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DONORS WITHOUT BORDERS

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Marin has never been provincial. Its influences on the arts, environmentalism, healthy living, and organics—among other movements—have been felt around the world.

This tradition of paying attention to needs both in our own backyard and in far-flung communities is alive and well. In this issue of *Imagine* you'll read about the creative ways in which donors of the Foundation are making a mark on social issues from Haiti to Nepal. And you'll learn about the efforts of other Marin residents to start nonprofit organizations—one going back to 1990 and another just getting off the ground—to improve the well-being of impoverished communities in remote parts of the globe.

Of course, our own county benefits enormously from this same entrepreneurial spirit. Several nonprofits have started businesses that have a dual purpose: to give the clients they serve the chance to gain skills and earn an income, and to produce revenue for the sponsoring organizations. You'll learn how these social enterprises are providing a range of products and services in Marin.

Finally, we want to tell you about an ambitious effort in Novato to reduce underage drinking. It's an initiative that involves the entire

community: teaching and non-teaching staff at schools, community leaders, parents and, importantly, the students themselves.

Overall, we hope you'll agree how encouraging it is to realize how the people and projects featured in this issue are such powerful examples of Marin's creativity and passion, whether they are expressed around the corner or around the world.

As always, please let us know if you have any comments or reactions.

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imagine spring 13

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MARIN COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

HOW CHANGE HAPPENS



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marin philanthropist magazine

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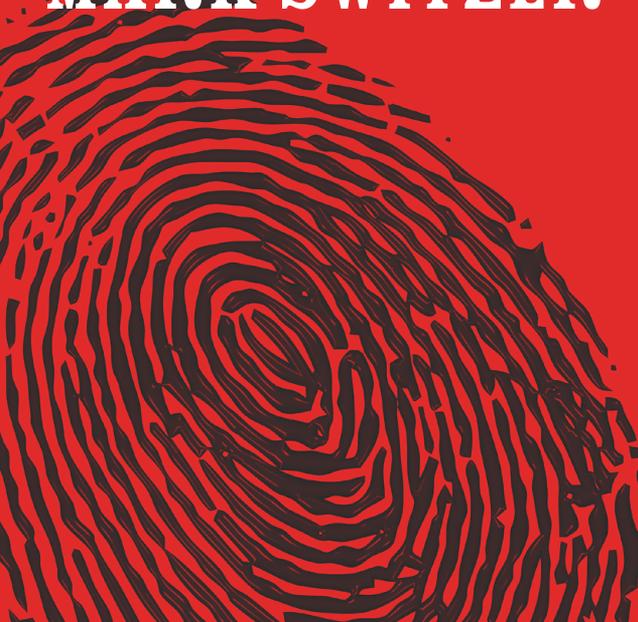
The double bottom line in Marin

MARIN originals



Marin residents are making a mark on a range of social issues, locally and globally. This new feature section of Imagine, which will appear occasionally, tells their stories. In this inaugural article, we describe how several people here started nonprofit organizations addressing everything from community-building in West Marin to helping kids in Africa succeed in school.

OLGA MURRAY
LINDA MORNELL
MOIRA HANES
MARCO KRAPELS
ELIZABETH
BARNET
MARK SWITZER



Sometimes, a single trip to a new part of the world can change someone's life. In the case of Sausalito resident Olga Murray, it ended up changing not only hers, but the lives of thousands of children in Nepal.

When Murray—an attorney with the California Supreme Court at the time—was on a trekking expedition there, she was overwhelmed both by the country's natural beauty and by the charms, and needs, of its children.

"They were poor beyond anything I had experienced before, dressed in rags, very dirty, poorly nourished, and mostly unschooled, but with an amazing capacity for joy," she says. "I thought to myself that for the price of a good haircut back in the States, I could make a significant difference in their lives. I returned home determined, somehow, to find a way to help."

Murray seemed poised for this kind of determination, since she specialized, in her work with the Court, in writing decisions that dealt with civil rights, women's rights, and environmental policy.

Back in Sausalito, Murray began efforts that led to the formation, in 1990, of the Nepal Youth Foundation. "All of our programs started organically, with the recognition of an urgent need to assure the survival and education of Nepali children," she explains.

Her first efforts focused on providing college scholarships to boys who were forced to leave, at age 16, the orphanage where they lived.

Next came health care, prompted by her visit to a small hospital after falling during a second trek. She ended up providing scholarships to youngsters who had been hospitalized there.



OLGA MURRAY FINDING MEANING IN NEPAL

That was followed by opening a group home for homeless boys who attended a local school, and soon afterward

a second home for girls was created. “And,” she adds, “we began a nutrition program at the only general children’s hospital in the country, where we encountered children who came there because they were severely malnourished and had contracted serious diseases as a result. They were often discharged from the hospital even though they were as malnourished as when they arrived.”

She also took on the issue of young girls being sold into bonded servitude. “In 1999, I read in a newspaper that the festival of maghe sakranti was coming, and that parents in the Tharu community in west Nepal would be bonding away [selling into servitude] thousands of little girls to work in the kitchens of upper-caste families.”

Those efforts have resulted in rescuing over 12,000 girls, some as young as six, from servitude over the past 13 years, and, Murray proudly adds, “We have virtually ended the custom of bonding girls in Nepal by turning the community against the practice.”

