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# Project Harvest Hope

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June 2003



Dear PHH friends,

As we go to press on this newsletter, there is much discussion in the news about nation building. We at PHH are familiar with this topic. Our work in regional development has taught us some of the key components of a stable democracy, including an active civic sector, thriving local economies, and protection of minorities. A fragile nation struggling to establish democratic practices, preserve its natural resources, participate in the world economy, and determine the peaceful coexistence of various populations — this could be Russia or Afghanistan, Romania or Iraq.

Here at PHH, we are striving to help our partners' attempts at nation building — not by leading but by following. We believe that local people know best what is necessary to build a healthy society, and that it is our task to offer any assistance and expertise we might be asked to share. We are committed to the principle of local leadership, placing the locus of decisions where it rightfully belongs: with those most impacted by them.

Our agricultural cooperatives contribute to civic life by teaching skills for democracy, protecting the environment through sustainable farming practices, and preparing local people for participation in a market economy by teaching standard business practices. These cooperatives stabilize regional economies, provide jobs for local people and restore hope for young and old.

In the following pages and at some upcoming events, you can learn about our efforts to eliminate poverty, protect the environment, and strengthen democracy. We are working in partnership with the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy to build a sustainable development network across Romania and beyond. In our effort to combat regional poverty we are creating new coalitions across ethnic, religious, and national lines. We are hosting workshops and conversations in the United States to engage people in issues of sustainable agriculture, civil society and faith-based organizing, and we're leading educational pilgrimages to Romania to provide transformative experiences to North Americans.

These are ambitious and hopeful plans, and we invite you to join us in these efforts. Please see the enclosed gift card on page 5 and the enclosed envelope for ways to help. There's no better time to take action in the world, for the world needs us to build barns that others might hope.

In hope,  
Cecilia Kingman Miller  
Vice-President, PHH

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"The objective is at one and the same time to struggle to safeguard the commonweal—that is to say water, air, the earth and biodiversity—and to construct a world which would be based on rights: individual civil and political rights, and collective social, economic and cultural rights. From there, once these rights have been acquired, people will organize themselves as they want."

—Anonymous French farmer and leader

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## PHH EXTENDS MISSION

### **PROTECTING LANDS, RESERVING CULTURE, PROVIDING A FUTURE** **Conference on Faith-Based, Village Scale Economic Development**

Like so many other organizations, we at PHH have seen that poverty, despair and environmental damage are not contained by human boundaries. And we know the well-being of ethnic groups in troubled regions is inextricably linked to the economic health of the region. Over the years, we have gained valuable experience in community-based development in the Transylvania region, experience that could prove helpful to others.

Therefore, in 2002 we extended our mission to helping all faith-based partnerships in Romania that are interested in organizing across religious and ethnic lines, in order to strengthen economic, agricultural, and civic life in the region. We are partnering in this effort with the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy and with the LAM Foundation, a Reformed Church organization based in Illyefalva, Romania. Our intention is to build an interfaith and inter-ethnic network of villages engaged in sustainable, values-driven, community-based economic development. We further hope to replicate this model for other regions of the world, including the U.S.

To inaugurate this effort, Project Harvest Hope has begun planning a multi-ethnic, interfaith conference on values-based economic development in Transylvania, Romania in 2004. This conference will be a significant step in improving relations among the religious and ethnic communities in Transylvania, and will lead to greatly increased funding for small scale economic development in the Transylvanian area of Romania.

#### **Opportunities for Hope**

As Romania prepares for entrance into the European Economic Community, there is increasing interest in providing viable and sustainable rural development and in bringing local agriculture up to EEC standards. The European Union is investing significant funds through organizations participating in the Special Accession Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development (SAPARD). SAPARD helps prepare countries for taking on EU standards in the fields of agriculture and rural development. Various religious groups have been active in economic development in Transylvania, including the Romanian Orthodox and the Reform (Presbyterian) Church, as well as the Unitarians. Unfortunately, most of the individual projects are too small to interest major international funding agencies like SAPARD. Additionally, there has been little sharing of experiences and expertise.

