



Trees for Life

2015 Annual Report



www.treesforlife.org



Balbir Mathur

President and Founder

In 2015 our focus at Trees for Life has continued in two areas: Moringa and education.

Moringa research

A major focus of Trees for Life over the past 20 years has been spreading awareness of the potential nutritional and medicinal benefits of the moringa tree. In 2013, we joined hands with well-known moringa researcher Dr. Mark Olson of the National Autonomous University of Mexico to establish a collection of living samples (“germplasm”) of all known varieties of moringa.

This year, we continued working with Dr. Olson, Dr. Jed Fahey of Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, and other prominent scientists to promote further research on how moringa can benefit humanity. This included support of Dr. Fahey’s laboratory, where he and his colleagues are researching moringa’s potential to prevent cancer and other chronic diseases.

Teach for Life

In serving the poorest of the poor for the last 30 years, we have found that the root cause of poverty is lack of education. One of the main obstacles to education is the lack of trained teachers.

In response to this need, we have developed an IT-based platform that will allow teachers around the world to share their knowledge and skills through training videos. Educators have told us that this movement has the potential to transform education—not only for teachers who serve the poor, but also for people in developed countries like the USA. This educational branch of Trees for Life is called Teach for Life.

In 2015, our team joined hands with several expert educators to further develop the program and the training lessons. I also shared the program with people in India, and the response was overwhelmingly positive from all sectors—teachers in the field, educational institutions, and potential technology partners.

Retirement

As I announced last year, I am retiring at the end of 2015. Our search for someone to step into the role of president was successful. Mrs. Simmi Dalla joined our team as a volunteer this year, and we realized that she had the skills and qualities to help shape the exciting future of this movement. I am very proud of our team and the strong foundation that has been laid. Trees for Life will be in very good hands.

Who We Are

Trees for Life empowers people by demonstrating that in helping each other, we can unleash extraordinary power that impacts our lives.

This movement started by enabling people around the world to help plant fruit trees in developing countries. Now it has matured to where Trees for Life provides a platform for people of various disciplines to work on long-term fundamental solutions to problems in the areas of *education, health and environment.*



Trees for Life | 3006 W. St. Louis
Wichita, KS 67203-5129 | (316) 945-6929
www.treesforlife.org



Countries served in 2015

Burundi
 Cameroon
 Dominican Republic
 Ethiopia
 Guatemala
 India
 Kenya
 Lesotho
 Malaysia
 Mozambique
 Namibia
 Nicaragua
 Papua New Guinea
 Paraguay
 Philippines
 Rwanda
 South Africa
 Tanzania
 United States



It's About Life

Trees for Life started in the early 1980s with planting fruit trees in India. We emphasized creating awareness, training people to plant and care for trees and providing the resources needed. Each recipient pledged to help at least two others.

The program grew rapidly in India and spread to Guatemala, Cambodia, Nepal, Costa Rica, Haiti, Indonesia, Brazil, Mexico, Ethiopia, Nicaragua and El Salvador. As a result, people planted tens of millions of fruit trees.

Inspiring people to help themselves

For us, it's not about the number of trees planted. Much more important is the fact that tree planting inspires people to do more to help themselves. Trees for Life isn't about trees—it's about *Life*. It's about awakening the spirit in people and empowering them to address the needs of their own community.

Local ownership

Local people contribute a large portion of funding and resources, often making great sacrifices. People from various segments of society provide land, labor and in-kind contributions. Our international network provides key elements that are lacking locally.

Creating models

Our task is not to solve the problems of the world. We aim to create a few models that, if successful, may inspire others to solve their own problems. We are not a factory manufacturing the antidote to a disease. Rather, we are like a laboratory developing new antidotes.

Long-term focus

Many groups focus on serving immediate needs, which is very good and necessary. We, however, focus on the long term. We work mostly in the background, focusing on how people can make a major paradigm change. While results are not always immediate, the long-term impact can be very deep and widespread.

