



echo news

Hope Against Hunger | volume 44 | issue 1



in this issue: looking back, looking forward • improving family nutrition • finding hope despite challenges • intern spotlight: Noah Coleman



David Erickson, President/CEO

***"Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life."
Prov. 13:12***

Dear Friends,

For many, our world is a very difficult place. For some, it seems that obstacles to progress confront them at every turn – limited land, depleted soils, discrimination, opposition, ... discouragement. While these challenges are real, hope is also real. By God's grace and with the help of others, many of the difficulties can be overcome. And then, having experienced that overcoming grace and blessing, we discover that we have something to share to bless and benefit others.

As you peruse this issue of *ECHO News*, you too will see both the reality of the challenges that many people face and the fact that there is hope ...hope that brings change in difficult circumstances now as well as for eternity. This hope is also contagious – having seen and experienced it, sharing seems to naturally take place and the benefits spread.

It is the fullness of this hope that shaped ECHO's development, beginning 40 years ago, and continues to define our embrace of the challenges and opportunities that await us in 2021 and beyond. So many more men, women, and children deserve to know that there is indeed Hope Against Hunger!

Enjoy...and be encouraged,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'D.E.' or similar initials.

David Erickson, President/CEO

P.S. We are so grateful for the generous giving to ECHO in a difficult 2020! By God's grace, and through 7,374 gifts from more than 2,916 people like you who care deeply about the needs of the hungry, we are tackling new challenges and opportunities to bless and benefit families all around the world. Stay tuned – we'll be sharing more about the difference that your generosity is making in this New Year.

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



Cover photo: Nathalie and her children live in the village of Bouldié in West Africa. Trained in December of 2019, her 2020 harvest was nearly double the harvest of the previous year.

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.

in this issue



looking back

3

family nutrition

5

finding hope

9

intern spotlight

13

New Video Resources from Asia

Creative responses to the challenges of closed borders amid COVID is spurring new ways to help those we serve.

The ECHO Asia Staff has been developing new video resources that can be shared throughout the region. One of these resources is a 4-part seminar that gives viewers an understanding of the basics of soil science, as well as a virtual “field trip” to see these principles in action. These skills will help farmers improve soil fertility leading to healthier plants and harvests.

This resource is available for free on ECHOcommunity.org with slides and videos.

Resources are also available from this fall’s Appropriate Technology Fair and the ECHO International Agriculture Conference, both held virtually serving a combined total of more than 1,000 individuals from 70 countries around the world.

Visit ECHOcommunity.org today to share these new resources with those serving as missionaries or development workers worldwide. 



Founding CEO Dr. Martin Price with Founder and Visionary Dick Dugger at an ECHO celebration in 2001. From a few initial contacts in a handful of countries, ECHO now extends its helping hand into almost every country of the world.

Looking Back, Looking Forward

ECHO's 40th Anniversary, celebrated in 2021, is a great reason to celebrate the past and look to the future with hope.

In the early 1970s, Dick Dugger caught the vision for an organization that would “echo” solutions to hunger and poverty throughout Haiti and around the world.

1980s

Eleven years later, Dr. Martin and Bonnie Price left a familiar and very comfortable life in Ohio in a quest to combine their training in science, the Great Commission, and the needs of the poor. Dr. Price never imagined that ECHO would grow from a five-acre farm, to a 55+ acre campus with an extensive agricultural library, a Global Research

“Dick Dugger caught the vision for an organization that would “echo” solutions to hunger and poverty...”

and Demonstration Farm, Seed Bank, and housing for interns, visiting missionaries, and development workers.

Even more astounding has been the growth of ECHO's network – missionaries, mission organizations, indigenous churches, agricultural and development workers – all who work with the rural poor around the

world. From a few initial contacts in a handful of countries, ECHO now extends its helping hand into almost every country of the world.

2000s

The first Impact Center was launched in 2009 in Southeast Asia; East and West Africa followed shortly thereafter. These centers contextualize ECHO resources and offer hands-on training closer to those who need it most.

ECHO's services expanded from answering occasional agricultural questions from overseas contacts and sharing a few hard-to-find seeds – now ECHO's global teams provide hands-on trainings in more than 15 countries, seed banks on three continents offer hundreds of varieties of seeds to help families diversify their crops and improve their nutrition, a year-long internship prepares college graduates for international service, and vital, practical research provides relevant solutions to the challenges farming families face.

