

kids  
can make a  
difference®

# NEWSLETTER

Winter 2003 VOLUME 8 NUMBER 1



## Looking In, Looking Out... by Jen Chapin

During my first semester at music school in Boston, I would lock myself in a practice room and spread my *New York Times* out over the piano keys. There I would sit, slumped over with guilt as I dug into the news. It would take a while before I would get around to my Ear Training, and my reading would be taunted by fluid scales of other fingers that filtered in from adjacent practice rooms. I felt like a fraud. I loved music so much, but it all seemed so specific, and my unfocused mind would not permit me to swim in it to the exclusion of other things.

At night, I would go home to my Cambridge apartment and proofread the papers of my Harvard graduate school roommate. She was a socially-minded woman with aspirations of public service in government, and I could see myself in her place. I had just arrived with a degree in international relations from a liberal arts college where I had spent my time writing papers on subjects like government in Zimbabwe and US-Mexican Relations. I was passionate about studying these topics, and eager to deepen my understanding of education, public policy, literature, and different cultures. My interests were not just academic; they were somehow personal.

### About this issue...

Before you start reading the first article, please turn to page 11 to learn what you need to do to remain a subscriber to this newsletter. Enclosed in this issue is a self addressed envelope so you can notify us how you want your subscription handled.

This issue attracted a diverse group of writers to continue the theme of "responsibility" launched last issue. Jen Chapin (page 1) discusses the road she traveled to incorporate her singing career with her need to help bring hunger in our country and world to an end. As you will read, this mission is a family affair.

Joan Dye Gussow (page 4) addresses her responsibility as a nutrition educator. She speaks to our large audience of nutrition professionals and suggests some solutions that can be taken in addressing the real issues involved in global hunger.

Ava McCall (page 6) asks teachers how can we focus on educating our students and ignore the problem of poverty and hunger in our schools and communities? She discusses the need for teachers to become activists for long term solutions.

Following up on the articles by Robert Hinkley and Mark Maier in the previous issue of the newsletter dealing with corporations, Beth Segers (page 8) reflects on how she manages to integrate her day job as Managing Director of Putnam Investments into "real life."

A Religious School Director, Jim Dricker, (page 10) shows how "it is the doing that makes a difference." Jim describes the responsibility he feels all of us have to end hunger. He grapples with the question of how can we hope to end malnutrition and starvation on a global level and explains from a Jewish perspective what our responsibilities are.

Enjoy

Then there was music. My spirit and my body depended on it. I had been a listener and a singer for all of

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

my life. I was able to take this for granted until my college band came apart during senior year. School was to end and real life to begin, and it occurred to me that I might not be able to live without being involved in making music, in some way. So I turned down a slot in a Master of Arts in Teaching program to become an undergraduate again at Berklee College of Music.

### **KIDS Advisory Board**

**Anne Baker**-*Global Education Director National Peace Corps Association*

**Jen Chapin**-*Songwriter, singer, teacher. Chairperson of the Board of Directors of World Hunger Year (WHY).*

**Jane Darby**-*Teacher (NYC)*

**Rex Enoch**-*Global Education Director for Heifer International*

**Marta Flanagan**-*Minister (Unitarian Universalist)*

**Joan Dye Gussow**-*Professor Emeritus, Teachers College, Columbia University, author.*

**Andrew Steven Halperin**-*Attorney*

**Stephanie Kempf**-*Author (Finding Solutions to Hunger:), teacher*

**Olivia Ifill-Lynch**-*Educator, Founder and principal of The School for Academic and Athletic Excellence (NYC)*

**Ava McCall**-*Professor and Department Chair, Curriculum and Instruction department, University of Wisconsin Oshkosh*

**Julianne Rana**-*Program Coordinator World Hunger Year (WHY)*

It's a little weird to go from weighty class discussions about education reform to the connect-the-dots work of notating a basic bossa drum pattern. But what was even stranger was to go from forming abstract questions on social, political, and economic issues --thinking about the world--to the immediate tangible little problems of what chord should go next. If I was going to sing – if I *needed* to sing, I needed songs, and I wanted to write them myself. This was what I wanted to learn when I came to Berklee. So my focus had to turn inward.