When asked why Nepal engages her so strongly, Murray says that part of it is how much a relatively small amount of money can accomplish there. “Also,” she adds, “there is no safety net in Nepal as there is in the U.S., and millions of children just fall through the cracks and end up on the street or working at a very young age without any schooling.”

Murray, who retired as board chair of NYF last year at the age of 87, spends half the year in her Sausalito home and half in Nepal working on foundation projects. And she retains what is probably her favorite title: In Nepal, the kids call her “Olga didi,” meaning “older sister.”

To learn more: www.nepalyouthfoundation.org

(below): Murray marching with girls freed from servitude [photos courtesy of the Nepal Youth Foundation]



LINDA MORNELL SUMMERS FOR SEARCHING

Big ideas often start at home. At least that was the case for Linda Mornell, a long-time Bolinas resident who saw the



effect that Outward Bound's summer programs had on her three children.

"It had a great influence on their characters and values," she says. "They found balance and had a chance to recreate themselves."

Mornell, a psychiatric nurse at the time, also felt

that these same kinds of experiences could benefit kids in her children's school—a private high school in San Francisco—who came from low-income families and who faced a variety of challenges.

Starting with a handful of students, Mornell found ways to send them to summer experiential programs both in the U.S. and abroad. It didn't take long for this effort to evolve into a nonprofit she called Summer Search—since it was both a summer program and because it focused on young people "searching for new identities, new ways of being, and new countries," as she puts it.



(left): Linda Mornell, Founder of Summer Search, at home in Bolinas, where she has lived for the last 43 years (right): Linda Mornell with Summer Search alumnae. From left: Karen Granados, Lyncy Ha, Anna Lee, Adriana Vinansaca, Wendy Rodriguez, Samantha Roberts





“I was a menace at dinner parties in those early years,” Mornell recalls. “It was like, ‘I’m so glad to meet you, and I’m so glad you’re interested in Summer Search.’”

She also realized that the powerful, life-changing aspects of these experiences made it difficult for the participants to resume “life as usual” back home. “They came back feeling empowered and proud of themselves, but they got depressed by having to face resentment from siblings and the realities of being in often dysfunctional families,” Mornell explains.

As a result, Summer Search instituted a mentoring program, in which the students have regularly scheduled conversations with staff members trained to help them talk about, and through, the life issues they face.

This mentoring, which starts in a student’s sophomore year in high school and continues through their second year of college, “helps them talk about their feelings and helps them overcome their tendencies to make self-destructive decisions,” says Mornell.

Summer Search now offers participating students two summer experiences. During the first summer, every student takes part in an outdoor program such as Outward Bound, and during the second summer, they choose among different options, including home stays, academic programs, and international service experiences.

The graduation rates of the participants

are impressive: Over 99 percent of Summer Search students have graduated from high school, 93 percent have gone on to college, and among that group, 89 percent have completed college or remain enrolled.

Many have gone on to become doctors, lawyers, nurses, teachers, and businessmen and women.

Summer Search, Mornell explains, intentionally seeks out kids with an altruistic spirit. “The kids who have thrived and who have internal strength to succeed in the program tended to also be altruistic,” she says. “They weren’t getting into trouble. They weren’t acting out. It would be a great loss not to develop these kids.”

Summer Search has evolved a lot since those early days in Bolinas. It’s now a national organization, with programs in seven locations around the country. And while Mornell gave up the leadership of the organization 20 years after its founding—“It was so hard, but at some point, charismatic leaders have to go,” she says—she continues to be involved, consulting for 15 hours a month.

“I’m now like the grandmother,” Mornell says. “You learn to say very little, but at the right time.”

Left: Mornell in Bolinas;
Right: Summer Search graduate
Anndretta Lyle and
President Clinton in 1999

To learn more: www.summersearch.org

MOIRA HANES MARCO KRAPELS

SEEING THE LIGHT IN ZAMBIA

When Larkspur resident Marco Krapels had a self-described mid-life crisis when he turned 40, he said to his wife, Moira Hanes, “We could buy a Porsche and drive really fast along the coast. Or, I can take a sabbatical from work and do some good.”

He chose the latter, and decided to combine his deep knowledge of solar energy, gained from overseeing investments in that industry at Rabobank, with a desire to bring solar power to a part of the world that was “off the grid.”

Through a series of connections—and having received a small solar-powered light as a gift—Krapels and Hanes set their sights on a remote part of western Zambia where there is no electricity and no roads.

During Krapels’ sabbatical, they spent time

understanding the local culture, exploring the area’s needs, and deploying the first round of lights. They also made important local connections, including the region’s king and local chiefs, to get support for their project. “We just didn’t want to go in, deliver something, and then pull out,” says Hanes.

They ended up focusing on 52 schools in the Shangombo district, where students had to end their studies and reading when the sun went down. “We wanted to give them a better life. If they can stay in school longer and do better, that’s their ticket to a better life,” says Krapels.

Krapels and Hanes report that between eight and ten thousand students now use solar-powered lights every night, with three or four students often gathering under



Marco Krapels
with kids in
Zambia



one to read and study.

Krapels and Hanes saw another benefit of the solar devices: They have ports on them for charging cell phones, which play a critical role in such a remote area by enabling people to sell crops, conduct banking transactions, and make connections with each other.

After this trip, Krapels and Hanes formed Empowered by Light as a way to expand their work and make it sustainable. To date, the organization has provided nearly 3,000 solar units to the Shangombo district, bringing light to health clinics in addition to schools. And they're thinking about starting a lending library, where families can check out a light and then return it for use by others.