This conference is designed to bring together local

NGOs, religious groups, and representatives from European foundations in order to create a multi-ethnic, interfaith network of locally based, strategically sound development initiatives. An economic development effort of this scope will have far greater opportunities for funding than the scattered and isolated endeavors of individual villages. This project will also provide opportunities to organize across ethnic and religious lines, an important skill in this troubled region and one that helps to strengthen democratic reforms.

#### **Conference Agenda**

The conference will begin with a discussion of the values from participants' various religious traditions that provide the framework for our economic development activity, in order to develop a shared statement of goals grounded in these values. Participants will then present development projects for their regions. There will be a discussion of specific opportunities for cooperation that will enhance these projects, such as sharing of information, equipment or management. The norms of business practices (i.e. transparency in accounting and decision-making processes, etc.) and the ethics of sustainable development work will also be discussed, in order to provide local partners with these standards. These practices are necessary for funding by foundations, yet are still unfamiliar to people in a post-Communist society.

After the conference, the projects will be packaged into a shared proposal which will be presented to potential funding bodies. By bundling the projects, the total will be large enough to attract significant funding from the EU's SAPARD program and other agencies.

The conference participants will be selected from congregations in Transylvania representing the various major religious communities of Orthodox, Catholic, Reform and Unitarian. We expect each church to send the minister or priest, two lay persons, and a representative from their partner congregation in the U.S. or Europe. We will also invite observers from potential donors in Europe and local NGOs.

The conference will be hosted by Project Harvest Hope, in cooperation with the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy and the LAM Foundation.

The Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP) is a non-profit organization based in Minneapolis, MN. It promotes resilient family farms, rural communities and ecosystems around the world through research and

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## PILGRIMAGE PROGRAM: Pilgrimages of Witness and Transformation

The mission of our Pilgrimages is to provide opportunities for North Americans to:

- ♦ Witness the daily joys and struggles of Romanian village life
- ♦ Give and receive the gift of engaged listening
- ♦ Share stories, bread and work
- ♦ Reflect upon our vocation as people of privilege
- ♦ Explore a spiritual commitment to justice-making

To accomplish this mission, pilgrims live in the homes of local families, work alongside our project partners, and participate in seminars and reflection groups. Seminar topics include sustainable development, faith-based organizing, and religious and cultural history.

Our pilgrimages have an intentional discipline and spiritual rigor. We have found that the work of transformation and commitment is often difficult, as is the experience of a vastly different culture, and therefore we provide leadership and support during the journey. We hope that you will join us on an upcoming pilgrimage — ready to witness and be transformed!



*Last year's pilgrims to Romania from Unity Church help with a fence outside the parsonage in Homorodszentpeter.*

### **SUMMER 2003 PILGRIMAGE:**

#### **Unity Church–Unitarian Pilgrimage**

July 24 to August 4, 2003

Leaders: Rob and Janne Eller-Isaacs

Cost: \$1200

Note: This pilgrimage is restricted to members of Unity Church, St. Paul.

### **2004 PILGRIMAGES:**

*(Specific dates TBA)*

#### **Transylvanian Village Pilgrimage (Spring 2004)**

Leader: Cecilia Kingman Miller

Cost: \$1200

Optional Tour: With this pilgrimage there will be an additional post-trip option to visit historical and cultural sites in Transylvania, including Unitarian churches dating to the Reformation. Cost TBA.

#### **Back-country Pilgrimage (Summer 2004)**

Leaders: TBA

Cost: \$1200

Intentionally rigorous pilgrimage, visiting some of the most remote and impoverished Transylvanian villages. Travel as the local people do: by train, cart and foot. Stay in centuries-old farming homes, and meet traditional farmers and craftspeople.

