

International Giving 2016

Seekers Church continues to support many missions and ministries in the United States and other countries. The amount budgeted for international giving in 2016 approached 25% of what we expected to receive in offerings over the course of the year. Once our budget for the year was approved, and the overall amount available for international giving had been determined by the Stewards of Seekers Church, all members of the faith community were invited to request support for missions or ministries where they are personally involved.

After worship on February 21st the community affirmed support for nine international missions and ministries:

[Bokamoso Youth Foundation](#) – Winterveldt, South Africa

[Othandweni Day Care and Guest House](#) – Winterveldt, South Africa

[PAVA \(Programa de Ayuda a los Vecinos del Altiplano\)](#) – Chimaltenango, Guatemala

[Collegio Miguel Angel Asturias](#) – Quetzaltenango, Guatemala

[Abato Foundation](#) – Mpigi, Uganda

[Sustainable Organic Integrated Livelihoods \(SOIL\)](#) – Haiti

[New Story Leadership](#) – Israel/Palestine

[Nakba Museum Project of Memory and Hope](#)
[Rostropovich Foundation Initiative to Screen Newborns for Congenital Heart Defects](#)

Here are the international missions and ministries we are supporting this year. To visit their websites, click on the name of the organization.

Bokamoso Youth Foundation

The Bokamoso Youth Foundation supports the Bokamoso Youth Centre, in Winterveldt, South Africa. Bokamoso seeks to empower at-risk youth through life and work skills training, professional counseling, and administration of scholarships for further education that are funded by the Bokamoso Youth Foundation. The Bokamoso (the Tswana word for “future”) program has been offering hope and a future to the youth of Winterveldt since 1999.

Seekers supports the Centre through participation on the board of the Bokamoso Youth Foundation (USA), supporting an annual exchange program that brings 12 young people from Winterveldt to share their life stories through poetry, songs, and theatrical performances with people in the U.S. The intent is to raise awareness of the challenges young people face in Winterveldt, South Africa, and to widen the circle of support for the youth of the Bokamoso Youth Centre.

Seekers Church has had a connection with Bokamoso that goes back many years. The Foundation grew out of a decade of support within Seekers for the emerging partnership with Bokamoso, and many of us are actively involved with Bokamoso.

During the annual visit from Bokamoso, Seekers Church sponsors a career workshop, to help Bokamoso members plan for future employment, and to support Bokamoso staff as they plan for the long-term viability of their program.

Othandweni Day Care and Guest House

Seekers' link to the Othandweni Day Care at Winterveldt began in 2002 when Seekers were invited to help with its construction and the training of the team to run what was then a guest house, designed to welcome visitors to the Bokamoso Life Centre and associated missions. In 2005, the team added

the day care operation. Presently they care for 50 neighborhood children at risk, many orphaned by HIV/AIDS. As a service to the community, they also run an after-school program for about 60 junior high students. Othandweni provides an oasis of hope for pre-school children who otherwise would be running loose in a dangerous area, and for the junior high students a place to sing and dance and share their aspirations in a supportive environment.

In addition to financial support, Seekers has given time and technical support. In 2011, the Friends of Othandweni was formed to give more consistent support but with the goal that the Centre would eventually become sustainable with South African support. Many Seekers are involved.

PAVA (Programa de Ayuda a los Vecinos del Altiplano)

PAVA (Aid Program for Highland Communities) is a Guatemalan non-governmental organization that works closely with rural communities in the Department of Chimaltenango, Guatemala, to achieve long-term sustainable development through community-based projects and programs. A small, full-time staff, based in Antigua, manages PAVA's programs, providing technical expertise and coordination for:

- Infrastructure projects (including potable water systems, bridge construction, school construction, and community libraries);
- Support for community learning centers (comunitecas) that serve as libraries and learning centers in three model highland communities; and
- Education (including scholarship programs which allow rural Guatemalan children to finish high school, and a professional development program for teachers to improve the

quality of education in primary schools).

From 2002 through 2015 SWeekers Church supported an annual work pilgrimage help sustain the work of PAVA, raising funds and organizing groups of about two dozen people from Seekers Church and across the United States to work with PAVA and residents of 15 different villages. During this time we helped construct 11 schoolhouses, three libraries, and two running water systems.

Our 2016 contribution supported the PAVA scholarship program, part of the current PAVA focus on educational programs. Since 1986 PAVA has been highly committed to supporting the education of children in remote highland communities. Through 2015, 162 children benefitted from the PAVA scholarship program. The main objective is to help close the breach in rural children's enrollment in middle school.

[Collegio Miguel Angel Asturias](#)

Miguel Angel Asturias Academy is a private, non-profit Pre K-12 school in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala, founded in 1994 to eliminate education disparities and create informed, critical-thinking, socially conscious citizens in Guatemala through subsidized tuition to its creative curriculum. This curriculum is based on the popular education theory of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, in which systems of injustice are confronted and transformed on the basis of all as teachers and learners. The Academy has two main missions: get ALL Guatemalan children in school and break cycles of poverty through education.

Asturias Academy currently serves approximately 300 students from varying backgrounds: indigenous, non-indigenous, poor, working class and middle class. Many Seekers have visited the Asturias Academy and we welcomed the founder to Washington DC on a recent visit.

Abato Foundation

Abato Foundation is a children's charity organization that was established in Uganda in 2011 to help raise and support orphaned and vulnerable children through education, talent development, and training. "Abato" means children in the native language.

Recognizing the central role of education in wider global agendas and acknowledging the need to reach out to the poorest children with the objective to break the poverty cycle for them, Abato Foundation was born. The leaders of Abato Foundation Uganda believe that every child has a right to a good upbringing irrespective of the circumstances of their birth.

Abato Foundation is registered as a non-governmental organization working to promote the welfare of children in Uganda. Their main center is in Mpigi District where most of their efforts are centralized.

Sustainable Organic Integrated Livelihoods (SOIL)

Currently, only 10% of rural Haitians and less than 25% of those in cities have access to adequate sanitation facilities, by far the lowest coverage in the Western Hemisphere.

People are forced to find other ways to dispose of their wastes, often in the ocean, rivers, ravines, plastic bags, or abandoned houses. At the same time, agricultural output is low due to poor soil fertility, soil erosion, and lack of fertilizers.

Ecological sanitation (EcoSan) is a low-cost approach to sanitation where human wastes are collected, composted, and recycled for use in agriculture and reforestation. It

simultaneously addresses many of Haiti's most pressing issues: improving public health, increasing agricultural productivity, mitigating environmental degradation, and providing low-cost sanitation.

[New Story Leadership](#)

New Story Leadership seeks to inspire a new story of possibility for the Middle East by bringing outstanding Israeli and Palestinian students to Washington DC to experience American culture, history and democracy. Through living, learning, and working together, these future leaders come to respect difference, not to fear it, and to view the conflict with new eyes. Before, during and after the program, NSL strives to support all its graduates as they return home with a new hope about building a better future together.

Seekers Church is pleased to be hosting the US office of New Story Leadership in our facility, and members of Seekers and the Eyes to See Ears to Hear Peace Prayer mission group have an active partnership with NSL during their annual visit to Washington D.C.

[Nakba Museum Project of Memory and Hope](#)

The Nakba Museum Project aims to ensure that the Palestinian legacy of endurance is passed on to future generations. It is a legacy that speaks to both Palestinian and Israeli peoples that sharing the land is indeed possible.

While the media carries the urgent news of war and death, a museum makes space to place the immediate events in Israel/Palestine into a larger story, inviting people to understand what appears as a cause today is nothing more than a symptom of an unresolved yesterday. The Nakba project begins a new conversation in Washington by insisting that the history

that we do not understand is the history we are most likely to repeat. Since the idea was conceived in June 2014, the founders have discovered a real groundswell of support for the idea.

The Nakba project is committed to being nonpolitical and nonpartisan. It will be a space which simply tells the human story, with all its paradoxes and pathos. It will not be about taking sides or proving someone right and wrong. Rather it aims to build a deeper understanding of the current impasse, and become a place for critical conversations for change.

The museum is being launched in stages, initially displaying paintings, art work, educational materials, articles, historic artifacts, and showing movies. In stage two, it has begun hosting events, seminars, conferences, in which refugees and their relatives share their personal stories. The goal of each display or event will be to create a culture of listening and represent a non-contested space, through a simple invitation to witness.

Rostropovich Foundation Initiative to Screen Newborns for Congenital Heart Defects

The Rostropovich-Vishnevskaya Foundation (RVF), in cooperation with the Georgian Ministry of Labor, Health & Social Development (MLHSD) and with the support of the U.S. Department of State, launched a pilot program to screen all newborns in the Georgian capital of Tbilisi for life-threatening critical congenital heart defects.

RVF staff recently met with the U.S. Ambassador to Georgia, Ambassador Norland, to discuss the importance of this program as well as all RVF programming in Georgia. They also met with Minister of Labour, Health and Social Services Davit

Sergeenko, who agreed to support the implementation of RVFs programming in Georgia.

The WHO estimates that each year, 270,000 newborns die during the first 28 days of life from congenital anomalies. Critical congenital heart defects (CCHDs) are one of the most common severe malformations in the world. Many babies born with CCHDs appear healthy at birth, only to develop acute deterioration and die several days after leaving their birth hospitals. In Georgia more than 500 babies are born with CCHDs each year. Most babies born with a CCHD can be stabilized and successfully treated if diagnosed in the first 24-48 hours of life. This program provides the missing diagnostic screening component so that newborns are referred in a timely manner to the already existing medical and surgical treatment capability in Tbilisi.