in this issue:  fruit trees in Ethiopia • centenarian equips small-scale farmers paper mulch builds soil • ECHO partners with MIT • intern spotlight: Emmalee Allen
In many parts of the U.S., there are road signs that remind us that “bridges ice before roadways.” This has often been a reminder to me that it is the transition times that can be most precarious. ECHO is in the midst of such a transition time, and it has been helpful for us to remember the bedrock principles that have been critical to our past and will be essential to our future. Undergirding everything is our desire that what we do and how we do it will bring glory to God. We are also clear that we want to impact the lives of small-scale farmers in such a way that hunger is reduced, that livelihoods are improved, and that women, men, and children have more opportunities to flourish.

The ways we pursue these objectives must be principled but responsive to opportunities and needs. In the last few years, ECHO has taken bold steps to move closer to the people we seek to serve — to share with them, learn from them, and help them to connect with one another. Our Regional Impact Centers and ECHOcommunity.org have been key elements of this strategy. These initiatives have been blessed, and we have seen tremendous impact. In the past year alone, ECHO has had a direct impact on many thousands of people. Through them, by their own reporting, the secondary impact has exceeded a million people.

But the needs and the opportunities are so much greater. With your support ECHO is carefully building the capacity to expand our reach and our effectiveness. In early June, over 20 members of ECHO’s worldwide training staff gathered together to build our capacity to be more effective trainers — ways of preparing, delivering, and reinforcing the learning process so that beneficial plants, practices, and technologies will be better understood, applied, and shared. It was a humbling, challenging, and inspiring time. The lessons learned are already being incorporated into our work around the world . . . and we’ve just begun!

In the midst of this, Stan Doerr resigned as ECHO’s CEO. Stan has served in this role for 9 years and was instrumental in the “globalization” of ECHO’s outreach. In reflecting on his decision, Stan concluded by saying:

“For some time now, I have been praying about what is next, for what I see as the last 10 years of my career. Much of the leadership training I have participated in suggests that it is best, but rarely seen, to change organizational leadership during a time of strong growth to minimize the negative impact leadership change often creates.”

In the past year alone, ECHO has had a direct impact on many thousands of people. Through them, by their own reporting, the secondary impact has exceeded a million people.

Following their acceptance of Stan’s resignation, the Board appointed me to serve as Interim CEO / President. For the past five years, I have been privileged to lead ECHO’s international engagement and advance our strategic development. In the process, my respect for the gifts, experience, and faithfulness of our worldwide staff has only grown. There is great commitment and enthusiasm to move forward together in the work to which God has called us individually and collectively.

We are grateful for your continued prayers and support! The signs of ECHO’s impact and opportunities are expanding by God’s grace and the gift of partnerships with development workers and small-scale farmers around the world. Together we are making a difference in the lives of millions of women, men, children, and communities. Thank you for embracing the future with us.

Grace & Peace,

David
ECHO is a global Christian organization that equips people with agricultural resources and skills to reduce hunger and improve the lives of the poor.

Cover photo: Roghath Sebastian Mrema (left) shows his guest, Anna Mushi, around his integrated farm. Mr. Mrema has tilapia, goats, pigs, cows, and many diverse food plants.

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in their own words...

“The Philippines is a developing country that needs the empowerment that ECHO has to offer through their Development Notes and various publications. As a foreigner with no agricultural training in the tropics, I am better equipped to help nationals because of the materials and information readily available for downloading. In addition, the information and networking at the ECHO Asia Conference is a regular excursion for my family. We thank the Lord that we get to participate in this valuable event and increase our knowledge to help our people.”

--Keith Mikkelson, Philippines

In May, we collaborated with Keith to present ECHO’s Philippines Sustainable Food Production Workshop at his extraordinary small-farm resource center, Aloha House. This partnership has greatly multiplied ECHO’s impact throughout the Philippines. For more photos of the workshop, see pages seven and eight.
Established in 1977, Project Mercy, one of ECHO’s many partners around the world, is an international not-for-profit relief and development agency providing aid, comfort, and support in the name of Jesus Christ.

Project Mercy’s mission started with a focus on refugee relief in 1977. In the early 1990s, their mission expanded to provide food and clothing assistance in seven countries within Africa and to focus on community development in Yetebon, Ethiopia.

