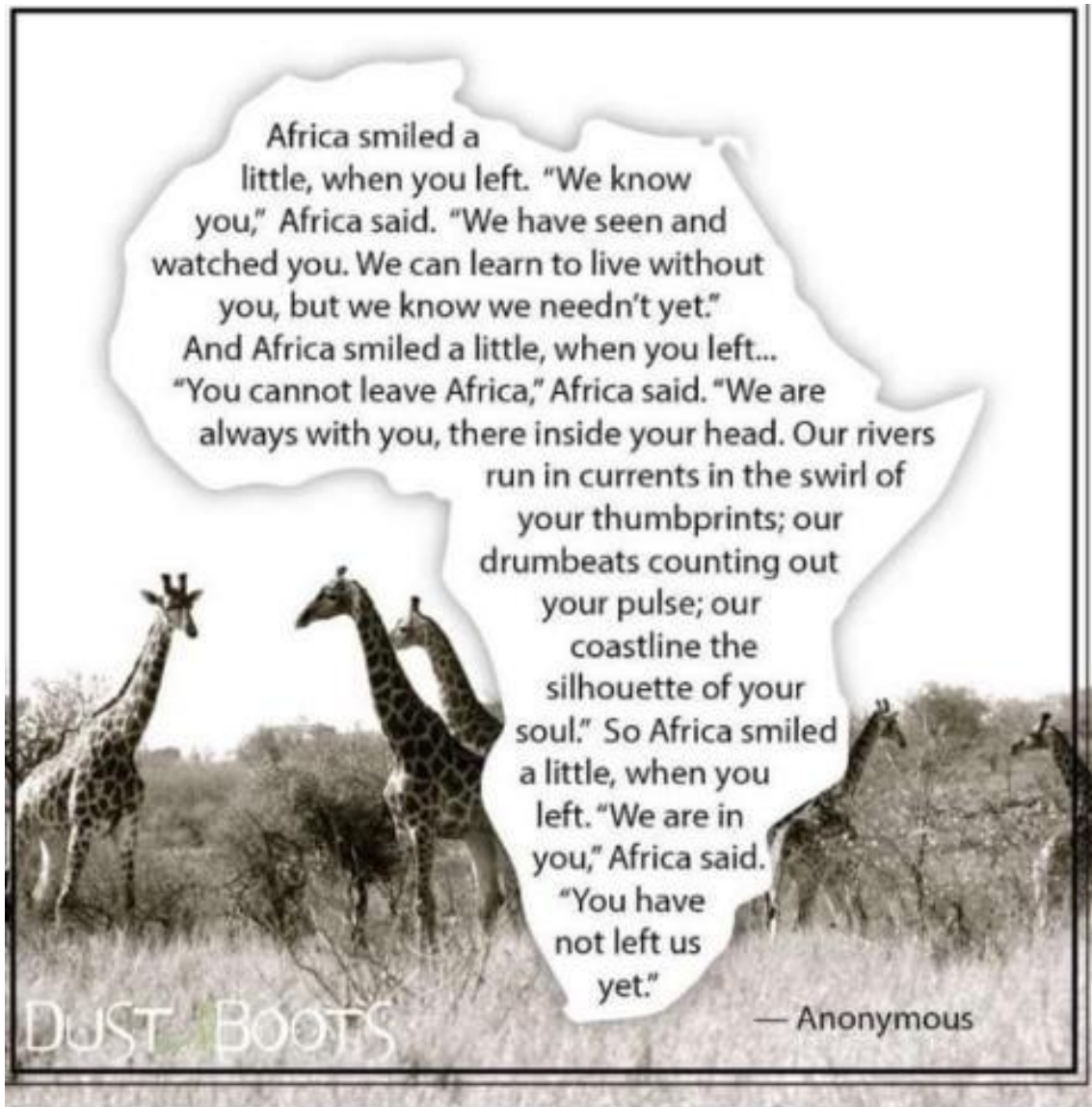


SSAAP Quarterly Newsletter,

Edition XXXVIII; Fall 2022



For Aunt Connie. You have gone above and beyond: for SSAAP, and for us. The help you are extending to the project at this time is both essential and vast; we will never forget how you have helped keep SSAAP pulsing and forging ahead. It is a fabulous and fortunate feeling when one of your blood relatives can also be one of your best friends; Radiance and I Love you so much. Thank you... we hope to see you in Zambia soon!