In 2011, ECHO began strategically harnessing the power of technology as a force for good – sharing reliable knowledge about plants, practices, and appropriate technologies online. Now, through our online platform, ECHOcommunity.org, more than 19,000 missionaries, development workers and farmers working in over 190 countries access

this online resource each month to find proven agricultural information and seek expert advice for the communities they serve.

While the dedicated staff and volunteers of ECHO have labored long and hard, ECHO as it exists today is a testimony to God's direction as He led this work over the last 40 years.

Strategic Planning

In 2017, ECHO's Board of Directors adopted a 5-year Strategic Plan, focusing ECHO's global team on two main goals – direct training and global resourcing. Every year since then, both the number of people directly trained globally and the number of ECHOcommunity members has continued to increase.

Multiplied Impact

Most inspiring has been the multiplication rates – the frequency with which both direct trainees and ECHOcommunity members utilize and share what they have gained from ECHO!

Based on external assessments, ECHO's direct training work is benefiting well over 1 million men, women, and children each year; And, ECHO's global resources are also reaching millions through development workers, missionaries, and the communities they serve each year.

Expanding ECHO's equipping work means more families will know the hope of improved harvests.



The launch of a South Asia Team will help more families pave a path forward out of hunger and poverty.

“ECHO as it exists today is a testimony to God's direction as He has led this work over the last 40 years.”

Looking Forward

This incredible impact humbles us. Yet, the truth is that there are so many more families still struggling to know the hope of a future.

Launching a new team to serve South Asia is a key strategic step for the future. The need is extraordinary – 38% of India's children under 5 suffer from stunting due to malnourishment, and there's opportunity to share the gospel among some of the most unreached people in the world!

This year, our Internship Program will become even more beneficial, as we add a Master's level certificate to the hands-on preparation for global missions that has always been key to ECHO's equipping work.

ECHO's knowledge resources will reach more people worldwide through the newly released ECHOcommunity mobile app – soon available in nine additional languages.

The challenges of the recent pandemic have taught us to hold our convictions and our calling tightly and our plans loosely enough to adapt to meet the current needs of those we serve. We have seen even more clearly the faithfulness of God and the privilege of serving – these core realities will guide our “today” and “tomorrow.” 🌍

