



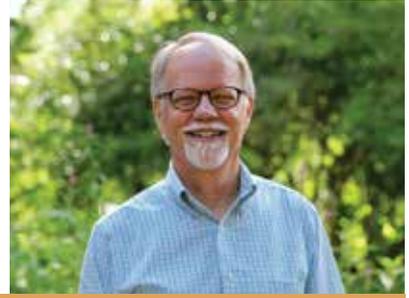
ECHO[®] NEWS

volume 42 | issue 2

honoring God through sustainable hunger solutions



in this issue: a day in the life of an intern • gardening on rooftops • biogas
honoring the Lord through legacy • intern spotlight: Elizabeth Casey



David Erickson, President/CEO

“Don’t let anyone think less of you because you are young. Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity.” 1 Timothy 4:12

Dear Friends,

One of the many gifts of engagement in the global mission of ECHO is seeing the lives, passion, faith, and commitment of young people. As you read through this issue of *ECHO News*, you will see it on virtually every page. I hope that you also feel the energy, love, and integrity of these youth from around the world.

At a recent volunteer appreciation luncheon at ECHO-Florida, the Florida Interns performed one of their trademark skits. In this skit they poked fun at the image and reputation of “millennials” as slackers who think they can change the world from the cozy confines of their local coffee shop, spending their parents’ money on overpriced coffee and smartphones. The skit was hilariously funny because the lives, work, and witness of our Interns is so radically different from that stereotype.

We are seeing a similar desire, in young people around the world, to invest their lives, labor, and futures in practical grass-roots efforts to address poverty, violence, corruption, and the many other conditions that choke-out life, hope, and opportunity. Sustainable agriculture and the fullness of the Gospel are core to deep and lasting change in many of the most hard-pressed contexts of our world.

As you browse this *ECHO News*, please celebrate with us the ways that young people are eager to invest in creating a more hope-filled future. And remember, it is your investment in ECHO’s mission that makes it possible for us to equip them – building their capacity for impact throughout the world. Thank you for helping us continue to grow this global equipping mission!

In Gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Erickson'.

David Erickson
President/CEO

ECHO exists to follow Jesus by reducing hunger and improving lives worldwide through partnerships that equip people with agricultural resources and skills.



Cover photo: ECHO Interns are each in charge of caring for our farm animals! Training in animal husbandry gives interns hands-on skills that will be useful for years to come.

ECHO News is published quarterly by ECHO, Inc.

edited by Danielle Flood

Please share your comments about ECHO News. Write: 17391 Durrance Road, North Fort Myers, Florida, 33917, e-mail: info@echonet.org, or call: 239-543-3246.



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Beating Famine Award

At the *Beating Famine Conference*, sponsored by World Vision, over 100 nonprofit organizations convened in Mali to develop key strategies for reducing hunger throughout the drylands of Africa. At the conference, ECHO West Africa was honored for their work in training over 3,000 small-scale farmers across the region in 2018.

“Feeding is assured.”
—**Agui Diallo**

“Despite the poor rainfall, I was able to harvest enough and with that I was able to buy a sheep. We can take care of our parents.” – Boukaré Barry

“Feeding is assured. Usually our harvest yields 30 to 40 carts, this year we have collected 70 carts.” – Agui Diallo

On behalf of our West Africa Impact Center, we invite you to celebrate with us all that God is doing through the transformative global work of ECHO!





A day in the life of an Intern

by Maddie Christy

A day spent shadowing the life of a current ECHO intern gives insight to the importance of interns in the mission of ECHO.

From the moment I arrived on campus, I had the sense that the interns were an integral part of ECHO's mission. But I had lots of questions. What do interns actually do? What role do they play at ECHO? What do their lives look like during their 14 months here?

Interns are a long-standing legacy at ECHO. In the early days of the organization, founding CEO Dr. Martin Price hired a recent college graduate who was interested in international development to serve for one year as an intern. The internship was meant to give recent grads a chance to get hands-on experience and learn as much as they could about agriculture before entering the

mission field. The internship was a success, with two interns added in 1985. By 1989, ECHO had six interns on staff. The internship program has existed ever since, now hosting 8 interns at a time. This spring the 257th intern was welcomed onto staff!