In 1999 through 2003, Ethiopia suffered great famine. Project Mercy responded saving many lives. They delivered monthly dry rations to 200,000 families and facilitated emergency feeding centers serving thousands of the most severely malnourished individuals. Overall, the famine affected 15 million people and took one million lives.

After the famine, Project Mercy realized that providing a means for ongoing food sources is the key to eradicating future famine. They reached out to ECHO as a source of expertise. In 2007, ECHO sent more than 330 trees to help start a fruit tree nursery. As a perennial crop, the trees will yield fruit year after year and will be an excellent source of vitamins and nutrients. Families can sell excess fruit in local markets, providing not only much needed nutrition, but a source of income as well.

In ECHO News volume 30, issue 4, we wrote about this shipment of trees and the hope that Project Mercy had
for the project. “Having access to commercial-grade fruit trees will make a big difference in the lives of families in Yetebon. Project Mercy’s goal is for every household in the community to have three fruit trees in their backyards.”

To ensure the success of the tree nursery, ECHO sent Agricultural Specialist Tim Watkins to accompany the shipment and former intern Sara (Hendershot) Hillegass to stay for six months, to help to establish a stable, growing tree nursery in Yetebon. Sara also taught the staff how to propagate the trees through grafting, cuttings, and seeds.

Now, eight years later, Project Mercy is amazed at the growth, success, and progress of the various trees, and more importantly, their impact on the community.

Since 2010, Project Mercy has averaged 100 fruit trees distributed to local farmer families each year. As Project Mercy has accelerated the grafting program, they expect to distribute between three and four hundred trees in 2015. These fruit trees will generate nutritious fruit at homesites throughout the community, while producing a cash crop in good times and serving as a buffer in times of scarcity.

The vegetable and fruit tree gardens are the organization’s training tools to improve the farming skills of community members they serve. In addition to being a contributing support to the community, other beneficiaries of these vegetables and fruits are 40+ vulnerable and abandoned children that Project Mercy cares for full time as well as 1,200+ students in kindergarten through 8th grade that benefit from the School Meal Program where they receive two nourishing meals each school day.

At the weekly market in Butajera (near Yetebon), one can now see locally grown tomatoes, carrots, cabbages, beets, and other varieties of vegetables for sale. We are looking forward to seeing avocados and papayas as part of that list. Two decades ago, not a single one of these varieties was locally-grown in the market.

A pound of avocados at the store in Addis Ababa sells for about 14 Birr...equivalent to 70 cents USD. While the local price for avocados would be slightly lower, ECHO is proud to have partnered with Project Mercy to provide 800 families a crop that is increasing nutritional diversity and increasing their source of income. It is amazing what we can do when we partner together!

Disease resistant with indigenous root stock but grafted with highly prolific fruit-producing shoots, these trees will provide their care-takers with healthy and calorie-loaded fruit for generations!
Not many people get to turn 100 years old. But, in May, Grace Ellison (pictured below surrounded by her family) did just that. Grace Ellison was born in 1915, and celebrated her 100th birthday on May 17th. She was surrounded by 35 family members and over 100 friends from various parts of the United States and India. ECHO was invited to celebrate with her because she asked that gifts be given not to her, but to ECHO.

Ellison is the granddaughter of a Lutheran “horse and buggy” pastor. She says, “he had two churches. He would preach in the morning at the first church, get in his buggy and go to another little village and preach the evening service.”

Her father was an avid gardener and tended fruit trees with Grace and her sister at their home in Rochester, New York.

These memories were top of mind when Grace was introduced to ECHO in 2009 through a trip with Bay Village, the Retirement Community where she resides. She was immediately impressed by the mission of ECHO and decided to partner with ECHO through a gift.

When asked what gifts she would like for her birthday she responded that she didn’t want or need anything. She asked that gifts be given instead to ECHO and two other charities close to her heart.

Grace still lives a vibrant life, attending church, Bible study, and social events within her community. She is pleased that her friends and family have blessed ECHO with their own gifts and are helping to equip small-scale farmers around the world.

Robert and Carol Wright, also of Sarasota, Florida, are one of a number of Ellison’s friends and family giving a donation to ECHO in her honor.