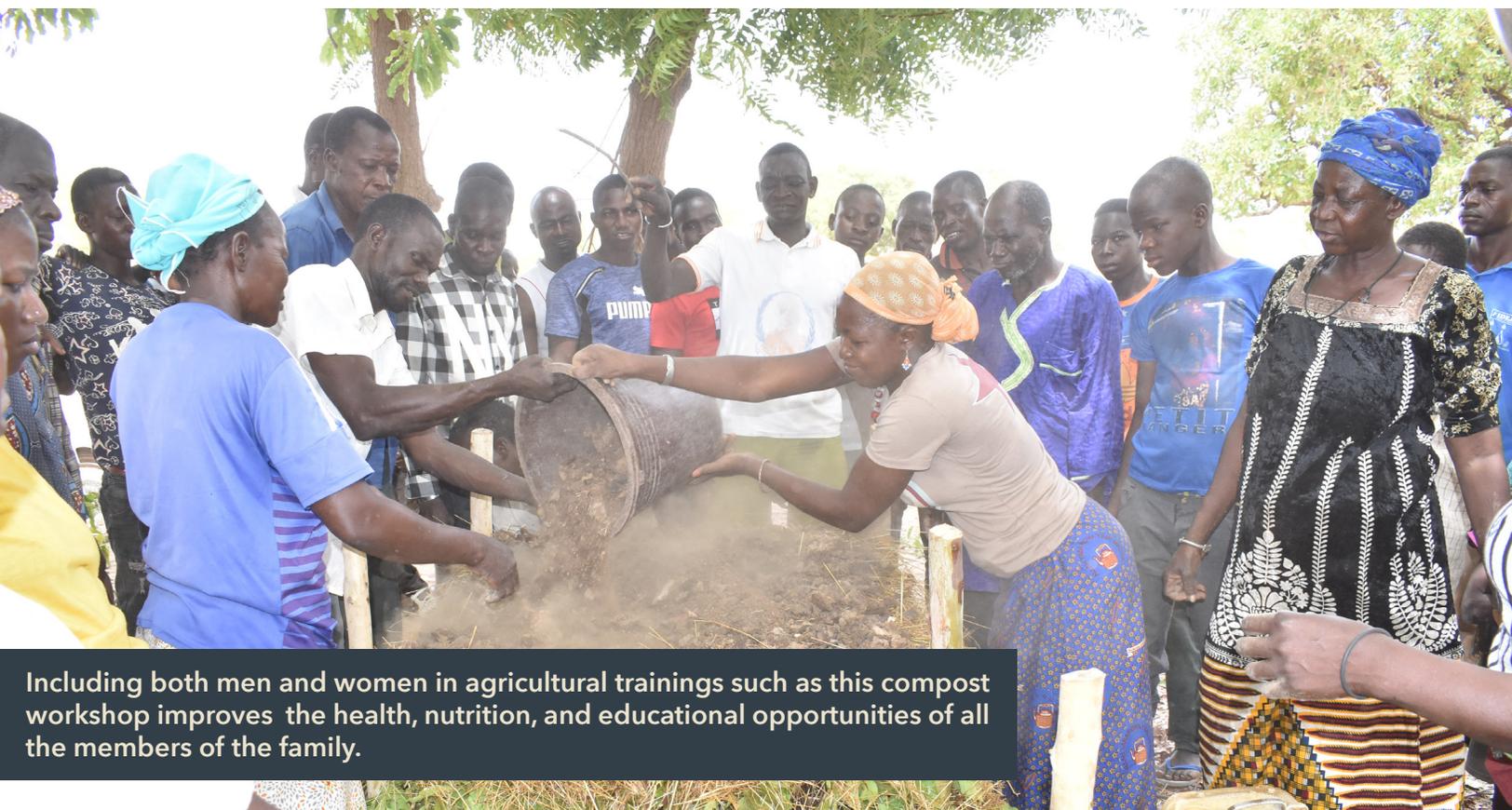
Improving Family Nutrition

A lack of access to good land and adequate resources is an ongoing challenge facing women in many countries around the world.

This gender inequality also means that women are often excluded from training events even though the knowledge conveyed may be more relevant to the lives and work of the women in the community. One of the many consequences of this bias is that the health, nutrition, and educational opportunities of children suffer. This is why ECHO provides trainings specifically for women and intentionally emphasizes including them in community-wide hands-on training events.

“One of the many consequences of this bias, is that the health, nutrition, and educational opportunities of children suffer.”

A story from an ECHO trainee illustrates how these obstacles are manifested – and the inspiring example of how they can be overcome. Joseph is an elder at his church in Cameroon. After attending an ECHO training, he applied the concepts and his crop yield doubled. Amazed that this increase cost so little, he began to share what he learned with others; in no time, he trained more than 100 people in nearby communities.



Including both men and women in agricultural trainings such as this compost workshop improves the health, nutrition, and educational opportunities of all the members of the family.



Female farmers trained from around the world. L-R Burkina Faso, West Africa; Myanmar, Southeast Asia; Tanzania, East Africa.

When he offered to train farmers in one nearby village, the Muslim men refused to participate because they assumed Joseph only wanted to convert them to Christianity.

Only women – about 20 of them – attended the training and learned about compost, liquid fertilizer, and other principles of farming.

Women there don't own land; they farm the plots their husbands allocate, which often means they are relegated to the worst land. After applying what they'd learned from Joseph, the women had amazing results even on those poor fields. Their husbands then said, "If this method can give such good results on poor land, imagine what can happen on good land!" Then they allocated good, productive plots to their wives and even learned from them.

Family food production increased. The women thanked Joseph not only for improved crop production, but also for changing the minds of their husbands so they now have better land to farm. 🌱



Elizabeth Mtei plants vegetable seeds from ECHO East Africa into tires with her son.

what's happening



Rice paddies at ECHO Asia were harvested, dried, and threshed, demonstrating alternative rice-growing techniques with farm visitors.



