

International Giving 2019

Seekers Church continues to support many missions and ministries in the United States and other countries. Once again, this year the amount budgeted for international giving is almost 20% of what we expect to receive in offerings over the course of the year.

Once our overall budget for the year was approved, and the overall amount available for international giving had been determined by the Stewards of Seekers Church, all Seekers were invited to request support for missions or ministries where they are personally involved. After worship on February 18th the community met to determine how our international giving will be distributed. At that community meeting we affirmed support for 12 international missions and ministries:

Middle East

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

Africa

[Bokamoso Youth Foundation – South Africa](#)

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

[Programme Nutrition & Eye Care \(PRONEC\) – Uganda](#)

Central America

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

[Collegio Miguel Angel Asturias – Guatemala](#)

[San Lucas Toliman Reforestation Project – Guatemala](#)

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

[Bachillieres in Colonia in Puerto Morales](#)

[Alianza Democratica Nicaraguense \(ADN\)](#)

[Center for Development in Central America \(CDCA\) – Nicaragua](#)

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

MIDDLE EAST

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

The mission of New Story Leadership is to equip a new generation of Palestinian and Israeli change agents with the leadership tools needed to create social, economic and political change in the region. It 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. Delegates live in Palestinian-Israeli pairs with American host families in Washington, DC for 7 weeks each summer. They have work-placements in the offices of Representatives and Senators and in other high-level organizations.

NSL delegates use the Narrative Method to craft their personal stories of struggle and hope. Delegates share their stories at speaking engagements on Capitol Hill and across DC. The delegates participate in strategic meetings with organizations like the United States Institute of Peace, J Street, AIPAC, the United Nations Development Program, and the Swedish Embassy, and with various US Congressmen and Senators, including Sen. Bernie Sanders, Sen. Tim Kaine, and Rep. Joe Kennedy.

Each delegate arrives in Washington, DC with a proposed Project for Change (PFC). Working together in Palestinian-Israeli teams, they collaborate on joint social impact project. Delegates return to the region after the summer prepared to implement their PFCs. PFCs become eligible for

startup seed funding and receive technical support from the Alumni Network.

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. The Seekers Eyes to See Ears to Hear Peace Prayer Mission Group maintain an active partnership with NSL, particularly during their annual visit to Washington D.C.

AFRICA

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

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 twelve young people from Winterveldt to share their life stories through poetry, songs and theatrical performances with people in the US. 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, supporting development of the Centre as a South African non-profit organization. And development of the Bokamoso Youth Foundation here to coordinate support. 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. Roy Barber and Elese Sizemore have been central links in the long-term relationship. Roy reports that since the Centre began over 1,200 young people have been helped by the program.

Othandweni Day Care and Guest House – South Africa

Winterveldt is an impoverished, crime -ridden township in a former Bantustan about an hour's drive north of Pretoria. Seekers' link to Othandweni began in 2002, with an invitation to help with the Center's construction, and with 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 next door.

In 2005, the Team added a Day-Care operation for preschoolers to learn the basics and prepare them for first grade, also enabling the parents to go to work. Since the hiring of Level 4 teachers, the Center has improved tremendously.

Later, as a service to the community, they started an After-School Program for about fifty middle level students, providing an oasis of hope for youth who otherwise would be

running loose in a dangerous area. Here they can find a place to get help with homework, learn traditional song and dance, have a decent meal (in some cases the only one for the day), and share their aspirations in a supportive environment.

Othandweni Day Care program uses Seekers funds for infants to five-year olds, providing care, education, and healthy meals, preparing them for elementary schooling. Last year a new board of directors took leadership and hired a new manager and accountant. Local fundraising is a challenge because parents' poverty impacts on the collection of day care fees and because of the same land ownership issues that affect Bokamoso, which impinges on obtaining a health certificate needed for government funding. The manager has generated some income through expanded use of the guesthouse and is working on starting a bakery whose proceeds may help with food costs.

At Seekers Church Linda Nunes-Schrag and Bill Drehmann maintain regular mentoring and fundraising contact with Othandweni, through e-mail and phone, and striving to raise needed funds. They welcome anyone who feels moved to join them.

Programme Nutrition & Eye Care (PRONEC) – Uganda

Programme Nutrition & Eye Care (PRONEC) is a nonprofit organization based in Uganda that provides meals, nutritional supplements and education to improve the health of malnourished children in Uganda. They also provide support and medical treatment for the visually impaired people to remain independent and safe in their homes, with a focus on those unable to earn a living.

PRONEC rose out of the gap for lack of optical, dental, nutritional services in the health facilities of surrounding areas and communities. Private clinics were and are still too expensive for ordinary people to afford. Eye care, dental

services, and nutrition education are not addressed as a priority in the formal health settings provided for the public such as hospitals and government clinics. This lack of resources predominantly affects poor people, who cannot afford to travel to the town centers in order to access the services they require. PRONEC provides:

- Vision exams and eyesight tests
- Affordable optical services
- Outreach screening for eye defects
- Nutrition Education
- HIV/AIDS education and services

Damalie Mirembie is a contact person here in the United States, having known them for over 15 years for their work and support to deserving low income people.

CENTRAL AMERICA

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

PAVA (Aid Program for Highland Communities) is a Guatemalan non-governmental organization (NGO) 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 community learning centers (comunitecas) that serve as libraries and learning centers in three model highland communities, 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.

