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*Building a world where all people can be happy*

The *AllPeopleBeHappy* foundation education event in Vail on June 28th was a huge success. Many thanks to Liz and Timm Paxson, Vail residents and board members for hosting the event. Erika Vohman, the founding director of The **Equilibrium Fund**, and CNN Hero, spoke about her work in Central America educating people about the uses of the native Maya Nut. She even brought samples of delicious Maya Nut cookies for everybody to sample. Diana Mathias, President of the Vail Chapter of **Room to Read**, spoke of Room to Read's incredible progress in bringing schools, libraries, books, and computers to the developing world.

### **Project Updates:**



**The Kossye Project** recently sponsored a 4 day "Local Innovations Workshop" in Ethiopia. Activities included family gardens, a festival day at the elementary school, and presentations about new small businesses. Participants included countryside women, male farmers, school teachers, community health workers, local business people, and a number of faculty members from the University of Gondar. All in all more than 100 people participated. Also on hand were Justin Hanseth and Joey Alsberge, who worked with Village Health Works in Burundi on

a Food Security program funded by *AllPeopleBeHappy* in 2008. Justin brought many new vegetable and fruit tree seeds and demonstrated how to plant them. This collaboration is a wonderful illustration of the spirit of community which *AllPeopleBeHappy* hopes to foster among all of its supporters and partners.

**One Acre Fund** was awarded a \$10,000 *AllPeopleBeHappy* foundation grant in June 2008. The lofty goal of this organization is to help East African farmers grow their way out of poverty. They do that by organizing farmers into self help groups, loaning them inputs (planting materials and fertilizers), training them in farming techniques, and helping them with marketing their increased crop yield. They began with 550 families in 2007, and will reach their goal of 12,000 families by the end of their 2009 fiscal year. The Board of Directors of the *AllPeopleBeHappy* foundation voted to award another \$10,000 grant to help **One Acre Fund** reach their goal of enrolling



28,000 families by the end of the 2010 fiscal year. Farmers enrolled in this program typically see a doubling of crop yield as well as a doubling of income, and a 50% decrease in infant mortality. The program is currently seeing an impressive 98% repayment rate from participating farmers. There is anecdotal evidence that many families are using the extra income to pay for schooling for their children.



**The Equilibrium Fund** was awarded a \$10,000 grant in July 2008, for the rescue of lost indigenous knowledge about the Maya Nut as a conservation and livelihood improvement strategy in Nicaragua. As a result of that grant, 1174 women and 87 men in 51 communities were trained. In all 6624 people benefited either directly or indirectly from the training provided. In addition to learning how to cook with the Maya Nut, a nutritious food which can be gathered from the ground for free, the communities participated in Maya Nut tree reforestation efforts, saw the benefits of improved health through better nutrition, and many women went on to form

business cooperatives to market their Maya Nut based products. At its summer board meeting, the Directors of the *AllPeopleBeHappy* foundation voted to award another \$10,000 to continue these good works.

## Meet Our Directors

Michael Chou came to the *AllPeopleBeHappy* foundation board with an impressive resume. In addition of being president of Quadrant Consultants Inc., an engineering consulting company he founded 30 years ago, Michael is one of Houston's real "movers and shakers."



Over the years he has been a member of the Houston Parks Board, Metropolitan Transit Authority (Metro) Board, a Fellow with the American Leadership Forum, Vice President of the Texas Turnpike Authority, Asian Chamber of Commerce, Coalition of Mutual Respect, and the Anti Defamation League to name a few.

Michael spent his childhood in Malaysia, went to high school in Australia, earned his Bachelor degree in Sociology and Masters in Urban Studies from Tulane University. He also received a Masters in Environmental Science from the University of Houston. Michael has 2 sons who have grown up and are off seeking their own adventures; Wei, a West Point graduate who is continuing his training in the army in preparation for deployment in Afghanistan, and Dee, who teaches English in China. Michael and his wife Ruiling make their home in Houston.

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