



# LA COSECHA

*The Harvest*

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## SMALLER WORLD BUSINESS PARTNERS CHALLENGE

Sustainable Harvest International has been challenged by current Smaller World Business Partner AVA Chemical Ventures to recruit 100 new Business Partners in 2006. If we are able to meet their challenge, AVA Chemical Ventures will increase their donation to \$3,000 in the coming year! This will enable SHI to extend our programs to work with one of the many communities on our waiting list. Can you help us meet this challenge?

The Smaller World Business Partners Program gives companies the opportunity to become directly involved in our efforts to end poverty and deforestation in Central America. By making a donation and educating your community about our work, your business will take responsibility for its environmental and economic impact on our planet. Smaller World Business Partners are encouraged to join at the following levels:

- **\$300** a year provides technical training and support to a family.
- **\$3,000** a year provides support to an entire community
- **\$15,000** a year provides salary, transportation, training and materials for one extensionist to work with as many as 60 families in 5-6 communities in his/her country.

Business partners pledge to support SHI's programs on an annual basis to ensure the longevity of the work. All Business Partners will receive updates and photos of the work they support, a certificate and be featured on the SHI website. The opportunity to visit SHI programs on a Smaller World Tour is also available. Please contact our office to learn more about this and other Smaller World opportunities.

## Field Program Update

### Honduras

In the past six months, Honduras reached the mark of over a million trees planted in the eight years that SHI has been working in the country, and we're still counting. The round number is important of course, but more importantly this is a testament to the continuing success of the reforestation and agriculture efforts of the SHI program. Country director Yovany Munguia notes that strong rains in Honduras affected some results, but that "still we reached the goals we set for our entire

work year in six months, which means we have to adjust those goals and do more." Indeed, that means that in the past six months, over 80,000 trees were planted, 121 acres were reforested, and over 270 acres have been improved by use of sustainable and organic methods. This is a testimonial not just to the SHI staff, but also to the people of the more than 400



**Happy Helpers - Honduras:** These children help their mom in the kitchen by pulling corn off dried cobs. SHI is helping families like this one grow corn without the use of toxic and expensive chemicals. This corn will be ground and mixed with lime to make traditional tortillas.

Continued on  
next page.



Photo by Susan Goldsworth

Panamanian farmers preparing tree seedlings for transplant.

our families want to work with us more when the rains let up a little. Things will get better, and people know that is true when working with SHI.”

### Panama

The Panama program has been slightly hampered by lack of a third extensionist for the past six months, but that has meant that our two active extensionists have worked twice as hard. SHI Panama instituted an orange tree planting program that has meant over five acres replanted and 7,000 trees planted in the first two months of 2006 alone. Almost 40 acres have been improved in the last six months, a result that country director Ximena Moncada qualifies

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### Field Report Continued from Page 1