Precious Partnerships

SSAAP could never even begin to accomplish any of the projects of its mission without the help of so many, working in a myriad of ways to accomplish the ultimate goal of the program: sustainable service through sacred relationship, provision of human essential resources: clean drinking water and adequate food through water reticulation systems, additionally providing services such as access to basic education, animal-rearing, microloans, and support of local artisans.

Our partnerships range from service clubs in the United States of America, to universities in the States and in India, to local individuals with a heart for service. SSAAP's partnerships are primarily based in the U.S.A., though we have support systems in place as well in Greece, Italy, Ireland, and India for our projects.

Volunteers

As COVID decreases, interest in travel and volunteerism increases; SSAAP has two visitors we anticipate to serve as volunteers in Sierra Leone during the November 2022-April 2023 period in which SSAAP will reside in the country. Our first volunteer, expected to arrive on November 4, 2022 to Freetown, Sierra Leone, will assist with water collection for SSAAP-Sierra Leone water wells dug previously (2017; 2019-2020) for sample testing in the States to ensure that the water in our SSAAP-Sierra Leone water wells is fit for human consumption, as SSAAP is beginning to work with water treatment systems in our local villages in Sierra Leone. He will also assist in locating new water well sites for the SSAAP-Sierra Leone 2022-2023 period; SSAAP has 54 wells for 2022-2023 to be shared among four districts in Sierra Leone, in the most remote areas we can locate.

SSAAP also hopes for another volunteer, who has shown interest in the project, to work with microloans in the villages in both Sierra Leone and Zambia. He wishes to visit the SSAAP-Sierra Leone project site in March 2023 and the SSAAP-Zambia project site in May 2023, so we are very hopeful that he will assist us in our projects. SSAAP already has a well-established Microloan Program in Zambia, but as we are in the process of organizing a similar Microloan Program in Sierra Leone, his assistance will be an asset to the success of both programs.

If you have any interest in visiting and volunteering with either the SSAAP-Sierra Leone or SSAAP-Zambia, please let Heather or Laura, SSAAP's Secretary, know. We welcome you with both open arms and open hearts!

Water Treatment Systems: IX Power Foundation

SSAAP is working with IX Power Foundation in Golden, Colorado, U.S.A. to treat water, if necessary, in SSAAP locations in Sierra Leone: either through contaminated ground water in communities which have not yet received a water well from SSAAP, or water in our water wells should the water be contaminated due to natural minerals found in the soil or local mining operations which have contaminated the water source for local people; this will be determined after collecting and then sending water samples back to IX Power Foundation in the U.S.A. for testing.

One of IX Power Foundation's interns in 2022, Wilson Moyer, worked specifically to create a water treatment system which he assured me could also be used to conduct small-scale irrigation for some of our project sites. Please see Wilson's PDF document, attached to this email, entitled: "*Bike-Powered Pump*", which will explain the water treatment system that he devised. Incredible work, Wilson! Thank you for your dedication, energy, and commitment to this project. Your hard work is admirable and your ideas are so insightful. Thank you for inspiring me in my work!

Water Wells: Centerville Noon Optimist Club

SSAAP was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to speak at the Centerville Noon Optimist Club of Centerville, Ohio, U.S.A. (my hometown and birthplace) on June 14, 2022. The presentation was the most memorable one that I have ever given, because of the level of interest and engagement from the audience. Their respect for the project and its efforts and investment in rural communities in Africa was abundantly clear during the presentation. I have never given a presentation before that held the audience's full attention: no one was texting or sleeping or seeming to be bored. A speaker is only as good as his audience, and so for the success of the SSAAP presentation on June 14, 2022, I have only the powerful attention and interest of the audience to thank!

