

Integrities

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DOING SOMETHING IN CONFUSING TIMES

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2019 Event - RSVP appreciated*
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December 15

Light and Darkness Celebration
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*** No Charge**

DOING SOMETHING IN CONFUSING TIMES

What can we do in confusing times? It is so easy to feel paralyzed, and think that there is nothing we can do. Or that no matter what we do, it won't really matter.

In this time of confusion, reading about people who did something specific has been an inspiration for me.

JANNA JIHAD, SEVEN-YEAR OLD

Janna Jihad was seven years old when she began taking photos with her mother's cell phone. She photographed Israeli soldiers occupying the Palestinian land where she lived.



Janna, now 13. "My camera is my weapon."

"It was my mother's cellphone. I was only 7 years old when I started doing journalism. It was when I saw that there were not enough journalists to cover things that happened in my village, Nabi Saleh, and also in Palestine in general. Like, when my friend Mustafa was killed, my uncle Rushdie was killed, a lot of things were happening, and the world didn't know about how we, as Palestinian children living under this Israeli military occupation, are living, how we're suffering, how we're—like, how our rights are getting violated, our childhood is not given to us. So I wanted to be the voice of those children.

“A lot of difficult stuff for us as children living under this occupation happened. Like, for example, I saw a lot of people in my life getting killed in front of me. I was trying to—you know, we all—like, we get traumatized. We’re humans. You know, it’s pretty hard for us to process all of that. But we always believe that we want freedom, and wanting freedom is not easy. We have to pay the price of freedom. And the price of freedom won’t be that cheap. It’s going to be pretty expensive. A lot of people are going to get killed. A lot of people are going to get arrested. A lot of people are going to get injured. But our main goal is to liberate Palestine, to live in freedom, love, peace, equality and justice, like other human beings and children deserve to live.

GRETA THUNBERG

When we look at Greta Thunberg, taking a sailboat to come here from Europe in order to save fossil fuels, driving our car a little less seems like something we can do!

Greta began all alone. No one wanted to join her. She didn’t go to school, but stood outside alone, protesting. “I thought that it was a good idea, that maybe it would make a difference. And I tried to



"My message is that we'll be watching you."

bring others with me, but no one was interested, so I had to do it alone—and then, on the second day, people started joining me.”

Greta, now 16, addressed the U.N.'s Climate Action Summit in New York City. Here's the full transcript of her speech, beginning with her response to a question about the message she has for world leaders.

"My message is that we'll be watching you."

"This is all wrong. I shouldn't be up here. I should be back in school on the other side of the ocean. Yet you all come to us young people for hope. How dare you!

"You have stolen my dreams and my childhood with your empty words. And yet I'm one of the lucky ones. People are suffering. People are dying. Entire ecosystems are collapsing. We are in the beginning of a mass extinction, and all you can talk about is money and fairy tales of eternal economic growth. How dare you!

PLANTING CROSSES

Sometimes what we try to do seems futile. *Democracy Now* told the story of a man walking along the US-Mexican border who kept finding the bones and the dead bodies of immigrants who had crossed over. What could he do? He finally started planting wooden crosses wherever he found a body! So far, he's planted over 100 crosses!

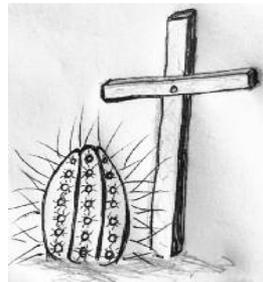


illustration by Karen Cane

PRISONERS RAISING MONEY

Even people in prison can do *something*. Peter and Betty Michelozzi wrote to us about some inmates at Soledad State Prison.

“A local representative for *Relay For Life*, which raises money for cancer research and relief, asked the prison administration if they could invite inmates to participate in their program. The warden and other prison officials agreed to give it a try.

An invitation went out to the entire prison population and immediately drew some four hundred positive responses. Many inmates who carry a heavy burden of guilt for their behaviors are eager to offer some return or service to make up for them. And a program like *Relay For Life* provided such an opportunity.

Inmate leaders decided that respondents would be divided into forty groups of ten members each. The intent was to have the groups compete with each other to see which group would raise the most money. That money would come from inmate personal accounts and contributions from family and friends of group members.

The entire effort stirred the interest and imagination of the men. A flurry of fundraising activity preoccupied all participants for perhaps a month or more. The competition raised a total of \$17,000 for cancer research and relief! And it brought a sense of pride and uplift into the men's otherwise drab existence.”

Action, even from prisoners!

LEAVING JUGS OF WATER FOR REFUGEES

by anonymous author

I've been at this for months—every weekend or every other weekend. Perhaps it's because of that Polish couple who died trying to protect my ancestors from the Nazis almost eighty years ago . . . and it's because of the pictures and stories of the plight of those desperate brothers and sisters at the border trudging with everything they own on their backs, seeking a better life for themselves and their families.

Why else would they walk through a desert with their children that they love dearly, but for sheer desperation and determination?

Well over 8,000 bodies (!) have been discovered in this area over the last twenty years, and i've been going from one area to another . . . It never, ever gets easier.

Finding the bodies of once vibrant, thinking and breathing brothers and sisters with hopes and dreams. Every time I find a body, I think about his/her family—anxiously awaiting the news that their loved ones are safe.