“The work the interns put in reaps a bountiful harvest- for ECHO, and for the communities the interns are preparing to work alongside..”

let me follow her around. So, I present to you as best as I can from her point of view, a day in the life of an intern.

Left: Teaming up for group work projects on Thursdays is a regular part of the schedule at the Florida farm.

7:20 a.m.

It's 7 a.m. on Thursday morning. Bustling around the kitchen to make or grab breakfast before they head out the door, most grab coffee, tea, or mangoes. Elizabeth is scrambling eggs— farm fresh from her chickens!

7:30 a.m.

Thankfully, the first meeting of the day happens right outside the front door in the commons area between the men's and women's intern houses. We gather like sardines, or close friends, on the wooden benches for our morning meeting. The birds are greeting ECHO with a good morning song while the sun is still rising. This brief daily intern meeting features announcements, plans for lunch, and a time of prayer.

8:00 a.m.

The time has come for morning chores! The interns break from their meeting and spread out in all directions around the farm to tend to their individual duties. Elizabeth's first stop is to check and record the rainfall for the day. As the monsoon intern, it is her responsibility to track the water we've received each day and let others know the total so they can account for it in their work.

Next, Elizabeth tends to her birds. We head to the main chicken coop to open the hatch and let the birds out for the day. They soon come flooding back into the coop when we return with feed. On our way to the ducks, we stop and check on the chickens. At the duck and tilapia pond, Elizabeth lets the ducks scramble out before closing the door behind them so she can hose off the deck and collect any eggs they've laid. Once she's filled the feeder, the ducks race in and crowd around each other to fight for their fair share for the day.

9:00 a.m.

The interns now have time to work in their individual areas for the morning. Often this work time includes weeding, planting, or an ongoing project. If requested, interns can have the help of volunteers during this time slot! Today Elizabeth had plans to work on her raised beds and needed some extra hands. Three hard-working volunteers joined us for the morning in the monsoon. Our tasks including weeding, composting, and mulching four of her raised beds. With many trips to the compost and mulch piles, water breaks, and one interruption to go catch rogue chickens, our work was completed by noon. What would have taken Elizabeth a week to do on her own could be checked off the list in one morning. And some fun was had by all along the way!

12:00 p.m.

Today included a special intern lunch gathering. The male interns hosted in their home. Gabe, the urban garden intern, prepared stew, accompanied by mangoes. As part of hosting, Gabe also prepared an activity for group reflection. With the addition of two new interns earlier that week, the group used this time to share ideas about what they wanted to accomplish together. It was a sweet time of casting vision for the upcoming months and the future work for which they are being prepared.

3:00 p.m.

In the afternoon, the interns return to group farm work. At 3:00 p.m. staff, interns, and volunteers gathered for a brief meeting to divvy up responsibilities. This afternoon was set aside for small projects around the farm, assigned by Farm Manager



Elizabeth (in plaid) and three volunteers feel victorious after a successful morning's work.

Andy Cotarelo. Each afternoon looks a little different for interns. Monday and Wednesday afternoons are set aside for seminars. Interns are in a merged classroom and hands-on setting learning about a variety of agricultural information. Recent seminars have covered mangoes, beekeeping, bamboo harvesting, and the Biblical basis for ECHO. Tuesday and Friday afternoons are reserved for work in either the seed bank or propagation. Each intern is assigned to one of these duties for the duration of their internship. Thursdays are for everyone to join together and knock out a few projects that need attention all around the farm.

3:30 p.m.

This week for farm work, Elizabeth and Feo, the rainforest intern, teamed up to take on a mulching project near the urban garden area. This mulching project soon turned into an irrigation problem! We first cleared the two main areas of weeds and overgrown greenery with hoes and rakes. Before we buried the ground in mulch to prevent weeds, we checked to make sure the irrigation in that area was functioning—it was not. We found a couple leaks along the pipe and had to make repairs before finishing our mulching. After checking with the Farm Manager and multiple trips to the shop, Feo was able to teach Elizabeth how to repair the holes. We finished off the job by dumping and spreading mulch all over the two areas.