The Club, post-presentation, sponsored two and a half water wells in Sierra Leone for the November 2022-April 2023 period in which SSAAP will be there next. This was an unexpected outcome of the presentation and SSAAP is thrilled by this opportunity. Thank you, Centerville Noon Optimist Club, for your support of our work and for engaging in our projects in such a meaningful and sustainable way. There is nothing as powerful to a remote community in rural Africa as a water well. The difference it makes is profound, and stretches far beyond any predictions or expectations we might have had for it. I truly cannot thank you enough for being one of SSAAP's most valued partnerships; thank you.

Here is a link to the Club's website for the meeting on June 14, 2022 in which SSAAP presented:

<https://centervillenooptimist.com/simwatachela-sustainable-agricultural-and-arts-program-heather-cumming/>



Heather Cumming with Centerville Noon Optimist Club President Gary Hansen on June 14, 2022. Photo courtesy of Centerville Noon Optimist Club's Greg Griffin.

SSAAP's Voice in the Media: University of Kentucky

SSAAP feels very fortunate as well to be working with Doug Boyd, Ph.D., Director of the Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History from the University of Kentucky Libraries (Margaret I. King Library) in Lexington, Kentucky, U.S.A. Dr. Boyd worked with SSAAP for two days in May 2022 (May 20-21, 2022) as well for two days in June 2022 (June 17-18, 2022), whereby he drove from Lexington, Kentucky to meet me in Centerville, Ohio to produce recordings about the project, my beginnings in Africa with the United States Peace Corps in Zambia, and the philosophy behind our work. Dr. Boyd is still editing the recordings and hopes to have them available on the Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History's website by the end of October 2022; I will keep you posted on his progress with this project in the next SSAAP Quarterly Newsletter (Holiday Edition 2022).



Recording with Dr. Doug Boyd at the Woodbourne Library in Centerville, Ohio on June 17, 2022 (above) and on June 18, 2022 (below). All photos on this page (page 5) courtesy of Dr. Doug Boyd.



SSAAP's Visit to Ghana: October-November 2022

SSAAP is honored for the opportunity to visit Ghana, on our way to Sierra Leone, from October 26 – November 4, 2022. Our host, Lawson Gadri, is someone that I have been working with over the last three years on Gandhian studies, as he attended the same course in Gujarat, India on Nonviolence and Gandhian Principles that Radiance and I attended – only that Lawson attended the same course a few years prior. I have never met Lawson face-to-face; however, our communications have been vast and very uplifting. Here is Lawson's itinerary for SSAAP's visit to Ghana:

The Itinerary for our program is as follows;

26/10/2022

Arrival and Hosting in Accra

27/10/2022

Journey to Kpando Municipality

28/10/2022

Courtesy Call on the Municipal Chief Executive of Kpando Municipality

29/10/2022

Familiarization Tour to Gbefi Community and the Twin Villages

Non-Violence Durbar and Launch of Non-Violence Community Library at the Twin Villages.

30/10/2022

Familiarization Tour to Bubulugu Kope (Bubulugu Village)

31/10/2022

A Tour to Gabikpo Island on the Lake Volta

01/11/2022

A Tour to Mount Afadzato- Morning Section and Wli Waterfall - Afternoon Section

02/11/2022

A round table discussion and editing of the book title; Gandhi: The World Emissary

03/11/2022

Discussions: Project Opportunities for Remote Communities

04/11/2022

Departure

Love and peace,

Lawson

Salone-2022/2023: Update on SSAAP-Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone, affectionately termed “Salone” by its local people, awaits our return. We have not visited Sierra Leone since the Coronavirus outbreak and were there previously from October 2019 to March 2020. We have a great deal to accomplish upon our return to Sierra Leone on November 4, 2022. The list of tasks is many, and include – but are not limited to:

- Fifty-four water wells to be dug in four districts of Sierra Leone: Moyamba, Port Loko, Tonkalili, and Kambia
- Assessment of sixteen water wells dug in three districts of Sierra Leone in 2019/2020: Port Loko, Tonkalili, Kambia; the wells were not finished when we left Sierra Leone in March 2020, as the contractors wait until the water table is at its lowest, which is right before the rainfall: typically beginning around Sierra Leonean Independence Day on April 27th of each year
- Collection of water samples for data and testing in U.S.A. laboratories via IX Power Foundation for sixteen wells dug in 2019/2020
- Collection of water samples for data and testing in U.S.A. laboratories via IX Power Foundation for four wells in Moyamba District dug in 2017
- Assessment of one water well in Moyamba District dug in 2022 (finishing 2017 contract) in Mowusu Village
- Plotting GPS points of all twenty-one SSAAP-Sierra Leone water wells dug in 2017 / 2019-2020
- Collection of water samples for data and testing in U.S.A. laboratories via IX Power Foundation for fifty-four wells to be dug in 2022/2023
- Set-up of Microloan Program in Port Loko and Kambia Districts
- School Sponsorship Programs in Moyamba (Primary, Teenaged Mothers Returning to School Program), Port Loko (Primary, Teenaged Mothers Returning to School), and Kambia (Primary School Sponsorship) Districts
- Pineapple Plantation Program – location to be announced (TBA)
- Establishment of SSAAP Agricultural Headquarters in Port Loko, Sierra Leone: Mabale-Extension Land
- Establishment of rural SSAAP home areas: Moyamba District (Mokoyo Village, Kaiyamba Chiefdom and Salina Village, Fakunya Chiefdom); Port Loko District (Port Loko town, Mabale-Extension Land); Kambia District (Bakeh-Lhimray Village)
- Fisheries Projects: Port Loko town (assessment from 2019/2020); Madee Village, Port Loko District; Kambia District
- Rice-growing and Cashew Nut Agricultural Project: Port Loko, Kambia, Tonkalili Districts and Moyamba District (should the villages in Moyamba desire this project)
- Cattle-rearing Project: Port Loko District
- Nonviolence Library in Port Loko District: organize and restructure
- Creation of Nonviolence courses in Port Loko District

- Commission of local artists for purchase of local art in Sierra Leone in our respective communities

SSAAP has also organized its water wells for 2022-2023 not only with a contractor, but also with a local body which will support the efforts of the contractor at the local [village] level, as the local people have an investment in their water well to a degree that the contractor will not have. Thirty percent of the cost of one water well (\$1000) will be contracted to the local body (individual or group of people) to ensure the timely completion of each well. As we have a large amount of wells to complete during the November 2022-April 2023 period (fifty-four wells), it is paramount that the wells are done with precision and care in an organized time frame in which SSAAP can record and assess their completion. Because the sixteen water wells (Port Loko, Kambia, and Tonkalili Districts) were not completed by the time SSAAP left Sierra Leone in March 2020, many issues have resulted, causing frustration to both SSAAP, the local beneficiaries in the villages, and our supporters in the States.

Therefore, it is mandatory that all fifty-four wells for 2022-2023, as well as Mowusu Village well in Moyamba District from 2017, also the sixteen water wells from 2019-2020 be completed by the time that SSAAP leaves Sierra Leone on April 5, 2023. In order to continue with our well-digging endeavors in the remote areas of Sierra Leone, we have to complete the work from the years prior! Thank you so much for your cooperation and patience with this magnitudinal job.

*

Zam 2022/2023: Update on SSAAP-Zambia

Zambia, affectionately termed “Zam” by its locals, awaits us as we will return to its soil on April 6, 2023; at this time SSAAP will work with the following projects:

- Assess and complete our 2021 contract with our contractor, Abedneco Likumbi, which consists of five water wells in the following areas: Cooma Chiefdom (3 water wells), Chona Chiefdom (1 water well), Mukuni Chiefdom (1 water well)
- Assess and complete the simple irrigation system (Water Reticulation System) in Cooma Chiefdom contracted to Likumbi in 2021
- Finish the water well (Mukuni Chiefdom) contracted to Likumbi in 2022
- Begin three more Water Reticulation Systems in Cooma and Simwatachela Chiefdoms for 2022 and 2023 contracts
- Survey donated SSAAP lands to secure for Title Deeds in Simwatachela, Cooma, Chona, and Mukuni Chiefdoms
- Assess G-MAP (Adult Literacy Programs for Women) Programs in Simwatachela Chiefdom from 2021-2022; work with teachers at schools participating in program to

assess the way forward and whether or not we should open the program up to men in the future as well