*For more information about our pilgrimages, workshops or other events, please visit our website at [www.projectharvesthope.org](http://www.projectharvesthope.org) or drop us a note: Project Harvest Hope, 732 Holly Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55104*

### **PHH Video for Sale**

Project Harvest Hope's new video *We'll Build A Land!* is now available for purchase. This lovely film tells the story of Project Harvest Hope and is filled with images of Transylvanian villages and agricultural life. Produced by Melissa Mummert, a documentary filmmaker, the video costs \$10.

Proceeds benefit local villagers through PHH's programs in Transylvania. We will offer a screening of this film at our reception for donors in Boston, June 28. To purchase this film, see the enclosed gift card.

## PROJECT REPORT: Harvest Hope pro Homoród

### Karácsonyfalva Dairy Project announces Phase Two: WOMEN'S CALF FUND

As the dairy farm fills with cows donated through your generous support, we now turn our efforts to Phase Two of this project: the satellite farms. The initial herd of cows has given birth to 29 calves, with more on the way. Once these calves are mature enough to leave the dairy barn, we will offer them to participating families in 12 villages, establishing locally owned independent herds.



Priority will be given to widows and single women, who desperately need the milk income these cows provide. These women and other participating villagers will need training and veterinary assistance in order to gain the greatest financial benefit. If you would like to help these widows, please donate to the **Women's Calf Fund**. You can do so by filling out the enclosed donation card today. Your generosity will provide independent income to those who most need it!



László Mihály

#### Other News:

The Dairy Project is happy to announce the arrival of László Mihály, our new dairy barn manager. László grew up in the neighboring village of Almás, and is excited to join our efforts to build a cooperative dairy project in this region. We are likewise thrilled to have him on board! The dairy is now producing 250 liters of milk each day, which is then sold to a Greek cheese company from

the town of Barót. Eventually we hope to build a cheese-making facility in the Homoród Valley, in order to create more jobs and greater income for local people.

#### Oklánd Bakery Project:

The bakery, managed by Zoltán Balázs, currently produces 400 loaves of bread each day and 200-250 different kind of bagels and kalács (a special milk loaf), which are sold in ten villages and in the nearby town of Udvarhely.

from *PHH Extends Mission*, page 2

education, science and technology, and advocacy. IATP addresses issues as varied as global trade, food security, forestry, water privatization, genetically modified food, human rights and civil society development.

IATP has founded or collaborated in the creation of the following projects: the Nestle boycott, Peace Coffee, WTO Watch, 20/20 Vision, Windustry, Keep Antibiotics Working, Healthcare Without Harm, and the Forestry Stewardship Council. The Institute ran the International Media Center at the WTO meetings in Seattle, hosted the 50th Anniversary Conference for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and is a founding member of the Inter-American Network for Agriculture. IATP has worked in many nations, including Albania, Ecuador, and Poland, as well as with family farms in the United States.

The LAM Foundation, based in Illyefalva, Romania, is a local foundation financed by the Swiss Reform Church. LAM has established multiple institutions in their region, including a micro-credit bank, and has provided, either directly or indirectly, for the creation of 7000 jobs in Transylvania.

Project Harvest Hope is honored to enter into partnership with such respected and experienced organizations. In addition to IATP and LAM, we expect to have a co-host, the Romanian Environmental Partnership (REP) of the Environmental Partnership for Central Europe (EPCE).

#### How You Can Help

We hope that our friends will find this project exciting and want to assist us. Cost for this conference is \$85,000. With IATP's help, PHH is seeking major support from US and EU foundations. Gifts from our supporters will be seed money, helping to secure greater funding from large foundations. Your gifts will assure the participation of local people, and help provide speakers and technical assistance from EU affiliated organizations. If you find this endeavor intriguing and want to play a part in the creation of a sustainable development network in Romania and beyond, then we invite your support. **See the form on page 5 and the enclosed envelope to make a donation.**

For more information about this Conference, or any other PHH effort, please visit our website at [www.projectharvesthope.org](http://www.projectharvesthope.org).