How crucial is self-absorption to the process of making music or any form of art? And when your body is your instrument, and your own psyche is your subject, how do you survive the tedium and narcissism of looking into this ever-present physical-emotional mirror? Today, as a musician in New York City, I struggle with these questions every day. I want to find the inward balance of discipline and introspection to make good art, but both my life and my art demand that I turn away from this mirror to feel a vital connection to the striving, suffering, dancing outside.

My father Harry Chapin had wrestled with these issues, years before, in a different context at a different time. At the age when I was singing in the James Brown Ensemble and studying jazz harmony, he was a self-taught folkie, writing and performing songs inspired by the message-driven music of Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger. He deeply desired success, but by the time he hit number one on the pop charts, he had begun to question what, if any, meaning lay in

achieving status as a "rock star."

Conversations with my mother and his good friend Bill Ayres deepened his concern over the self-absorption of the 70s, coming so soon after the idealism and social activism of the previous decade. Famines in Bangladesh and Ethiopia were in the headlines, and my dad became especially disturbed over the existence of hunger in a resource-rich world. He would say that hunger was "an obscenity" and that hunger in America was "the ultimate obscenity." In 1975, he and Bill founded WHY (World Hunger Year). The name came from the urgency they felt, which told them that we needed to ask WHY hunger exists in a world of plenty, and that every year was world hunger year until hunger was eliminated. A new life began for my dad. The ensuing whirlwind of lobbying, meetings, and appearances combined with an impossibly busy schedule of concerts and recordings only accelerated until he died in 1981.

(Continued on page 3)

*(Continued from page 2)*

It's hard to avoid clichés in describing the impact this legacy has had on me, especially the obvious one that my father's short life is “a lot to live up to.” And it has been, and remains, a lot. The fact is that I was raised on the idea of fighting social inequities even more than I was raised to make music. But both are in me deeper than any pressure derived from a legacy. So far I have been spared the pressures of commercial success that my dad faced, but not the desire to make some small dent in the injustice of this world. Of course, I am always hoping to make that dent with the music itself—then my sometimes-dueling passions are united in work. When I find a turn of phrase or melody that seems like it might be able to really reach people where they are — when, in a lyric, I can touch on some of those "outside" things that are so thick in my heart — when I manage to tap on the hurts of the world without being preachy, then, I am happy! But it's an elusive thing. It seems much easier to just get out there and try to help in ways I can see and touch.

Last year, I became Chair of the Board of Directors of WHY and now find myself increasingly excited and involved. I love that WHY looks beyond band-aid remedies for hunger to dig into root causes and empowering solutions. And I am energized by WHY's vision of the whole picture – from organic community gardens in inner-city neighborhoods re-connecting people to the land, to micro-credit enabling people to start their own small businesses, and beyond. As someone who has always been interested in education, I love WHY's commitment to getting the word out, especially to young people through our excellent “KIDS Can Make a Difference” program and curriculum.

So I'm still in the practice room with my *Times*, stealing time away from music to try to feel that link to the world. This is part of my essential nourishment, even if it continues to come with a pinch of guilt. (How ironic to feel bad that I'm worrying about poverty at the expense of rock & roll!) It is all wrapped up together in me—the looking in to write songs, the looking out to learn and to work with WHY. Now I work to find the balance, and to make these different aspects of my work coherent to myself and to others.

It all makes sense, in a way. Art is the ultimate expression of humanity. When we write a song, or launch into a saxophone solo, or paint a picture, we are sharing with each other our yearnings, our heartbreaks, our spirit. Hunger and poverty are the denial of humanity. They rob us of spirit, and break down all aspirations but simple survival. So it is natural to work to vanquish one while exalting in the other—certainly both efforts require much creativity! When I remember this, my work finds symmetry, and my days sing in harmony.

