mission of Lutheran World Relief, why you give, and what we need to do better! We want to hear your story, and with your permission, share it in our publications to inspire others.

Please contact us at kholbrook@lwr.org or 410 230 2713 so we can set up a time to chat by phone or Zoom.

We hope to speak with you soon.



FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Friend,

Next month, I will have had the privilege of serving as the President and CEO of Lutheran World Relief for 8 wonderful years. And still, on a daily basis I am taken aback, overwhelmed with the generosity of your hearts. To witness how you continually put God's love into action through your faithful support of our most needy neighbors around the world is the gift of a lifetime.

In late February, we watched in horror as violence and conflict resulted in the fleeing and displacement of millions of Ukrainians. Because of your incredible support, our refugee neighbors felt your love immediately through emergency supplies and funds, shelter, food, personal care kits and quilts, and medical supplies. You shined a light in the darkness and provided hope to the hopeless. Your gifts reached our Ukrainian neighbors not only for short-term relief, but also for the needs still to come.

Beyond Ukraine, your continued support reaches every corner of the globe. This issue of **Faithful Neighbors Magazine** is just a snapshot of some of the incredible lives you touch through your love. Jesus tells us, "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me." Thank you for your service and for inspiring me daily over the last 8 years. May God bless you and your loved ones as you bless others.

In Christ,

**AMBASSADOR
DANIEL SPECKHARD**
President and CEO

HOME GROWN HOPE

Zoemía Solís, 30, and her son Yorban, 9, hold up their recent harvest. She feeds her family and earns an income off the surplus. With your support, her family has access to more nutritious foods and is learning healthier habits.



The town of La Democracia feels a bit like a refuge. Located about an hour inland from Guatemala's Pacific coast, the roads leading into the small community are rugged and broken, hugging steep, curvy hills, and showcasing tranquil, beautiful vistas. Close to Zoemía Solis' house, three little girls play together behind a pickup truck that no longer starts. They jump in the back and giggle together, content and oblivious in their own world. Tiny ducklings waddle past, racing to keep up to their mother. Even the air feels fresher here somehow.

Despite the idyllic setting, however, the community faced real challenges. Easily accessible clean drinking water was a rarity. Because of the pandemic many people couldn't find work, making it hard to afford food for their families. When they did have food, it often wasn't healthy or diverse due to the general lack of understanding around nutrition. Women faced discrimination, seen only fit for roles as mothers and caretakers for their husbands and homes.

Because of your faithful support, things in La Democracia are changing.

Zoemía stands next to her family's vegetable plot. Vibrant purple beets and bright green spinach peek through the fertile soil. Yorban, her 9-year-old son gazes proudly at her, his arms draped around her shoulder. Zoemía received this plot from her father in law, Enrique. Enrique heard of the opportunities Lutheran World Relief was providing through their project with FundaSistemas focusing on improving health and nutrition. He wanted Zoemía to be able to take on her own opportunities.

Although she hadn't previously grown vegetables, with the help of a mentor, Zoemía's first harvest flourished. Her family's nutrition has improved, and she no longer worries about feeding her family. She sells extra produce in the local market, adding to the household income.

With her newfound confidence and leadership skills, Zoemía is even shifting gender roles in her community. She was recently elected to vice-president of the local community council.

Your generosity is transforming lives in Guatemala. Your support has provided agricultural training and mentoring,

access to clean water, and leadership opportunities for women like Zoemía.

"I feel proud of myself," Zoemía said. "I am very proud. I want to set a good example for my children, to give them my best. And I'd like to motivate others as well." ○



"I FEEL PROUD
OF MYSELF"

Coffee, Cocoa and Your Compassion

(VIRTUAL EVENT SUMMARY)



FOR PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD, a cup of coffee (or three) is an integral part of their morning routine. And while we can't seem to live without it, not many of us stop to think about how it got there. Or how, as a **Faithful Neighbor**, your love helps the farmers growing it.

In **Coffee and Conversation**, our inaugural virtual event exclusively for monthly givers held this past April, we explored just that. **Coffee, Cocoa and Latin America** brought together Lutheran World Relief experts **Carolyn Barker-Villena**, Senior Regional Director for Latin America and **Rick Peyser**, Senior Relationship Manager of Coffee & Cocoa. The result was a fascinating and informative conversation about how your monthly gifts help in projects that protect this beautiful region and the families whose livelihoods depend on it.