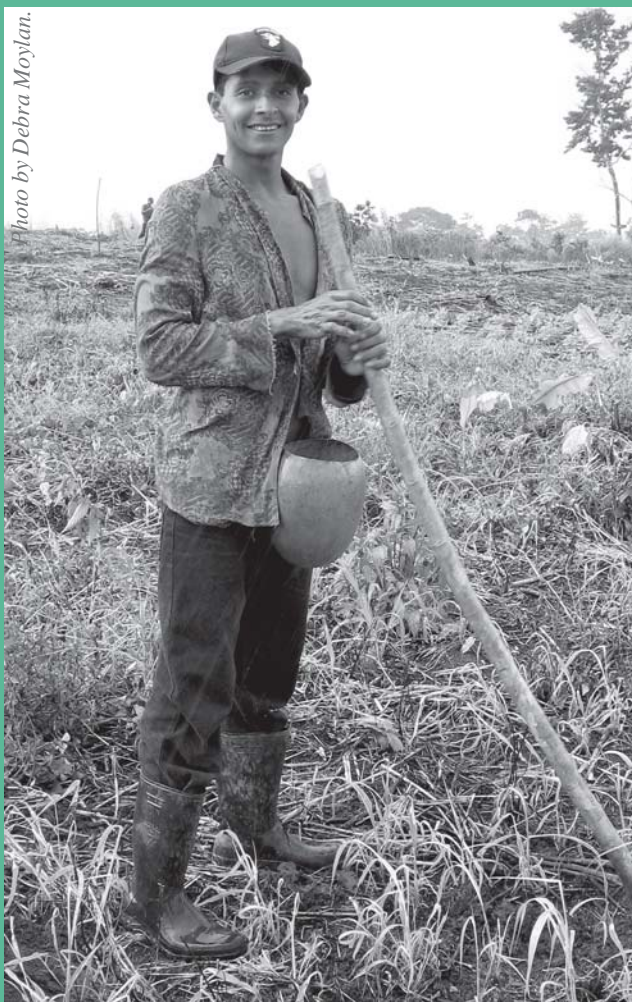
families and 32 communities that are part of SHI’s work in Honduras. SHI Honduras also now has over 227 associates in its rural loan program, which is crucial to raising the income levels and health standards of Honduras. The loan program coordinator, Lili Andrade, writes that “Our loan programs mean people are less desperate, and when that happens people don’t do damage to the environment as much. You save trees by saving the people.”

### Belize

While still carrying out its chief work in helping farmers to begin using sustainable agricultural practices and lessen the use of slash-and-burn techniques, the Belize program has been particularly successful recently in outreach and education efforts with adults and schoolchildren. This has involved workshops in organic composting methods and drying food products for sale in the local markets. In the past six months,

family gardens have also been emphasized and in this time over half of the 122 families that we work with in Belize have set up family gardens that provide better nutrition to their families, as well as being a small source of income through sales of excess produce. “Our other goals haven’t been what we wanted, but are not too bad,” lead extensionist Candido Chun reports. “We have improved about 43 acres in the past six months, and planted almost 4,000 trees. That’s not as good as we’d like to report, but some of that has been due to weather, and anyway

Photo by Debra Moylan.



SHI Participant Don Amador from El Coloradito, Nicaragua plants bean seeds.

as “Not bad, but we’ll do better.” She will be hiring a new lead extensionist this month and expanding the program to over 100 families, and hopes with the upcoming designation of SHI Panama as an independent non-profit organization she can really expand the work that the program does. She also hopes to help families working with SHI reach out more to local markets. “When we improve standards of living, we make everything better. The forest, the land, and the lives of the poor.”

## Nicaragua

“The weather has been very weird this year for us,” country director Marvin Gonzalez reports. “Hurricanes and heavy, heavy rains have hit near here, but in our actual work area we have been faced with near drought in some areas; then when it stopped raining elsewhere we suddenly got near floods.” Despite the strange weather, almost 45,000 trees have been planted in the last six months with SHI Nicaragua’s help, and almost 155 acres have been improved with sustainable agricultural methods. SHI Nicaragua also received substantial funding from the Trickle Up Program to implement a new small business program and an expanded rural loan program, and the results of that give hope to many of the families who live in deep poverty within what is the western hemisphere’s second poorest country (behind Haiti). SHI Nicaragua is working very hard in establishing seed storage silos and dryers, especially important in wet weather. Six seed banks have been set up to make sure the communities where we work have continuing and stable access to seed for planting.

In January, SHI Nicaragua had its first visit from a Smaller World group, and these visitors saw first hand the difficult circumstances that our staff faces in this country. Several commented that it was a life-changing experience, and indeed the hope is that SHI Nicaragua is a part of changing lives for both Nicaraguans and those who come to know them.

## Congratulations Flo!



Photo by Douglas Reed.

Sustainable Harvest International Founder and President, Florence Reed, received an honorary doctorate from Southern New Hampshire University. Flo received this distinguished award alongside economist Jeffrey Sachs.