## UPCOMING PHH EVENTS IN YOUR AREA

### BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS Unitarian Universalist Association General Assembly

#### **The Dawning of Hope: PHH Worship**

Monday, June 30, 8:00 to 9:15 am  
Hynes Convention Center, Room 312  
Worship Leaders:  
Revs. Levente Kelemen & Rob Eller-Isaacs

Come join in celebrating the joyful gifts—and struggles—of international justice-making in the world. Hear stories of hope from PHH's partners in Romania. Our preacher is the Rev. Levente Kelemen, President of Harvest Hope pro Homorod (HHpH), and minister of the Unitarian Church of Oklánd, Transylvania. HHpH is an independent foundation partnered with Project Harvest Hope to provide sustainable agricultural development in Transylvania. Rev. Rob Eller-Isaacs is President of Project Harvest Hope (USA) and co-minister of Unity Unitarian Church in Saint Paul, Minnesota.



**Mark Ritchie Lecture**  
**Building Hope: Local and International Coalitions for Sustainable Development**  
Monday, June 30, 9:45 to 11:00 am  
Hynes Convention Center, Ballroom A

What is the future of small-scale, sustainable agriculture? What connects labor, environmental, religious and civic organizations to farming? Our guest speaker, Mark Ritchie, will discuss these questions and the possibilities for coalition-building to address agricultural, economic and ecological issues locally and internationally.

Mark Ritchie is President of The Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, which promotes resilient family farms, rural communities and ecosystems around the world through research and education, science and technology, and advocacy. Mark is a MacArthur Fellow and an active Unitarian Universalist. (See conference article on page 2 for more about IATP.)

#### **Reception for PHH Supporters and Friends**

Saturday, June 28, Noon  
Marriott Copley Place

All PHHs friends and supporters are invited to this lunchtime reception. We want to thank you for your ongoing support, and hope you will celebrate our successes with us! Mark Ritchie of IATP will be joining us, and there will be a special screening of the new PHH video *We'll Build a Land!* Stop by our booth at GA

to RSVP and receive your complimentary tickets to this reception. Not attending GA but still want to join us? RSVP to Bev Smrha at [beverlyss@earthlink.net](mailto:beverlyss@earthlink.net) or by telephone at 510/482-9362.

### PORTLAND, OREGON

#### **Sustainability and Society: Rural Development in New Democracies**

Speakers: Cecilia Kingman Miller, Vice President, Project Harvest Hope, and Jim Kleinschmitt, Program Associate, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy  
Date: TBA — Fall 2003  
Cost: \$10

This talk will explore the contributions of agricultural cooperatives and faith-based coalitions to civic life, and the ways that they help stabilize democratic systems while protecting the environment and traditional cultures.

#### **Yes! I want to offer the gift of hope!**

Here's my gift of: \$500 \_\_\_\_\_ \$100 \_\_\_\_\_  
\$50 \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

#### **I'd like to make a pledge for the 2003-2004 year.**

Pledge amount: \$\_\_\_\_\_.

I'd like to pay my pledge \_\_\_\_\_ monthly  
\_\_\_\_\_ quarterly.

#### **Please designate my gift!**

I want to support the following efforts:

- Interfaith Conference on Economic Development
- Women's Calf Fund
- General Program Fund

#### **We'll Build a Land!**

- I'd like to order a copy of *We'll Build A Land!*
- Enclosed is my check for \$10.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

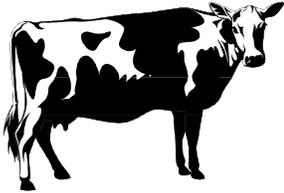
E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks out to Project Harvest Hope.  
Send checks to: Project Harvest Hope  
c/o Arthur Ungar  
517 Silverado Drive  
Lafayette, CA 94549

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## Project Harvest Hope — June 2003

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### Visit the Project Harvest Hope Website!

Find out all the latest on Project Harvest Hope on their website at [www.projectharvesthope.org](http://www.projectharvesthope.org).

Keep up on correspondence from the Kelemens, news and pictures from the Karácsonyfalva Dairy Farm project, and how to participate in the Project Harvest Hope pilgrimages.



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