- Begin SSAAP Cattle-Rearing Program with our partner Cows4Kids
- Continue with SSAAP Microloan Programs
- Tree-planting project in Cooma Chiefdom, Zambia – local people bringing seedlings to establish more local trees in the area, which will counteract the cutting down of trees for firewood

*

Radiant Street Beast Program – Animal-based Art

Please visit our website to see a wide range of art, proceeds going towards street animals in Zambia:

<https://www.ssaap.org/radiant-street-beasts>



~ Photos above taken off SSAAP's website (www.ssaap.org), courtesy of Laura Wilson~

My daughter Radiance relates to everything through the lens of the Animal Kingdom before she relates to the Human Kingdom, much the same way that I do with the Plant Kingdom. Whether or not this translates into an animal-caretaking career, such as a veterinarian, or if working with animals is a meditative healing pastime for her that doesn't generate income for her, much like writing has been for me in my life, is up to her. Radiance is making strides towards action in her *Radiant Street Beasts Program*, which collects animals from off the streets in urbanized areas of Zambia and takes

them home with us to the village, where we feed them, nurture them, pamper them, and give them rabies shots, vitamins, antibiotics if necessary, and de-worming medications every three months.

When we left Zambia in October 2021, there were seventeen cats in our home. Three were kittens, which perished in January 2022; Radiance frequently calls the man who is looking after our home, our garden, and our cats while we are not present in Zambia (his reward for his hard work when we return to Zambia: one cow), to ask about the status of the animals. The three kittens, having been weaned by their mother, and Radiance not being there to take care of the kittens until they could fend for themselves, caused their death. So, there should be, at present, fourteen cats in our home when we return.



Radiance has been making beaded/wire jewelry and selling the items in the States to generate income for medications and food for the animals while at the village, as well the man SSAAP hires who lives in Livingstone, Zambia to catch the street cats to give to us. Here are some of her products:



Part of Radiance's home-school in 2022 has been to organize this program. She must calculate the cost of her materials, then determine prices for each art item. Her original costs for each item indicated a loss, and so I had to work with her on the addition/subtraction alongside her sales receipts. She also has to budget how much the medications, food, and transportation of the animals from town up to our village. So far, in 2022, she has raised approximately \$1200 toward her street cat adoption initiative.

If you are interested in this program, or in purchasing the jewelry that supports it, please contact me.

Radiance also accepts commissioned art orders, so if you are interested, please do let Heather know.

If you have ever seen Heather wearing feather earrings, they were made by my daughter! She likes to collect feathers – from Africa, from U.S.A., from India – and make earrings with them. Her earrings are currently sold at the Sugarcreek Bird Farm, Ohio, in their gift shop, as well online on the SSAAP website: www.ssaap.org; proceeds of art sales go to the Radiant Street Beast Program, run by Radiance, in Simwatachela Chiefdom, Zambia.



Please visit our website to learn more about Radiance’s jewelry art items for sale, or perhaps even consider purchasing her jewelry for the upcoming holiday season:

<https://www.ssaap.org/radiant-street-beasts>





Immense Gratitude

Lately I have noticed that time seems to be compressing, moving at a speed and a pace that most of us can no longer keep up with. My long days of work continue and are not going to let up anytime soon. Every day appears to be crunch-time now, not just before we left U.S.A. on August 22, 2022, but seem to still be continuing into this time compression void, whereby it feels that there is always so much to do still! I don't pretend to think I am alone in this, either, as most people I know in U.S.A. are also caught up in the whirlwind of time. The details of SSAAP are excruciating, but the magic is in the details and so I have my work cut out for me. My brain is high-functioning with details, and I feel very fortunate about that.

Gandhi said that for every job that exists in the world, the first task is human psychology. Every job needs its foundation to be based upon human psychology, then the other job is secondary (and possibly even less-difficult) than the primary work of knowing how to work with human beings, i.e. having a basic understanding of human psychology. Understanding how to work with human beings at the space where they are – and how we can connect to them – will always be the first job; the second job is fulfilling tasks and having an action plan.

