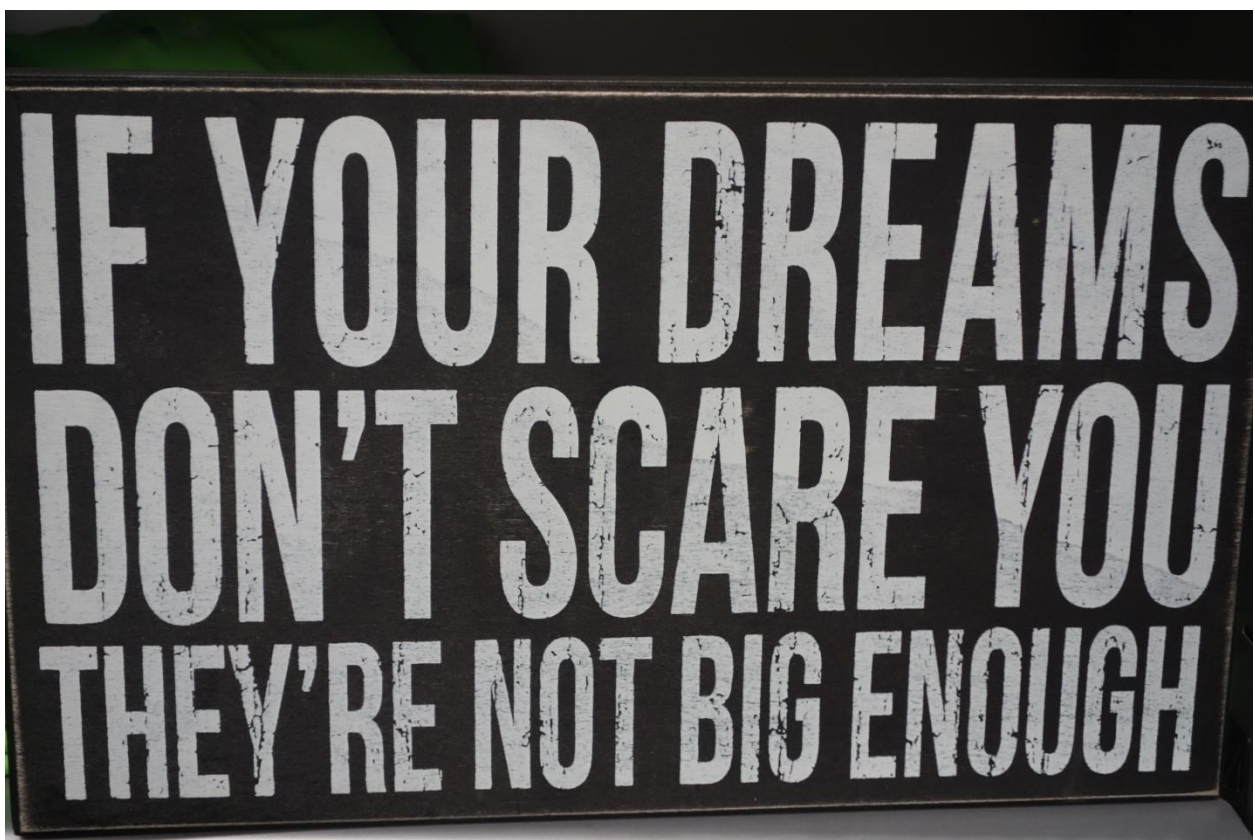
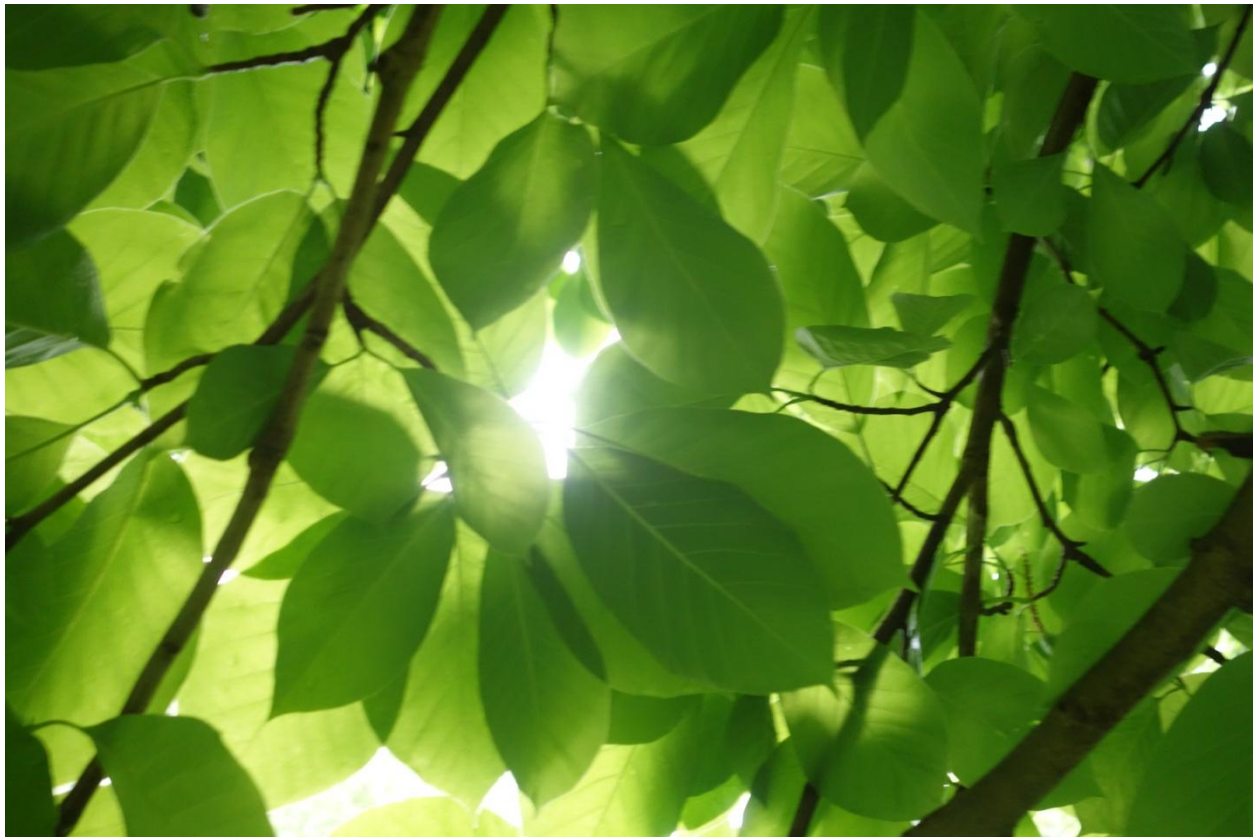


*SSAAP Quarterly Newsletter, Edition XXXVII;*  
*Summer 2022 ~ U.S.A.*



*This newsletter is dedicated to Sue and Mike: Mrs. and Mr. Fanelli. I feel that our families are interconnected and that this is too the rhythm of Africa: through blood, through Love, Africa is just one big family. I don't have words for the gratitude that we feel towards all you have done in light of SSAAP as well as towards our family, and how much Radiance and I both cherish you. Thank you, thank you, endless Love and thank you. Both.*





*“As I walked out the door toward the gate that would lead to my freedom, I knew if I didn’t leave my bitterness and hatred behind, I’d still be in prison.” ~ Nelson Mandela*