PAVA worked with highland Guatemalan village elders to bring primary education to indigenous people as promised by the 1996 Peace Accords after 30 years of civil war. More than 25

Seekers participated in building schools and community libraries.

From 2002 through 2015 Seekers Church supported an annual work pilgrimage Led by Marjory and Peter Bankson, to 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.

Now that need has largely been filled. PAVA has shifted its emphasis to scholarships for the most able students to get secondary schooling and, in some cases, support for college. This year, PAVA is celebrating its first student to graduate from college – and she has become the education director for PAVA!

This year's contribution will support the PAVA scholarship program, part of the current PAVA focus on educational support for graduates of village middle schools. programs. Since 1986 PAVA has been highly committed to supporting the education of children in remote highland communities. The main objective is to help close the breach in rural children's enrollment in middle school. The Banksons maintain the link between PAVA and Seekers Church.

Collegio Miguel Angel Asturias – Quetzaltenango, Guatemala

Asturias Academy was founded by Jorge Chojolan in Guatemala to combat racism on the principles of Paolo Friere and all classes are bi-lingual, Spanish and the local indigenous language, Quiche. The style of teaching is not rote, but is lively, engaged and deeply democratic. Seekers has supported this for a number of years and visited it and has also hosted gatherings when Jorge or one of his four daughters visited Washington, DC.

San Lucas Toliman Reforestation Project – Solola, Guatemala

From 2002 through 2015, the Guatemala Pilgrimages led by Marjory and Peter Bankson offered participating pilgrims the opportunity to visit several of the missions and ministries that emerged in San Lucas Toliman while Father Greg Schaffer served as priest at the Catholic Church there. The Reforestation Project, founded and run by Toribio Chajil is one of these ministries. After Fr. Greg passed away in May 2012, the Friends of San Lucas (FOSL) took over management of the Mission but had to cut its budget to the core programs of education, construction, health, coffee cooperative, and visitors. FOSL was able to give Toribio use of the land at a nominal rent, to continue his reforestation program.

Through his Reforestation Project in San Lucas Toliman, Guatemala, Toribio Chajil provides seedlings, insight and encouragement to people throughout the country to help control erosion and encourage environmental sensitivity. He conducts reforestation activities with children and adolescents and provides environmental education in some local schools. Seekers visited this project regularly during the PAVA pilgrimages. The Banksons maintain our link with the Reforestation Project.

Sustainable Organic Integrated Livelihoods (SOIL) – Haiti

SOIL works in Haiti to design, test, and implement sustainable and cost-effective solutions to the sanitation crisis. It has grown from a pilot project in 2013 to a service reaching nearly 6,000 urban residents with safe and dignified access to household sanitation. It provides households with toilets and weekly collection of wastes for a small monthly fee, safely treating and transforming the wastes into compost (“EcoLokay”) using a process that respects World Health Organization

standards. Planned additional activities include transition of customers to mobile payments designed to increase convenience and reduce costs, improved management of supply chains, and testing new marketing approaches to reach additional population segments.

S0IL depends on contributions from groups like Seekers Church to keep projects going strong through the ups and downs of grant cycles and to quickly respond to changing conditions on the ground in the communities it serves. Erica Lloyd, who grew up in Seekers Church and maintains active connections, serves on the S0IL staff.

Bachillieres in Colonia in Puerto Morales

Bachillieres in Puerto Morales is a technical high school for 15-18-year-old youth in a section of Puerto Morelos called Colonia that has great poverty. It trains students in core subjects, including English and computer science that they can use in the tourist industry. It currently has 360 students, divided into 8 groups but with only 6 classrooms.

Seekers visited the school in 2018 and again in 2019, seeing many of the gains from the previous year, including an awning that created an open-air gathering place for students, improved drainage, uniform shirts, and battery back-up for computer data. Funds in 2019 will be used toward building 2 additional classrooms, paving the front entrance from the street, making concrete tables and benches for the lunch area and hard wiring the computer lab to ensure internet connections. Joan and Doug Dodge maintain our connection with the school.

[Alianza Democrática Nicaraguense](#)

Alianza Democrática Nicaragüense (ADN) Metropolitan Washington D.C., Inc. (ADN) is an NGO promoting democracy, social justice, development, and culture for all Nicaraguans across

all political, economic, and social spectrums. The organization drives activities that bring awareness to the general population regarding the Nicaraguan political crisis since April 2018; promoting the democratization and defense of civil human rights there, raising funds to support Nicaraguan victims and refugees; and celebrating their tradition and culture.

Seekers Church has been collaborating with ADN and the “Eyes to See” Mission Group helped host a fundraising festival to support Nicaraguan refugees in Costa Rica.

Center for Development in Central America (CDCA) – Nicaragua

The Los Leones (“The Lions”) is a boys’ afterschool group located at a community clinic serving a very poor part of Ciudad Sandino called Nueva Vida, a few kilometers outside of Managua. The boys, ages 8-16, come from families that attend the clinic and live close by and all have extreme economic, familial, educational and societal challenges. They gather at the clinic once a week to play soccer, learn arts and crafts, receive guest speakers and go out on field trips. They have fun, improve their behavior, see healthy and positive community leaders, and engage in quality social-emotional activities and outings. Los Leones was started by two volunteers in the clinic, Ian and Tito, but has recently run by women. Our Leones staff all agree that it is imperative the boys have a male leader to work with them and we are looking to ensure at least one year of funding to hire such a person (hopefully Tito).

Seekers funds will provide a monthly stipend for Tito and some administrative costs, including transportation.