The shamans and gurus from the sacred East have said that doubt is the best thing for all of our belief systems. Doubt is the only measure for what we call Truth, because if you don't doubt something you can never test its Truth. Love, my religion of sorts, is something that is tested within me every day, sometimes every moment. It takes a multitude of forms in my life and has become the only thing worth living for: whether it is Love for the people of Africa that SSAAP serves, Love of my daughter and parents, Love of my siblings and friends, Love for those supporting our work, Love for stranger, Love is Love and it is always worth both living for and dying for. And yet Love is so dualistic in its nature: it is one of the easiest things to do, as a human being: to Love, and yet has become so difficult for our current state of humanity to practice. Perhaps technology, in the end, has gotten in the way of our organic relationships with one another. Technology has become a shield, a barrier, between the realness, the raw state of our human experience, and placed the band-aid of vanity and self-absorption and ego over it; living on mental energy is not a sustainable option for human beings.

In my life I don't doubt Love; I doubt myself strong enough to hold its infinity. There are always people in my life that in the end I am most grateful to: those that our relationship does not come easily; the Love doesn't die away and the deeper it is the more it goes into the raw interior, the dark spaces within; the pain burns, like getting into ice water: you go through shock until it doesn't hurt anymore, and then the more profound is the re-birth on the other side. Pain is transcended in the name of Love. There are people in my life who cause me to believe in this infinity of Love, which is actually the infinity of the cosmos: infinite possibility. The more difficult the relationship, the deeper the growth: this is a Law of the Universe.

I have always felt honored and simultaneously privileged beyond comprehension to have the opportunity and the ability to live with the local people in the villages of Africa where SSAAP serves. Living with the people in our village setting has provided the opportunity for both Radiance and I to know the people in a deeper way, as we are part of their community and they are a part of us, as well they are the essence, the very vertebrae of SSAAP. SSAAP is brain and heart work, fused, to create a deeper level of sustainability because its base is Love. I, as a privileged white, blonde, American woman who grew up in a wealthy suburb of Ohio, U.S.A., have never had the drive to achieve personal success. I am sure my parents wondered if there was something wrong with me. But I have known, since before the age of eight, that my success on this planet would be directly proportional to the degree that I Loved others. In other words, success in my life has always used the currency of Love. There was never anything else that meant anything to me other than this. What was I going to do with my life, with the spirit of privilege pulsing through my blood since my birth? I wasn't going to use it only on myself! That would have been an utter waste. The privilege of being born into a wealthy suburb, of having parents who would have laid down in traffic for any one of their four children, my mother's cultured sense of wisdom and intelligence, and my father's mastery at his craft as well his understanding of world issues, the education they gave me and all the Love, food, clothing, and shelter they provided for me ~ I can accept these things only if I let them settle deep into the cavity of my being, and then allow them to roar back out of me in the name of giving back to others; in my case, I aim to help those who are neglected in their societies and do not, as a result, have access to sustainable drinking water or more than one meal per day. The very ironic nature of privilege is that it is never really ours, and those of us who have been born into it abundantly, as I have been, must give it back to the cosmos ~ it is our duty to the Universe, to our humanity, and to ourselves. This work in Africa is mine, and I want it; I own it; I came here for its very purpose. I will die, one day a very, very old woman, doing it.

I will never believe in technology the way I believe in human beings, and the value of human connection, which is the undying power of Love. To claim that humanity has developed because we have new technology and devices that didn't even exist a decade ago is short-sighted. Yes, we have created robots and machines to survey other planets and drones which take aerial photographs and perhaps even fight in wars, but we still haven't, as a human collective, done the real work of the planet: take care of those less-fortunate than ourselves. That has been our assignment since before measured time and history reveals that we have failed every opportunity given to us. Individuals, we are many in the world, working to serve others; many of the people I admire most who have dedicated their lives to service are real life heroes and heroines and some of the very people supporting SSAAP's efforts! But individuals are not the problem; burnout, self-serving leadership has been and continues to be not only the bane of human existence and true progress, but also a pathetic Shakespearean tragedy of sorts that humanity cannot seem to exist without nor break free of its abusive cycle. The best example of this is not even in Africa; it is in the United States of America. We have all-record high numbers of homeless people living on the streets in U.S.A. currently; North American autumns, winters, and springs are cold, and such an over-resourced wealthy nation steeped in privilege as our own should, for starters, assess why so many homeless people are sleeping on its streets. In 2021, statistics reveal that over half a million people are homeless: estimated homeless population at 552,830. The equivalence for

homelessness in U.S.A. in Africa is people drinking filthy water and having less than one meal per day. We cannot claim to have advanced as a collective humanity if we still have people sleeping on the streets and masses of people without food and water; these basic human needs seem straightforward and simple, and with the power of technology, these collective human issues could be addressed and then eradicated, perhaps even easily. But while technology only continues to cater to and service the privileged, then it serves more as a tool for ensuring poverty than it does in eradication of it.

Therefore, until the toothless, illiterate, skeletal man living in my village in Simwatachela, Zambia who is wearing rags that are drenched in the sun day after day because the fabric is no longer strong enough to hold the weight of its stitches, who eats less than one meal per day and has never known the feeling of having a full stomach because when he eats it simply takes the edge off the pain of his hunger is served, then humanity hasn't really progressed; all the technology in the world cannot do the work that human beings must do intrinsically and innately, organically, within themselves ~ if we are in the business of large-scale human healing, which will be directly healing Mother Earth in the process. This is the work I am referring to, and it is all of our work, now; none of us are exempted from it.

The hardest work that is asked of us will always be the work we do with human beings, involving human psychology, as Gandhi said: working with downtrodden individuals, those who have been abused or suffered mental or physical distress: the people on the planet that much of humanity wishes to ignore; this is the work we must do in the world if our humanity is to survive the breaking point we have found ourselves in right now. The crucible we currently exist in and are barely surviving has come to us as a gift, and for a reason. We are being tested. If we choose to live only for ourselves, and choose selfishness and vanity and our own perceived personal success, we wane. If we choose our collective humanity, and human connection we wax; we too are included in our own collective, so if we serve others, we are indirectly also serving ourselves. If we can learn to think of ourselves while at the same time putting others before ourselves, this does not mean we do not Love ourselves. Rather, it means we Love something higher than ourselves, because in the process of Loving others, we are also Loving ourselves more deeply. We are serving Mother Earth, the human collective, and our personal selves when we decide to Love all three with the same intensity, intention, and energy.

Africa, the land of the unknown and even the mysterious, is a risk - but Love itself is a risk, and we do it because in Love, there is no death: true Love has no death. That's why true Love is difficult to hold, because it is the infinity of the cosmos itself. Conditional love is more common, most human beings engage in it because it is able to be abandoned when the going gets tough. But unconditional Love, true Love, is the real deal, is so much harder to find, and so much more trying to be within, but is in my opinion the only Love worth living and dying for.

We are human beings and have to be human in our shortcomings, they make us real and stronger as we go through the lessons of this life, but we are also higher beings that have to ascend to the stars night after night when we sleep or we cannot function during the day, and I feel honored to be both things: my lower and my higher self; I have come to that. I am so

grateful to be alive during this difficult time on planet Earth and on all the other dimensions, and thank you for being part of this wild ride along with me. It feels so much better knowing I am not alone in my work, and without you, there would be no SSAAP. I thank you, with immense gratitude, from the bottom of my undying heart.

With Love,

Heather



SSAAP is a 501(c)3 charity service organization, created by the African people and committed to serving the basic needs of the very people who created it.

I have attached SSAAP's first newsletter, from 2011, so that you may read how far we have come since SSAAP's origin in 2008/2009, as well so that you may see that so many of the projects are still current/to-date, as it will take a lifetime (my lifetime!) to accomplish all that we wish to do in Africa.



~ All photos in SSAAP Quarterly Newsletters are taken by H. C. Cumming unless otherwise stated; if you wish to use any of the photos in this newsletter, please seek permission from SSAAP first. ~



“Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's need, but not every man's greed.”

— Mohandas Gandhi