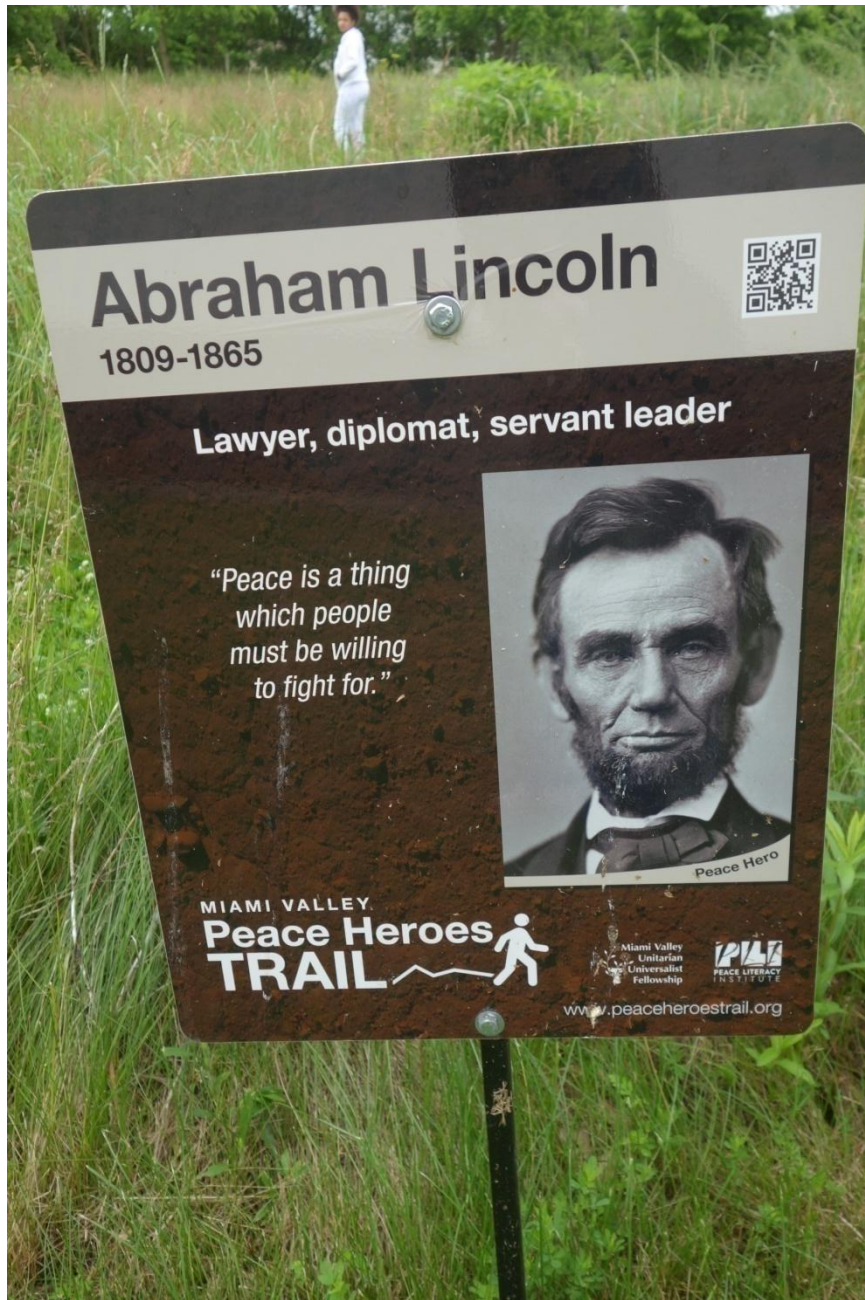
## *Peace Heroes Trail: Dayton, Ohio; U.S.A.*

Dear SSAAP Supporters,

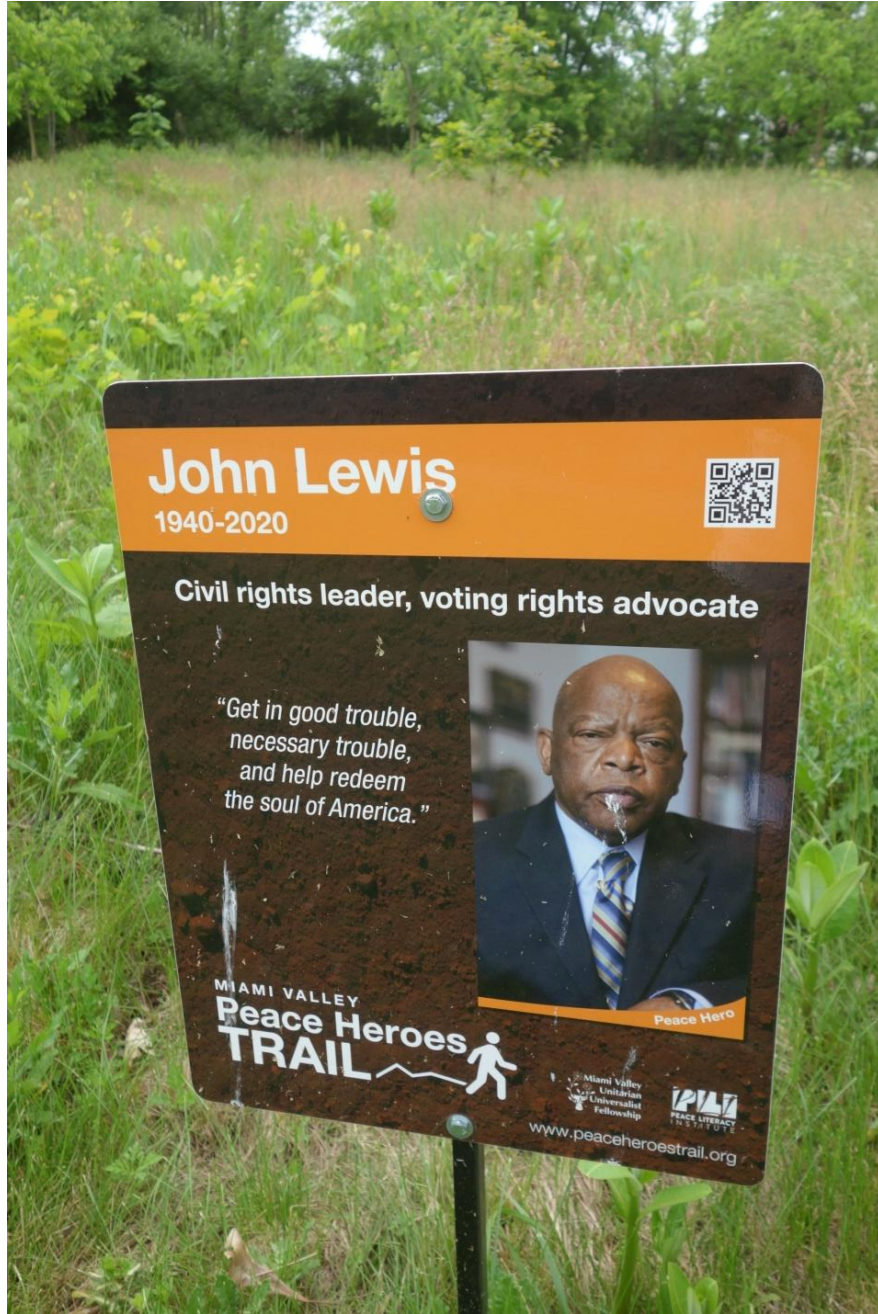
I hope this Newsletter finds you at your highest Light! Edition XXXVII, SSAAP Quarterly Newsletter, is written from my hometown in the U.S.A., and as my daughter Radiance and I get ready to go back to Africa once again (August 22, 2022), we are mutually reflecting on what being a United Statesian means to both of us: our value system, our roots deeply knitted within the same fibrous soils which that of tall trees and wildflowers do grow.

We came back to the States to get our COVID vaccines, to see our family, our friends, and our friend family, to spend quality time with SSAAP project partners, and to give presentations as well as host SSAAP Fundraisers. The Peace Heroes Trail in Dayton, Ohio is both educational and motivational; Peace Heroes are both living and deceased; they provide insight as to how essential issues of humanity have changed very little in the last hundreds of years, and that if we – as a collective – are going to evolve, then such an evolution will begin only when we have the strength to live not only inside of our hearts, but also within a sacred space that does not permit us to hurt another human being because in doing so we hurt ourselves exponentially. This is the pact of being human, not to hurt others intentionally, and when we respect and Love others this way, we are giving birth to a new humanity, possibly even a humanity that cherishes its habitat, that on a deeper and higher level would never want to do anything to harm the planet, either.