The session began with an overview of the **MOCCA** (*Maximizing Opportunities for Coffee and Cacao in the Americas*) project. The six-country program — which reaches 20,000 farmers and their families, 40% of whom are women — helps farmers sell more at better prices, improves production processes, and trains local cacao producers. As a result, participants have

been able to support their families, educate their children and put food on the table every day.

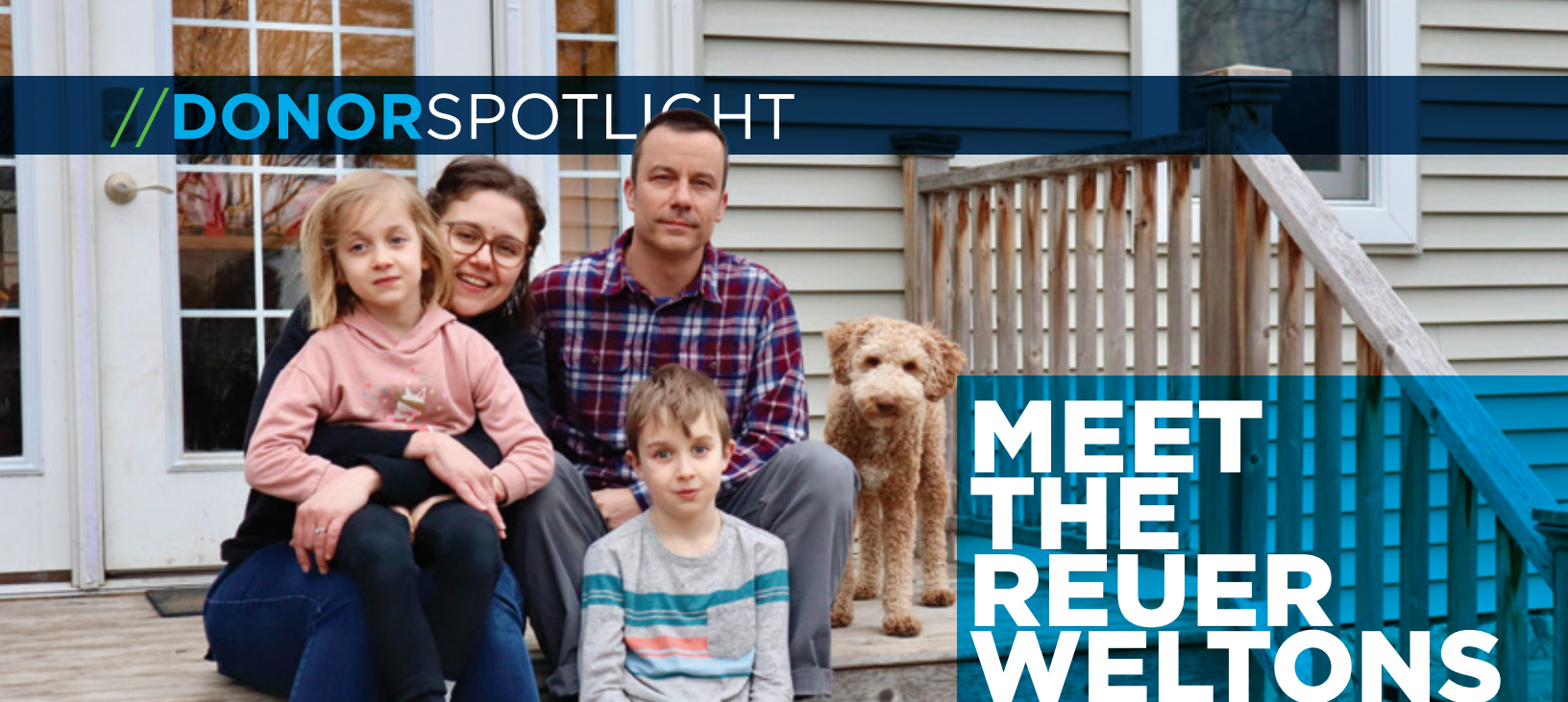
Your generosity is critical to creating sustainable solutions for these farmers and their families. “Without your support, we wouldn't be able to do this really important work,” Carolyn said.