The organization has also moved on to the area's only high school, Sioma High School, attended by 550 students. Since the school depends on antiquated and unreliable diesel generators, Empowered by Light has plans to build a solar farm that will provide all the school's electricity while reducing costs, pollution, and noise. The system will pay

for itself in six years.

While Empowered by Light, now a year-and-a-half old, is still an all-volunteer organization, Hanes says that soon "we'll have to bite the bullet and hire an executive director to bring in more funds to scale our work."

Despite being in its infancy, that hasn't stopped Krapels and Hanes from having a big vision for the organization. "We want these projects to prove that African countries can leap-frog a fossil fuel-based infrastructure and go straight to renewable energy sources," says Krapels.

"We want these efforts to be a shining example for all of Zambia and for other countries as well."

To learn more: www.empoweredbylight.org

ELIZABETH BARNET MARK SWITZER FINDING COMMON GROUND

To most people, including the three million or so tourists who visit the area each year, West Marin is known for its dramatic coastline, rolling hills, dairies, and quaint communities.

But to the people who live there, it's home—one that's spread out, isolated from the populated parts of Marin "over the hill," unincorporated, and marked by socioeconomic extremes.

In 2006, these issues were among the ones that a group of residents got together to discuss in living rooms and community venues in order to find ways to preserve and expand the area's sense of community.

They were influenced by a resurgence of thinking around the notion of the commons—in particular by the writings of a West Marin resident, Jonathan Rowe, who

died in 2011. The commons movement emphasizes the responsibilities people have to steward shared resources, including everything from the environment and public spaces to a community's cultural and educational resources.

As Elizabeth Barnet, one of those early participants, recalls, "We were thinking at first primarily in terms of where people naturally came together" at places like traditional town squares. "It started with a bench that Jonathan [Rowe] placed on a corner in Pt. Reyes Station."

Soon after, local residents did something else borrowed from the commons movement: They took a "perambulation" around Pt. Reyes Station to identify common "spaces and places" and what might be improved.



Gathered around the bench in Pt. Reyes Station honoring Jonathan Rowe (from left): Rufus Blunk, David Clarkson, Mark Switzer, and Elizabeth Barnet

Barnet describes the initial bench as a metaphor for how West Marin Commons evolved. It now views its mission as bringing people together to take part in community projects and celebrations, identifying community issues and solutions, sharing resources, giving voice to residents' views, and creating a marketplace for goods and services.

Some of this takes the form of community projects like a native plant garden, civic improvements, and the creation of additional spaces where people can come together. For example, it has leased the corner lot next to Bovine Bakery, at the corner of Highway 1 and 4th Street, which has been an informal gathering place for visitors and locals for many years. It now contains a bench as a memorial to Rowe.

West Marin Commons also sponsors traditional barn dances—which bring together diverse members of the community, including teens and local Latino farm workers—and potluck dinners that feature foods from different cultures.

But West Marin's rural nature suggested the need for a virtual counterpoint to the physical commons. As a result, its website contains sections that reflect many of the notions that underlie the concept of the commons: sharing opinions (in a section called West Marin Soapbox), exchanging goods and services (in a "money-free zone" called West Marin Share), accessing local resources, and even sharing rides (in a section called Over-the-Hill Gang).

The site also lists volunteer opportunities, profiles local nonprofits, and contains a community calendar.

The overall goal, says Mark Switzer, a member of West Marin Commons' governance committee, "is to be aware of what we are as a community. The site is a grassroots, fluid, and interactive way for people to engage in issues."

Barnet sees West Marin Commons as a way to tap into the creativity and imagination of its residents. "It's a way of being conscious about what's going on, taking note of things, and reaching out to people." 

To learn more: www.westmarincommons.org

It Takes a Village

Novato's efforts to curb teen drinking

By Sara Bernard

One Friday in February, 10 teenagers got up from their bag lunches and walked around a portable classroom at Novato's San Marin High School. They peered at a dozen printouts about flavored alcoholic beverages called alcopops, energy drinks, and other colorful beverages that Youth Leadership Institute/Friday Night Live coordinator Kiely Hosmon taped up on the walls: Four Loko. Rockstar 21. Monster. Red Bull. Tilt.

The million-dollar question: Which of these contain alcohol?

It may seem like a simple test, but almost no one got a perfect score.

"It's misleading," said junior Zane Roegiers. "And the wine coolers? I thought they looked like juice."

When Hosmon asked him why he thought those companies made it so confusing, Roegiers didn't miss a beat.

"So they get inside kids' minds before they turn 21," he said.

Roegiers is a member of the San Marin High chapter of Friday Night Live (FNL), a



leadership club that meets every Friday at Novato high schools. It's one of the many partner projects of Healthy Novato, an initiative designed to bring together an entire community around underage drinking.

This spring, FNL's primary goal is to reduce teen access to alcopops, which are marketed to young people. The FNL students plan to visit local businesses and ask vendors to take these products off their shelves. It's a move the Novato City Council officially supports, thanks to a resolution passed last November after half a dozen youth came to City Hall and spoke up about the drinks' dangers.

Putting teens at the helm of a teen issue is a big part of the change at work here.