I think about my ancestors, and how they were hunted. I think of my family—what if it was me?

God, just how many bodies have I found over the decades?

As an international aid/relief worker for so many years.—I have found so many. From the aftermath of war, from violence, from natural disasters, from disease, from starvation.

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In this case—this man most probably died from lack of water. This man, whose hopes and dreams entailed coming here to America for a life of relative prosperity. For clean water and plentiful food—where death squads aren't breaking down doors and doing what they will to whomever they please.

I've concentrated my efforts to leaving five gallons of water, food, and two space blankets in each location as I make my way throughout this ridiculously hot and dry area of the Sonoran Desert, beyond the Arizona border.

And each bottle has a rudimentary map showing its location and its proximity to the border.

Suffice it to say, because of my life experiences and because that Polish couple were executed by the Nazi's for trying, ultimately unsuccessfully, to protect my ancestors from the flames of the Holocaust—that is why I'm here so often, traveling from my Colorado or New Mexico homes, after a week of work.

Almost 160 locations so far. . . And each bottle is accompanied by a message, in Spanish, in crayon, often accompanied with drawings, by the very young daughter of an ally and friend.

Telling the reader that they are wanted here.

That they are welcome.



illustration by Karen Cane

WHAT IF IS DOING

HELPING TO TRAIN COLLEGE STUDENTS IN MEXICO

IF continues to support the groundbreaking work of Pietro Ameglio in nonviolence education and organizing in Mexico. Pietro recently edited a book called “*Weaving Alternatives: Towards a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence.*” It collects some of the best practices from current organizing work in Mexico and, in so doing, demonstrates how far the acceptance and practice of active nonviolence in Mexico has come in recent years. In an indication of the international reach of his work, a recent article in Sojourners Magazine quotes his wife, the sociologist Myriam Fracchia, and articulates the necessity of divine disobedience by echoing principles and language that the author heard from Pietro through their collaboration on the Catholic Nonviolence Initiative (see: I Prayed The Rosary for Immigrant Children; I Was Arrested; <https://sojo.net/magazine/november-2019/i-prayed-rosary-immigrant-children-i-was-arrested>). In September Pietro was a keynote speaker at a peacebuilding conference in Barcelona, Spain and in October, he gave a series of talks in the Worcester, MA area. In November, he and the youth from the Peace and Nonviolence Collective begin a series of 8 nonviolence workshops, to be held on the streets of downtown Mexico City.

IF CURRENTLY SUPPORTS THREE LOCAL PROJECTS IN WATSONVILLE

Training young children to care for the environment

Watsonville Wetlands Watch works to preserve the Watsonville Sloughs through advocacy, student education, restoration of degraded habitats and preservation of healthy habitats. IF funds stipends for high schools interns who are trained to guide younger students in exploring and learning about the ecology of the wetlands. The young students who learn about the wetlands come to appreciate their beauty and importance as part of the web of life and as a result develop a love of nature and caring for the environment.



*Watsonville Wetlands Watch High School Interns
Photo provided by Linda Wallace*

Environmental action in the Pajaro Valley

IF provides funding to a local grass roots climate action organization. *Regeneración* works with the predominantly low-income Mexican-American residents of the Pájaro Valley to address and cope with the local impacts of climate change, such as increasingly high summer temperatures. The hundreds of Pajaro Valley residents who are farmworkers workers are expected to work in the fields during periods of excessive heat, which makes them susceptible to a variety of heat-related illnesses ranging from rashes and cramps to heat stroke. *Regeneración* educates and empowers residents through public art, videos, and community events to “raise their voices publicly, work locally and contribute to a growing global movement to preserve life.”



*Regeneración Volunteers in Watsonville
Photo provided by Linda Wallace*

Helping immigrants

IF funds the critical work of the Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County's Immigration Project. *The Immigration Project* works to promote the wellbeing of the local immigrant community by providing free counseling on immigration issues, Border Patrol abuse monitoring, assistance with applications for citizenship and

legal status, and information to documented and undocumented persons, including their rights as workers and residents.



*Immigration Project Office in Watsonville
Photo provided by Linda Wallace*

IF ALSO SERVES AS FISCAL SPONSOR FOR A PROJECT IN MEXICO AND ONE IN NICARAGUA

Helping care for the sick in Chiapas

For over 45 years Sergio Castro has been working within the indigenous Mayan communities and marginalized Mexicans of San Cristóbal de las Casas in Chiapas, one of the poorest states of Mexico. Don Sergio spends most of his time providing free medical and wound care to burn victims, and, with increasing frequency, patients suffering from the effects of type 2 diabetic complications. He and his team visit about 150 patients in their homes every week, which comes out to about 7,800 patient visits per year.



Yok Chij Wound Care Practitioner with Patient in Nicaragua. Sergio Castro upper left overseeing team.

Providing health care in Nicaragua

The Terrabona Health Project provides essential public and preventive health to the population of the community of San Jose de Terrabona, a rural community that is relatively far from health services and communication, along with remote hamlets in the area. The services are provided by Jader Loaisiga, a health worker who has training in nursing. The project contributes to the improvement of the hygienic and sanitary conditions and the epidemiology of the inhabitants of these communities by providing vaccinations, nursing services, condoms, health education and home visits (over 300 a year)..



Terrabona Healthcare Practitioner with Patient in Nicaragua.

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