The session ended with an update on the emergency crisis in Ukraine, where your love has brought food, emergency relief and supplies and emergency cash funds to our neighbors in Ukraine.

“Because of our Faithful Neighbors, your compassion and generosity month after month, we are able to bring your love where it's needed most, when it's needed most,” Karen Holbrook, Senior Associate of Monthly Giving & Stewardship reflected. “And we're not going to stop until your love reaches every neighbor.” ○

To watch the recording of **COFFEE, COCOA AND LATIN AMERICA**, visit lwr.org/conversation or scan the QR code to the right. If you would like to purchase Farmers Market coffee, visit lwrfarmersmarket.org.





MEET THE REUER WELTONS

Growing up in rural Faulkton, South Dakota, **Kate Reuer Welton's** parents didn't have a lot of extra money. In a world pre-internet, she wasn't constantly bombarded with issues of suffering all over the world, but Kate had a clear-eyed view of who could use an extra hand in her community. Her parents showed up for families in need mostly with their time and taught their daughter what it meant to be faithful and generous.

She started to understand how her own life was enriched by being around people with different resources, and after a volunteer stint with Lutheran World Relief in the Kakuma refugee camp in Northwestern Kenya during college, she felt called to do her part in building a world where people could live with dignity and hope. In the camp, she worked closely with some of the 20,000 boys who were displaced or orphaned during the Second Sudanese Civil War, often called the Lost Boys of Sudan. The boys showed her how "God shows up in all kinds of place and in all kinds of people."

Now a campus pastor at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities, Kate and her husband Jim want to raise their children Ben, 8 and Eleanor 5, with the same sense of compassion and generosity that comes from serving others. Indeed, after living in Minneapolis, Minnesota over the last 2.5 years, she and Jim have had lots of opportunities to have complicated conversations about God's calling to compassion and service with the kids. Much like many people in their city, and around the

country, the Reuer Welton's were marked by the uprising following the murder of George Floyd. "We couldn't not talk about it," Kate said. "We had to engage pretty deeply. It served as a chance to talk about the world as God intended versus the world we stand in now, and how our call is in that gap. We can be a bridge."

Often the kids brought their piggy banks to church after hearing about someone in need. But Kate and Jim wanted them to be more intentional in their giving, not only reactive, so they suggested finding an organization that they could each donate to monthly.

Because of Ben's interest in East Africa, particular the Democratic Republic of Congo, he ended up choosing Lutheran World Relief, and became a Faithful Neighbor at the beginning of the year.

"I personally love Lutheran World Relief; they are doing great work," Kate said. "I really want the kids to feel connected to the organization they picked and the work they are doing."

Ben said when he donates to Lutheran World Relief, he feels "happy" because he knows so many people need a helping hand.

"Because of monthly giving, Ben and Eleanor now understand that they might not always get the biggest, shiniest toys and things," said Kate. "But we can all be part of something much bigger than ourselves." ○

“YOU SHALL ALSO LOVE THEM WHO WERE STRANGERS IN

Home is more than a physical structure. It is family, security, a sense of belonging. Home is love. But for millions of people under the age of 18—have been forced to leave their home country because of conflict or persecution. Lutheran World Relief (LWR) is there to help. As we commemorate World Refugee Day on June 20, here are the ways we are helping those suffering over the years, and all year round.



UKRAINE

Amid the fastest growing refugee crisis in Europe since World War II, your love was found. It provided food, shelter and other critically needed items, including quilts and care kits. It buoyed the hope of refugees by creating a safety net of emergency funds. In both Ukraine and the neighboring countries, your love gave refugees both immediate care and longer-term support.

PERU

Your love helped connect Venezuelan refugees with critical information needed by those adjusting to life in a new country. Ven Informado, a free digital platform that pairs refugees with mental health and legal employment resources, serves as a one-stop shop for newly arrived Venezuelans in Peru, making a difficult transition just a little bit easier.