*Jen Chapin is a songwriter, singer, social activist and educator. Her latest CD release *Open Wide*, a duo album with acoustic bassist Stephan Crump, has been praised by critics as “enormously potent” (*JazzTimes*) and “exquisite” (*Memphis Commercial Appeal*). Jen is Chair of the Board of the non-profit organization WHY (*World Hunger Year*) which finds and supports innovative community-based solutions to hunger and poverty, a member of the KIDS Advisory Board and currently teaches “Music and Social Action” and “Black Music in America” to teenage girls in NYC. For more information on performances, recordings and other activities, please see [www.jenchapin.com](http://www.jenchapin.com). For more about WHY visit their website at <http://www.worldhungeryear.org> or call 1-800- 5-HUNGRY.*

**KIDS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE<sup>®</sup> NEWSLETTER**

**A PROGRAM OF WORLD HUNGER YEAR (WHY)**

**Published by:**

**Jane Finn Levine, Ed.D. and Larry Levine**

**P.O. Box 54, Kittery Point, ME 03905**

**(207) 439-9588, FAX (207) 439-4917, email: [kids@kidscanmakeadifference.org](mailto:kids@kidscanmakeadifference.org),**

**<http://www.kidscanmakeadifference.org>**



## **The Role of Food Professionals In Ending World Hunger...**

**by Joan Dye Gussow**

**T**wenty five years ago, alumnae who came back to our departmental reunions would, at some point in our conversation, often say something like the following: “My boss said to me the other day, ‘Oh, you seem to be interested in World Hunger; you must be from Teachers College.’” It was a sad commentary we thought—though we took it as a compliment—but it was probably true. Nutritionists were not routinely taught about world hunger because the dominant view in the nutrition profession at the time was that hunger was about the race between population growth and food production—the first being the domain of population experts and demographers, the second being the domain of agricultural scientists and farmers. Nutritionists didn’t seem to fit into this picture.

And so it was not a nutritionist, but a young social worker named Francis Moore Lappé who wrote *Diet for a Small Planet*, the book that told Americans how our high meat diet helped cause world hunger. Grain fed to beef, she concluded, was taken from the mouths of the hungry. By eating just one less hamburger a week, we could help feed the poor.

Subsequently Lappé and co-author Joseph Collins concluded that *Diet’s* answer was simplistic. In *Food First*, they argued that there was no lack of food in the world, that almost every nation could feed itself if given the chance; people were hungry not for lack of food, but for lack of power to grow or purchase it. Mostly people were hungry because they were poor, and they were poor because of unjust systems that kept them that way. Here then was work for political scientists, economists, development experts and the like. What was there for nutritionists to do?

The answer in one sense was obvious. Of all these professions to whom “solving” hunger was “assigned” at one time or another, none was involved directly with helping individual people get appropriate food. But nutritionists—not nutrition scientists but practicing nutritionists—were almost always involved directly with food and people.

Over the last twenty-five years, at least partly because of government programs designed to address food needs in the United States, more nutrition professionals have become engaged in domestic hunger issues. Notwithstanding this involvement, world hunger, and the tough questions it raises about the sustainability of the global food system, have not ranked high on the list of issues engaging our profession,

Indeed, it has been difficult for the members of the professional organizations of nutrition practitioners—the American Dietetic Association and the Society for Nutrition Education—to raise food security issues within their organizations because discussions of food system sustainability inevitably suggest (correctly, but provocatively) that the present food system is not sustainable. Nutrition professionals are wary of being seen as critical of the present food system since they feel the need to keep on the good side of the food industry, the largest industry in the United States

It is perhaps significant in that regard that the Society for Nutrition Education’s fifteen-year-old Division of Sustainable Food Systems (DSFS) is looked upon as somewhat radical by many of the Society’s other members. And the American Dietetic Association’s special practice group (DPG) on Hunger and

*(Continued on page 5)*

(Continued from page 4)

Environmental Nutrition (HEN) struggled to be born and now struggles to bring to the attention of its colleagues the real meaning of food security.

