

Grants for Permaculture Design Course Create Network of Partners

When Mainsprings, the Reed Jules Oppenheimer Foundation (RJOF) and Restoration Agriculture Development (RAD) first collaborated in 2012 to transform the Mainsprings flagship campus in Kitongo into a Permaculture-based system, the soil was hot, sandy, dry, and unproductive. It was essentially a grassland desert. Over several years, we worked to design systems to keep water in the soil, incorporate a diverse variety of tall trees, shrubs, bushes and vines and increase the biodiversity and fertility of the soil. After integrating so many types of species of plants to our farm, we've witnessed that each variety provides something unique to the soil and to our community at Mainsprings. The farm has flourished and butterflies, bees and birds have returned. Instead of walking in the hot sun, our students and community members now walk in the cool shade of mangoes, papayas, and bananas trees overhead.



As permaculture began to thrive at Mainsprings, we realized that we were living and working in a beautiful, natural classroom that could be used as an example to illustrate the possibility of this in many different locations. After partnering with RJOF, RAD and the Valley Foundation once again, we created a pilot grant program which allows East African organizations to receive training, support, and funding to implement and spread these permaculture practices within their organizations and the communities they serve. Our hope was to create a fertile environment for a network of partners to work together allowing all of our communities to thrive.



This idea created so much excitement that we were able to raise enough funding to allow ten organizations to participate in this pilot project this year. Within an application window of one month, we received over 30 applications from organizations in seven countries across the East African region. These organizations represent children, women living with HIV/AIDS, health systems, people with disabilities, subsistence farmers, pastoralists, and all the surrounding communities in which they work. Together with Mainsprings efforts, we are collectively impacting the lives of over 12,000 people across Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, and Malawi.

From February 10-17th, we welcomed two representatives from each organization, along with 12 other independent participants who learned how to design and implement permaculture in our second annual International Permaculture Design Certification Course. The attendance was four times that of our first course, and our campus was bustling. Permaculture expert Mark Shepard and our very own Max Kitafula led this cohort through a variety of topics and practical sessions.



Left: Participants of the PDC Course learning how to use an A-Frame to make level contours to capture as much water as possible on a piece of land. *Right:* Participants take to the fields to practice installing berms and swales.

Permaculture (cont.)

It was inspiring to see how all of these participants started to envision what their own farms, land, and campuses could look like using these methodologies. We have always known that when standing alone, we are limited in what we can accomplish. With a mission like Mainsprings' of alleviating rural poverty in East Africa, it is through a diverse network of passionate partners like these, that we will truly see change on a very grand scale. This new grant program helps to create a strong network, leverages our knowledge and impact, and ensures that all of our communities will truly have brighter tomorrows.



Celebrating Seth Diemond's Service to Mainsprings

After nearly seven years of dedicated service, we have recently celebrated COO Seth Diemond's last official day at Mainsprings. After many years in Tanzania, he has decided to move back to the US to be closer to family. When Seth first joined the team in 2013, our Secondary School was only one year old (we hadn't graduated a single class yet) and our permaculture farm was only a few months old and struggling to survive because of a persistent goat problem. During his time, first serving as the Campus Director in Kitongo, then as COO in Tanzania, where he oversaw both Kitongo and the initial development of our second campus in Kahunda,



Seth has been a part of some incredible transformations and growth. We've had dozens of new buildings and programs, five graduations from our Secondary School, graduates finishing their studies and getting their own jobs, residential girls growing from shy little ones into confident leaders, and the growth and promotion of many staff. We are incredibly grateful for Seth's dedication and hard work during his tenure. We will miss him in Tanzania, but wish him all the best and know that he will always be a member of the Mainsprings family.

Our Brand New Computer Lab

Thanks to our generous local supporters at the Grumeti Reserve Fund and Singita in Tanzania, our computer lab has recently received a major upgrade! What was a simple tablet library now has all new solar, ceilings, and fans for keeping the room cool, new windows, and, most importantly, 35 new desktops and laptops so that every student in a class can have their own piece of technology. Thanks to a partnership with Shule Direct, a Tanzanian organization that is devoted to making the Tanzanian curriculum integrated into an interactive platform to enrich a student's understanding with extra computer-based lessons and activities, our students will now be able to access the world of technology all while improving their understanding of their traditional subjects. We are excited to continue to be a leader in education in Tanzania, not only helping our students excel on their national exams, but preparing them for the globalized world we all live in. Many thanks to the Grumeti Reserve Fund for their continued support of all our programs and making upgrades like this possible!



See it for yourself!