THE STRANGER, FOR YOU THE LAND OF EGYPT.” *Deuteronomy 10:19 (NSRV)*

But in today's world, 26.4 million people—half of whom are women, living as refugees in foreign lands. When that happens, may your monthly gifts have comforted and supported those

Joao Sousa for IWR



LEBANON

Your love is reaching neighbors with the very least, like Bunga Rampe Br Ginting in Indonesia. When farm laborers like Bunga had to stop working, they had no money to purchase even the most essential items. Thanks to you, families have received rice, sugar, cooking oil and hand soap.

UGANDA

Funded entirely by your generosity, South Sudanese refugees in Uganda received seeds, tools and training to help feed their families from their household gardens. Many grew enough to sell in the local market, boosting their household income. Refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo in Uganda were also recipients of your love, receiving small business loans and support, bringing them and their loved ones a sense of security and stability in the midst of chaos.



IRAQ

In northern Iraq, your gifts brought families home. Having fled in fear of ISIS-related violence, once it was physically safe again, a lack of clean water meant returning still wasn't possible. You gave from the heart, and as a result, 10 new wells pump clean, safe water to farms and family homes in Ninawa province.

GROW OYSTER MUSHROOMS

In Guatemala, your support is helping female farmers like Roselvina De Leon Gonzalez to feed her family and generate income. Your generosity provided training and support to help Roselvina, 31, learn to grow oyster mushrooms, a protein-rich food that contributes to both her family's health and their financial security.

Her husband and children aren't the only ones that enjoy the healthy addition to their plates; people from the surrounding area are also seeking out her mushrooms to buy. The crop has been such a success that while she once considered migrating for better job opportunities, projects like these are changing her outlook. "The goal is to no longer have to think about migrating," she said.

With such market demand, Roselvina hopes to scale up and have 2-3 more mushroom grow rooms, or modules, in the future. You can follow along with her process below. ○



HOW TO GROW OYSTER MUSHROOMS



1 DISINFECT the substrate. A substrate is a material that the mycelium, or the seed of the mushroom, can use for energy and nutrition. Roselvina uses corn as her substrate, letting it soak for 24 hours, and then dry for another 24 hours.

2 MAKE the substrate "cake." One layer of corn, one layer of mycelium is placed into bags with small holes or air filters in them for air exchange.

3 INCUBATE the substrate, or let it develop. Incubations last 35 days; the magic has begun!

4 HANG the bags. Roselvina brings the bags to the module where they spend another 20 days growing in a warm, dark environment.

5 HARVEST the mushrooms. The mushrooms emerge from the holes in the bag and when full size, they can be cut off.

6 EAT the mushrooms. Roselvina's family likes them best breaded, with tomatoes and onions, or in mole.

OR

HEAD TO MARKET.

Hurry up, your customers are waiting!

Your neighbor **NEEMA WILLIAM**, 14, greets you with a tiny piglet and an infectious smile. Because of your support, Neema no longer misses study time or risks painful injuries carrying heavy buckets of water several miles twice a day. She now gets her water from a rainwater catchment system, built by your love.

It not only supplies the children at the Eric Memorial Foundation for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Disabled orphanage in Mvomero, Tanzania, where Neema lives, with water, but also the larger community. The orphanage, located in one of the poorest areas of Tanzania, provides a safe home for vulnerable children like Neema, who without your support, would have to drop out of school to care for disabled siblings.

Thank you for helping to ease the challenges for neighbors like Neema that come between her and a brighter, healthier future. That's something to smile about!

//INFOCUS

When violence forced Ukrainians to flee their country by the millions, many didn't know where to go, just that they had to, and immediately. This little girl traveled by train to Poland with her mother, aunts, and cousins, leaving her hometown and most of her belongings back in Selverodonetsk, Ukraine. She sits among all her worldly possessions as her family tries to decide their next step.

You greeted children like her, in the midst of chaos and uncertainty, with immediate relief in the form of food, shelter and personal care kits.

You supported families like hers with emergency funds for longer-term needs, allowing them to rebuild their lives and establish themselves in unfamiliar places. And with your ongoing support, together we can make sure that no matter where their journey takes them next, your love will surround them.



How your love is reaching Ukrainians



Fred McCray from LWR delivers supplies to St. Martin's Lutheran Church in Krakow Poland.