But there is hope. As former Chair of HEN Sue Roberts wrote in the DPG's Winter 2001 newsletter, September 11, 2001 raised the national interest in "food security," and by so doing gave HEN's members the opportunity to move the meaning of that phrase beyond the notion of simply guaranteeing a secure food supply "to the newer meaning of locally grown, sustainable food that is secure," not only for those of us in the United States, but for hungry people around the world

As we work to educate our colleagues about the real issues in global hunger, I can think of no better resource than the one that is giving me talking space, the Kids Can Make a Difference Newsletter—and KIDS wonderful curriculum *Finding Solutions to Hunger*. The lessons it teaches can educate not only kids, but the adults they live with—and all of us in the profession who need to widen our gaze beyond teaching our clients how to select from the ordinary or emergency foods which they have available.

As professionals, we must wake up to the fact that our nation's food system has often been responsible for *creating* world hunger through actions that disempower poor nations. Then we must begin acting on the discomfoting reality that unless every person in the world can be given access to food or the resources to produce it, none of us will be food secure in the long run.

*Joan Dye Gussow is the Mary Swartz Rose Professor Emerita of Nutrition and Education at Teachers College, Columbia University (NYC) where she formerly headed the Nutrition Education Department. She is author, co-author or editor of a number of articles and several books. Her latest book, This Organic Life: Confessions of a Suburban Homesteader, was published by Chelsea Green Publishing Company and released May 1, 2001. She is a member of the KIDS Advisory Board. Joan Dye Gussow may be contacted at jeg30@columbia.edu.*

## Did you know...

**800 million people go hungry every day in the world. How is it that 33 million of them live in the United States—the world's number one food exporter?**

Source: Fatal Harvest: The Tragedy of Industrial Agriculture, edited by Andrew Kimbrell, distributed by Island Press



# Subscribe to the Newsletter

If you are not presently a subscriber, don't continue to count on the charity of others. Take this opportunity to receive this publication three times a year.

*A suggested contribution of \$9 is appreciated*

Name:

Address:

Telephone:

e-mail address:



## **But I'm A Teacher, What Does the Problem of Poverty and Hunger Have to Do With Me?...**

**By Ava McCall**

**A**s teachers, can we focus on educating our students and ignore the problem of poverty and hunger in our schools and communities? Even though we might not want to address these issues because they are often sensitive and complex, they are frequently part of our own lives, our students' lives, our communities, our society, and our world as a whole. If we are committed to "leaving no child behind" and helping all children and youth learn and develop their many talents and gifts, we must address the issue of poverty and hunger.

Each day we walk into our classrooms, we are likely facing students who currently live in poverty and are probably not receiving the nutrition or health care they need to make them ready to learn. Approximately 20% of the children in schools today could be classified as poor. Their families often struggle to provide enough food, pay the rent or mortgage, or meet the cost of health care or child care (Edelman, 2001). The problem of poverty and hunger is worsening with the current economic recession, a woefully inadequate minimum wage, and welfare reform. An increasing number of family members are losing their jobs, working fewer hours, or losing public assistance benefits (Bivins, 2002). Even if our students' adult family workers are employed full time at a minimum wage, they usually remain in poverty. When the children and youth in our classrooms are too ill, tired, or hungry to learn, our efforts to promote their academic progress are futile. In short, poverty and hunger limits our abilities as teachers to promote learning and our students' intellectual, social, emotional and physical development.

When our students' families are too burdened with the frustrating task of providing basic necessities on a limited income, they are frequently unable to help their children with academic tasks, communicate with school staff, or participate in school activities. The shame families frequently feel because of poverty often prevents them from expressing their families' needs to us as teachers. Helping their children with homework, attending PTA meetings, parent-teacher conferences, school open houses, and special programs are a lesser priority for adult family members than working to provide food, clothing, and shelter for their children. In essence, poverty can prevent the creation of close relationships between our students' families and the school, which are crucial for children's academic progress.

