

A Girl From Chestnut Ridge Inspires Hope in the Dominican Republic

Grace Goldberg-Springer, a twelve year old from New York, recently travelled to the Dominican Republic to help build the local enterprise project her fundraising has made possible.

Brattleboro, VT April 1, 2010 - Grace Goldberg-Springer, a twelve-year-old girl from Chestnut Ridge, means it when she says she believes in taking action to help other people. Grace began helping children in La Lomita, an impoverished community in the Dominican Republic, when she was ten. For her 10th birthday, she asked her friends not to bring her presents, but instead school supplies to help the approximately 100 school age children who live in La Lomita.

Her commitment to the community did not stop there. This year Grace has raised over \$1,500 by making and selling necklaces and earrings to start an egg producing business in La Lomita. This small project will go a long way to help this poor but strong community on its journey toward economic sustainability. Part of the proceeds from the egg business will go support and feed the poorest members of the community.

Grace learned about La Lomita through GRACE Cares a 501(c)3 not-for profit organization founded by her aunt Dr. Zoe Kopp, uncle Dr. T. Namaya and cousin Kenneth Giancola. GRACE Cares is actually an acronym for Growth, Resources, Action, Community, Empowerment. The not-for-profit helps with small sustainable community development projects that assist poor communities, including La Lomita, to become self-sufficient.

La Lomita and the surrounding communities are some of the poorest on the island with a lack of food, education, and clean drinking water. It experiences high birthrates, lack of employment, and a host of ongoing basic needs. In partnership with members of the local community and Dominican project leader Ruben Ottenwalder, it was decided to start a small enterprise of raising chickens to produce eggs. The eggs are used for children's nutrition and sale, providing both health and economic benefits to the community.

Last month, Grace Springer-Goldberg traveled to the Dominican Republic to meet the people of La Lomita, and help build the coop that will hold 100 chickens. Her experience at the farm at Green Meadow School in Chestnut Ridge, NY prepared her to help build the coop and enabled her to share knowledge of growing beans and tomatoes. While in the Dominican Republic, Grace participated in meetings with community leaders to review future projects. One such project will involve the formation of a local community non-governmental organization and an agriculture cooperative. Grace said, "We must continue to focus on helping people help themselves." The people of La Lomita were inspired and grateful that someone so young, from so far away had done so much to assist them.

GRACE Cares has been facilitating partnerships for small projects in developing areas since 2002. GRACE's projects in the Dominican Republic include an elder care home, a drinking water project, and support for a community center and school. In keeping with GRACE's partnership model, local communities match outside donations with monetary or labor contributions. GRACE has ongoing and planned projects in Dominican Republic, India, Haiti, and the United States.

Contact:

Zoe Kopp, President

GRACE Cares, Inc.

koppzoe@yahoo.com

<http://www.gracecares.com>