Tools of empowerment

We focus on developing and providing the tools of empowerment to local leaders who can create hope in their communities. Empowerment in our case means:



A "Miracle Tree"

The moringa tree (*Moringa oleifera*) literally saves lives. Its edible leaves help prevent deadly diseases by providing large amounts of essential nutrients like vitamin A, protein, calcium, vitamin C and potassium. People use every part of the tree for beneficial purposes ranging from traditional medicine to purifying water. [CONTINUED >](#)





A “Miracle Tree” Continued

Moringa also happens to grow in parts of the world where malnutrition is the worst—exactly where it is most needed. The problem is that most people are simply not aware of its value.

Trees for Life spent more than fifteen years developing and testing educational tools about moringa. We now distribute materials to help people in many countries spread awareness of moringa’s potential benefits. We also share information worldwide through our website.

As a result, Trees for Life has inspired people and governments worldwide to plant moringa. We have heard that more than 200 million have been planted in Africa alone.

In the past few years, we supported Dr. Mark Olson of the National Autonomous University of Mexico in the establishment of a moringa germplasm collection, which will preserve living plant material from all the known varieties of moringa for future research and propagation. We also helped promote research that

can make use of the moringa collection.

In 2015, we continued working with a variety of scientists to promote studies, especially on the topic of protein content. We also provided support for the lab of Dr. Jed Fahey of Johns Hopkins University Medical School. He and his team are researching the potential of moringa to help prevent cancer and other chronic diseases.

Books for Life

Education is a key to empowerment, and a major key to education is literacy and reading. Books for Life, an educational branch of Trees for Life, introduces people to the joy of reading and learning. This year we worked in two main areas: donated books and school support.

Donated books

Books for Life provided donated books to libraries and schools in poor communities around the world. Books were provided to communities in Burundi, Cameroon, Ethiopia, India, Kenya, Lesotho, Malaysia, Mozambique, Namibia, Nicaragua, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Philippines, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, and the United States.

School support

We also provided support to a preschool in the town of Tisma, Nicaragua. This preschool provides education to approximately 30 or 40 children each year who otherwise would not be able to get an education.

Water for schoolchildren

In some rural areas of Rajasthan, India, many teenage girls stop attending school because there is no water for latrines. Trees for Life joined hands with the Sehgal Foundation in the “Human Dignity Project” to help provide water for such schools. The water systems use “kid power”—playground seesaws connected to pumps bring water from underground to storage tanks. This water can then be used for drinking and better hygiene.



Cookstoves

Villagers in the Dominican Republic and Guatemala have to make long journeys each day to cut firewood and carry it home on their backs. This year, Trees for Life supported the efforts of such villagers to build fuel-efficient cooking stoves. These stoves use less than half the wood of open fires, protect children from burns, and preserve the health of women and children by taking smoke out of the house through a stovepipe.



Teach for Life

Teach for Life is another educational branch of Trees for Life.

Lack of education is keeping billions of people around the world in a pervasive cycle of poverty. A major roadblock to education is the lack of well-trained teachers. Recognizing that “education is freedom,” Teach for Life has developed an IT-based platform that enables the best teachers in the world to share their knowledge and experience with those in need, especially those who serve the poor.

Teachers share their expertise through brief training videos. These videos can be easily translated into any language and will be provided free of cost.

To build a strong foundation, we are starting with training for teachers of early childhood. This year we joined hands with educators and teacher coaches in the local school district, who shared essential information on what is taught in early childhood in the areas of Literacy, Math, Science, Social Sciences and Arts.

We also continued development of lessons sharing effective teaching methods, and developed the first iteration of a website.

Videos

This video, intended for teachers who will be filmed, explains the program:

▶ <http://tinyurl.com/TFLmovement>

Here are two sample training videos:

▶ <http://tinyurl.com/TFLwords>

▶ <http://tinyurl.com/TFLrhyming>



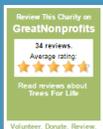
We are committed to:

- Service, not growth. We wish to remain small, responsible and responsive to people's needs.
- Remaining a family, not an institution, so that we can feel the heartbeat of the people.
- Serving from the context of sacrifice, not power.

