

ROCKY MOUNTAIN CONFERENCE
Reflections
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Sharing and Caring

A NEIGHBOR is a person who cares about another person. It doesn't matter if he lives 1,000 miles away in a storm ravaged area. UCC Church members from all over the country have come to the aid of their neighbors in New Orleans. They may not have known them before, but those that have met and worked together in cleaning out a home have established a bond of love, compassion and caring. Jesus tells us to "love our neighbor as our self." It is easy to look at a person's home and say, "This could be my home. This is my neighbor, my brother or sister in Christ. How can I help?"

In the four years since after Hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast, thousands have volunteered their time through the National Disaster Ministries and Volunteer Ministries, funded by One Great Hour of Sharing.

IN SOUTH INDIA eating mushrooms as a part of the meal has become popular only in the last ten years, in part because mushroom cultivation has begun with much enthusiasm.

Through a grant from One Great Hour of Sharing, three women from The Center for Working Women attended a training course in a nearby Agriculture College and became trainers.

Mushroom cultivation requires little space and can be done inside the house. A single woman can cultivate mushrooms with waste materials and waste fodder from the farm. Seeds are easily available and a woman can earn an income without much strain.

AT THE FIRST PERFORMANCE of an 'All Our Children' children's theater project in Iraq's only institute for the autistic, the

director reported. "I saw something spark in the children I haven't seen in five years," the entire length of her tenure. Affectless children laughed for the first time. A child who would never approach strangers eagerly went to the actors.

A consortium of humanitarian agencies, supported by One Great Hour of Sharing, All Our Children hopes to mount up to thirty performances to Iraqi children in hospitals, orphanages, refugee camps and in poor neighborhoods. The goal is to improve the emotional health of these children who are disabled, fearful, anxious and depressed, their childhoods lost amid war, looting and insecurity.



AS THE EMBERS from the Balkans wars continue to cool down, and the region settles into a tenuous peace, UCC/ Church World Service is moving into longer-term development

projects. "We know what the risks are in creating dependence on paternalistic relief aid," said Vitali Vorona, CWS Balkans Director. "That is why we focus on assistance that empowers people and helps them generate their own resources."

Among the empowered people were 250 families in three villages near Mostar, Bosnia-Herzegovina who received agricultural assistance in the form of 22,000 kilos of seed potatoes.

To "payback" the seed potatoes loan, the communities sent more than 35 tons of potatoes to seven soup kitchens throughout the country, where more than 6,000 people received food—based on need, not on ethnic background. The families are on their way to independence, and in the process, they are helping to build peace in a country still struggling with the legacy of war.

Made Possible by your OCWM support.

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