“We’re all about the same age, and in the same boat, and when we can’t be doing the work ourselves, we’re happy to give a gift in her honor so that ECHO can do the great work around the world,” says Carol.

Ellison’s first gift to ECHO was in 2009, at the age of 94. Since then, she has donated to the mission yearly. Ellison believes that you can always make a difference in the world, no matter your age.

Grace was presented with the Leadership Giving Award from ECHO along with her three sons and their wives, and one of her grandsons.
Mr. and Mrs. Kusnadi were involved with a local household biosand filter water project in Medan, Indonesia, their hometown, when they heard about ECHO. The project they were working with was facilitated by the local organization Yayasan Abdi Satya (YAS) and supported by Samaritan’s Purse Canada.

YAS was also involved with disaster response and child development, and was interested in growing its capacity for community development programs to support rural fishing and farming communities around Medan, specifically in the area of agriculture.

YAS wants to set an example of farmers making a stable and vibrant livelihood through farming and fishing in these communities.

When learning of ECHO resources, Mr. and Mrs. Kusnadi decided to attend the 2011 ECHO Asia Agriculture and Community Development Conference in Chiang Mai. They were able to travel to Thailand along with their friends and YAS project managers, Hermansyah and Anthony.

The group of four friends found the conference to be a great time of learning and networking. They were particularly impacted by a trip to Maejo University’s vermicomposting facility, which focuses on using worms to break down organic food waste in order to produce high-quality compost and worm juice. Inspired by what they saw during the field trip, the team went back to Medan and began experimenting with various vermicomposting systems.

Since the 2011 conference and initial vision of vermicomposting, YAS work has expanded and developed into a Small Farm Resource Center (SFRC) that demonstrates techniques such as urban farming through vertical gardening units, aquaponics, and free-range chicken production. The YAS farm teaches agriculture practices that focus on less/zero harmful chemical fertilizers and pesticides, demonstrates effective ways of managing water resources, and promotes nutritious, underutilized vegetables such as Chaya and Moringa. They have also begun supporting a local Bible School by teaching seminarians agriculture and livestock subjects. While the YAS farm is able to pursue different agriculture projects according to the needs of the neighboring communities, what endures and remains central to their work is the process of gathering, testing, and sharing sustainable agriculture ideas for the sake of the poor communities in Indonesia.

When asked what precipitated the development of these agriculture techniques and the creation of the SFRC, Mr. Kusnadi excitedly replied that their time at the ECHO Asia Conference was the starting point.

ECHO Asia is grateful for partners, such as YAS, in our network who work so diligently in identifying techniques and plants that work in their local context. ECHO Asia was also excited to recently partner with the YAS staff to host the first ECHO Indonesia Sustainable Agriculture Workshop on March 3-5, 2015. Who would have thought that attendance at the ECHO Asia Agriculture and Community Development conference four years ago would have led to all of this?

ECHO Asia is hosting another Agriculture and Community Development Conference this year! To learn about the upcoming 2015 ECHO Asia Conference, visit the ECHOcommunity.org calendar of events.
what’s happenin

West Africa forums are “changing families and the families of neighbors in a region where trainings have not previously been possible,” says Robert Sanou, ECHO West Africa Impact Center Director.

#echofightshunger

Philippines Sustainable Food Production Workshop

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

Participants Maribel and Hannia (L-R) show off their new seeds during the seed swap. Hannia is a past ECHO Intern now working in the Philippines.
**Sugarcane Harvesting**

ECHO Intern Patrick Trail (R) inserts stalks harvested at ECHO Florida into the press. The juice was then processed into molasses.

**Thank You, Aloha Farm**

Keith Mikkelsen and Aloha Farm co-hosted ECHO’s Philippines Sustainable Food Production Workshop in May. Participants were introduced to many different techniques and practices including this system of small-scale farm-generated fertility using vermiculture.

**With Great Appreciation**

Susan Sill (L) and Jaques and Monique Cote (R) were honored as ECHO Florida Volunteers of the Year at the annual appreciation lunch. ECHO interns entertained the crowd with a lively skit featuring a taro plant so big that it could not be harvested without the help of ECHO’s incredible volunteers.
Throughout ECHO’s history, Appropriate Technologies (AT) have always been intertwined with the small-scale agriculture training offered to ECHO’s network members. In the same places that ECHO was meeting needs for seeds, encouragement, networking, and training, other needs became apparent: clean water, reducing post-harvest labor, transporting water, and making cooking fires more efficient.