## 1,700,000 Trees!

We are very proud to announce that Sustainable Harvest International’s programs in Central America have planted **more than 1,700,000 trees and converted more than 5,000 acres to sustainable uses.** Reforestation plays a major role in SHI efforts as it helps to restore the natural forests, build healthy soils and protect important watersheds. Our local staff provide families with the materials for reforestation projects and they give them the training they need to put the trees to use on their farms. Families learn techniques for saving tree seeds, grafting and strategies for planting that will enable them to benefit from the harvests of fruits and nuts while preventing erosion.



Photo by Alexandra Dylke.

# SUSTAINABLE TECHNOLOGY

Field Program Director, Greg Bowles

## Saving Seed in Nicaragua

Seed drying and storage facilities are crucial to SHI's work in Nicaragua where there is relatively little access to commercial seed. When commercial seed is available, many farming families live in such poverty that purchasing seed can be a great burden. By enabling families to maintain their own seed, SHI is helping them reduce their dependency upon outside seed, including genetically modified seed that is now for sale in many parts of Central America.

Techniques and storage facilities for seed saving are relatively simple, but extremely functional and easy to take care of. One such device is essentially a long wooden tray with a rolling metal roof cover. The cover serves to protect from rain, but can be drawn back for dumping the seed, and on sunny days can be left open for the seed to be dried. Storage facilities can also consist of raised sheds, which protect from both animals and rainstorms. Dampness and humidity can lead to rot, so it is crucial for the storage space to be clean and dry.

Storing seed is both a survival mechanism and a commercial venture for many of the families in SHI's program. The seed and the grains saved are used by the families themselves for replanting, or are sold. The sale of seed is being used by SHI Nicaragua families to establish small credit and loan programs. In this case, seed creates "seed money" that in turn supports small business ventures and further agricultural development.

Small silos can serve not only to preserve seed, but can also preserve the grains grown from seeds themselves. These grains are mainly stored for family consumption, but also allow families to sell their grains at good market prices. Most families in the region tend to harvest at the same time and then sell at the same time causing market prices to be very low. With storage silos, families can store grains and sell them at times when they are able to get a higher market price.

The region where SHI works in Nicaragua is particularly prone to hurricanes and heavy rains, receiving on average about a third more rain than the rest of the country. Dried seeds maintain their viability for up to ten times as long as other seeds. This is crucial for planting crops in the region or for re-planting if there has been a natural disaster or some other type of crop failure. The basic storage and drying techniques that we teach are a hedge against the weather conditions. The training we provide and the facilities we help build are a crucial part of improving lives and consequently improving the environment in Central America.



Photo by Mercedes Alvarez



Photo by Bruce Maunum

Top: Seed dryer  
Center: Elevated storage building  
Bottom: Sisters with storage silo

# My Summer Vacation Piloting Chicken Tractors in Panama

Member of SHI's Volunteer Board of Directors, Ron Poitras

OK, so it was in January of 2006 but it was really warm and it felt like summer; and really no, it wasn't a vacation, but it did turn out to be a very memorable experience. What I am referring to is my recent ten day excursion to Panama with Sustainable Harvest International(SHI). I along with 17 other SHI supporters visited with families who work with SHI and spent several days helping them with a variety of chores from planting fruit trees and cutting and processing sugar cane, to teaching organic growing techniques and building chicken tractors. Being an organic farmer from the great but frozen state of Maine, it was wonderful to be able to once again sink my hands, this time into the warm mother earth of Panama. I was so impressed with the dignity, kindness, and resourcefulness of the Panamanian people. The SHI program clearly makes a big difference, not only in their lives, but by saving acres of land from deforestation.

Touring the countryside, it does seem like everyone in Panama keeps chickens. They are everywhere. On my farm, chickens are among my best allies for building soil fertility and boosting crop yields, but they must be managed. A device I use extensively is a chicken tractor, which is basically a bottomless cage or pen that can easily be moved around. I love these tractors! They are easy to build, run on bio-fuels and help maximize the many benefits from having chickens. For example, with a chicken tractor:

1. Birds are put to work scratching over the ground in a relatively small space, mixing organic matter, eating

weeds and seeds and insects, and of course manuring the ground and increasing fertility.

2. Moved from growing area to growing area every week or two, chickens are concentrated in one area just long enough to complete all these tasks but not so long that they cause compaction or acid soil conditions.

3. Chickens in a chicken tractor are protected from dogs and other predators.

4. Managed in this way chickens obtain a substantial portion of their feed – as much as half – from the fresh grass, weeds and bugs that they eat.

5. Research indicated that eggs and meat obtained from poultry raised in this way are high in nutritional value.

As part of our work tour in Panama this January I helped organize a workshop where we worked together with some of the farmers from the village of Bella Florida to build a chicken tractor. Three groups of Panamanians and gringos assembled various pieces of the tractor that fortunately at the end of the day all fit together. It was fun and the chickens

liked it! Now we have a working model at the farm of Digna Rodrigues that others can build from and adapt for their own use. Chances are good I'd say that we will see a whole lot more chicken tractors in Panama next time we visit!

For more information on chicken tractors there is a summary of the concept written by Andy Lee at [www.agroforestry.net/overstory/overstory50.html](http://www.agroforestry.net/overstory/overstory50.html)

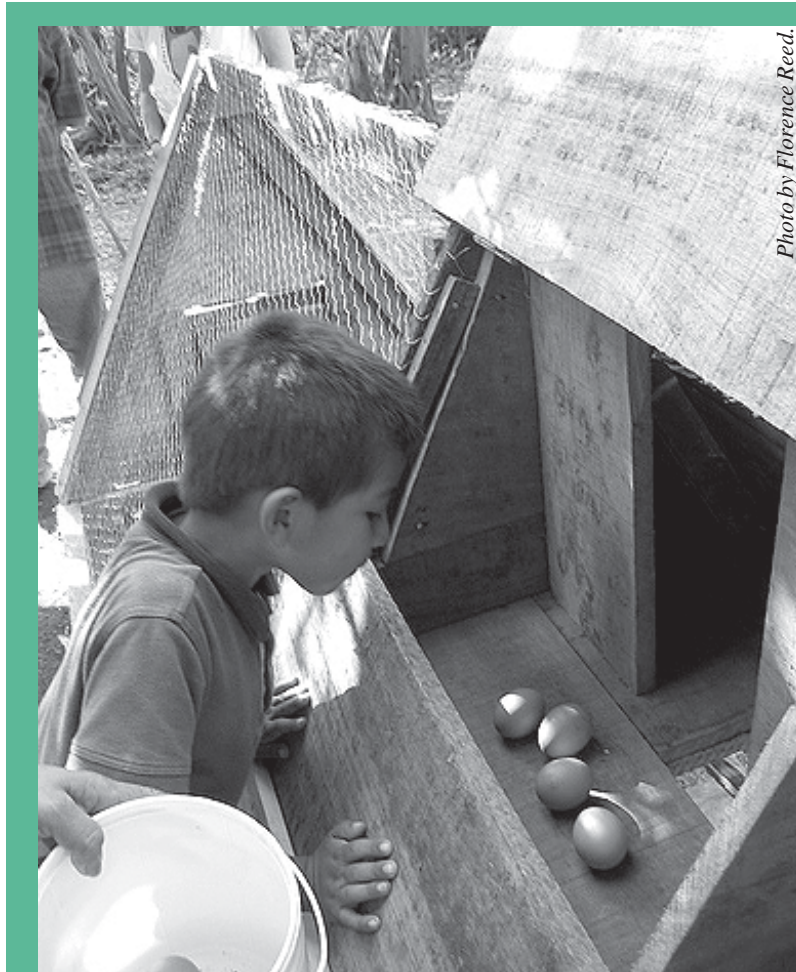


Photo by Florence Reed.

A young farmer collects eggs from a chicken tractor nesting box.