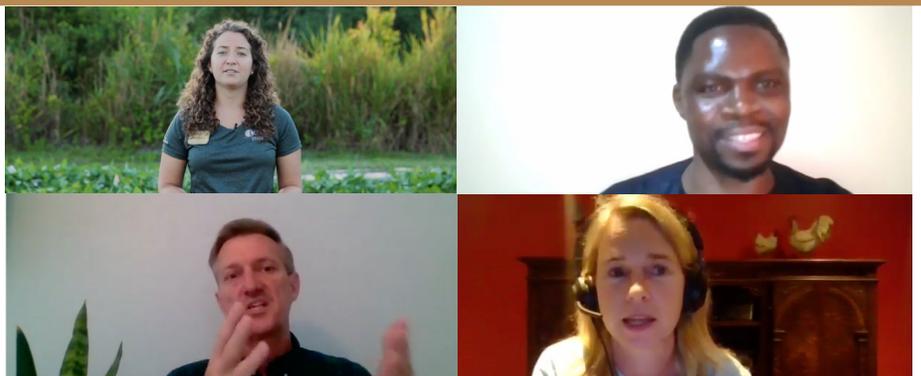
Follow up visits to the village of Bouldié showed families putting the skills they learned from ECHO to the test – with impressive results like this sorghum harvest!

#echofightshunger



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

Virtual International Conference



ECHO's Annual International Agriculture Conference went virtual! Though we missed seeing everyone in person, we were incredibly blessed to share 32 training sessions with 698 registrants from 70 countries!

g at ECHO



Neighboring Fields

Pastor Robert shows the difference between his field and his neighbor's field in a village in rural Burkina Faso. After last year's ECHO training, Pastor Robert put his new-found skills into practice with obvious results. The success of his harvest has made him a "living testimony" in the village.



Sharing 12,000 Multipurpose Trees



Students of Lengijave Secondary School in Arusha district prepare to plant trees at their school as part of a project providing 12,000 trees to local communities.



Car Tires as Donkey Collars?



Through Creative Capacity Building training, these women became part of the innovation process, using sidewalls of tires to make donkey-friendly collars and improved ox yokes.

Finding Hope Despite Challenges

A go-to-resource over many years, ECHO equips a pastor to improve farm land and provide for many orphans in his community.

In 2012, Pastor Satya travelled to the United States to visit donors and churches that supported the orphan care ministries started by his church in India. Pastor Satya had recently used their donations to purchase land on the edge of their city. His plan was to use the land to house, educate, and feed the dozens of orphan children in the care of his church body. Farming the land had proven more challenging than he had imagined, and even with assistance from local farmers he realized that he needed help to figure out what was going wrong.

Finding Training Through ECHO

While traveling to the U.S., someone recommended that he visit ECHO, and he immediately signed up for an upcoming class in Florida. During that class he learned about several factors in his soil that might be causing their lack of success.

Armed with this knowledge he returned home but was greatly disheartened to learn that his soil was laden with chemicals that would make the land very difficult to feed and train the children. Undeterred,

he started implementing some of the underutilized crops that he had learned about at ECHO and found that moringa grew well and was an excellent way to add nutritional value to their diets.

Six years passed and the orphan homes swelled with children. The Bible training center on the farm was training more kids and young adults every year. The need for healthy, affordable food was growing as well, and Pastor Satya's vision to develop the land into something that would provide for them was still alive.

“Moringa grew well and was an excellent way to add nutritional value to their diets.”

A Closer Resource

Pastor Satya reached out to ECHO's Impact Center in Asia, asking them for further training. Pastor Satya and a former-orphan-turned-staff-member named Ravi made the journey to Thailand.

In 2019, they were able to take what they had learned about the land they have, their questions, and their passion, to the new ECHO Asia Small Farm Resource Center in Chiang Mai. **The ECHO Asia staff customized a two-week training program for them where they gained hands-on experience with techniques, plants, and technologies that have the potential to vastly improve their land, and the lives of the orphan children.** Today they believe that they are on the cusp of a big change for their small farm.



Pastor Satya learned about moringa from ECHO and is teaching the children at the orphanage to grow and harvest this nutritious vegetable.

“After visiting ECHO Asia, I was able to see the solutions – not only to my problems, but also to

“After visiting ECHO Asia, I was able to see the solutions — not only to my problems, but also to the problems of other farmers around me.”

the problems of other farmers around me. So I am connecting to farmers here to share with them all that I have learned from ECHO Asia,” shares Pastor Satya.