In the early days, Dr. Martin Price, Co-Founder of ECHO, relied on partner organizations that specialized in AT resources. But, as the ECHO network has grown and developed, ECHO has acquired both the breadth and depth of experience needed to be a world leader in sharing and promoting the implementation of Appropriate Technologies within a small-scale farming system. At the Global Farm in Florida, ECHO has been able to experiment with and integrate various appropriate technologies into an urban homestead to demonstrate, both for general visitors and agricultural trainees, how these techniques can be implemented within a home.

Today, AT demonstrations can be found at all of ECHO’s Impact Centers around the world. These demonstrations are specifically chosen to be regionally appropriate and made out of resources that are available locally. Regional publications share appropriate technologies that have high potential with those living and working within the area.

It is this history and growth that has led ECHO to be chosen as a key partner within the International Development Innovation Network at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, also known as IDIN at MIT.

IDIN “empowers a diverse, global network of innovators to design, develop, and disseminate low-cost technologies to improve the lives of people living in poverty.” The consortium originally existed between academic partners and innovation partners, connecting the academic world to the developing world through International Development Design Summits. These two-week and four-week events bring together individuals from diverse cultures to collaborate. As the summits grew, IDIN was looking for partners who could continue the work of the summits and build upon these innovative ideas to have the greatest potential impact in lives around the world.

In 2014, IDIN hoped to build better and longer-lasting ECHO Effect Multiplied in Tanzania through MIT

International Development Innovation Network chooses ECHO as global partner

ECHO & IDIN • PARTNERSHIP IN ACTION

Frank Mollel (pictured above, right) is a farmer from Moivaro village in Tanzania who is inspired to impact his neighbors through innovations that help to maximize the use of resources available on their farms.

One such resource, often hiding in plain sight, is cow manure.

During last year’s International Development Design Summit in Tanzania, one team tried to address this constraint by designing an oxcart modified to spread manure. Frank was a member of this team.

Over the past few months, Frank has devised a simpler design: a human-powered version of the manure spreader with the help of ECHO and IDIN. The new prototype costs less to build, has fewer working parts, and is simpler to maintain.

Agricultural machinery is expensive and difficult to obtain in most of East Africa, including rural Tanzania. Frank’s work is promising for local farmers given its comparably low assembly and maintenance costs.

Frank is not just motivated to support his own family, but also to support the efforts of many farmers in Tanzania and Africa through ECHO’s global network.
relationships in the communities where they were identifying development problems, and hoped to work closer with the individual champions to help develop prototypes of their AT projects. They were also looking to expand their reach and invite community members from around the world to benefit from existing prototypes of AT innovations inspired by the design summits.

Through a competitive process, ECHO was selected as IDIN's institutional partner in Tanzania, effectively multiplying the impact and work that ECHO has been doing for over 30 years. IDIN leadership highlighted ECHO's global networking, long-term commitment to appropriate technology, and dedication to community engagement as strengths that brought ECHO to the top of the list of potential partners.

Moving forward within the IDIN partnership, ECHO is excited to cultivate and foster creative, life-changing ideas from our network members in Tanzania and then be able to share them through both the IDIN network and ECHO's ever-growing network of 9000+ agricultural practitioners throughout the world.

“The opportunity to work with IDIN is a win/win for MIT and ECHO whose missions overlap in their aim to educate and impact poverty’s key development challenges” says ECHO's East Africa Director, Erwin Kinsey. This is done through support of change-makers who work within their communities to design, develop, and disseminate innovations. The program provides seed capital to innovators both from communities and local engineering schools to create, test, and modify designs based upon local challenges. Some of the 48 prototypes currently under exploration include the following: an avocado oil press to monetize 50% of fruits which waste due to lack of a market, a low-cost bean thresher, an ox-drawn manure spreader, a ferro-cement grain store that couples as a water storage for part of the year, and different devices for hauling water.

ECHO's approach remains the same: to support other CBOs and NGOs, rather than take the lead by itself, to co-create with communities. It is not development FOR but development WITH the rural poor and those who work with them who are at the forefront of problem-solving.

The program began in October 2012 and will conclude in September 2017. IDIN is structured as a consortium with MIT as the prime awardee, and with sub-awards in place with UC Davis, Olin College, KNUST Ghana, and Colorado State University.
ECHOcommunity in Nine Languages

No Toboggans in Florida?

Did you know that “toboggans” were not available at ECHO’s International Agricultural Conference in 2014? This was the message that French-speaking visitors to the conference webpage would have seen (courtesy of Google Translate) without purposeful, human translation of the website content. The correct message was that “presentation ‘slides’ would not be available for all the sessions.”… A very different message.

Since 1996, ECHO had significant resources providing technical documentation in Spanish, French, and English. These resources, accessed thousands of times since then, have equipped agricultural practitioners around the world with new ideas and skills.

As ECHO’s global impact has grown, and especially over the last six years, we have seen the need to provide networking and technical resources in languages surrounding our Regional Impact Centers. English, Spanish, and French have been joined by Thai, Chinese, Indonesian, Vietnamese, Burmese, Khmer, and Kiswahili. Native speakers, and others who use these languages in their work, benefit as terminology is clarified and resources are more easily shared with small-scale farmers.

As resources become available in these languages, ECHOcommunity.org, our networking website for development workers, has had to grow in order to support new members whose primary language is not English. When the site was launched in 2011, only a few pages were available in Spanish and French.

Fast-forwarding to today, through generous gifts from partners like you, ECHOcommunity.org key pages and full navigation are natively translated into these nine languages! Not only that, but the website itself can detect a user’s region and offer ECHO’s content FIRST in their heart language and connect them to all the resources available in their language, no toboggans necessary.

ECHOcommunity frontpage in Thai highlighting an article on ECHO Asia Notes 23!

Special Thanks!
Since 2014, St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church of Sanibel, Florida, and the Tyndale House Foundation have donated generously to help ECHO translate documents into key languages.

ECHO News
12 July 2015

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ECHOcommunity frontpage in Thai highlighting an article on ECHO Asia Notes 23!
Demmy Lucas has been an agricultural entrepreneur for a number of years. Her creative and successful practices led ECHO staff to recommend her as a presenter for a week-long seminar for World Vision. She has been attending ECHO networking events including the Symposium of 2015. Most recently, she served as a host-home for past ECHO Intern Brian Lawrence while he served in Tanzania.

As you may know, mulch is a protective covering of organic material laid over the soil to prevent erosion, retain moisture, and enrich the soil. Paper mulch is a soil covering using papers, magazines, and/or boxes and other materials laid at the top, for instance grass, fruit peels, and leaves. This technology is also appropriate in dry areas because paper mulch controls water loss. Gardeners in the United States have been recycling newspapers in this way for years, but in many areas, mulching itself is not very common.

Demmy Lucas, one of the recipients of pico-grants offered by ECHO East Africa, now uses paper mulch to control weeds, improve soil fertility, and control moisture in her plot where she plants lemongrass.

Demmy makes her livelihood by processing and packing spices such as ginger, black pepper, cardamon, cinnamon, masala, mixed spices, and a soup blend. She sells her spices in supermarkets, wholesale and retail shops, hotels, and to her friends and relatives. This business is her primary livelihood. Lemongrass is one of her ingredients in making the spice mixes. Demmy used to plant maize in her plot, but the yield was low because she was removing maize residue after harvesting to give her friend to feed her cattle. Later she decided to use the maize residue as mulch in the plot, which increased the yield to some extent. When she started spice processing, she planted lemongrass on the same plot to minimize the cost of buying lemongrass from the market. In the beginning she harvested one kilogram of dried lemongrass. One day, Brian Lawrence advised her to use paper mulch before adding other trash as mulch. This time around her yield increased to three kilograms of lemongrass. Not only her yield increased, but also she conserved her environment because any loitering paper was useful in her plot as mulch.

Demmy said; “As an entrepreneur, I wish to spread this knowledge of paper mulch to other people especially families/farmers with small plots in order to conserve environments and at the same time increase their yield in their small plots since the soil will be fertile and moisture well controlled. With increased yield, families and farmers will reduce hunger and malnutrition in the community.”