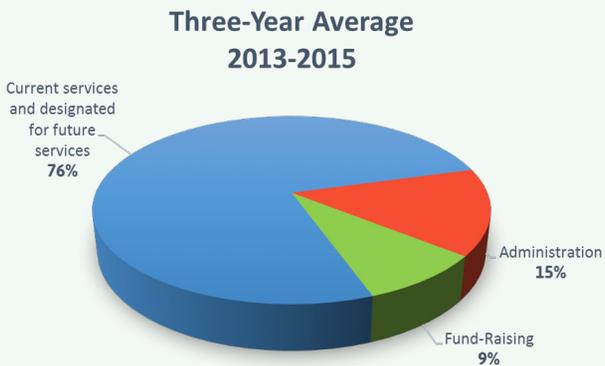
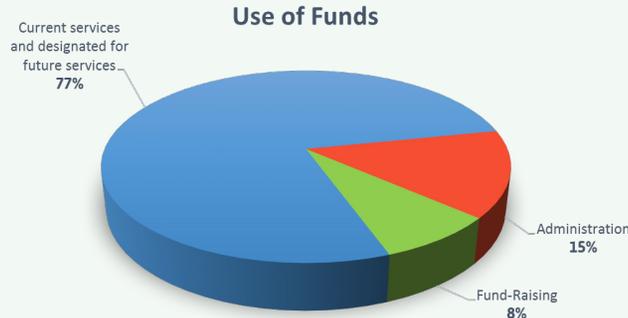
Where does my gift go?

To help the greatest number of families move toward self-reliance, Trees for Life does not use its limited resources to track individual gifts from donation to distribution to specific families. Instead, your gift supports the entire mission of Trees for Life. We use your gift where it can do the most good by combining it with the gifts of others to help transform entire communities. Your gift is tax deductible, and will be used to help people move from poverty to a sustainable life of hope.

Trees for Life is qualified as a charitable organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions to Trees for Life are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.



Use of Funds 2015



Statement of Activities for the year ended December 31, 2015

REVENUE SOURCES

Contributions	270,169
In-kind Services	85,894
Interest Income	18,170
Loss on investments	(56,019)
Total Revenue	\$318,214

EXPENSES

<i>Program services</i>	
World	379,767
Fundraising	39,543
Management	71,632
Total expenses	490,942

NET ASSETS

Unrestricted net assets	764,832
Temporarily restricted net	230,343
Permanently restricted net	5,000
Total Net Assets	\$1,000,175

Board of Trustees

BOARD CHAIRPERSON
Steve Krause
 Former President, Krause Corporation

PRESIDENT
Balbir S. Mathur
 Founder, Trees for Life

SECRETARY
Treva Mathur
 Office Coordinator

TREASURER
Victor Klaassen, C.P.A.
 Accountant

Charles Benscheidt
 President, High Yield Sales Co.

Steve Carter
 Retired Intensive English Instructor
 Wichita State University

Robert S. Doenges
 Businessman

Bob Knight
 Former Mayor, City of Wichita

Sheila Kumar
 Community volunteer

Shirley Lefever-Davis
 Dean of the College of Education
 Wichita State University

Sheril Logan
 Retired Assistant Superintendent
 of Schools, Wichita, KS.
 Current School Board President

Hal McCoy
 Chairman, Restaurant
 Management Company

Nancy McCoy
 Community Volunteer

Becky O'Hearn
 Head of Early Childhood
 Wichita Collegiate School

Reed Jules Oppenheimer
 Businessman

Adam Smith, Ph.D.
 Research, Center for Conservation
 and Sustainable Development

Jason Vandecreek
 Owner, Vandecreek Consulting

Vik Wall, M.D.
 Physician

Margalee Wright
 Character Education, USD 259, retired
 Former Mayor, City of Wichita