"It's not just adults using scare tactics—not just, 'Sit down, take your hat off, put your phones away,'" says Roegiers, who's been a member of the Friday Night Live club for the past year and plans to

continue until he graduates. "It's adults and kids working together. We're all just partners."

A tragic beginning

Healthy Novato was spurred by a tragedy: In September 2010, 15-year-old Isaac Brott was killed in a car accident. The driver, who was 16, was intoxicated.

It wasn't the first fatal accident involving teenagers and alcohol in Novato, but it drew the attention of Ginnie and Peter Haas, Jr. of the Peter E. Haas Jr. Family Fund (a supporting organization of MCF). They helped finance the launch of Healthy Novato as a citywide project that could tackle the issue with renewed energy. It was clear that something needed to be done—something that went well beyond telling kids what was good for them.

"What we hear from the kids is,

"You did a good job of educating us. You told us not to use alcohol, but come Friday night, we set that aside," says Vicki Romero, director of curriculum and instruction at Novato Unified School District (NUSD). To change that, she says, "it takes an entire community that makes this their agenda."

It also means starting early, says Peter Haas. "We need to start communicating these messages when students are still in grammar school and engage the schools and parents to communicate these messages."

The numbers paint a startling picture. According to the 2011 California Healthy Kids Survey, developed by West Ed for the California Department of Education, 43 percent of 11th graders report having a drink by the age of 14. Nearly a third report binge drinking within the last 30 days, and 73 percent say that alcohol is fairly or very easy to access.

Building on the work that the Novato Blue Ribbon Coalition for Youth has been doing to curb underage drinking, marijuana use, and bullying, Healthy Novato coalesced in 2011. Partners include Marin County Health and Human Services, Novato Youth Center (which is the fiscal sponsor), Youth Leadership Institute, Novato Unified School District, Novato Blue Ribbon Coalition, and the YMCA, among others.

With funding from the Marin Community Foundation, Kaiser Permanente, the Lynx Foundation (a supporting organization of MCF), as well as the Peter E. Haas Jr. Family Fund, the Healthy Novato leadership team builds strategies that address problems collaboratively, with city government, local businesses, schools, parents, and kids all having a part to play.

Overall, what drives Healthy Novato—and the youth who are involved so far—is the promise of finding real, tangible solutions to underage drinking.

“We tend to talk about this a lot, but we don’t take action,” says Ana Camara-Flores, a junior at San Marin High School and a member of the Novato Youth Council, a youth-led after-school group that develops drinking prevention projects. “We get together in times of tragedy and cry about it and wish that it didn’t happen. But after a few weeks, everybody kind of forgets.”

Although Healthy Novato is still in its infancy, the theme is pretty clear. “We’re beyond making speeches,” says Camara-Flores. “We

just want the action to occur.”

Spreading the word

One early win for Healthy Novato and the Novato Blue Ribbon Coalition for Youth was a spring 2012 campaign to get Tilly’s, a youth-oriented clothing retailer, to take down a window display that openly encouraged young people to binge drink. (Mannequins in summer wear stood among tipped coolers and scattered red plastic cups in front of banners that read “It’s time to get tanked” and “It’s time to party.”) A group of Novato students spearheaded a successful effort to persuade Tilly’s to remove the display from its stores nationwide.

Another promising move: the Novato Youth Council’s “Through the Lens of Youth: Transforming the Culture of Underage Drinking in Novato,” a research project and photography exhibit that debuted at Novato City Hall in December 2012 and will travel to other venues this year. In addition to displaying their own photographs and narrative, students offered specific recommendations for how to change culture and policy across the city. The list includes getting parents to lock up their alcohol, installing lights in public places where teens drink, and encouraging everyone to debunk the idea that teen drinking is “normal.”

Other Healthy Novato partner programs include the Novato Youth Center’s Promotores Program, a bilingual group dedicated to

engaging the Latino community in leadership roles to take action on underage drinking and other health issues. And the YMCA’s Peer Court program in middle and high schools involves both victims and offenders in resolving conflicts, rather than focusing on purely punitive consequences.

“It’s important to hear what the youth have to say if you really want to help them,” says Bill Welch, a retired police officer and owner of North Bay Security Group, a safety consulting agency that works closely with NUSD. He got involved with the Novato Blue Ribbon Coalition in late 2010 and now serves as its chair and as a member of Healthy Novato’s leadership team. “Youth are going to listen to their peers more than they’re going to listen to adults.”

Tips for parents

Still, adult influence is strong. Allowing teens to drink at home, leaving alcohol accessible, or modeling risky behavior all contribute to a culture of acceptance that can prove dangerous. The Healthy Novato website offers tips for parents, such as how to plan a safe celebration and how to effectively talk to kids about these issues. Healthy Novato Director Katie Keating also encourages parents to sign Healthy Novato’s “Count me in!” pledge and to get acquainted with Novato’s Social Host Accountability Ordinance, a local law that holds people accountable for allowing gatherings where youth drink;

people can face hefty fines and possible jail time for breaking this law.

While many parents probably know these things, says Keating, “maybe they don’t recognize how important it is for them to be proactive.”

Peter Haas cites another benefit of the Healthy Novato effort in addition to its messages about underage drinking. “An even broader concept,” he says, “is teaching responsibility and being accountable for one’s own actions. Telling kids that you cannot drink because you are underage and it is against the law takes away that deep internalized principle. We’ve got to instill into young adults the sense that they are not only responsible to others but have a responsibility to themselves.”