“The work the interns put in reaps a bountiful harvest—for ECHO, and for the communities the interns are preparing to work alongside.”

6:00 p.m.

By this time, most interns had wrapped up their farm work for the day. We cleaned tools and returned golf carts to the shop to be charged for the next day. Some people rushed off to evening activities—dinner, bible study, gardening, a pickup volleyball game, or volunteering commitments.

8:45 p.m.

Elizabeth’s last task for the day was to feed and cage her birds, much like during her morning chores. With her work boots back on and her headlamp to guide the way, we ventured into the dark farm. The mature chickens were easy—they

had already perched themselves inside the coop for the night. We only had to close the door and admire their beauty for a moment. On the way to the young chickens, we stopped by the laying box to pick up a few eggs from the day! We arrived at the teenage chicken’s coop to find that some had gotten out through a small crack again. We returned them to the enclosure, before coaxing the whole group into the left side of the structure for safekeeping from critters overnight. And lastly, the ducks got one more frantic feeding before the hatch closed them in for the night.

9:30 p.m.

It’s now officially the end of the day. Most interns have retired to their respective houses for the night. After a long day of hands-on work in the sun, interns tend to head to bed as soon as they can. Often, interns joke about “missionary midnight” which comes at about 9 p.m., signaling the end of the day in the life of an intern.



Elizabeth harvests eggs that were laid during the day.

I loved following Elizabeth around for the day. I got a tangible sense of what the everyday life of an intern is like. They work in the tropical heat in Florida. Most of their time for 14 months is centered around the farm. But their work has purpose, and there is joy in it. These interns are the backbone of ECHO. The work the interns put in reaps a bountiful harvest—for ECHO, and for the communities the interns are preparing to work alongside. They are quite literally training to be sent out as the hands and feet of Jesus and to be manifestations of the knowledge of the ECHO network. The interns are crucial to ECHO’s mission and have a beautiful role in the work of the Kingdom. That’s a big deal. 🌱

Biogas for Change

Knowledge + Manure =
Clean Cooking Fuel and
Safer, Efficient Kitchens

In August of 2018, Mrs. Juliana Jackson took a chance. She spent 40 hours with a group of strangers learning how to create cooking fuel from manure, a resource she has in abundance.

The training was requested by a group of motivated young people who heard of biogas and ECHO's mission through a radio program and wanted to learn this technique for themselves.

ECHO Trainer Harold Msanya taught how to (1) construct the tubular biogas digesters (2) use the bio-slurry for conservation agriculture and (3) plant and cook perennial vegetables. With these skills, participants will be equipped to share not just the techniques, but also skills for increasing food production while conserving the land.

In February, Harold conducted a follow-up training on business skills with the same group of ten biogas technicians. The training took place at the home of Juliana, who now has a working tubular biogas system installed. Juliana shared that she fills her biogas from her six cows. The gas that is produced is enough to cook all three meals, every day. She is incredibly passionate about the benefits of having the system in her backyard. She shared that she is now able to get the kids off to

Top: Juliana has an indoor, clean-burning stove thanks to her tubular biogas collection system. Bottom: Juliana (right) now has a way to use her animal manure to create a clean cooking fuel.



school on time, since cooking breakfast is much less time-consuming when she uses the biogas. She now relies much less on cooking on an open fire or with a charcoal burner.

Another trainee, Ezekiel Lepayon, has made a small business installing biogas systems for others, even sharing on social media to teach others about this creative resource.

These improvements make cooking safer and reduce the health risks of cooking over traditional fires. They also reduce dependence on logs or charcoal as fuel. With passionate mobilizers like Juliana and Ezekiel, we are excited to see this knowledge spread... like fire! 🌱



what's happenin



Staff build a trellis of passion fruit, luffah, and bottle gourd, on ECHO Asia's new Small Farm Resource Center. This new site gives us three times more space for training.