Since the conflict began in late February, millions of people have fled Ukraine, with millions more in dire need within their own country. Your love and support greeted them, providing both short and long-term needs during some of their darkest days.

HERE'S WHAT YOUR HELP LOOKED LIKE:



Emergency Funds to Ukrainian refugee families in Poland, distributed through Lutheran churches



Food, Shelter and Emergency Supplies



Quilts and Personal Care Kits



Critical health care support including medical supplies and help for emergency medical services

WHERE YOUR HELP WENT:

Your gifts reached those suffering in Ukraine, in neighboring countries hosting Ukrainian refugees, and in other countries suffering from the inevitable ripple effects, like fuel and food disruptions. ○



Maryna Hayes from LWR delivers supplies to St. Martin's Lutheran Church in Krakow Poland.

TURNING TRASH INTO TREASURE

MK Wirasaputra for LWR



Inga Malem Pandia is a farmer in North Sumatra's Karo Regency in Indonesia, an area renowned for its high-quality Arabica coffee. Walking home every day from the farm, Inga passed plastic bottles, bags and food packages littering the road. She shares in her own words the story of how the **Kopi Nande Program**, supported by **The Starbucks Foundation** and your generosity, has cleaned up her village and brought additional income to the women that live there.

It all started when I was walking home after working at the farm. All I could see was garbage. You name it, we have it. Plastics, bottles, food packages, agriculture packages — and they were everywhere. I consulted my friends, and everyone agreed. We have to do something about this before we are swamped with garbage and diseases. The problem was, we did not know how to do it.

We like to think of our meeting with Lutheran World Relief's Kopi Nande Program as our own serendipity. Officials from Kopi Nande were trying to convince the village leaders to implement a waste management activity in our village. Their idea of a garbage bank was something we have been looking for. We were nodding throughout the meeting and wanted to kick off the activity as soon as possible. Then we did.

Kopi Nande patiently held our hands throughout the process. From the introduction to waste materials, development of garbage bank functional structures, the establishment of the bank management system, introduction to the garbage off-taker, as well as the execution of the bank promotional activities. We established a five-women management team, and we worked tirelessly to establish the bank.

On September 19th, 2020, we successfully opened our garbage bank. On that first day, 18 customers signed up. We pay about 3 cents for a kilogram of unsorted garbage and about 10 to 14 cents for sorted garbage depending on the materials. After just ten days, the bank successfully collected 2 tons of garbage. Our first sale to the recycler made us \$120 USD. We were so happy.

A year has gone past. Today, the bank has 185 customers consisting of women, men and children. We have sold over 20 tons of garbage and made a total of \$1,500 USD. Most of our customers use the money saved at the bank for school needs, such as books and stationery. And now, there is less garbage seen on my way home after working at the farm. ○



Jake Lyell for LWR

Then Jesus looked up at his disciples and said:

Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven; for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets.

Luke 6:20-23 (NSRV)

In the Beatitudes, Jesus reminds us that God holds the most vulnerable among us especially close. He comforts the mourning and feeds the hungry. There is nothing we need to do to receive the gracious abundance of his love; it comes to us freely.

With this reminder, we are called to serve as Christ's hands and feet in this life. And as a Faithful Neighbor, your service is profound. You feed the hungry, providing food and clean water to families in need. You comfort the mourning, surrounding those fleeing violence in places like Ukraine with love in the form of personal care kits and quilts.

Like Christ, your love goes out to the most vulnerable among us, bringing them comfort, relief and kindness. Month after month, your willingness to share your blessings is a godsend to your neighbors around the world who are hurting. May God Bless you as you continue to serve and do his good works on earth. We are grateful for your service.

Until your love reaches every neighbor.



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Partners in Lasting Promise

WHERE WILL YOU LEAVE YOUR LASTING FOOTPRINT?

Don't let the state decide how your assets will be distributed. Instead, create a thoughtful estate plan to ensure the people and causes you love can flourish for generations to come.

You can answer God's call to love your neighbors in a lasting way by leaving a share of your estate to Lutheran World Relief — and bring enduring hope to families around the world like Josephine's.

Request your free copy of our **Guide to Leaving a Gift in Your Will** to get started.

Call **800 597 5972** or visit **LWR.ORG/GUIDE**



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