Problems like underage drinking can seem intractable, but with time, effort, and patience, Healthy Novato partners are confident that community-wide efforts will eventually lead to community-wide changes.

“You can’t say we’re going to start this project and we’re going to change everybody overnight,” says Bill Welch, who’s lived in Novato for most of his life and takes the long view. “But if you get 10 buying into it, and their friends, and their friends, then in 10 years you can make a huge difference.” 

To learn more:
www.healthynovato.org



Healthy Novato addresses bullying

As part of Healthy Novato’s work to create a healthy environment for the city’s young people, it is undertaking efforts to reduce bullying in Novato schools. It also takes into account research that shows a connection between kids who bully and those who generally “break rules and go on to drink,” says Vicki Romero, the district’s director of curriculum and instruction.

The district is working with a San Francisco organization called No Bully to incorporate strategies that involve both teaching and non-teaching staff at schools, parents, and—importantly—the students themselves. Funding for this effort comes from the Lynx Foundation, a supporting organization of MCF that is taking the lead in funding anti-bullying activities in Marin.

Romero explains that the heart of No Bully’s approach is the formation of “solution teams”—groups of students led by trained facilitators to address instances of reported bullying and to come up with ways that involve the bully to help the student who was being bullied. During the third and last meeting of the team, the student who was being bullied joins in, and by then, in many cases, the bullying of the student has stopped.

“This isn’t about punishment. The kids are coming up with solutions,” explains Romero. “The adults just facilitate.”

The program also promotes greater social responsibility around bullying, making it OK for students to confidentially report instances that parents and teachers may not be aware of. “The idea we want to convey is that it can be cool to help students who are being bullied and to stop those who are doing the bullying,” says Romero.

She doesn’t shy away from realizing that bullying behavior can start early and remain hidden. “It can begin when children are very young, when they start to ostracize their peers,” she explains. And, she adds, “It is getting harder to identify, with the prevalence of social media. It can start as cyberbullying and easily escalate to the playground.

“Overall, we’ve wanted students to feel they have an ethical responsibility to respond to bullying,” says Romero. “Now, we have a program to empower them to act as a collective group. That’s what No Bully is doing for our district. And we’re seeing a 90% success rate.” 

DONORS WITHOUT BORDERS

International giving is on the rise. In fact, it's the fastest growing sector of philanthropy. In 2011, charitable giving to international aid, development, and relief was estimated to be \$22.68 billion, an increase of 7.6% from 2010.

There are many reasons for this growth: the outpouring of support in response to major natural disasters and the needs of refugees in areas of crisis; international travel, especially to developing parts of the world;

greater coverage of international human rights issues; the growth of social media and rapid communication about events around the world; the globalization of business; and the growing economic clout of immigrants in the U.S.

Many of these influences are reflected in the ways that donors at the Marin Community Foundation are looking beyond our shores, and boundaries, to make a difference.

NANCY MOORE AND MARC CORNU *Almana Harvest: Change is brewing*

Mill Valley resident Nancy Moore is naturally inquisitive. When she was considering Costa Rica as a place where she might retire, she got interested, on her first visit, in the coffee industry there. She calls it "cultural research."

"I have a background in finance and venture capital," says Moore, "and I'm always on the lookout to learn about leading industries."

Immediately, she was struck by how much work in the coffee industry is done by women and how little economic benefit they get from it. "People are not aware of how much of the labor force involved in their morning cup of coffee is made up of women," she explains.

That led Moore to the International Women's Coffee Alliance (IWCA), an organization dedicated to supporting women

and their economic growth in coffee-growing communities. She found that while they had a strong infrastructure and connections around the world, they did not have an ongoing stream of revenue.

That encouraged Moore to join forces with a former colleague, Larkspur resident Marc Cornu, and a veteran of the hospitality industry, Alain Piallat, to form *Almana Harvest*. Its mission is to promote coffee grown and nurtured by women in order to provide a better, secure, and sustainable future for them, their families, and the communities where they live.

They're doing this by developing a product called *Women's Harvest*—coffee grown by women and sold (at least for now) to the hospitality industry. At each stage of the supply chain, exporters, importers, roasters, distributors, and equipment

suppliers pay a "participation fee" of a few cents per pound. That money goes into a fund—the *Almana Harvest Fund* at MCF—to support projects that benefit women and their communities in the 10 regions around the world where the IWCA has chapters.

"This creates an ongoing revenue stream," says Cornu. "You don't have to ask for contributions year after year. This is important, since many of the projects we fund can take three to five years."

As examples of projects funded through the *Almana Harvest Fund*, Moore cites efforts to improve housing, enhance growers' knowledge of coffee cultivation, provide micro-loans, ensure sustainable growing practices, and, importantly, empower women to have a stronger voice in their communities and their industry.

Moore explains that *Women's Harvest*



is both a brand (representing coffee of different grades and from different countries) as well as certification along the lines of Fair Trade, informing consumers that sales of the coffee will benefit the women involved in its production.

So far, Women's Harvest coffee will be served at several Marriott hotels in Central America. Eventually, says Moore, they plan to sell the coffee directly to retail customers.

"Nobody has ever defined what women and coffee means," she says. "Let's define it. Let's promote it. That's what we took on."