#echofightshunger



Follow us on Instagram for pictures of ECHO's work all around the world. #echofightshunger



The maresha plow has been in use for hundreds of years in Ethiopia. Now, ECHO staff and partners are working together to offer a locally-made design that reduces soil disturbance and plants seeds all in one pass. In this photo, the metal plow shape has been replaced by a slimmer "ripper" maintaining a healthy soil ecosystem. In other prototypes, the seed planter deposits a single seed at a regular distance apart behind the ripper and covers it for a successful planting.

Demonstration Gardens in the City



Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, is not a place known for gardens. Still, the ECHO staff maintain a creative urban demonstration garden to help inspire visitors with what can be grown to feed the hungry in small spaces.

g at ECHO



From ECHO's Farm to Your Table

Local to Southwest Florida? ECHO's market garden gives visitors to our Florida farm the chance to take home some of the delicious bounty. Stop by on Fridays and Saturdays to browse our selection of locally grown herbs, greens, fruits, and vegetables.

Growing by Lambs and Bounds



Twin sheep, Goldie and Shrimp, were born to Dot on December 27th, giving interns hands-on experience in animal husbandry. Shrimp is getting a reputation for being "extra cuddly."



High School students from 10 villages near Yagaba, Ghana, spent an entire week learning from ECHO in West Africa. Promesse and Launa taught them to make liquid fertilizer and other techniques that they can take back to their communities. While they don't yet consider themselves farmers, they all contribute to their families' farms and were excited to learn something they can share.

Honoring the Lord through legacy

By creating the Dr. John Byler Memorial Fund in remembrance of her husband, Martha makes trainings in health and nutrition more accessible.

by Jasmine Johnson

There are many ways to give. Martha Byler chooses to honor her husband in the process.

Martha originally found out about ECHO through her son's interest in sustainable agriculture. He heard about ECHO during college and wanted to connect with a worthwhile cause following graduation.

The Bylers continued to receive information about ECHO even after their son finished his volunteer time, but they did not come down to visit until much later.

After her husband passed away, Martha returned to ECHO for a week of volunteering, wanting to help with something bigger than herself.

Martha fit in at ECHO very well, since she was connected with a master gardeners' group through Purdue University.

Her time spent volunteering at ECHO was educational as well. Martha was able to expand her knowledge by utilizing the ECHO staff surrounding her. Martha helped in the plant nursery, learned how to graft trees, assisted in the seed banking process and many other daily tasks.

During her visit, Martha discussed with two staff members how she might honor the memory of her husband. After looking into available options, Martha realized that she wanted to provide funding for something that both she and her husband were passionate about: health and nutrition.

"When you stop and think about it, everything ECHO does improves the health of the people," Martha said.

The Dr. John Byler Memorial Fund provides scholarships for ECHO trainings, focusing especially on those involved in health and nutritional service in the developing world.

During the fund's first year, five individuals had the opportunity to attend ECHO's International Agriculture Conference.

Left: Martha volunteers her time on the ECHO Florida Farm assisting the interns and farm staff.

Right: Scholarship recipients gather in Tanzania during the East Africa Symposium. The scholarship has funded learning opportunities on three continents.





The idea for this fund connected to the Bylers' careers and passions. Martha was trained as a nurse while John was a physician.

"And you know if you say yes, we're going to be missionaries," Martha recalled her husband saying following his proposal.

The Bylers set out with the intention of doing mission work in the Congo for short-term periods. However, after they were all settled into this routine, John started having heart problems. The doctors told him to come home for bypass surgery.

This drive for mission work overseas was cut short by John's health restrictions, but their desire to give back never faded.

"God has provided through my husband's wise management," Martha said. "I don't have to worry about the next dollar. I can volunteer, I can enjoy my gardens and plant, so I'm very blessed."

Martha remains active stewarding the blessings she's enjoyed in order to help others.

Today, she continues to volunteer by teaching various life lesson and home economics classes for at-risk women in her community. Active in her church, she's mentored those recovering from addictions and volunteers in school projects.