They thank God for providing for the orphans in their care through ECHO’s mission and the donors who make this work possible.

Flourishing Gardens

2020 was a year of challenges for many around the world, and the orphanage was no different. But, with the support of the ECHO Asia staff, and hard work by Ravi and Pastor Satya, their gardens are flourishing.

“We started with some of the practices we learned at ECHO Asia, and by God’s grace we are getting lots of vegetables,” says Pastor Satya. “We are putting fruit trees in, and agriculture is going on very well. We now have a fish pond, six cows, chickens, ducks, and pigeons integrated into the farm.” 🌍

“ In Their Own Words: Lotan Njolay

“When the leaders of my village nominated me to participate in the ECHO training, I was excited. I haul and sell water to my fellow villagers using my two pairs of donkeys and oxen for the business, so I was needing this training.

Before the training I had already had a few ideas to develop an improved donkey cart. The training has put me in a right way. My farmland is small – about 1 acre, and I plant different crops: maize, beans and elephant grass. I use my pair of oxen to till my farm and also reach out to my fellow farmers who usually pay me for tilling their land. All technologies



that were developed during the training, such as ox yokes, harnesses, and donkey carts, are going to support my livelihood significantly.

The donkey cart can be pulled by only one donkey with such great efficiency; this was really amazing to me. Before the training I thought that donkeys have strong necks but through the training I learned that their strength is in their chest, and they should not bear yokes but should wear collars.

I have determined that after this training I am going to use the skills I gained to make my own technologies. I can make these collars and yokes for my animals and also sell them to my fellow farmers.”



Trained Years Ago, Still Seeing Results

Recent follow-up visits in West Africa, as rainy season ended and harvests are ready, reveal the hope two families have found – and now regularly share with others.

Meet Pastor Elie

Trained in 2016, Pastor Elie's enthusiasm for ECHO techniques has paid off. It is with emotion that he shared his testimony with us: "When I first attended the training, I felt like a huge need had just been met. So, I wanted to know more by attending the ECHO forum which was held a few months later in September 2016 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso." Back from the forum, Pastor Elie began to make compost and liquid fertilizer that he would apply in his fields during the next rainy season.

The first year, he achieved incredible results. On an area of 1.5 hectares, he harvests 30 bags of 100 kilograms of maize, or 1 ton per hectare. Before training, on the same area, he could only harvest 15 bags of 100 kilograms at most. Describing his improved production, Pastor Elie said, **"In 42 years of ministry during which I have always practiced agriculture to provide for the needs of the family, I finally had the hope of seeing our living conditions change."**

Pastor Elie also used these biofertilizers for the production of rice and market garden products. He said that the results have been remarkable. Those who bought his market garden produce came back to ask for more.

The unique attributes of his field attract the curious to whom the pastor gladly gives explanations of the techniques he applies. He continues to train others, mainly in the manufacture of compost and liquid fertilizer. He told us that these training times were also an opportunity for him to share the gospel.



Pastor Elie also put into practice the animal husbandry techniques he learned from ECHO. He now makes his own livestock and poultry feed for his animals. Today he has about 30 hens, 20 goats and sheep, and 10 oxen. He also started breeding quails, which are in great demand at the market. He told us that he sells his animals regularly to support his family.

The impact of ECHO's training is very visible in the life of Pastor Elie. With pride he said, "I am totally independent today. I buy very little meat at the market because I raise our animals myself. My family and I have food in quantity and in quality because for three years I have not had to buy grains at the market. In addition, the sale of my various products (rice, millet, corn, market garden vegetables) gives me a significant income. To transport my products, I was able to buy a motor tricycle and a small motor pump. My family's life has completely changed thanks to ECHO's techniques."

Meet Joël Coulibaly

Joël is 60 years old, and is married with children. After receiving his first training in 2015, he did not put the learned techniques into practice. "I said to myself that this is just one more training that will not change anything in our conditions," he explained.

But, in 2016 he attended a retraining during a session organized within his church. The testimonies of those who received the training and had applied the knowledge convinced him of the benefits of the new techniques. Back home, Joël started making the compost and liquid fertilizer that he was going to use for market gardening. "Even today, I am delighted to have made this choice because it has completely changed my life," he said.