To learn more: www.almanaharvest.org

Above: Nancy Moore and Marc Cornu at Fairfax Coffee Roastery



VICTORIA AND KK CRESSMAN

Making a vision concrete in Haiti

Mill Valley resident Victoria Cressman readily admits that she first began to think about her potential as a philanthropist after hearing Bill and Melinda Gates. "I was blown away by their giving. They made me want to do that, too," she says.

But it wasn't until she went with her daughter KK on a humanitarian trip to Haiti with a group of other women that she felt

same kids and their families often had no permanent shelter. "They were living in the dirt or in tents," recalls Victoria.

That led to their desire to find a way to provide permanent homes for them. Through the Marin Community Foundation, they created the Tents to Shanti Fund—emphasizing the notion of "shanti" ("peace") instead of the connotations of a "shanty."

a small business she runs.

Plus, ACFC students are helping build the houses, so they're learning a trade as well as creating permanent homes for their families.

The Cressmans' lessons from this experience? "What's important is for people to go with their gut and take action," says Victoria. "Once you learn about something,



"something was going to be created. It felt right as soon as we landed," she recalls.

She and KK were initially overwhelmed by what they saw. "It was dark and unexplainable, and we wanted to turn around and leave." But that sense of "something feeling right" prevailed, and they developed a sense of common purpose among the group to make a difference, even in those terrifying circumstances.

While in Haiti they volunteered with an organization called Art Creation Foundation for Children (ACFC), located in Jacmel, in the south. Its mission is to "teach street children art so that they may have a future."

But the Cressmans saw that these

With their own funds and the contributions of others (including ones made through a crowd funding website by friends of KK), the Cressmans have supported the building of three homes so far, with two more under construction. They went to Jacmel a second time to volunteer and see first-hand the impact of their funding.

"We want to honor what these families want," says Victoria, explaining that these homes are simple, with concrete walls and metal roofs. "And," she adds, "they are elevated, to protect them from the torrential rains." In one home, a grandmother had a window located where she could sell food as



become a doer.

It's important to do these things with your family and make a difference in the world."

To learn more:
www.facebook.com/TentsToShanti



KK and Victoria Cressman at home with Art Creation Foundation for Children artwork from Haiti

CHUCK AND BINNY FISCHER

Hands-on philanthropy

Chuck and Binny Fischer, San Rafael residents and donors at MCF since 1999, support international efforts in two ways: funding large organizations in response to huge disasters, and helping individuals directly, sometimes with hands-on involvement.

While they've done both, much of their involvement exemplifies the second approach. Chuck, a retired internist, has gone on a number of medical missions to Guatemala with a group called Faith in Practice. It is a faith-based organization that improves the physical, spiritual, and economic conditions of the poor in that country through surgical, medical, and dental mission trips and health-related educational programs.

His role is to travel to villages throughout the country to provide basic medical care and screen for conditions that could be improved by surgeries performed in a 500-year-old hospital in Antigua that Faith in Practice has modernized. Binny has participated in a support role on most of the missions.

Binny says that the couple's international travel and exposure to needs in third-world countries have had a big influence on their involvement abroad, both their medical work and direct financial contributions. Guatemala has become the focus of much of this support.

For example, they learned about another

organization in Guatemala, Common Hope, which provides education for poor children and medical care for their families, along with assistance for housing, clean water, and jobs. Yet another agency is the Casa de Angeles Foundation, which runs an orphanage on the outskirts of Antigua.

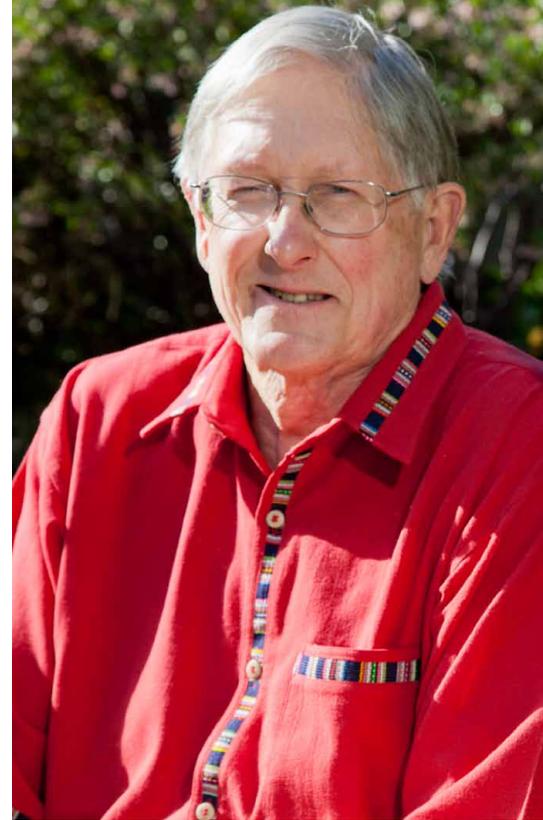
"What we like about these groups," she explains, "is that they are dedicated to using local resources. Some NGOs [nongovernmental organizations] bring in everything from the U.S. These make use of local architects, construction firms, and furniture builders."

And after seeing people "going for miles to get firewood and water to cook their food, we started supporting Solar Cookers International," adds Binny.

As they've traveled and learned more, the Fischers have expanded their international giving to include other issues and organizations that tap into their interests—and, as Binny explains, that have grown out of personal connections they've made over the years and their commitment to their church.