She also shares about ECHO in her master gardener group and encourages her extended family to contribute to John's memorial fund.

"When God has blessed us and we can afford to do it, then my desire is

to share what I have," Martha said.

No matter what you may be passionate about, there is a way to give toward that cause. By finding ways that you can glorify God through giving of your time, prayer or donations, you draw closer to who you were made to be. 🌍

"When you stop and think about it, everything ECHO does improves the health of the people," Martha said.

Gardening on Rooftops

ECHO Founding CEO Dr. Martin Price has written numerous resources for gardeners around the world to enable them to efficiently garden in an urban space. His book, *Gardening on Rooftops & Other Above Ground Locations*, was recently republished and is available for download. Please share with anyone working near resource-challenged neighborhoods.

Excerpt:

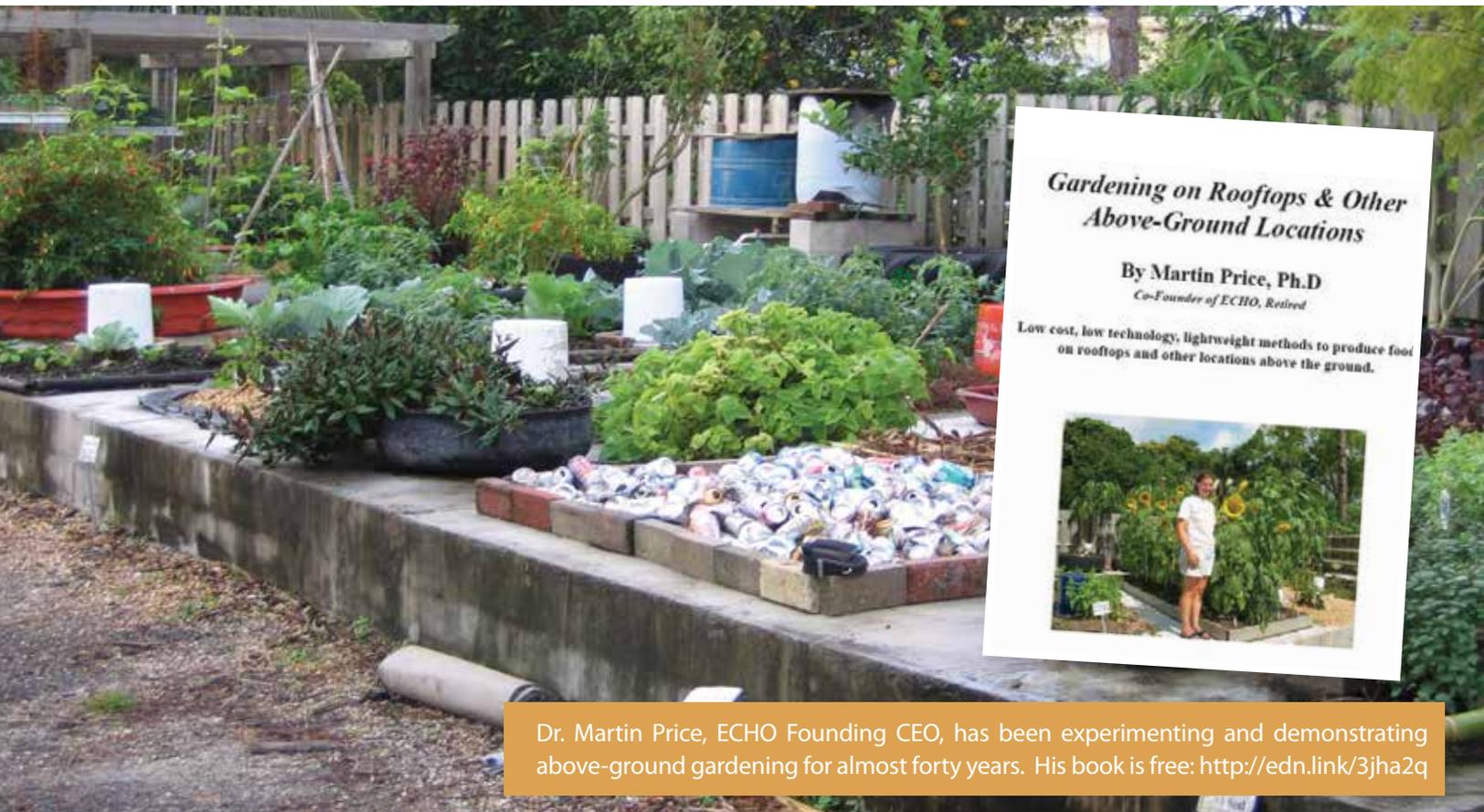
Most hunger and malnutrition around the world is not usually caused by a lack of food, although that may be changing. From the point of view of the hungry family, the cause is usually a lack of income sufficient to purchase the food. Anyone with enough income will be able to obtain food, except perhaps after major disasters or in a war zone.