*University of Kentucky Libraries,*  
*Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History*



SSAAP has had the honor to work with University of Kentucky's Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History on a very involved project, of detailing and dating SSAAP's origin, its timeline, and the history of the organisation. The oral interview was conducted in two double-segments, and the first double-segment was completed on May 20-21, 2022; the second segment was completed on June 17-18, 2022. Both interviews are expected to be posted, as links on the internet, by August 2022, as well as a more condensed video interview. I will update on this situation in the Fall Newsletter, due out in September 2022. Thank you for your interest!



*Photo above courtesy of Douglas Boyd*

# SSAAP Summer Art Sale

SSAAP is pleased to announce its Summer Art Sale, online, running from June 15 – August 15, 2022. Please contact Laura, SSAAP’s Secretary, or Heather, for updates Summer Sales. All items are 10% - 15% off. The link is as follows. Thank you for supporting SSAAP’s local artisans:

<https://www.ssaap.org/world-gift>

\*

*Mike, you told me I am your Peace Hero; I hope I deserve to be your Peace Hero! I have had to be bold in ways that I am not used to of-late, being the bearer of words that come from a space of Love but that are not always easy to hear and certainly not to say or to write. I feel I have been dealing with this lesson very intensely over the last few months and quite steadily over the last few years: how to be Truthful and speaking one's Truth (which is the only thing that sets us free) while doing so out of a pure Love space. Easy to say, even easier to type (!), very difficult to do.*

*I think this is the main objective of a Peace Hero: to speak the Truth in a pure Love-based way: not from ego, not to offend, not out of anger - only out of Love. This should be the work of the Peace Hero; the secondary work is the action on the planet, like the water wells for SSAAP. But the first is speaking the Truth, no matter how hard it is to say or for another to accept, it is speaking the Truth – done out of Love.*



## Satyagrahi:

- One who fights with the sustainable tools of Love, and Truth, and with her/his Soul ~ not with the fist, and not with anger
- One who stands up against injustice, because the pain from tolerating the injustice is heavier than the loss one inevitably bears in fighting the injustice
- “*You can strip everything from me in this material world – but you will never have my Soul*”
- One who fights with the Soul, because the Soul knows Truth



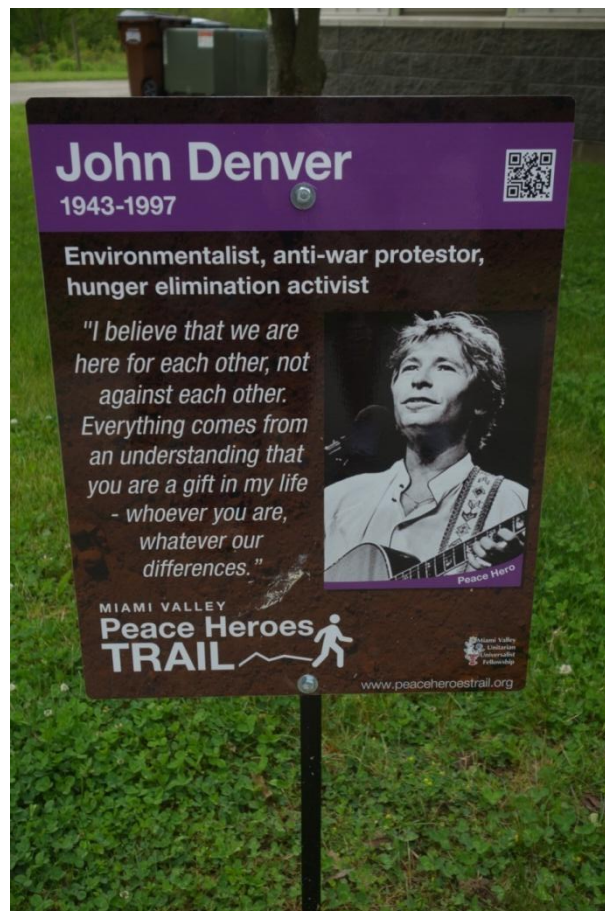


*Anger – feeling anger, being angry – is one of the most important, and potentially productive, parts of being a human being. None of us are exempted from it; it is part of our human condition.*

*Anger is a powerful tool; it is passion that can be channeled to great action, when infused with Love and then ignited.*

*Deadened anger, buried deep in the roots, festers, rots, feeds like a parasite off our lifeblood ~ causing sickness in our bodies and the hardening of our hearts... and then every part of our lives suffer as a result. We are most toxic, and we hurt one another the heaviest in this state of being.*

*Pain is the deepest part of our human nature that can be channeled into varying degrees of vast healing, when infused with consciousness.*



*Human being, in Her highest state, is with the Earth, She is with Nature, the way that animals exist: animals flow with Nature; human being in His highest state is consciousness.*

*Consciousness fused with Nature is the purest state of being in which we transcend the smallness of ourselves, and become the collective; in this, we become whole: individually, and as a human collective.*

*We become our highest selves only when we know our lowest selves; this is nothing short of a daily practice, a lifestyle, a lifelong journey into the meditative realms of the very thing we fear the most: our inner selves.*

# *International Peace Museum: SSAAP Fundraiser; Dayton, Ohio: May 22, 2022*



SSAAP was fortunate enough to have an event hosted by the International Peace Museum. Heather presented information regarding SSAAP, specifically about how the project helps to keep the local artisans with a constant source of income, and that SSAAP has provided a sustainable market for the artisans crafts here in the States, through two different venues (one in Denver, Colorado; one in Wolf Creek, Oregon), as well as fundraisers under SSAAP. It is one of SSAAP's [many] dreams to eventually work with the International Peace Museum to sell SSAAP art, as well to work with them on Nonviolence Initiatives with our partners in India / Ghana / Sierra Leone.



One of the best parts about SSAAP fundraisers is the people we meet and the connections we make. SSAAP had the pleasure of meeting the Director of Education for the International Peace Museum, Alice Young-Basora, pictured below, who we hope to sustain a long-term partnership with.



[www.peace.museum](http://www.peace.museum)

# *Tree-Planting Seedling Project, SSAAP-Zambia*

## *Nonviolence through the Messages of Trees*



The land given to SSAAP by Chief Cooma, approximately 21 hectares in September 2021, to begin the project in Cooma Chiefdom, Southern Province, Zambia is incredible – rolling hills, even a gentle stream.



The first steps in a Nonviolent Economy begin with finding alternatives: how to get food and water for local people, and how to maintain human connection. SSAAP works with local people in an effort to build a relationship, beginning at this time, and sustaining for the next decade – or even

potentially inevitably – through creating relationships with local people, the Earth, and international partnerships between people: human to human, through the planting of trees.

The project should involve a philosophy mission, an action plan, and should embrace the spirit of Nonviolence.

\*

***Philosophy Mission:*** Hand-outs in Africa do not help local people – but rather, they harm them. In the tradition of Nonviolence, and encouraging people to participate in their own well-being, the simple act of planting trees will assist local people to connect to many things. So much violence is currently active through a disconnection of human beings to their environment, and to the Earth.

Trees provide oxygen for human beings to breathe, and the more trees, the more rain will visit an area. In the Southern Province of Zambia, where SSAAP is located, the rainfall is inconsistent. The recent pattern, as Zambia has been affected heavily by climate change, is: the first year – heavy monsoon rains, the second year – moderate rains, the third year – little to no rains/drought, the fourth year – no rain. Therefore, drought and starvation have become commonplace to the Tonga people of Southern Province, Zambia. Trees will help this crisis significantly.

The local people have little to no knowledge of how the presence or absence of trees in their world serve them. Rather, they cut them down in high volumes to make charcoal, which they can then sell for \$1-\$3 per bag. Local people do not value trees, and do not have the understanding that without trees, there can be no survival for them, either.