Indeed, in 2017, after experimenting with these biofertilizers on two onion beds, Joël was particularly surprised to harvest a 220 pound bag. Before the training, on this same area, he could barely harvest 100 pounds despite the fact that he used the chemical fertilizer which was expensive. This feat encouraged him to increase his use of the new techniques and in 2019 he harvested 30 large bags from 22 onion beds, using only compost and liquid fertilizer. Satisfied with these results, Joël extended the use of biofertilizers to his corn and rice fields, as well as to his tomato beds.

"Every person who buys my onions and tomatoes once, always comes back for more," he said. "My customers appreciate my products not only for the size of the fruit, but also because they say they can keep for at least a month, without spoiling." With a broad smile he said, "Today, the amount I produce is still not enough to meet the strong demand of my customers."

Apart from agriculture, Joël is also involved in animal husbandry. To date, he has six head of oxen and 10 goats. With the training he received at ECHO, he prepares his own feed. He makes the salt-lick he uses for his animals and sells some of them, which has become another source of income.

His increased income has allowed Joël to save money for future goals. This year, Joël and his family used some of their savings to build a permanent house.

In addition, totally won over by ECHO's techniques, Joël has already trained others in making homemade liquid fertilizer. "With the quality of our soils which are completely degraded, I believe that only these new techniques will help us achieve food self-sufficiency. For that, training must reach many more people... and I can be part of that," Joël told us. 🌍

Opposite: Pastor Elie with some of his corn harvest. Right: Joël stands in front of his new brick house built with his increased income.



Intern Spotlight

Noah Coleman

I grew up 7 degrees north of the equator in a rural and remote village in the Republic of Cameroon. As a young boy, it was here, toiling in the groundnut fields under the equatorial sun and savoring mangoes in the shade during the harvest season, that I developed a passion for tropical agriculture. I have lived and worked alongside farmers who make less than a dollar a day, who have experienced the crushing weight of a fruitless harvest or the loss of an entire crop. As an unbanked rural farmer, you run out of options. **Surrounded by extreme poverty, preventable nutritional diseases, and subsistence farming, I began to see agricultural development as a field in which I could have a significant localized impact and that I would enjoy working in.**

My agricultural experiences from my youth directly impacted my academic trajectory. I finished undergrad with a B.S. in Agriculture and Natural Resources and a B.A. in French from Berea college while also completing internships and field experiences in Uganda, Cameroon, Guinea, and Trinidad and Tobago. From there, the Lord flung wide the gates towards UC Davis where I completed a M.S. in International Agricultural Development with research based on moringa production in Kenya.

I arrived at ECHO not to a hearty, celebratory welcome but to friendly "Hellos from a social distance and the solitude of a 2-week precautionary quarantine. During this time, I wrote, prayed, read, Zoomed,

live-streamed, and read some more. I finished 4 books and SO many agricultural articles. Those two weeks were restorative and clarifying for me, providing a space and time to process the transition and prayerfully prepare for the future.

I've been wanting to come to ECHO for 7 years and this internship has been more than I was even hoping for. Each day is a bit different and that keeps me hungry for more. I spent Earth Day learning how to safely harvest and steward wood resources. A couple months ago, my cows broke out of their pasture 10 times in a 48-hr period requiring that I stop everything and chase them around the farm.

Recently, I harvested a field of peanuts that I planted, consumed an entire crate of avocados, read books, built some trellises, performed pregnancy diagnoses on some cows, assumed responsibility for watering the greenhouse and hoop house, designed a low-input cow chute, installed a fertigation system (irrigation that can be supplemented with synthetic or bio-fertilizer), led five tours of our farm, splashed in flooded pastures, and savored the sweetness of the hard-to-describe jaboticaba, lemon-drop mangosteen, strawberry tree, and miracle fruits.



As I continue in the Internship and consider next steps, I'm excited to walk in obedience as the Lord leads. 🌍

Noah Coleman, Tropical Highlands Intern

Where There's a Will, There's A Way



Extraordinary Plants

Spice Trees You Can Grow

Wishing for a way to add a little “spice” to your life? While “herb” and “spice” often appear together, the difference between the two is easily defined. Herbs are the leaves of fresh or dried plants, while spices are the aromatic parts (the buds, fruits, berries, roots, or bark) of plants and/or trees.