Past ECHO Intern Kristin Davis ’92 Honored
Kristin Davis (left), Executive Secretary, Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services received the “Presidential Plaque in Recognition of Exceptional Leadership” as President of the Association for International Agricultural and Extension Education (AIAEE), 2014-2015. It was presented on April 30, 2015 in Wageningen, the Netherlands, at the annual conference of the AIAEE held jointly with the European Seminar on Extension Education.
Someone once said that life is like a tapestry in which we only get to see the backside. The back is a tangled mess, while the front is a beautiful image. I can relate to this analogy.

Coming from small-town Wyoming and feeling called to agriculture, but also being born with a physical disability that causes me to walk with a limp, feels like tangled strings that shouldn’t work together. I feel God allowed me to see just a little of the other side of the tapestry of God’s story through my life on a trip to Africa. While there, I met with women who had various physical ailments mostly due to their environment. It was in those moments that I could relate to them and, by God’s grace, connect in a powerful way. These women were the ones planting the fields to provide for their families. I longed to dig into their lives and share what Christ had done in mine. Coming back, I felt reassurance on my calling but knew I needed more practical agricultural training. That is how I ended up here at ECHO.

Since coming to ECHO, my knowledge of tropical small-scale tropical agriculture has grown exponentially. Crops I had never heard of before, I am now growing and eating on a regular basis. The greatest blessing for me in being here is being able to gain hands-on practical experience working in my area, having the freedom to fail as well as succeed. I am also blessed to work in a place where God speaks so clearly through his word, the people around me, and especially through creation.

I am not quite sure yet what is to come after ECHO. I am looking at returning to Africa and am trusting God with the details. I have confidence for the future knowing that God is weaving this beautiful tapestry for his glory.
Charitable Gifts Can Mean Lower Taxes

Here are some of the best ways to give and save:

**GIFTS OF CASH**
Every dollar you give outright to support our programs is tax deductible. The maximum deduction allowable for gifts of cash is limited to 50% of your adjusted gross income. (Any amount given in excess of this limitation can be carried over and deducted for up to five years.) Thus, a gift of $1,000 this year actually costs you only $650 if you are in a 35% tax bracket.

Also, many states allow state income tax charitable deductions that can make your gifts even more economical.

**GIFTS OF APPRECIATED SECURITIES**
If you have marketable securities that have grown in value, tax laws make it possible for you to make an important gift at remarkably low after-tax cost. A gift of appreciated securities qualifies not only for the income tax deduction associated with all charitable gifts, but it also avoids the long-term capital gains tax on the profit.

**LIFE INSURANCE GIFTS**
A common asset for giving is a life insurance policy that is no longer needed for its original purpose. Let's assume that there is no longer a real necessity for retaining a $50,000 policy purchased many years ago. The policy has a cash value of about $20,000. You can receive tax deductions on premiums you continue to pay in future years, as well as the current cash value, by making ECHO the owner and beneficiary of the policy.

You'll gain an immediate tax savings (a $20,000 deduction at an assumed 33% income tax rate). These savings can pass to your beneficiaries. The full $50,000, with no reduction for the estate tax, will come to ECHO to benefit future generations.

Just a reminder: You should always consult your advisers on tax-related matters affecting your specific situation. We welcome the opportunity to supply you with additional information about any of these methods of giving and to discuss with you and your advisers how you might consider making your gift. Thank you for your continued support of ECHO!
...And Information Keeps Spreading

In January, Appropriate Technology Trainer Venance Mollel trained 21 farmers in Nasioyo village, not far from ECHO’s East Africa Impact Center in Arusha, Tanzania. Training topics included growing bananas, kitchen gardens, contour terraces with bananas (shown left), and starting a nursery garden of vegetable seedlings (below).

On a recent visit to check in with farmers from the training group, trainers were excited to hear that 25 keyhole kitchen gardens have been constructed since the training, both in Nasioyo and the neighboring village of Lemanyata, mentored on by the original 21 farmers trained.

ECHO Trainers rejoice that the East Africa Regional Impact Center is having an impact on neighboring villages. Join with us and spread your impact across the world!