# They Are Learning How to Make the Land Productive

## Testimonial from Maria Fidelina Chirinos

### Benjamin Trochez School, La Laguna del Carmen, Honduras

My name is Maria Fidelina Chirinos and I am the Principal at "Benjamin Trochez School" in the Laguna del Carmen community in the Quimistan District. Our school has eighty students.

Sustainable Harvest-Honduras has been helping our school for two years, and during this time we have established several gardens where we grow some vegetables. These vegetables are used to improve students' diets and a small portion are sold in the community. The money we get from these sales is used to buy other food products needed for children's lunches.

Salomon, the SHI extensionist who helps us, has taught the children to make natural fertilizers, to prepare seedbeds, and to sow the gardens in a sustainable manner. Teaching them now the right way to grow food will help them in the future when they be-

Photo by Debra Moylan.

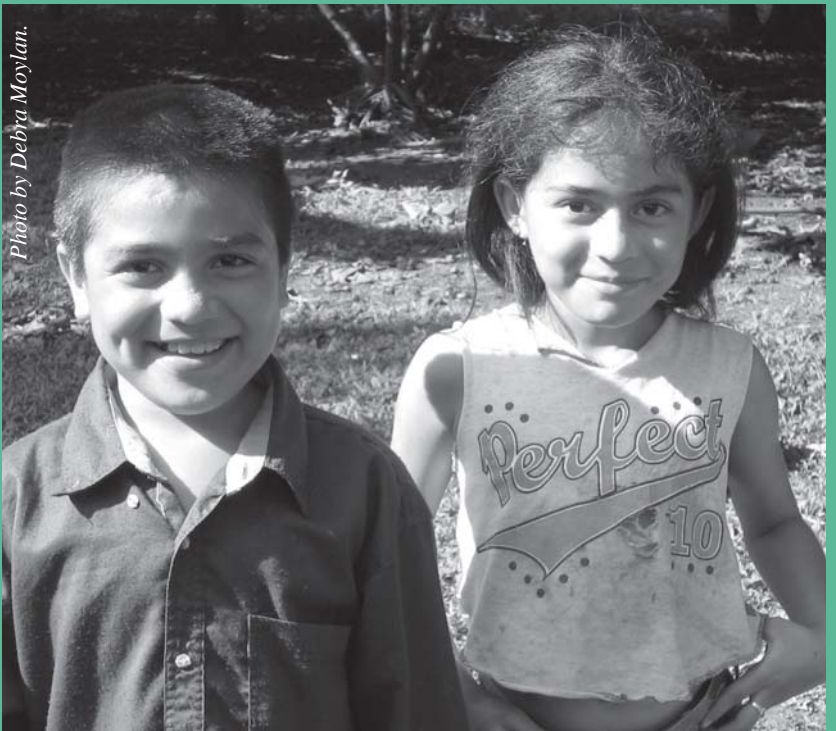


Photo by Laura Brown.



come adults and have to cultivate their own lands. There are some kids who are starting to grow small gardens at home and they are asking Salomon to teach them how to graft so they can grow their own plants.

Last year we also built a nursery with 150 trees, which were used to reforest the water source in our village.

Another task that we accomplished and which was supported by the organization was building three metallic trash containers and four signs with environmental slogans. We placed these signs throughout the community. This was done to educate our children and their families about the environment.

Professor Elman Suazo and I thank Sustainable Harvest and the Geiger family from the United States for all their support and help to our school and the students. We hope to keep on working together in the gardens and orchards, as well as other projects.