Want to visit the campus for yourself? Now is the time to sign up for this summer's trip June 4-15 or 17-29. Travel with a staff person from the US to our campus and see all that we do first hand. Add on a safari to your trip to make it truly remarkable. Contact Kate Alao for more information! (kate@mainsprings.org)

Empowering Local Leadership

When we first started as an organization, we always said “we want to be an organization for Tanzanians, run by Tanzanians.” After spending a few years volunteering before starting Mainsprings, our Founder & CEO, Chris Gates, witnessed countless examples of well-meaning organizations and initiatives fail because they were either too reliant on one person to run it all, or didn’t have the idea of long-term sustainability in mind. With each and every step of our development and growth, we have tried to plan for longevity. With the departure of Seth Diamond this month, we are excited to announce that we already have the leadership in place to continue our work in Tanzania and develop our programs even further.

We are excited to announce that our Kahunda Campus Director, Lyimo, has been promoted to Country Director in Tanzania. Along with his right hand man, Peter, our Administrative Director, they will be responsible for the day-to-day oversight of our 100+ staff at both campuses in Tanzania and making sure that all of our programs and projects continue to grow and thrive. After seeing what these two individuals have accomplished over the past several years, we could not be more excited and proud of the work that is happening in Tanzania, and know that we are just at the beginning of what type of change is possible through YOUR support and THEIR passion and dedication to living out the mission.

With this transition, we are also proud to announce that the staff in Tanzania is now 100% East African! This news is the result of many years of intentional training and strategically delegating responsibilities to various members of our leadership. We are confident that the individuals we have in place now are going to be able to carry Mainsprings even further through more culturally relevant programming, deep relationships with our communities and the Tanzanian government, and a passion to help make the lives of their fellow Tanzanians better and better.

We firmly believe that we all have a role to play in our mission to alleviate extreme rural poverty from wherever we are- from our volunteers who become our ambassadors, to our supporters who enable the incredible work we do, to our US team who provides the support and oversight necessary to continue grow, to our team in Tanzania who work in our classrooms, farm, clinic and home day in and day out. This new step is exciting for the future of Mainsprings and the future of Tanzania!



Lyimo has been Campus Director in Kahunda for 3 years. He brings his background of education and program leadership to help oversee all of our departments and campuses at Mainsprings.



Peter joined Mainsprings in 2018 as Administrative Director. Under his leadership, he has helped to continue to improve our financial systems, HR policies and Tanzanian governmental compliance as we continue to grow.

Tanzanite Nights

Mark your calendars now and visit www.tanzanitenights.com to reserve your tickets!

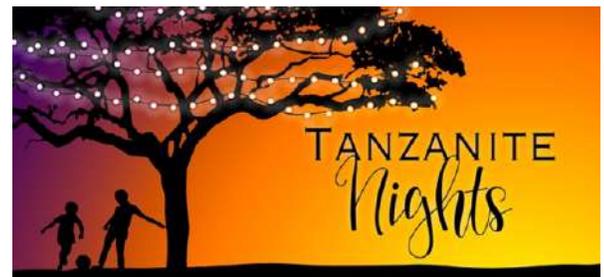
TANZANITE NIGHTS TULSA

Friday March 27, 2020

6:00 pm

Central Park Hall, Tulsa Expo Square

An evening of food, African music, live auction and activities celebrating the work of Mainsprings. Stroll through lush gardens reminiscent of our campuses and enjoy food inspired by the coasts of Zanzibar, the markets of Mwanza and our own farm and restaurant.



TANZANITE NIGHTS

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS NYC

Friday May 8, 2020

9:00 pm

Industria, New York City



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Students Headed to Nairobi for Robotics Competition

Our first set of robotics supplies only arrived at our school last June. Today, when you look at the incredibly complex robots created by our students under the supervision of our Dean of Students, Mr. Samo, one would think this program has been in place for years. It was thanks to our sister school, The Episcopal School of Dallas, that robotics took root on our flagship campus in Kitongo. After ESD hosted six of our teachers and administrators at their school in Texas last April, they sent over the supplies to start teaching basic robotics and coding.



The robotics club started as just an after school program, but soon it was apparent that we needed to incorporate it into our curriculum on a wider scale. We worked with ESD once again to get the supplies to make it an elective class in our school schedule this year. Taking the passion and excitement that was clearly building around this program, our Dean of Students submitted an application to the East African Lego Robotics Competition in Nairobi, being held this March. Mainsprings was selected to participate, and ESD is sponsoring Mr. Samo and 7 students to travel to Nairobi in just a few weeks to compete. This is the first time any of these students have traveled outside of Tanzania, so Mr. Samo has spent weeks securing the passports and permissions needed for the group to undertake this adventure. The team is ready and excited to represent our Joseph and Mary Schools in Nairobi. Both students and staff alike are even more committed to develop our school into an example of what technology can do for the education of students across East Africa.