One example is Women's Opportunity Network, whose mission is to reduce women's poverty through small loans to help them start businesses and create jobs. The organization is active in Africa, Central America, and India.

Through a local connection, they have supported the Sisters of Loretto's post-



earthquake work in Haiti. And another personal contact led to funding Forman Christian College, a multi-cultural university in Pakistan teaching tolerance in a diverse community.

Even their support of environmental issues has an international component: They are supporters of the Nature Conservancy, which works globally on a range of conservation issues.

"It's struck us that when you give internationally, it goes pretty far," says Chuck. "Plus, we've learned that instead of giving a dollar here and a dollar there, it's better for us to stick with the groups we like and give them more."



Chuck and Binny Fischer at home in San Rafael; Common Hope students in Guatemala; a scene in Antigua, Guatemala



SUSAN RUSCHE

Expanding her boundaries

When Susan Rusche joined a giving circle focused on international grantmaking a couple of years ago, it was as if she received her philanthropic passport. Along with her husband, Conn, she had been a generous supporter of domestic—mostly local—organizations for many years, with a strong commitment to environmental and animal-related issues.

The giving circle gave her the chance to support groups outside the United States for the first time. “In fact, that was one reason I joined,” she says. “It’s enough to figure things out locally. Doing that internationally can be daunting.”

The giving circle, called Caridad Partners, was formed in 2006 by two local women as a way to turn their interests in philanthropy, international issues, and travel into making an impact through charitable contributions. The group has chosen to address three issues affecting women and girls around the world: education, economic development, and social justice/human trafficking. And they’ve chosen to do this by funding international organizations with a Bay Area presence.

The circle now has about 16 members who meet several times a year to discuss everything from the issues they want to support to specific proposals they’re considering. Each participant puts \$2,500 per year into this joint funding effort.

Rusche and her fellow philanthropists—who come from a variety of backgrounds and professions—chose to fund local

organizations so they can meet with representatives of the groups and hear about their on-the-ground observations and experiences. “They make presentations to us when they’re seeking support, and they come back to tell us about the impact of our grants,” she explains.

The giving circle also benefits from the international travels of many of its members, whose trips have led directly to the group’s support of various projects.

Caridad Partners grants are supporting a project of Asante Africa (based in Livermore) to encourage girls to stay in school in Kenya, an effort by the American Himalayan Foundation (based in San Francisco) to stop the human trafficking of at-risk girls in Nepal, a program of Freedom from Hunger (based in Davis) that provides micro-loans in Guatemala benefiting women and girls, and a project started by Freedom from Hunger, HealthKeepers, that uses an “Avon-like” approach to getting health products in the hands of poor women in Ghana.

“Not only am I able to learn about issues and make a difference outside the U.S.,” says Rusche about the giving circle, “but I get to work with an interesting and dynamic group of women.” 





Right: Susan
Rusche at home
in San Anselmo;
Left: Projects
of the American
Himalayan
Foundation

THE ART OF THE OFFICE

When the Marin Community Foundation moved into its offices at Hamilton Landing in 2002, one goal of the interior design was to accommodate the display of art of various kinds. Since then, we have hosted three or four exhibits a year that have featured local artists as well as ones from around California and the rest of the country.

Many exhibits have had themes that reflect the kinds of issues the Foundation addresses through its grantmaking activities, such as social justice and the environment.

Others, like the current exhibit, "Millennial Abstractions," celebrate the exuberance and power of art to delight and inspire. In particular, the works featured through May are a reaction to much of the fragmented and deconstructed art following 9/11 and the Iraq War. Instead, these works are vibrant and evocative abstractions that involve the viewer at a more visceral, emotional level.

The Foundation is pleased to invite visitors, including groups from schools and retirement communities, to view exhibits at its offices at 5 Hamilton Landing, Suite 200, in Novato, on weekdays between 9 a.m. and 5 pm. 

Catherine Tirr, *Plane of Recall*, 2011

Not business as usual

The double bottom line in Marin

by James Robinson

Blue Skies Coffees and Teas takes up a corner of the busy lobby of Marin Health and Human Services' Health and Wellness Campus in San Rafael. In the middle of a Tuesday afternoon there is barely a moment when customers aren't lined up patiently. The three men staffing the kiosk move quickly to keep up with the steady business.

Blue Skies may look like a typical café, but it's not. It's run as a business of Buckelew Programs, a San Rafael-based nonprofit organization that since 1971 has provided housing and employment assistance to the mentally ill and those recovering from addiction.

Jason Karp, a lanky, bubbly young man, serves everyone with a smile. Because he's worked in this job for over three years, he knows many of his customers by name. He's been sober for a lot longer than that, but he says that work was hard to find when he first cleaned up.

Blue Skies is just one of the companies that Buckelew runs—and Karp is typical of the employees who work in them. Buckelew began a janitorial business and clerical training program seven years ago. Four years later it started Blue Skies and recently launched People's Harvest, which supplies fresh

produce to local schools, hospitals, and other institutions.

The revenues from these "social enterprises," as these kinds of businesses are called, cover a small percentage of Buckelew's \$13 million operation, says Dan Waters, a consultant for Buckelew Programs. And while there's potential for growth, he says the real value of these businesses comes from the opportunities they provide for those who are ready to return to work.

"Three years ago I was on the floor, crying, depressed.



Jason Karp at Blue Skies Coffees and Teas in San Rafael



This job saved my life," says Karp, grinning, a faded Buckelew Programs cap perched proudly on top of his head.