🌱 *Special thanks to Margarita Baca for her translation.*

# Rice Paddy Eco Systems

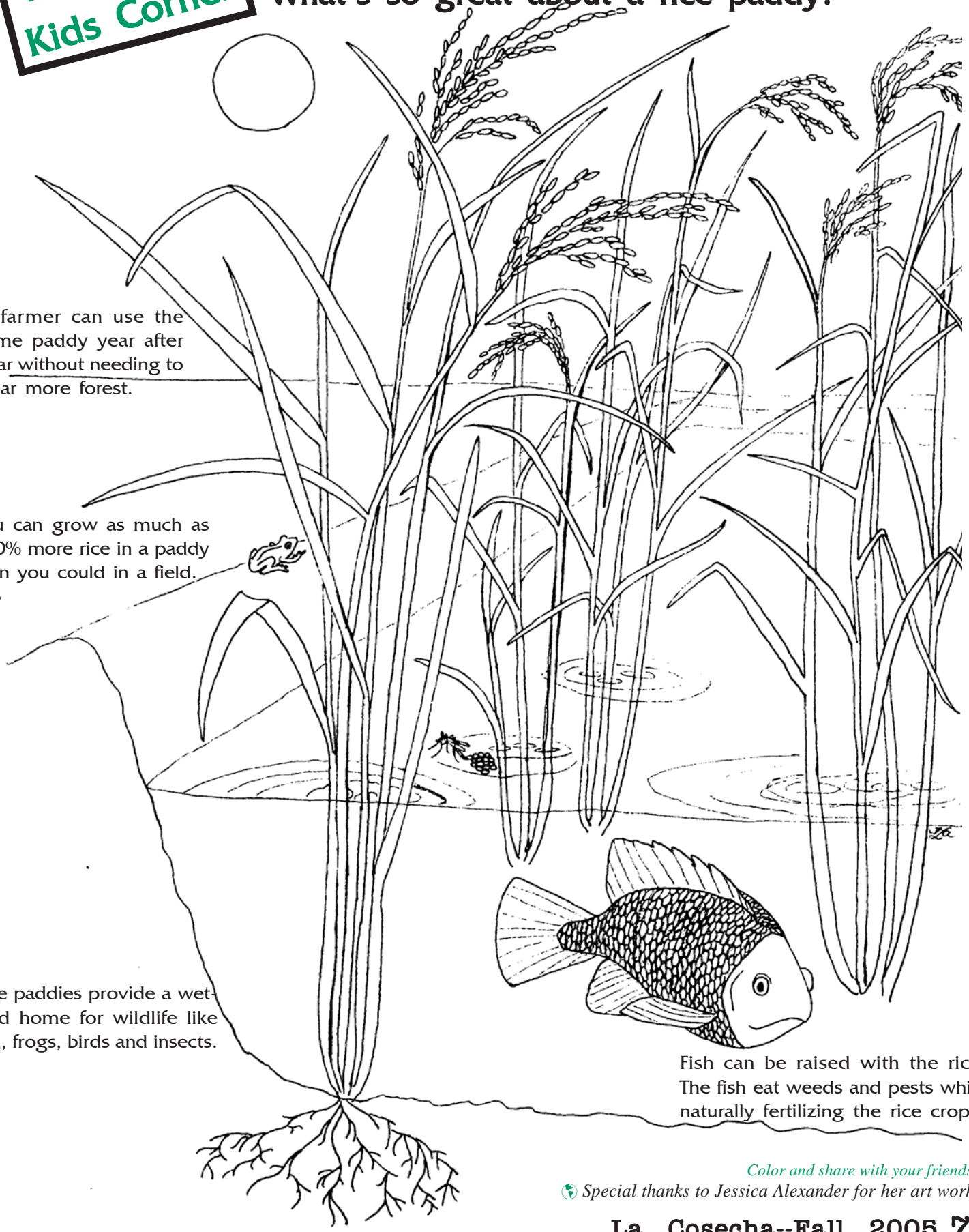
What's so great about a rice paddy?

A farmer can use the same paddy year after year without needing to clear more forest.

You can grow as much as 800% more rice in a paddy than you could in a field.

Rice paddies provide a wetland home for wildlife like fish, frogs, birds and insects.

Fish can be raised with the rice. The fish eat weeds and pests while naturally fertilizing the rice crop.