For educators dedicated to "teaching [as] our vehicle for making a difference in the world" (Berman, 1990, p. 80), then we have additional reasons for addressing poverty and hunger. One is concentrating on meeting the immediate needs of hungry children and youth so they are ready to learn. Our schools can offer breakfast and lunch programs free of charge or at a minimal fee during summer programs as well as the school year. However, these programs need to be provided without the stigma attached to receiving "free" meals. One of the preservice teachers in my social studies methods class still recalls the shame as a child of having a special lunch ticket which entitled her to a free or reduced price meal. We can also provide before and after school child care and assist families in utilizing local food banks and other social service organizations which provide food, clothing, free or reduced health care, and rent assistance.

Webster Stanley Elementary School in Oshkosh, Wisconsin is an excellent example of a school staff dedicated to addressing the problem of poverty and hunger among their own students. The school not only

*(Continued on page 7)*

(Continued from page 6)

has free or reduced cost breakfast and lunch programs, but morning snacks are served to all children. Teachers and other staff members collect used or purchase new clothing to provide winter clothing for children without gloves, hats, snow pants, and coats. Providing health care for low-income families who do not qualify for other forms of health care is another service provided at the school through the Kids Care Services. Funded through the local hospital's foundation, the Kids Care Services pay for a nurse practitioner who completes initial examinations, treats patients with antibiotics, orders prescriptions, and connects children and their families with the medical community. Finally, through the YMCA, the school offers before and after school child care at a minimal cost. The staff at Webster Stanley recognizes they cannot focus on academics without addressing their students' basic needs.

As teachers we can also focus on poverty and hunger by directly teaching about the reasons for these problems in order to move away from the tendency to blame the poor for their condition. One excellent resource is the curriculum guide *Finding Solutions to Hunger: Kids Can Make a Difference* (2001), which provides lesson plans for teaching about the causes of hunger. When our students, families, or colleagues complain that poor people are "lazy," and don't work hard enough to provide food for their children, we must cite the very inadequate minimum wage of \$5.15 per hour which does not allow families to move out of poverty. In fact, families need a self-sufficiency wage, which provides a level of income for a family to meet basic needs of food, housing, child care, health care, and transportation without additional public or private assistance (Pearce & Brooks, 2000). For metropolitan areas of Wisconsin, a self-sufficiency wage should be at least \$6.00 per hour for one adult to as much as \$19.00 per hour to support a family of six. Edelman (2001) recommends a \$2.00 increase in the minimum wage in order to approximate the purchasing power of the late 1960s. If we feel comfortable, it can be a powerful teaching/learning opportunity to share our own experiences of growing up poor and hungry and why our families struggled economically. As one of my college students reminds me, poor people are not "others," but include "us."

Another way to make a difference as teachers in addressing the problem of poverty and hunger is by becoming activists for long-term solutions. We can lobby Congress to raise the minimum wage to a self-sufficiency wage, provide universal health care or at least health care for low-income families, increase affordable housing, and enlarge funding for child care. We can work with local and state government and social service agencies to meet these same needs within our own communities. These actions may lead to the creation of communities and a society in which the children and youth we teach can grow and flourish.

Finally, we can teach for activism among our own students in addressing the problem of poverty and hunger. When we provide opportunities for our students to learn about why people are poor or hungry, consider short-term and long-term solutions, and join with others who are working to solve the problem, we can promote academic growth and empower children and youth to make the world better. The *Kids Can Make a Difference* newsletter and the *Finding Solutions to Hunger: Kids Can Make a Difference* (2001) curriculum guide offer many examples of actions students can and have taken to help solve the problem of poverty and hunger. As they engage in these activities, students are not only developing academic skills, but the life-long skill of improving our world and ending the problem of children who come to school unable to learn because they are hungry.

*Ava McCall, Ph.D. is professor and Department Chair of Curriculum and Instruction Department, College of Education and Human Services at University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, Oshkosh, WI. She may be reached at mccall@uwosh.edu. Her web site is www.socialstudies.esmartweb.com. She is a member of the KIDS Advisory Board.*

#### Resources

- Berman, S. (1990). Educating for social responsibility. *Educational Leadership*, 48, 75-80.  
Bivins, L. (2002, March 1). The new face of hunger: Food banks say need increasing. *The Oshkosh Northwestern*, p. A1, A6.  
Edelman, P. (2001, August 1). The question now isn't just poverty: For many, it is survival. *The Washington Spectator*, 27, 1-3.  
Kempf, S. (1997). *Solutions to hunger: Kids can make a difference*. New York: World Hunger Year.  
Pearce, D. & Brooks, D. (2000). *The self-sufficiency standard for Wisconsin*. Madison, WI: Education Fund of the Wisconsin Women's Network.



## **Reflections on How to Integrate One's Day Job into a "Real Life..."** **by Beth Segers**

If this were really your one and only life, would you be OK with the choices you have made? Forget the past, since that's done, but would you change your present situation of how you spend your time, your talents and your treasures? Someone once asked me this question, posing it hypothetically, to get me to reflect on my days. Years later it hits me that it's good to re-ask that question, if only as a reminder that this *is* our one life. The choices, while never perfect, must add up to something worthy of this gift.

So how do I justify working in Corporate America? Simply put, it's my day job that allows me to do much more outside the office. Having worked for nearly 20 years in the heart of various financial firms, I've had to square the seeming contradiction of wanting powerful roles inside the firm while also wanting to hurry to get outside the office where I think my work counts more. Earlier in my career I climbed ladders only to question the view - now I first check the wall against which any ladder is placed. I passed through the period when I thought I should quit a senior role to go serve food in a soup kitchen. Friends who run shelters tell me that they'd rather have colleagues "inside" who can be relied upon to help fund, as well as serve the food.

Which brings us to the topic of hunger. What are you hungry for? For many of us, the answer is fortunately not food, but meaning. And while family, friends, health and a vital role at work are pieces, the whole must include those beyond our private circles. Meaning invokes community and the idea that we are only strong as the weakest among us. Seeking out the weak became a priority, and in my case I gravitated towards children and education. Years later I've added some work with those struggling with mental health. Whatever your passion or interest, it is more than matched by those in need.

So I began to tutor kids, inner city 10-14 year-old boys to be specific, all of whom were living below the poverty line. Most are from single-parent families in which that parent did not get far in school, and could offer little homework help. The kids work hard, attending school 7 a.m.-9 p.m. daily, and performing community service each Saturday. Twelve years later I have former students who've graduated from college and have gone back to volunteer at the school too. This is a circle of meaning that helps me as much as any student. Tutoring there weekly led to serving on the board, writing a strategic plan, and seeing more than 40 spin-off schools nationwide use our model. So the circle keeps expanding. And it satisfies both my hunger for meaning and the needs of these kids.

Recently I met a neighbor in our parking lot. It was dark, late and cold, but we spent a minute to chat. She looked a little different but we kept talking, sharing minor news and talking about the encroaching winter. Then she showed me what was in her hand - a silly hat - and explained that she was just coming in from "clowning" for children at Mass General Hospital. It explained the face paint on her nose, but also her enthusiasm, as she told me how much she loves their laughter and their enjoyment despite their illnesses. It would be hard to discern that her day job is that of being a lawyer.

My corporate "day job" allows me to unite the volunteer parts of my life with the responsibilities I face daily at work. It also lets me share stories with the many groups with whom I interact, and to challenge colleagues to see their job as but a fraction of their life and responsibility for others. It also helped me to reflect on what I was trying to accomplish in taking on more roles outside of work. Sharing time, talent or treasures with

*(Continued on page 9)*



*(Continued from page 8)*

others is not about accumulating psychic brownie points for a next life's anticipated salvation. For me the meaning comes now, in catching the rhythm of God in this life, and I've found that this involves embracing those in need.

There are many types of poverty, including the poverty of spirit of those who cannot think beyond their own needs. That is another responsibility of a corporate "day job" – to remind people that the hunger for meaning is a good hunger when it leads to service.

*Beth Segers is a Managing Director of Putnam Investments, based in Boston, where she leads industry analysis and market planning. She also serves on a handful of non-profit boards in the Boston area (Nativity Prep, Franciscan Counseling Services, Restoration Project, and the Investment Committee of St. Anthony Shrine). She can be reached at [beth\\_segers@putnam.com](mailto:beth_segers@putnam.com)*

### **A Word From Jane and Larry...**

Thank you, one and all, for your response to our end of the year appeal. You have demonstrated once again, your strong and loyal support to KIDS and belief in our mission of helping young people understand that it is within their power to make a difference in their communities and world.

Our year end appeal drew support in the form of new contributors, increased contributions from long time supporters, and continued support from believers in the program.

Every gift makes a difference to the continued financial viability of KIDS. We especially appreciate your support during this downturn in the economy, at a time when we are facing a challenging year for fundraising, and a time when we faced a twin technological disaster:

1. For the last six weeks or so, we have been involved with computer and internet problems. These problems had a negative effect on the program during the critical "hunger awareness" period in most schools (Thanksgiving to Christmas). Our main computer died a terrible death forcing us to spend money to replace it. In addition, our backup computer had a hard drive failure-leaving us only with a laptop. We would have been able to manage while waiting for the new unit and replacement for the hard drive, but additional problems were lurking in the background.
2. Our internet provider went out of business and we ended up in the hands of a new provider. We will not bore you with the details, but the startup period was a disaster!

All the problems have been resolved (we hope), but it cost KIDS a great deal of money—not only to replace the computer, but in lost sales and contributions through our web site. But, as we all knows, "life happens."

As the New Year begins, we look forward to moving forward and continuing to spread the word about KIDS.

Thank you, once again, for your strong support.



## **It Is The Doing That Makes A Difference...** **by Jim Dricker**

**A**s a religious school director for a Jewish Congregation in New Hampshire, I am responsible for supervising the education of approximately 100 students from kindergarten through seventh grade. Younger students from kindergarten through grade two attend our school for one and three quarter hours a week during the regular school year. Older students, from grade three through seven, attend three and half-hours a week. An important component of our curriculum is to educate our students in the ethical teachings of Judaism. The obligation to end hunger is prominent in this. For a Jew, to feed the hungry is considered a *mitzvah*, a commandment that is not negotiable.

There is another reason why feeding the hungry is so important in Jewish education. In Hebrew, the word for “virtue” is *midah*. This word can also be translated as “measure.” Our virtues are our measures. In Judaism, many of the human virtues or measures are derived from an understanding of God’s qualities. This is so because humankind is created in God’s likeness. To the extent we possess the divine in ourselves, so too we have the same virtues. Just as God feeds the hungry, so must we feed the hungry. To do so is part of our nature that derives from the holy sparks that burn within us. Since it is within our nature, it also follows that it is within our capacity.

To end hunger on a local level is one thing. How can we possibly hope to end malnutrition and starvation on a global level? There is also a teaching in Judaism that says, “You are not expected to complete the work, yet you are not free to evade it.” We shouldn’t avoid undertaking more than we can accomplish because of the size of the task. To realize this protects us from abandoning in frustration a job that turns out to be too big to complete alone or in our generation. Although none of us can feed everyone who is hungry, each of us can do something to make this world closer to being a place where everyone is adequately nourished.