***Action:*** Planting trees will help people to connect with the Earth, and connect to one another.

A project should never be focused entirely upon money and funding; rather, the work is in their details. Projects need organization, dedication, and sustainability – as well commitment from the local people. When we are driven solely by money, our projects are not sustainable, and they are not Love-based. Nonviolent projects can never be driven by funding or by money. Therefore, something as simple and profound as planting trees can change the face of Africa as we know it, and planting trees through local seeds and seedlings is entirely *free*.

The *Nonviolence through the Messages of Trees* is also an educational campaign. Through planting seedlings, we will have the opportunity to dialogue with local people regarding the meaning of trees, and their inherent value, as well the meaning of human beings and human relationships to one another, and their inherent value. Valuing human connections and connections to the Earth are part of the Nonviolence Campaign, as well a step forward in the powerful international connections to one another that are needed on the planet at this time. The centerpiece of the educational campaign is that human life is not cheap, and our existence on the planet is a gift, and our habitat cannot be recreated once it is destroyed, and therefore our habitat on the planet is not cheap. Through the cycle of Love and Nonviolence, as well the educational campaign, both interrelationships between human beings and their planet can be repaired.

The project will commence in Cooma Chiefdom – the new SSAAP project site. In Cooma Chiefdom, a well was drilled recently for the project, to serve as the center of its irrigation base for



an irrigation project SSAAP is initiating in an effort to provide year-round water to people who wish to plant both vegetables and crops for further food sustainability for their families. The water well in Cooma Chiefdom will, as well, be a source of water for the *Nonviolence through the Messages of Trees* initiative. The Cooma Chiefdom SSAAP site has a large space of land, which may be utilized for a large-scale tree-planting project so that it might expand in the next decades or even century to come. The Cooma Chiefdom project SSAAP site will allow for the growth of the project due to its size.

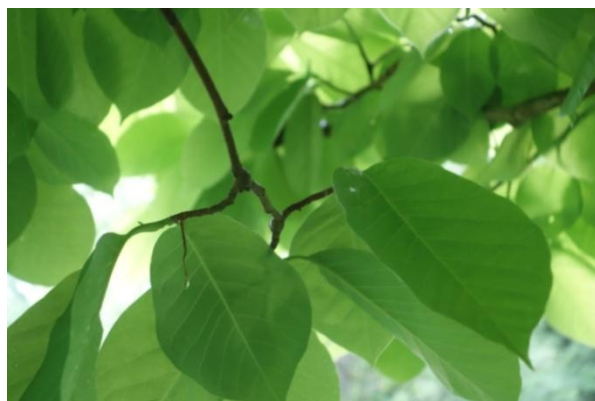
***Funding:*** Very small funding is requested in an effort to feed many people ( $10 < x < 50$ ) once every 2-4 weeks, for the initial stages of the project (1-2 months). People will bring 10 tree seedlings, for local trees, and in return: lunch for the day. So the emphasis of the project will be people trading seedlings for a meal for the day. This will mean more to them than I can express. Food is the currency in Africa, and food means Love to them. Through providing a meal for them for every 10 seedlings they bring, this will help them in providing incentive, in the initial stages of the project. 10 seedlings = 1 lunch for a local person.

Please note that this project is already being funded by a generous and loyal SSAAP Supporter. If you are interested in joining this initiative, please let Heather know and I will connect you to the incredible SSAAP Supporter who has taken this project on!





I am in favor of the African bartering system, which we still use in the traditional and remote village areas - people don't have cash, but they trade (!) - and tend to get everything they need this way – or very close to it, anyhow. I would be quite hesitant to introduce cash into the village setting - again, from my experience in the field (19 years), I don't believe that introducing our western systems into a traditional African structure that has been historically highly functional (until colonialization imposed a cash system that was foreign to the indigenous people, thus they have suffered in poverty as a result for the centuries that have followed the colonial wake) and would still be highly functional now if it was still honored, rather than to impose our western system upon them, which continues to devastate local grassroots village people, over and over again.



SSAAP believes all projects in Africa should be Africentric, not Americentric. In other words, funds should follow projects, and not the other way around: projects following funding. SSAAP is not trying to turn Africa into the West.



SSAAP is not a corporate development model. We don't pay anyone to do anything, excepting the contractors for the water wells and the artisans we give contracts to. The majority of the projects run, in Zambia, Sierra Leone, and U.S.A., through volunteers; even I, as Executive Director of SSAAP, am not paid. My salary would mean less water wells to rural Africa. I am already privileged. I would prefer the local people have water wells than to pay myself.

This model of volunteerism leaves room for people to work through their choice and willingness to participate thus their inner desires; they can choose to volunteer with the project and in doing so will help themselves benefit. SSAAP works under the Peace Corps model of grassroots development (don't introduce cash into a community unless through a microloan / village banking model, or through income-generation activities). The local people are strong and sufficient and can manage anything that comes their way on their own. This is both empowering as well productive to their society.



Thus, I don't want to participate in anything that doesn't honor the people of Simwtatachela – and the people of rural Africa at-large – that raises them to their highest Light.

SSAAP also does not wish to engage in partnership with any partner that isn't willing to meet them in the middle. In partnership, we concentrate upon the things we share in common, and while we do not ignore inherent differences, we focus on the strengths and bonds of cohesive union rather than focus on potentially crushing differences. We work together as equals, or we don't work at all. It's not any different than a romantic partnership, or a friendship, or any healthy relationship: we come together as equals, not that one of us knows more than the other or has more to offer than the other.

SSAAP has certain strengths it brings to the table; and while we don't have a fraction of the finances or monetary aid that many organizations or non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have, SSAAP has its own abundance: Radiance and I being citizens of Africa, living in the field 75% of the time, speaking the local dialects, and almost nineteen years of experience under our belts now. We have a mind and a heart for the people not because we are working on this project from behind our computer screens in the comfort of our American home, but rather because we are living in the field with the people and making our home theirs and their home ours, suffering over the same issues they struggle with: lack of food, corrupt government systems, cold winds and bitter weather, burning sun, and drought. Our years of living in the rural African context and all the personal sacrifices that we have made, have not only brought us to the point that we can relate to the local people - but rather, that we are part of them: inseparable.



I believe that any two parties can work together in the space of Love and Truth, so long as mutual respect exists.

I thank you for the opportunity to write to you: first from my hands, stained from the topsoil of rural Simwatachela, then my heart pulsing its purple blood from taproot of my being, and finally my brain: the ultimate computer processor that, when utilized correctly, speaks out of Love and not out of ego.



Life would be so much easier if we could judge a book by its cover – but we cannot. We are, each and every one of us, unique and extraordinary, individually complex in our design: like snowflakes, like leaves, like zebra stripes. To box this exquisite and intricate design in by gender, race, or creed is to try to simplify Nature, which cannot be simplified. Life would be simplified if we could judge it based upon its exterior – we cannot, and should we try, ultimately we miss out. Nature always has the upper hand. We must be flexible, and bend towards the flow of Nature. Flexibility is the only way that we can work in Africa; rigidity gets us nowhere.

Life is beautiful not because it is easy, or because it feels good, or because it lacks suffering; rather, every human being suffers on this planet. Life is beautiful because we don't give up, no matter how much is asked of us, no matter how heavy the odds stacked against us are, we still want to keep going, we still want to be alive. This is ingrained into the genetic disposition of our humanity. We don't give up – we do not weaken. Everything is connected and interconnected and our universal feelings of separation are merely an ego illusion. We are all connected. In our pain and in our glory, we are all connected. And this is what makes life beautiful.