*Color and share with your friends!*

🌱 *Special thanks to Jessica Alexander for her art work.*



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**INSIDE THIS COSECHA:**

Business Partners Challenge	1
Field Report	1
1,700,000 Trees	3
Congratulations Florence	3
Sustainable Technology: Seed Saving	4
Chicken Tractors	5
Learning to Make the Land Productive	6
Kids Corner: Rice Paddy Eco Systems	7
Upcoming Smaller World Service Trips	8



La Cosecha is printed on recycled paper using soy-based inks. Enjoy it and pass it on!

La Cosecha is a publication of Sustainable Harvest International (SHI), a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. Sustainable Harvest International is building a global network of local partners working toward environmental, economic and social sustainability. SHI facilitates long-term collaboration among trained local staff, farmers and communities to implement sustainable land-use practices that alleviate poverty by restoring ecological stability. All donations to SHI are tax-deductible.

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**Upcoming Smaller  
World Service Tours**

**Panama**

May 14 - 23, 2006

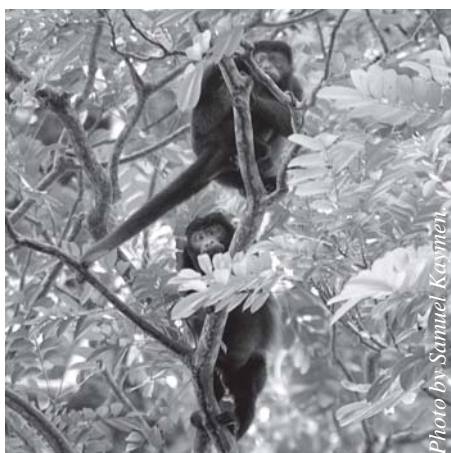


Photo by Samuel Kaymen

Sustainable Harvest International's Panama program needs your support to construct a demonstration farm. Panama's fragile ecosystem is quickly being destroyed as farming families slash-and-burn the forest to make way for crops. Help SHI's Panamanian team with the first stages of

construction of an educational facility where local families and visitors will learn about sustainable practices for producing more crops without clearing more forest. No special skills are needed to participate in this project. Just bring your enthusiasm! In addition to work on the demonstration farm project, we will take a weekend trip to a beautiful Panamanian beach and visit the Panama Canal.

**Trip cost: \$1,000**

**Belize**

May 17 - 25, 2006

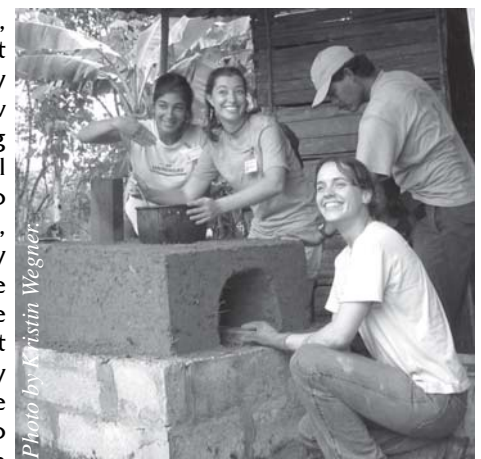


Photo by Kristin Wegner

Until recent years, Belize's environment remained relatively untouched, but now Belize is confronting serious environmental degradation. The Toledo district in the south, populated mostly by indigenous people, is the poorest district in Belize and perhaps the most threatened. A rainy region with a unique coastal ecosystem, Toledo contains rich mountain habitat, which is home to rare and endangered species.

Join Sustainable Harvest in the Mayan villages of southern Belize. Volunteers will help with community gardening and reforestation projects, especially for watershed protection. Other potential projects include working with a school garden, small scale irrigation projects and the construction of wood-conserving lorena stoves.

**Trip cost: \$1,200**

For more information on these and other Smaller World Tours please contact Outreach Director, Sarah Kennedy:  
[Sarah@sustainableharvest.org](mailto:Sarah@sustainableharvest.org)