

The Church of the Pilgrimage Mission and History as Partners with Heifer International.

By Rosalee Sinn, member of Church of Pilgrimage since 1973. - May 2013

Heifer International will celebrate 70 years in 2014. Seven decades of helping people in more than 125 countries with gifts of livestock and training. Our church has been one of Heifer's contributing partners for more than 40 years. And if I recall correctly our former minister the Reverend Edwin T. Anthony was a cowboy to war-torn Germany with a boatload of heifers.

When I asked recently about our church's total giving to Heifer, I received this reply from Kate Sheehan, who is the leader of the Community Engagement Team in the Northeast: "The first entry in the database was for \$15,677 on 2/1/1977. (That is a combination of gifts up to that point.) The total donation listed is \$79,439.21 but often times it is even more."

In 1973, when I became the Northeast Regional Director for Heifer, following 8 years as administrative assistant, the Northeast Office was moved to 16 Leyden Street in Plymouth. At the time Paul was serving as the Southeast Area Minister for the United Church of Christ and we lived on Atlantic Avenue. We joined the Church of the Pilgrimage in 1971. The church designated May as Heifer month and that first year we raised more than \$3,000. I remember a conversation with the Reverend Gary Marks, who was a great supporter of Heifer. He cautioned me that it could be a one time thing . . . but year, after year our church has raised from \$3,000 to \$5,000, purchasing arks-full of animals to help hungry people.

From 1973-1983, we had a holding and shipping center, with barns built by volunteers, on the Gauley's land in Plympton. From that location we shipped from 200-400 goats, cattle and sheep every year. Carol Fortini (Mrs. Ralph) a new member of our church, was secretary in the Heifer office on Leyden Street and many members of the church were volunteers at the office and the holding center.

In 1983, Overlook Farm in Rutland, Massachusetts became available as a center for Heifer and we moved the offices there in October of 1984. It was a long commute for me. I traveled a lot visiting churches and schools and individual donors in the Northeast, and spent many days at the office in Rutland. Some nights I slept on a mat in my office at Overlook. The farm provided new opportunities for Heifer with office space, a working farm, bunk rooms for work groups and opportunities for tours and special events. Thousands of school children, youth and adults visit the farm every year. There are many public events like "Pancakes at the Farm" in March or April and "The Harvest Festival" in October.

From Overlook we worked with many poor families in Maine, providing animals for them. In the late 80's Heifer began securing animals nearer to their destinations so at the present time only a few shipments go from the US to international destinations. . Occasional livestock shipments from the US are made as needed.

(I studied for my Masters in Animal Science at University of Connecticut, receiving it in 1984. My Master's project was a book called "Raising Goats for Milk and Meat" which was later used by Heifer as their teaching manual. It is translated into Spanish and Chinese and it was updated with a new edition in 2008.)

I made at least one international trip a year to visit beneficiaries of Heifer and to lead Heifer Study Tours. Paul joined me on some of these trips . . . one he combined with the United Church of Christ World Board to our mission partners in Ghana and Zimbabwe. Our granddaughters Heather and

Bethany, members of the Church of the Pilgrimage, visited Cameroon, Viet Nam and Cambodia with us and have helped us promote Heifer.

In 1993, I retired as a regional director, and continued my work with Heifer in Little Rock, Arkansas, where I was interim Director of Development from 1993-1996. I helped plan Heifer's 50th Anniversary and The 1998 Conference on World Hunger. For a few years I was a major gifts officer. My final employment with Heifer was as the interim regional director in the Mid-Atlantic region with an office in Philadelphia in 2003-2004. During these 10 years I traveled back and forth to Plymouth and at times was able to work from home. Since 1993 I have served as a consultant in goat husbandry and philanthropy on several occasions.

In 1993-1995, Dick Young Productions produced six videos for Heifer. Beatrice Biira of Uganda was only 9 years old when Dick filmed her in "The Promise" and "The Flame". Beatrice was also the subject of a book by Page McBrier and Lori Lohstoeter called "Beatrice's Goat." In 2001 Beatrice and I traveled to 14 States and she made 125 presentations about her life and her goat Mugisa. A few years later Beatrice came to the US to attend Northfield Mt Herman and then Connecticut College. She attended and received her Master's from The Clinton School of Public Service in Little Rock, Arkansas, worked for Millennium Promise and now works as a Community Engagement Coordinator for Heifer International in New York. Beatrice has appeared on 60 Minutes, The Oprah Winfrey Show and Good Morning America. She has been like a member of our family and has also called the Church of the Pilgrimage her church home in the US. Our church has supported Beatrice not only in a monetary way, but as her church family and friends.

The Mission committee has also provided support for a young Heifer girl in Kenya as she finishes her high school education. She is from the Heifer village of Esabalu and her name is Hellen Ngaah. This is her final year of high school. It has been good to have this more personal contact.

The Church of the Pilgrimage has welcomed Heifer guest speakers from China, Cambodia, Ecuador, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Cameroon, Guatemala and Honduras to mention a few countries. We have hung Ark banners, had an animal parade and had animals on the green. Each year individuals and families have given goats and sheep and heifers, chicks and water buffalo, but most of all they have given generously so that others can have farm animals that produce food, income and self-esteem.

This year (2013) we will reach the \$80,000 mark in our giving. And in the not too distant future we may reach \$100,000. Thank you everyone for "Passing on the Gifts".