There are so few options for the extremely poor. What can a family do if the national unemployment rate is over 50%, wages are a dollar or two a day, prices of food are increasing and may at times be even higher than in the USA, they have neither savings nor credit and there is no governmental safety net?

For many, an option of last resort is to find a piece of land somewhere and try to grow enough to keep the family alive. Hopefully, there would be some excess that could be sold so that perhaps at least one child could go to elementary school and emergency medical expenses could be met.

But how does someone in an urban area with nonexistent financial resources get land to cultivate?

There is a major difference between ECHO's techniques and those used or contemplated by planners for most rooftop gardens in wealthier countries. The techniques described here can be done at a fraction of the expense that is normally considered necessary.



Dr. Martin Price, ECHO Founding CEO, has been experimenting and demonstrating above-ground gardening for almost forty years. His book is free: <http://edn.link/3jha2q>

Biblical Basis for ECHO

4. Compassionate Care for the Poor and Hungry

In previous issues of *ECHO News*, we introduced this series which will be exploring Biblical themes that provide the foundation of ECHO and agricultural missions.

by Bruce Wilson

The fourth principle found throughout scripture that drives ECHO's work and agricultural missions is Compassionate Care for the Poor and Hungry.

This is a crystal-clear and consistent theme in scripture.

The message in Isaiah 58 couldn't be stated more clearly, "Share your food with the hungry, and give shelter to the homeless. Give clothes to those who need them, and do not hide from relatives who need your help... Feed the hungry, and help those in trouble" (Isaiah 58:7-11). Deuteronomy 15:11 "...open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor...".

After Peter, James, and John encouraged Paul's outreach to the Gentiles, according to scripture "their only suggestion was that [Paul and Barnabas] keep on helping the poor, which, Paul writes, 'I have always been eager to do'" (Galatians 2:9-10).

Throughout scripture — from the beginning of the Bible all the way to the end of the Bible - God's people are commanded

to reflect the love and justice of God in practical love and justice for the needy.

A brief study uncovers 30 Bible passages describing God's compassionate care for the poor and our responsibility to join him in serving them.*

**Feed the hungry. Help the poor.
This is what scripture teaches.**

Tim Keller writes, "Doing justice is inseparably connected to preaching grace. This is true in two ways. One way is that the gospel produces a concern for the poor. The other is that deeds of justice gain credibility for the preaching of the gospel. In other words, justification by faith leads to doing justice, and doing justice can make many seek to be justified by faith."

"If anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:17-18).