A new name for an old concept

The idea of social enterprises has become popular in the nonprofit world. In the Bay Area, the Roberts Enterprise Development Fund (REDF) is a big reason for that.

As president of REDF for the past six years, Carla Javits has overseen the fund's efforts to provide start-up funds and business advice to social enterprises in order to help them run viable businesses while moving people with disadvantages into employment.

Over the 15 years of its existence, REDF has helped 6,700 people find work while assisting businesses that have produced over \$125 million in revenue. The Marin Community Foundation has provided grants to REDF to work with Marin nonprofits like Buckelew.

Javits describes social enterprises as having a double bottom line: the money the sponsoring organization earns and the social good of providing work experience and income to the clients employed in these businesses.

Javits says that to be successful, these kinds of businesses need to employ a significant number of unskilled workers, provide them a decent wage, and offer them a chance to advance. And they need to provide a needed service or product in markets that are not highly competitive and where the costs of entry are not barriers. Food service and preparation, recycling, cleaning and laundry services, and property maintenance match up nicely with these criteria.

Besides Buckelew, several Marin nonprofits have started social enterprises. Businesses range from the Re-Cyclery Bike Thrift Shop, which has been providing work experience for

kids in San Rafael since the '80s, to a venerable organization like Goodwill.

Goodwill has been assisting Marin residents with social programs, job training, and work placement for almost a century. Goodwill's Bay Area operation has helped 2,000 people find work since the start of the recession, with the proceeds from its stores funding 85 percent of its work.

Marin County was not spared this economic squeeze. When the economy went south, joblessness doubled between the start of 2007 and 2010.

"People have started to see Goodwill as this amazing secret," says Kathleen Moynihan, Goodwill's development manager.

And in Marin City, local business leaders formed the Marin City Community Development Corporation (MCCDC) in 1979 to help those in need with job training and affordable



Left: Fresh Starts Culinary Academy graduate Alexa Lucas at Homeward Bound in Novato; Right: Trips for Kids' Re-Cyclery Bike Thrift Shop in San Rafael

housing. In a similar vein to Buckelew, MCCDC has embraced social enterprise in recent years, setting up a staffing agency and a construction arm that focuses on energy-efficient projects.

"We are very much advocates of on-the-job training. Having these outlets to give people direct work experience is a great vehicle to get them back into the workforce," says Makini Hassan, MCCDC's executive director.

Empowering people to earn

Homeward Bound's offices and its Next Key Center sit in a tranquil corner of Novato's Hamilton Field, looking up at green, rolling hills. Homeward Bound first began as a homeless shelter in 1974. It now provides temporary and long-term accommodations, counseling, and job training services to about 1,400 formerly homeless people a year.

"Homelessness is about money," says deputy director Paul Fordham. "People need to be able to earn."

To put that belief into action, Homeward Bound has invested in several social enterprises that employ the men and women it serves. Twelve years ago, it opened Fresh Starts Culinary Academy, where clients are trained in a range of culinary skills and have the chance to work—as trainees, paid interns, or

regular employees—for one of Homeward Bound's social enterprises: Fresh Starts Catering Company, Halo Truffles, HomeMades (which makes salsa, bread, honey, and jams), and Jackson Café, based at Whistlestop's headquarters in San Rafael.

Fordham has seen Homeward Bound's social enterprises grow exponentially in the last five years. In 2008, the organization was bringing in \$20,000 through these businesses, running them at a huge loss. Now, revenue has risen to \$500,000 annually.

Plus, Fordham reports that business has tripled at Jackson Café since Homeward Bound took over its operations in 2010.

On a Thursday morning inside Homeward Bound's Key Room, nine students sit around a table taking notes and discussing what they're learning in a catering class. The industrial kitchen is a hive of activity, with over a dozen chefs setting their attentions to vats of salad, piles of sandwiches, and delicious-looking desserts, preparing to deliver them to customers of Fresh Starts.

One of these students, William Groza, who came to Homeward Bound when he found himself homeless after a long prison sentence, is thinking about starting his own food stand as a result of the training he's receiving.

Another student, Alexa Lucas, was homeless when she arrived at Homeward Bound seven years ago. Now she has her own place and "has really blossomed, is an excellent baker, and has a job for as long as she wants it," says her boss, Carol Menard, Director of Fresh Starts. Lucas bakes the desserts for Whistlestop's Jackson Café as well as the rolls and breads for Fresh Starts Catering. ☁

To learn more:

Buckelew Programs' social enterprises: www.buckelew.org/social-enterprises

REDF: www.redf.org

Re-Cyclery Bike Thrift Shop: www.tripsforkids.org/marin/recyclery.htm

Goodwill: www.sfgoodwill.org

Marin City Community Development Corporation: www.marincitycdc.org

Homeward Bound's social enterprises: www.hbofm.org/Our-Businesses.html

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HOW CHANGE HAPPENS



How passing on values happens.

If you want to involve your family in your charitable giving, you've come to the right place. Marin Community Foundation's philanthropic advisors can work with you to find practical, powerful ways to involve the next generation in making a difference. Whether it's volunteering together as a family or using your fund at MCF as a tool for family philanthropy, we can help you create a tradition of compassion that lasts for generations.

Download the MCF Guide to Family Giving at www.marincf.org/familygiving.

www.marincf.org/familygiving