Allspice (*Pimenta dioica*) – The name “allspice” describes its flavor, which resembles a combination of nutmeg, cinnamon, and cloves. One of the Myrtles, this compact and handsome evergreen tree has aromatic, leathery leaves.

Bay Rum (*P. racemosa*) – A native of the West Indies and northern South America, this erect tree has a cylindrical crown and flaking bark. Bay rum, long popular as a hairdressing and after-shave lotion, is made by distilling the aromatic leaves of this tree in rum. Today, bay leaf oil is distilled by water or steam and used in perfume blends and men’s toiletries as well as a flavoring for soups, meats, and condiments.

Bay Leaf (*Laurus nobilis*) – The bay tree may have come originally from Asia Minor, but it has been in the Mediterranean region for so long that it is thought of as a native. In ancient Greece and Rome, poets were honored with crowns of laurel and were hailed as poets laureate, a term we still use today. In the kitchen, you will find the dried leaves go in and with almost everything, from savory meat and fish dishes to pasta sauces and even sweet dishes, such as custard. 🌿

While there is much we can’t foresee (we were reminded of that in 2020, for sure!), there are ways to plan with certainty when it comes to our ultimate goal of providing for our family and leaving a lasting legacy.

Even if you don’t consider yourself wealthy, taxes can still take a considerable toll on your estate. Planning your will is one way to make sure your hard-earned assets pass to your loved ones and the charitable causes you care about.

Flexibility

Your will can provide for your family while also specifying that **a designated amount, a particular asset or a percentage** goes to support ECHO’s mission. You can also structure your will to make a gift to ECHO from what remains of your estate after all gifts have been made to your heirs. A bequest is also **revocable at any time** if your goals or situation changes.

Is it time to update your will?

Experts recommend reviewing your financial plans every three to five years. In addition, these events can mean it is time to reassess your will:

- Changes in the value of your assets*
- Birth of a grandchild*
- Selling or purchasing real estate*
- Moving to a new state*
- New tax laws*
- Changes in your charitable goals*

To learn more or explore other options to leave a lasting legacy of helping the hungry, call Amy Wiggins, Advancement Director, at (239) 567-3341. 🌍

Sample language for your will:

To name ECHO as a partial or full beneficiary in your will or bequest, here’s the language to use: “I do hereby give, devise and bequeath to ECHO, Inc., a not-for-profit organization located at 17391 Durrance Road, North Fort Myers, FL 33917, Tax ID# 23-7275283, XX% or \$XX, of my estate to support for general use and purpose.”



17391 Durrance Road
 North Fort Myers, FL 33917
 239-543-3246 | www.echonet.org



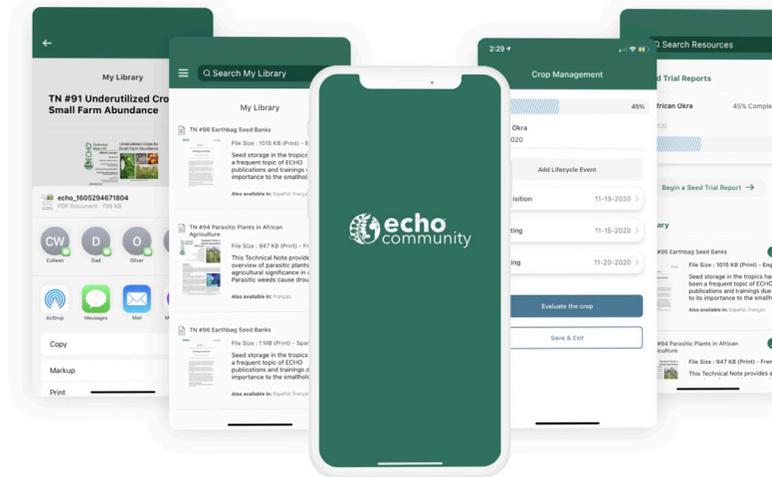
New Mobile App

We are excited to announce the immediate availability of the ECHOcommunity Mobile App!

This free app has been developed to help missionaries and development workers use and share resources when their work extends out beyond internet connection.

App users can:

- Read Documents Offline
- Watch Videos Offline
- Share Resources Offline
- Keep Detailed Crop Records
- Use in Ultra-Low Bandwidth Mode



May the knowledge resources and hunger solutions shared by ECHO reach many more lives in 2021! 