To teach one has the responsibility to end hunger, to teach one has the power to end hunger, and to act to feed the hungry, are separate and easily disconnected in an educational lesson. How successfully we can bring these three together is the measure of the effectiveness of our moral education program. With the help of the teacher guide, *Finding Solutions to Hunger: Kids Can Make A Difference*, we have been able to bring education about hunger into our ethics curriculum in a way that bridges learning and doing.

But, ultimately, it is the doing that makes the difference. It doesn’t matter how personally responsible one feels, or how empathetic one is toward the hungry, or how sophisticated one’s understanding is about the causes of hunger, if action doesn’t follow insight and feeling. From a Jewish perspective the true measure of a person’s worth is in the deed.

*Jim Dricker is Director of Religious Education at Temple Israel in Portsmouth, New Hampshire and a member of the Jewish Storytellers Network. He may be contacted at [JDRICKER@aol.com](mailto:JDRICKER@aol.com)*

### **A thought to ponder...**

“War may sometimes be a necessary evil. But no matter how necessary, it is always evil, never a good. We will not learn how to live together in peace by killing each other’s children.”  
*Nobel Lecture, delivered by former President Jimmy Carter*

## An Important Word About Your Subscription..

### Are you a subscriber or a “subscriber”?

Periodically, we go through our KIDS Newsletter mailing list to determine who has paid for a subscription. Payment is determined by contributions to KIDS during the past year, from our newsletter appeal, or from our annual fundraising letter, or purchased a KIDS Teacher Guide. If you have done any of these, there is no need for you to read any further. KIDS thanks you for your support.

It turns out that there are a whole bunch of you who have not paid for your subscriptions, far more than we realized. You are what we term “subscribers.” And that is not good (for us) for two reasons:

1. We need your financial contributions to operate the program.
2. Subscribing (and resubscribing) is a pretty clear statement that our newsletter (published 3 times a year) is valued and likely read—not thrown away or put in the Infamous Pile.

So we are on your case. Please fill out and return the form below to us as soon as possible. (Please check the appropriate box if in these tough economic times you cannot afford to contribute but want to continue receiving the newsletter.) We have included an envelope for this purpose. It is also important for you to let us know if you don’t want to continue receiving the KIDS Newsletter—we won’t be insulted, and the trees will thank you.

**Please fax (207) 439 4917 or mail to us in the enclosed envelope right away...**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Sign me up for a subscription; \$9/1 year

I/we want to become an active supporter of KIDS.  
In addition to becoming a subscriber, enclosed is  
a contribution of \$\_\_\_\_\_

#### Method of Payment

Check

Visa

MasterCard

American Express

I/we can’t afford to pay for a subscription, but  
keep sending the newsletter

Please remove my name from the mailing list

Credit Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration date \_\_\_\_\_

# 2001 TEACHER GUIDE AVAILABLE Contains Updated Statistics & Resources

***Finding Solutions To Hunger: Kids Can Make A Difference  
by Stephanie Kempf.***

Uplifting, engaging, interactive and challenging lessons for middle and high school students on the root causes of and solutions to domestic and international hunger. Examines colonialism, contemporary development projects, the media, famine vs. chronic hunger, the working poor and more, as well as valuable ideas for how kids can make a difference in their community, and in the world around them.

**Price... \$23 + \$6 shipping. Includes free one year subscription to the KIDS Newsletter!**

**To Order... Send check, purchase order or Visa  
Mastercard or AMEX number to:  
KIDS, PO Box 54, Kittery Point, ME 03905  
(207) 439-9588, (207) 439-4917 FAX**

---

**“If I were a teacher struggling to help students remain human in a sea of cynicism and self-absorption, I would grab onto this book as if it were a life raft and use it to bring my class to shore.”**

*Joan Dye Gussow, Professor Emeritus,  
Teachers College, Columbia University*

---



**P.O. Box 54  
Kittery Point,  
ME 03905**

The purpose of **Kids Can Make A Difference®** is to inspire young people to realize that it is within their power to help eliminate hunger and poverty in their communities, their country, and their world.