



AN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND REFUGEE AID ORGANIZATION

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Thanksgiving 2012 Appeal

Dear Friends of Concern America,

As Concern America nears the end of its 40th Anniversary year, there is much for which to be thankful: generous, committed donors; staff who, on average, have been with the organization for 16 years each; an engaged and dedicated Board of Directors; field personnel who give so much of themselves and volunteer in the field for an average of five years; and a multitude of volunteers and friends of the organization. Most importantly, we give thanks to the millions of people Concern America has had the privilege of accompanying in Latin America, Asia, Africa, and even North America, these past 40 years.

In the world of international development, many times the focus is on “charity,” in which those “with means” help those “without.” In contrast to “charity,” Concern America’s symbol, “Grow a Global Heart,” expresses our approach to international development, as evidenced in the following excerpts from our Mission Statement and Declared Values:

We weave together the lives of caring people everywhere so that the impoverished in our world have what they need to live a decent life... We believe that the good hearts and good thinking of people working together transform lives... We engage in our work as learners.

Dr. Kate Feibusch, a field volunteer with Concern America in Guatemala for the last 12 years, recently reflected on her time there in the following way: “**Life-altering.** Being in Guatemala and working with Concern has **forever** changed the way I think about my work, my life, and the world...” What she found most rewarding? “Working with the promoters. Materially-poor themselves, they give and give and keep giving. When I am with them, I feel that I am in the presence of God.”

Concern America’s work transforms lives every day with a wonderful interconnectedness, an exchange that flows through the organization, our supporters, and the people in the communities where we work. The biological term “symbiosis” comes to mind, from Greek meaning “together” and “living,” in which we all depend upon and benefit from each other to live decent lives in this world of ours. It is our hope that through our newsletters, our events, and the reports from our field personnel, which we frequently share, you feel connected to and inspired by the people with whom we work.

It has been estimated that the average lifespan of a nonprofit organization is 10 years. It is an incredible testament to everyone involved with Concern America that we continue to be a healthy, relevant, vibrant, and meaningful organization after 40 years! I invite you to read the highlights of Concern America’s work during the past two decades, 1992-2011, featured on the back (the first two decades, 1972-1991 were profiled in our May 2012 newsletter). As you read about our many milestones over the past 20 years, know that you are a key part of all these successes. And, as you consider whether or not you are in a position to support Concern America with a year-end gift in response to this Thanksgiving Appeal, I hope you can imagine yourself as part of Concern America for decades to come.

With gratitude and in peace,

John Straw
Executive Director



Celebrating 40 Years Gathering Goodness and Harvesting Hope



1992-2001

1992: Peace Accords were signed in El Salvador on January 16.
 1992: Fr. Michael Doheny, "founder" and dear friend to all at C/A, died on April 2.
 1992: C/A moved the Handicraft Project base to Guatemala as conditions there improved.
 1993: The Michael Doheny Humanitarian Award was presented to Mike Farrell.
 1994: C/A began health and appropriate technology work in Petén, Guatemala, upon the "return" of refugee communities from Mexico (as they repatriated to their homeland).
 1995: C/A supported development work with its sister agency Concern Universal in Mozambique.
 1995: Patrick Hayes was honored as the recipient of the Michael Doheny Humanitarian Award.
 1996: C/A's logo was re-designed.
 1996: The Peace Accords were signed in Guatemala on December 26.
 1997: The twenty-fifth anniversary of C/A was celebrated, and Dick Barbarino and Fr. Clarence Daly, C.P. received the Michael Doheny Humanitarian Award.
 1998: The responsibility for the Handicraft Project was assumed by a local Guatemalan group of five artisan cooperatives named Samajel B'atz' (Weavers of Thread).
 1999: C/A began accompanying indigenous women's artisan cooperatives in Chiapas, Mexico, in addition to its health and appropriate technology work there.
 1999: C/A staff and supporters (seven total) participated in the Partners "Training for Transformation" course in Dublin, Ireland, from which the organization developed its "Developing a Heart that Yearns for Justice" workshop (begun in 2000).
 1999: C/A returned to Africa to support Sierra Leoneans in nutrition and mental health, this time as refugees in Guinea (through the Holy Rosary Sisters).
 2000: HIV/AIDS prevention project began in Mozambique.
 2000: C/A moved offices to the present location in Santa Ana; C/A inaugurated "Anam Cara (Soul Friend) - Transformation and Justice Center."
 2001: C/A began supporting health and nutrition project with indigenous Wixarrika communities in Jalisco, Mexico.

2002-2011

2002: C/A celebrated its thirty-year anniversary.
 2002: Patricia Carter and Judy Morse were honored with the Michael Doheny Humanitarian Award; future awardees included Drs. David Bedell and Cliff O'Callahan (2005).
 2003: Richard S. Gallagher's book, *Soul of an Organization*, referenced C/A in the chapter "Small Is Beautiful: Making a Difference at Concern America."
 2004: The health project in Colombia began in earnest.
 2005: C/A is one of 1,500 charities given the "Best in America" seal by the Independent Charities of America.
 2006: C/A initiated the Immersion Program in Bolivia and in Guatemala.
 2006: Medical and executive staff from St. Joseph Heritage Healthcare (and, beginning in 2011, from St. Joseph Health System) visited health work in Guatemala as part of a collaborative relationship with C/A.
 2007: C/A's National Spokesperson, Mike Farrell, described his relationship with C/A with appreciation and affection in his autobiography, *Just Call Me Mike*.
 2007: C/A's health work in Colombia was awarded the PAHEF's Clarence H. Moore Award for Voluntary Service (out of 600 groups nominated).
 2008: C/A was a finalist for the Conrad Hilton Foundation Humanitarian Award. Though C/A did not win, the organization was awarded a \$100,000 grant by the Conrad Hilton Foundation. (C/A was a finalist again in 2010)
 2008: C/A's dear friend and supporter, John O'Donohue, died unexpectedly on January 4th.
 2008: C/A initiated an "AT" resource website (www.itacanet.org).
 2008: Tropical Depression #16 hit Petén, resulting in serious flooding in Las Cruces and its evacuation.
 2008: C/A embarked on an ambitious plan to publish a Manual that will make available its successful Health Promoter Practitioner training model throughout the world.
 2009: C/A trademarked its "Grow a Global Heart" symbol.
 2010: Sister Edith Prendergast, RSC, was honored as the first recipient of C/A's John O'Donohue Integrity Award.
 2010: C/A was honored with the Albert Schweitzer Award of Excellence.
 2011: A Training for Transformation workshop was held in Guatemala for young adults from California.
 2011: C/A held its 14th Annual Walk Out of Poverty walk-a-thon event, its 29th Walk as an organization.
 2011: C/A began marketing a selection of its crafts online.
 2011: C/A and its innovative Health Promoter Practitioner model were a semi-finalist for the \$100,000 Buckminster Fuller Challenge.