Feed the hungry. Help the poor. This is what scripture teaches. 🌱

*(Exodus 22:21-27; 23:10-11; Deuteronomy 10:18-19; 15:1-11; Leviticus 19:9-10; Isaiah 1:16-17; 10:1-2; 58:1-11; Amos 2:6-7; 5:11-15; Psalm 14:4-6; 112; Job 31:13-23; Proverbs 14:31; 19:17; 22:22-23; 29:7; Ezekiel 22:29-31; Matthew 25:31-46; Luke 4:18-19; 12:32-34; 14:12-14; 18:18-23; Romans 15:25-27; 2 Corinthians 8-9; Galatians 2:9-10; James 1:27; 2:1-5, 14-17)

Intern Spotlight

Elizabeth Casey

Hi there, y'all! My name is Elizabeth Casey, and I've gotten the privilege of serving as the Monsoon and Seed Bank Intern since March 2018. I was born and raised in the lovely city of Fort Worth, TX. I came to ECHO after working for three years as a case manager in refugee resettlement. Before that, I graduated from Tarleton State University with a Master's degree in Agriculture and Natural Resource Science. My undergraduate degree was in missions, so ECHO has been the perfect melting pot for my educational background.

Living and learning on the ECHO Global Farm has truly been a dream-come-true. I've had to pinch myself on a daily basis when I think of the high-quality training, resources, and experiences that have been entrusted to me. The internship has been a vivid picture of God's boundless love in my life.

One lesson I have taken away from my time as an intern is this: it's all about people! I've learned the importance of relationships in development work and ministry. A defining moment of my internship was attending ECHO's 25th Annual

International Agricultural Conference. I enjoyed exciting conversations with people who had years of experience in various training roles. Their lessons and stories affirmed my desire to work in agricultural development.

My internship ends this May, but thankfully that won't be the end of my adventure with ECHO. I will work at the ECHO East Asia Impact Center in Chiang Mai, Thailand, as a Technical Advisor for six months starting this June. I'll be helping the ECHO team plan their biennial conference, assisting with research projects, and developing their new demonstration farm location. I'm eager to be a part of ECHO's global influence on the lives of small-scale tropical farmers! 🌍

“One lesson I have taken away from my time as an intern is this: it's all about people!”



Elizabeth Casey



Recipe: Mild Tomato Salsa

It's tomato season here in Florida, and we're enjoying the bounty of these beautiful fruits! Salsa made from fresh tomatoes has an amazing, bright flavor. Try canning to savor this flavor all year long.

Makes 12 pints.

8 cups tomatoes, chopped (14 tomatoes)
4 cups green peppers, chopped (5 green peppers)
1 cup red peppers, chopped (1 red pepper)
1 cup onions, chopped (1 large onion)
½ cup jalapeño peppers, chopped (5 jalapeños)
½ cup cilantro, chopped
1 cup cider vinegar
½ cup sugar
5-6 cloves garlic, chopped
1 tbsp salt
1 tsp black pepper

In a large stockpot, cook tomatoes, uncovered, over medium heat 20 minutes. Drain, reserving 1 cup liquid. Return tomatoes to the pot.

Stir in green peppers, onions, vinegar, sugar, red pepper, celery, garlic, jalapenos, salt, pepper, and reserved tomato liquid. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer, uncovered, 1 hour, stirring frequently.

Ladle hot mixture into hot 1-pint jars, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Wipe rims. Center lids on jars; screw on bands until fingertip tight.

Place jars into canner with simmering water, ensuring that they are completely covered with water. Bring to a boil; process for 20 minutes. Remove jars and cool. 🌱

The QCD is an often-overlooked tax break

Not Itemizing? Some seniors can still get a tax break for charitable deductions.



Even with the increased standard deduction, some seniors are facing higher tax payments to the IRS.

Why? The money they're required to take from their retirement accounts once they reach 70½ counts as taxable income.

A qualified charitable distribution (QCD) can be used to satisfy all or part of the required minimum distribution (RMD) from an IRA. What's the tax benefit? The funds don't count as income.

This is a smart way for seniors who are taking advantage of higher standard deductions and not itemizing to still get a taxable benefit from their charitable giving.