\*

## *Ghana, October – November 2022*

On our way back to Africa, SSAAP will transit in Ghana for ten days before reaching Sierra Leone. There, we will acquaint ourselves with a group of Nonviolence activists who studied in the same Nonviolence course in Ahmadabad, India at Gujarat Vidyapith: Gandhi's University. Our itinerary is packed (!), but SSAAP's hosts are hoping not only to work with a few local villages in need of water wells in the Lake Volta Region of the country, but also to establish a Nonviolence Library which will assist many in learning about Nonviolence ideas and initiatives, as well peaceful conflict

resolution. Please see the attached invitation letter and itinerary for the upcoming SSAAP visit to Ghana, on our way to Sierra Leone:

## **TROKOSI ABOLITION FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL (TAFI)**

P.O. Box KF 1925, Koforidua, Eastern Region, Ghana



Your Ref: .....

Our Ref: .....

Mobile:

+ 233 542344930 /

+233 203553558

H. E. Hajia Alima Mahama  
3512 International Dr NW  
Washington DC 20008  
Tel: 202-686-4520 / Fax: 202-686-4527  
Email: [info@ghanaembassydc.org](mailto:info@ghanaembassydc.org)

Her Excellency  
Ghana Ambassador to U.S.,

### **INVITATION AS GUEST SPEAKER TO PARTICIPATE IN COMMUNITY EDUCATION ON NON-VIOLENCE FORUM IN GBEFI KPANDO, VOLTA REGION, GHANA**

We have the honour most respectfully to recommend Ms. Heather Cumming of Simwatachela Sustainable Agricultural and Arts Program (SSAAP) U.S.A for tourist visa issuance.

We are highly privileged and honoured to extend our warm invitation letter to **Heather Cumming** of Simwatachela Sustainable Agricultural and Arts Program (SSAAP) U.S.A. as Guest Speaker to participate in Community Education on Non-Violence Forum in Gbefi Kpando, Volta Region of Ghana from 26<sup>th</sup> October 2022 – 4<sup>th</sup> November, 2022.

The Community Education Forum is being organized by Trokosi Abolition Fellowship International (TAFI) in collaboration with Simwatachela Sustainable Agricultural and Arts Programme (SSAAP) U.S.A.

Trokosi Abolition Fellowship is a non-governmental organization founded and established on 22<sup>nd</sup> June, 1999 Incorporated with Certificate of Incorporation No. G.4652 issued by Registrar General's Department and Certificate of Recognition No. D.S.W/1384 from Department of Social Welfare, Ministries, Accra, Ghana dedicated to advocacy, research, women and girls in domestic servitude, sexual bondage, ritual bondage in Harmful Traditional Practices known as Trokosi System in Ghana, in the Southern Volta Region and Dangbe

East and West Districts in the Greater Accra Regions over the years and have achieved tremendous success in collaboration with Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), Department of Social Welfare, Baptist Development and Relief Agency (BREDA), International Needs Ghana and others brought the birth of Women and girls gained liberation and re-integrated into the society.

The organization also published the book title: *The Revealed Myths About Trokosi Slavery: Human Rights Violations*, First Edition published by AuthorHouse UK/US and is available at Amazon.com to educate both local and international community to complete eradicate the practice. The Second Edition book title: *Domestic Servitude: Land and Gender* is now exploring Philanthropist support to publish.

In the year 2013, TAFI participated in the EmPeace LABS 2013 in Jalgaon, India and presented Ghanaian Culture and the topic: Volta River Development in Eradicating Poverty and Hunger in Rural Communities around the Lake and Proposed Irrigation Farming and Water University in the Volta Region. This conference is organized and sponsored by the African Union, Gandhi Research Foundation, Arizona State University, USA, Jain Irrigation Systems Limited and University Community for Social Action and Research, China and has received Certificate of Participation.

Our tremendous presentation, contribution, inputs and excellent performance in the EmPeace LABS 2013 Capacity Building and collaboration building has opened the opportunities for three Ghanaian students for International Students Sponsorship to study in the Department of Peace and Research Centre at Gujarat Vidyapith University and have graduated in Gandhi philosophy (Gandhian Non-violence Theory and Application).

TAFI launched Mahatma Gandhi Peace and Research Centre Community Awareness Education at New Bakpa in the Central Tongu District in the Volta Region that brought the initiative of Satyagraha Institute Capacity Building in the Volta Region in Ghana.

In 2019, the Founder and President of TAFI Ghana was invited as Guest Speaker on the 150 Years Birthday Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and presented a paper on the Topic: Gandhi Philosophy in Relation to Trokosi System in Ghana and has been honoured and awarded with Certificate as International Speaker presented by Professor Nelasco Shobana at Madurai College in India.

TAFI is one of the frontline anti-slavery organizations appointed as a Consultant in Ghana by Minderoo Foundation, an Australian International Human Rights Organization to collate Data on Global Modern Slavery Reports as at 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2020 on Women and Girls during COVID-19 pandemic threat that brought the economic challenges and setback for the organization ongoing programmes till this upcoming innovative Community Forum from 26<sup>th</sup> October 2022 – 4<sup>th</sup> November, 2022.

Trokosi Abolition Fellowship International was registered and established in the African Green Revolution Forum (AGRF) Journal since 2014 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia by AGRF partners as a staunch advocate educating smallholder farmers in the Eastern and Volta Regions to strengthen the AGRF Concept in fighting to promote Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Security to eradicate Zero Poverty, Zero Hunger in the continent.

In efforts of this remarkable and laudable achievements made so far and also to promote the good work of our Ruling Government policy on Planting for Food and Jobs, this programme is being organized by Trokosi Abolition Fellowship International in collaboration with Simwatachela Sustainable Agricultural and Arts Program (SSAAP) to drive public education on Non-Violence and creating job opportunities in eradicating poverty and hunger in the remote communities in the Kpando Municipality and North Dayi District in the Volta Region of Ghana.

**The Historic Event Venue:**           **Gbefi Community, Kpando**  
**Date:**                                   **26<sup>th</sup> October – 4<sup>th</sup> November, 2022**  
**The Theme:**                         **Community Education Forum on Non-Violence**  
**Guest Speaker:**                   **Heather Cumming**

- Heather Cumming Courtesy Call on Eminent Akpini Fiaga Togbe Dagadu Ablenyi IX Royal Palace, Paramount Chief of Akpini State.
- Community Education Forum on Non-Violence
- Non-Violence Library Initiative
- Discussions: Project Opportunities for remote communities
- Delegates from 50 communities and Traditional Rulers, CSO, Media, Dignitaries would participate in this historic event and shared lessons learned to disseminate and educate their communities.





Ms. Heather Cumming is obliged to respect the laws of our Sovereign Motherland Ghana and to comply with Ghana Immigration Service Regulations during her ten (10) days of stay in Ghana.

We humbly and respectfully pray to our high office of the Republic of Ghana in U.S. for the issuance of Tourist Visa to our Respected Guest Speaker to support her visit to participate in this event.

We hope her visit would bring blessings, enrich U.S. – Ghana Cultural Relations and promote the socio-economic development in our remote communities to enhance our state government policy in Planting for Food and Jobs Agenda in Ghana. She will be hosted in Hotor Hotel as stated below.

Name: Hotor Hotel Kpando  
Email: [hotorhotel@gmail.com](mailto:hotorhotel@gmail.com)  
Website: [www.hotormeppmapp.com](http://www.hotormeppmapp.com)  
Contact: 0303963283, +233 (0)554409810

For further information, please contact the Vice President, Mr. Lawson Gadri Awudi. Contact: +233 (0)557200173, Email: [gadrilawson@gmail.com](mailto:gadrilawson@gmail.com)

We sincerely salute the Office of Ghana Embassy in U.S. and wish the Ruling Government of Ghana Four more years as we enter 2024. Long Live Ghana! Accept our congratulations on her visit to Ghana.

Yours faithfully,

Stephen Awudi Gadri  
Founder and President  
Consultant in Ghana for  
Minderoo Foundation, Australia



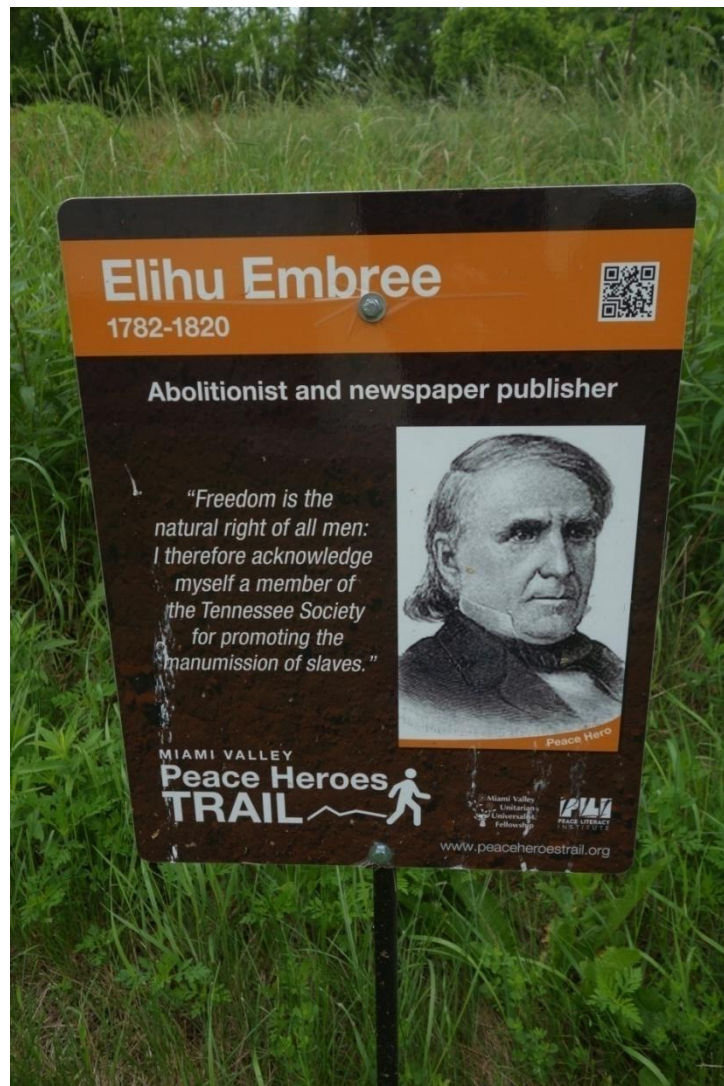
*But I work on African time - it is ever-forgiving and ever-abundant time...*







*There is a passion within me, a fire, so potent that nothing has ever – nor will ever – put out or quench. This fire has not always been easy, for myself or for others to tolerate, and it hasn't always been comfortable, but I do not know how to live without it. And in the end I don't think I could live without it, because it is my voice, my words, the essence of my spirit – my very being.*





## *Sierra Leone, 2022*

Radiance and I are looking forward to returning to Sierra Leone in 2022!

We will travel to Sierra Leone after our 10-day stopover in Ghana; we are flying back to Africa on British Airways, as we had hundreds of thousands of miles saved, but British Airways only flies so far as Lagos, Nigeria and Accra, Ghana. Due to our sustainable friendship with the Nonviolence Community in Ghana, alumni of the Gujarat Vidyapith Nonviolence Courses for International Students in India, Radiance and I decided to route ourselves back to Sierra Leone via Ghana. We have a busy schedule once we return back to Sierra Leone on November 4, 2022:

- November 4, 2022 – arrive Lungi Airport; Freetown, Sierra Leone
- November 4, 2022 – SSAAP volunteer Mike Edwards arrives in Freetown, Sierra Leone
- 52 SSAAP-Sierra Leone water wells to do: 25 in Moyamba District, 27 shared between Kambia, Tonkalili, and Port Loko Districts
- November 4-19, 2022 – Work with Sierra Leonean local artisans; send Mike Edwards home with SSAAP-Sierra Leone art
- November 19, 2022 – Mike Edwards leaves Sierra Leone
- November 19-December, 2022 – Work with Engineers Without Borders-U.S.A. team in Sierra Leone
- December 2022 – April 2023 – Ongoing work with 52 water wells, SSAAP Microloans (via TCP Global Program as well with individual SSAAP donor for microloans), School Sponsorships (Teenage Mothers Returning to School / Primary Children), Fisheries (3 villages with fishing boats for fishing project), Cattle Project (purchase of 3 cows to initiate SSAAP-Sierra Leone's first Cattle Project), AOB
- April 2023 – Return to Zambia

We are also hoping for visitors from Golden, Colorado to visit in an effort to assist with clean water initiatives through testing the water available in SSAAP water wells, also with future sustainable water treatment systems for water wells, as saline water found in the hand-dug water wells in Sierra Leone poses a threat to local people; many rural SSAAP villages are very close to the ocean, and many villages are located near salt water as Sierra Leone is a very small country.

Please let me know if you are interested in visiting our SSAAP-Sierra Leone sites; we would be honored to host you, and knowing the local people: they will have a house built for you just for your visit!

Thank you upfront to Mike Edwards for being our first SSAAP-Sierra Leone visitor; Sierra Leone is a tough sell, and not for the weak-hearted. Sierra Leone is a life-changer. Please come prepared with your heart open and your mind emptied of everything you thought you knew; Sierra Leone rearranges the synapses of your brain.



The sickest I have ever been in my life, second to when I went to the India for the first time at age 23, was in Sierra Leone when I was age 40: Valentine's Day, 2020. Radiance took this photo of me after we launched the Nonviolence Library for SSAAP in Port Loko, Sierra Leone. Three days before I had been diagnosed with Typhoid fever and Malaria; when they weighed me at the Port Loko Hospital, I weighed approximately 98.9 lbs. I am 5'4½". You can see, pictured above, that my head looks too big for my body, which is always for me the first sign of being severely underweight and malnourished. I was so sick that I couldn't get out of bed for five days, and was too sick to even get on top of the motorbike to take me to the clinic until the fifth day. Radiance had to take care of me and for days I was so dehydrated that my urine was orange. I thought I would die, and probably, in some regard(s), I did. Following this life-changing incident, I vowed that I would take every opportunity I could to gain weight wherever and whenever I could, knowing that in Africa it falls off me quickly; I don't like African food and it has taken me almost two decades to admit it. ☺ The malarial treatment drug, *Fansidar*, typically makes me sick to my stomach and delirious. I remember at the launch for the Nonviolence Library on Valentine's Day 2022, I told my counterpart, Taylor S. Kamara, not to let me speak because I would probably end up crying and embarrass everyone, excluding myself. It does not embarrass me to cry, because I do it so often. I was essentially forced to give a speech at the Library launching, and by the end of it, I had everyone else in tears – but my eyes were dry.

On the following page, Heather is pictured in Florida, U.S.A., April 2022 visiting my best friend's parents. I have gained 45 lbs since I got back to U.S.A. in October 2021. Radiance and I have a friendly wager (ice cream!) on how long it will take me to lose that weight once we get back to Sierra Leone. I hope it will take at least two months, but she thinks that by the third week I will be back down to 105 lbs again – which is my normal weight when we are in Africa. A bit too low for my

liking, and my physician's. She has said to me, the last few appointments: "I like this weight! This is a good weight for you: 145 pounds!"

The two greatest sacrifices for me, personally, leaving U.S.A. to go back to Africa are: (a.) dietary, and (b.) bathing. I would sleep with a book and my journal with its pen in a bathtub full of water against my better judgment any day of the week before I would take a bucket bath outside, in Africa, with the bugs and the children watching me. I like to spend ample time in water; I always want to be immersed in it. Water purifies; it clarifies; it cleans. Two things Radiance and I do not agree on: she adores African food more than American food, and she would choose taking a bucket bath any day of the week to an American shower/bath.



I probably gained all 45 of those pounds just during that week alone in Florida with my best friend's parents! They made sure that Radiance and I ate three square meals a day, and that we had food we LOVED for all three of those meals. ☺ When they came to visit me in Zambia in 2005, they were shocked (and still refer back to this!) by how much food I was able to eat at the five-star resort hotel they took me to stay at in Livingstone, Zambia. My best friend's father always says I must have a wooden leg, because he says he doesn't know where I put all the food. Now, it has finally caught up with me, and other than being pregnant with Radiance (I gained 80 pounds during that pregnancy), I have never had so much weight on my body in my life as I do now. I figure it is another form of survival: it buys me time back in Africa before I wilt away again, and my clothes fall off of me, and it pains me to look in the mirror because I look like a skeleton. I eat the African food, but I don't get



satisfied from it – which is exactly opposite than the Africans (and my daughter) who say they can eat Western food and they get full from it but don't feel satisfied. I believe food should be nutritional and feed us on many diverse levels, but also something that makes us happy and gives us joy.



I Love my work. I am a Nonviolence activist; I don't want anyone in the world to have anything less than what I have. My privilege is astounding, my daughter's as well. To see that people in this world are drinking filthy, brown, muddy water shared with the mosquitoes and by their cattle and sheep, or that they simply have no water at all, is an injustice I cannot bear. For this reason, I will work every day of my life until the day I die to help people who have no water get water. We'll start with that, then move to food: simple irrigation systems that ensure less dependency upon rainfall and

guarantee multiple harvests per year. If I can help the beLoved people living in communities in rural Africa who have kept my child and I alive all these years – well, then, it has been a life well-lived.



# Water



So, why the rural component? Why does SSAAP serve only in remote, rural Africa?

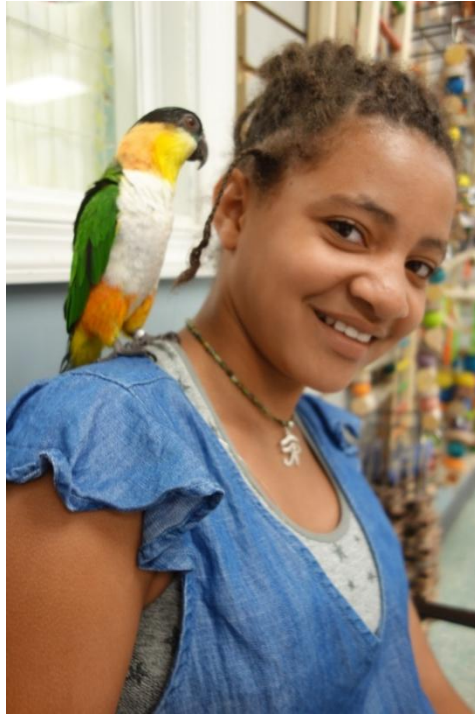
It is a monstrous need, for water in the villages of rural Africa. The more rural the village, and the harder to access, it is highly likely that their water situation is unbearable. That being said, I have stumbled upon, a handful of times, very remotely-located villages that have an uncontaminated water source that they are utilizing, but this kind of scenario is few and far between.

Poverty is a domino effect: one thing leads to another, and soon: the devastation, vast. Lack of clean water, or sharing a water source with cows, goats, sheep, etc. causes water-borne illness, potentially even death; lack of water causes lack of food, and this is the pivotal point for SSAAP: how to source rural villages with water, and how this water can eventually lead to food, which can put an end to centuries of starvation for local people.

Another component as to why SSAAP services only the remote villages in both of its African nations is because our heart lies in the village. Urbanized Africa, westernized Africa has never appealed to me, personally. I am a villager in Africa and a Midwestern Ohioan in U.S.A. I prefer the seclusion, the isolation, the rich abundance of the village, the sounds of birds, and the messages of trees. Nature, and human strength is profoundly abundant in the African villages in Zambia and Sierra Leone. Do not be deceived; the villages of Africa are profoundly abundant, but not under a capitalistic standard. Traditional, rural Africa in its own right *is* abundance, and if given water, the strength and resourcefulness of the local people to take care of themselves, as well as their communities, is powerful. A rural African village or an African community that has its own water source becomes self-sufficient, as they will grow their own food; and if their water source can eventually lead to irrigation of produce and crop farms, then not only has their dependency upon urban Africa lessened, but also their dependency upon a system, Capitalism, never meant to support, protect, or dignify them, eventually holds no power over them ~ thus eliminating their poverty, or what we in the West have defined their poverty to be.

# *Radiance's Homeschool*

*It takes a village to raise up a child...*



*... I haven't raised her alone – and I wouldn't have been able to do it all on my own.*

How many people I can thank for helping me to raise my child, I cannot count them all. Among them are countless Africans in our local SSAAP villages who we work with and stay with, our driller in Zambia named Likumbi, our counterpart in Sierra Leone named Taylor S. Kamara, my mother and my father, my siblings, Mr. and Mrs. Fanelli (to whom this newsletter is dedicated), my best friend's parents, my oldest friend's parents, my friend family and their children and their extended families, and some of my female friends who have been 'Other Mothers' to Radiance. She has had countless opportunities made possible for her only through experts extending their Loving support and gentle hearts to our home-school. Our support system, internationally, is vast. I am ever-grateful.

One man who I owe so many thanks to is a local veterinarian in Centerville, Ohio. During our stay in Ohio (May and June 2022), Radiance has enjoyed immensely apprenticing under him every Wednesday and Thursday; he is not only a family friend but also an extremely revered veterinarian, and he as well his clinic have an incredible reputation in the Dayton, Ohio area. Radiance has seen more things than she will comment to me about, knowing I am incredibly squeamish, which are not limited to: teeth extractions, neutering, spaying, declawing, and eyeball surgery. One day she

brought home some dog teeth to make into a necklace, and is still searching for someone to help her drill holes into the teeth so that she can string them with some of her African beads.

Additionally, she has registered to volunteer at the Sugarcreek Bird Farm on Mondays, which is a center for exotic birds. The establishment has been continuously warm and generous in everything they have done for her as well as *Love, Light, and Literacy Academy*: our home-school.



We were also fortunate enough, thanks again to Mr. and Mrs. Fanelli, to visit a college in May: Radiance's first college visit! Mr. Fanelli had done ample research on the college and had recommended a visit so that Radiance could see a college campus. Never too early to plan ahead! – and because we are out of the States for typically 2.5 – 4 years at a stretch, I thought we should do the college visit, even though she is only twelve years old. She was awestruck, and so was I, by the vastness of opportunity that awaits her. Many thanks to you again for this incredible weekend, Sue and Mike. We Love you!





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 in Bellbrook, Ohio, in their gift shop; proceeds go to the *Radiant Street Beast Program*, run by Radiance, in Simwatachela Chiefdom, Zambia.



Please let me know if you are interested in a pair of earrings which support Radiance's *Radiant Street Beast Program* for adopting street animals (primarily cats) in Southern Province, Zambia!



In the end, I am just a simple and straightforward girl, from a suburb of Dayton, Ohio. From the time I was very young, first or second grade, I knew my life did not mean to me what others' lives meant to them. I knew that mine was never supposed to be used on me. This is not to say that it had a lesser value than of those around me, but rather that I understood inherently that it was just another lifetime... nothing to take too seriously... just another era of this Soul's merging with the cosmos. I also knew I would never be successful in my own country, because I didn't care about or desire material things: cars, phones, houses, money, expensive jewelry or clothing. I just wanted to be closer to myself, I needed to know myself, and I knew the only way to ever really be with myself was to strip off all the layers of what was not me, i.e. a value system I never believed in but was imposed upon me by my society.



*~ Photo courtesy of Sue Fanelli*

I Love the African people and their lifestyle and culture, and don't want to change that or somehow distort it or alter it simply because I, a Westerner, might fail to understand it.

I Love my work in Africa with my entire heart, which is why it makes it easy work for me to do.





*~ Photo courtesy of Sue Fanelli*

I will never know who called who first: did I call Africa, or did She call me?

All I know is that I want Africa, and She wants me, and we Love one another unconditionally, no matter what is asked of me in being with Her.

Africa has given me everything: my child, raw Nature on a daily basis which has healed me physically and metaphysically and everything in between, and an appreciation for the details in life. The magic, the sweet nectar of living, is in the details.

I don't value my life too much to give it away. It was never mine to begin with. The very least I can do is use it on something that matters: to me, to humanity, to Nature, to the cosmos.

My fearlessness is directly proportional to my unconditional and profound trust in the ultimate design of an infinite Universe.

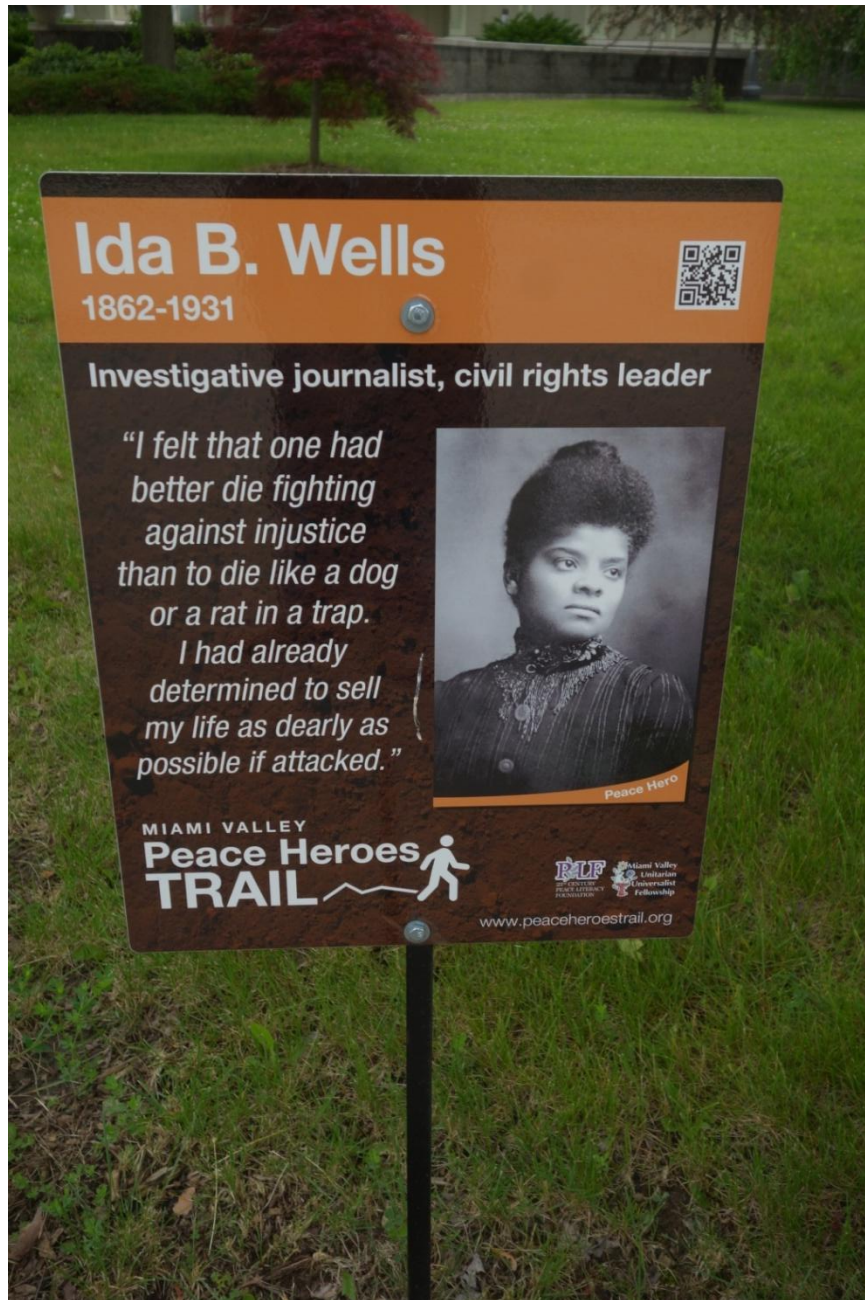




~ Photo courtesy of Sue Fanelli



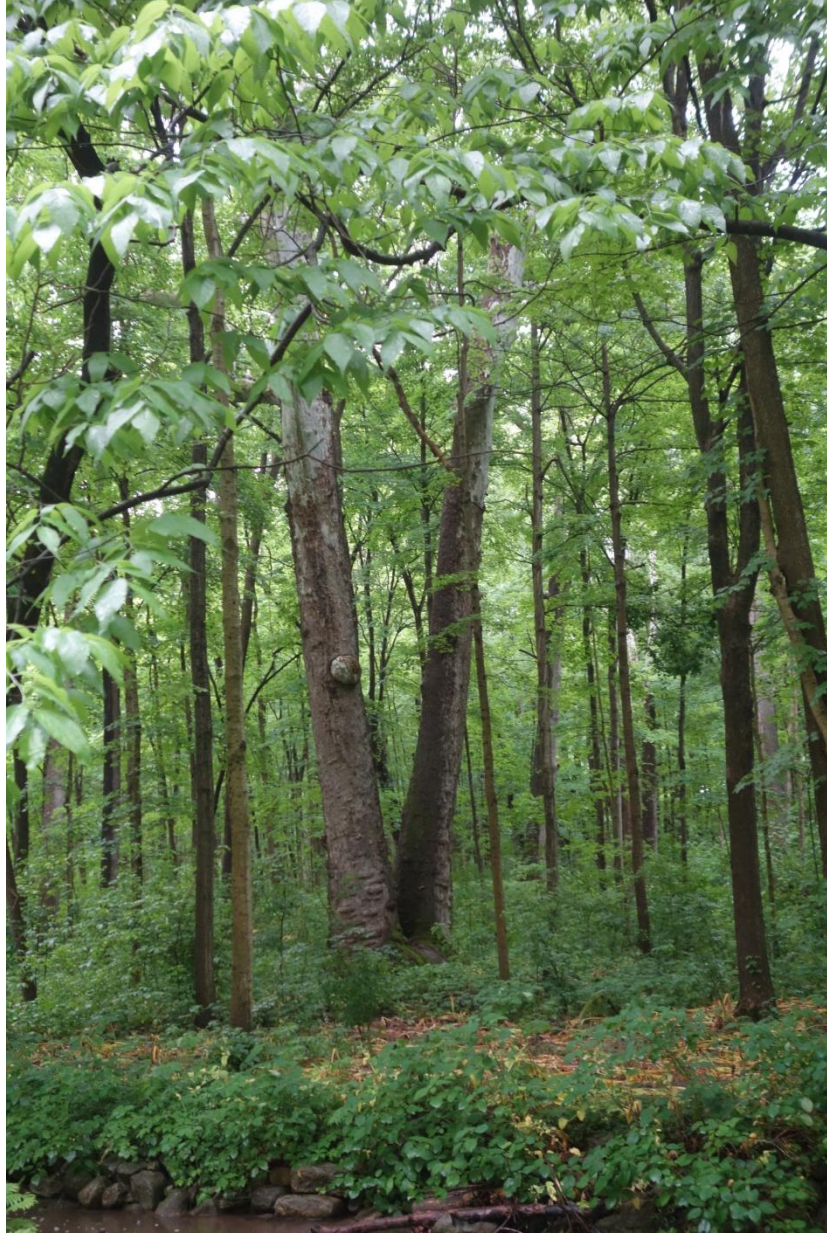
*~ Photo courtesy of Sue Fanelli*





*"It's now or never – let's make the world better." ~ Chris Roesel*





*All photos taken by H. C. Cumming and are property of SSAAP unless specified otherwise. Please let anyone from the SSAAP volunteer Team know if you wish to use any of our photos. Thank you!*