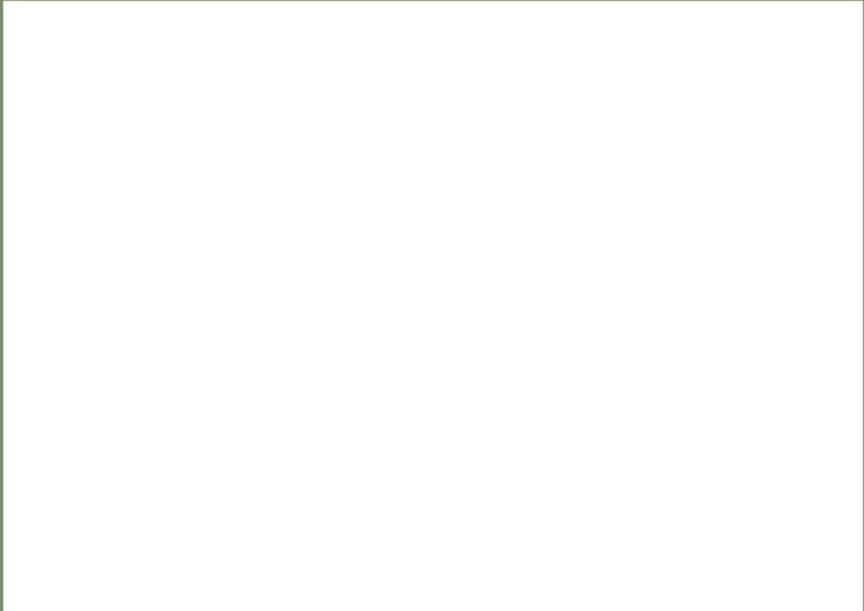
Even for those who are eligible to itemize, the QCD may still be of benefit.

If you are a retiree 70½ or older with an IRA subject to RMDs, and have a passion for helping the hungry, don't miss out on a great strategy to reduce your income tax. Call Amy Wiggins at (239) 567-3341 or email awiggins@echonet.org for more information. 🌱

**A QCD is a direct transfer of funds from an IRA custodian, payable to a qualified charity as described in the QCD provision in the Internal Revenue Code.*



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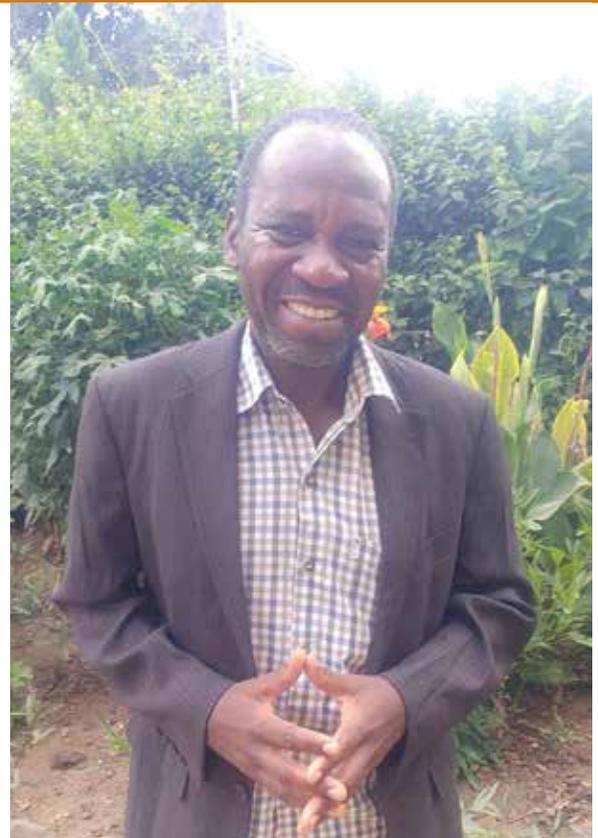
in their own words...

"I have really enjoyed the conference. I have learned a lot about seeds and about conservation agriculture to be able to improve my farm. Also, the networking and the sharing of ideas and experiences have been huge. We can now start groups to help each other.

After this conference, I want to teach the community. I have all this knowledge, but I need to share it. I cannot keep it just to myself.

Everyone has something. *All these farmers have resources that they don't know about and aren't using—manure, animals, plants. Someone just needs to show them.* I want to show them what they have."

—Joseph Aliguma,
Farmer from Uganda



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ECHO Intro Video:

