The Vision of Ka Thryn W. Da Vis

Projects for Peace

The Vision of Kathryn W. Davis

2008
“My many years have taught me that there will always be conflict. It’s part of human nature. But I’ll remind you that love, kindness, and support are also part of human nature. My challenge to you is to bring about a mindset of preparing for peace, instead of preparing for war.”

Kathryn W. Davis
Projects for Peace

Internationalist Kathryn W. Davis turned 100 years old, then 101 and now 102, challenging today’s generation of college students to undertake “Projects for Peace.” She said to the students: come forward with your ideas; shape them into actionable projects; and I’ll give you the resources to do your projects. This volume portrays what unfolded in the summer of 2008 as a result of this challenge.

Students heard the call and responded to the challenge. They demonstrated that today’s youth—tomorrow’s leaders—want to be engaged, want to make a difference. The students’ projects took place in many different places around the world, but all of them were built on person-to-person relationships, the role of leadership, and about finding ways to improve the human condition in the quest for peace.

Kathryn Davis is a leader, leading others as she invests in “preparing for peace.” We are fortunate that she has decided that her 102nd birthday demands no less than a renewal of “Projects for Peace” in 2009.

Davis United World College Scholars Program

The Davis United World College Scholars Program, funded entirely by Gale and Shelby Davis, is a major philanthropic force in promoting international understanding. Currently Davis philanthropy partners with 91 colleges and universities to internationalize the American undergraduate experience through scholarships awarded to 1700 students.

These globally minded scholars are from both the U.S. and 132 other countries and have proven themselves while completing their last two years of high school at one of 12 United World College schools located in Bosnia, Canada, Costa Rica, Hong Kong, India, Italy, Norway, Singapore, Swaziland, the United States, Venezuela, and Wales. Since its inception in 2000, the Davis UWC Scholars Program has become the largest privately funded international scholarship program for undergraduate education in the world.

Institute for Global Citizenship at Macalester College

The Institute for Global Citizenship at Macalester College was created to promote and support rigorous learning that prepares students for lives as effective and ethical citizens and leaders; innovative scholarship that enriches the public and academic discourse on questions of global significance; and meaningful service that enhances such learning and scholarship while enriching the local, national, and international communities within which Macalester is embedded.

The Institute both continues the college’s longstanding commitment to serving the public good and signals our recognition that as the world evolves, so too must the nature of the liberal arts education we provide to the women and men who will become its leaders.
This volume presents the 2008 Projects for Peace, inspired and funded by Kathryn W. Davis. It is a powerful testimony to the vision of a person who is now 102 years young and illustrates both a clear purpose and a strong sense of urgency about finding new pathways to peace in the twenty-first century.

This volume captures the talent, energy and effort of young people motivated by Kathryn Davis’ inspiration and generosity. Projects for Peace are summer-long projects designed and implemented by current students striving for peace at home and around the globe. The first of these projects took place in 2007 in celebration of Kathryn Davis’ 100th birthday. Here we present the results of the second round of Projects for Peace in 2008.

Kathryn’s initiative to begin and continue Projects for Peace has inspired many others beyond the students whose projects are recounted here. One of those many others is Bruce S. Gelb, President of the Council of American Ambassadors. Ambassador Gelb was so moved by Kathryn’s Projects for Peace initiative that he nominated her for the 2009 Benjamin Franklin Award for Public Diplomacy, given by the U.S. Department of State, as follows:

The Davis Projects for Peace effort has inspired young people to design and implement programs that advance global understanding. Projects run the gamut from digging wells in Afghan villages to developing an income generation scheme to provide scholarships and maintenance funds for a pre-school in Zimbabwe. The results of these grassroots, people-to-people projects are impressive… Local participation, an integral component of the Davis Projects for Peace, ensures community buy-in and project sustainability. Project leaders, generally U.S. university students, often collaborate with indigenous non-profits/community groups to tailor their efforts to local conditions, thereby maximizing project impact.

This volume is the result of a partnership between the Institute for Global Citizenship at Macalester College and the Davis United World College Scholars Program headquartered at Middlebury College. All of us associated with Projects for Peace want to express our deepest appreciation to Kathryn Davis for her youthful leadership and for her commitment to preparing the world for peace.
In August 2006, Kathryn Wasserman Davis made a momentous decision. She would be turning 100 years old in 2007 and she was feeling a great sense of urgency. Urgency about an elusive goal in her long life: peace in the world. As she reflected on the many years of her life, she felt frustrated that her generation and those that followed had failed in that great quest.

What might she do, Kathryn wondered? She decided it was time to see what fresh and motivated young minds might do about this perplexing issue. She decided to use her remaining years to unleash the potential of youth in the cause of peace. How to do that?

She had been watching with interest a program her 70-year old son Shelby had started with his own philanthropy about ten years ago: the Davis United World College Scholars Program. She had met many of these United World College graduates as they had become Davis Scholars, matriculating, among many other American colleges and universities, at her alma mater Wellesley and at Princeton, where both her late husband and her son had earned their undergraduate degrees. By the summer of 2006 that program had grown to include over 76 American colleges and universities, so it occurred to Kathryn that these would be accessible and dependable places for her to try out her idea of “projects for peace.”

Without hesitation, Kathryn put up $1 million and issued her challenge for any and all students on these campuses—now grown to 91 such campuses and beyond—to design whatever projects they felt would contribute to peace. Kathryn was so gratified by the students’ projects in 2007 that she committed another $1 million for a second round of projects in 2008 to celebrate her 101st birthday. This volume reports on these projects and demonstrates how Kathryn’s vision has motivated young people and how those young people have drawn inspiration from Kathryn.

A VISIONARY FOR PEACE

Kathryn Davis has been a lifelong internationalist. She discovered her passion for global engagement on her first trip to Russia in 1929. Shortly after graduating from college, she was travelling with a group through the Caucasus Mountains on horseback, and their horses were stolen. As Kathryn recalls it, “we ate wild berries for breakfast and spit-roasted mountain goat for dinner, and I couldn’t have been happier.” She went on to Geneva where she earned her doctorate and wrote a timely study, “The Soviets at Geneva”, about the League of Nations, forerunner to today’s United Nations which was headquartered in Geneva. Kathryn has returned to Russia more than 30 times since and has become
well known to the leaders of that country through its tumultuous recent history. She celebrated her 95th birthday with its former president Mikhail Gorbachev.

Kathryn is also a lifelong philanthropist, supporting education, the arts, scientific research, the environment and conservation, and various forms of international relations. She has left her mark on a wide range of institutions and countless students. At her alma mater Wellesley College, she has been supportive of numerous projects including financial aid for students, global education initiatives, professorships in Russian economics, Slavic studies, Asian studies, and history. Wellesley’s Davis Museum and Cultural Center is named for her and her late husband Shelby Cullom Davis, as is the International Center at Princeton.

Kathryn has been recognized for her achievements in many significant ways. In 2007, she was given the Woodrow Wilson Award for Public Service at a ceremony in Washington, D.C. This honor was bestowed on her for having “shown a special commitment to seeking out informed and thoughtful views” and for having devoted herself “to examining the historical background and long term implications of important policy issues.” In her acceptance speech, Kathryn addressed those she called “movers and shakers of the world” this way: “My many years have taught me that there will always be conflict. It’s part of human nature. But I’ll also remind you that love, kindness and support are also part of human nature. My challenge to you is to bring about a mindset of preparing for peace, instead of preparing for war. We don’t know what tomorrow holds, and therefore let us take advantage of today to be as useful as possible.”

**CONTINUOUS INNOVATION**

For all her achievements, Kathryn was not content to rest on her laurels. Instead she has wanted to do more, and not just more of the same. The wisdom of her years has led her to look to young people for new ideas and fresh energy to improve the prospects for peace. She recalled her own adventuresome youth and what it had motivated her to do since. She reflected on her own unrelenting curiosity, her desire to keep learning, engaging, participating, shaping. She realized that her life had not been simply a matter of being willing to try things she had never done before; instead, she realized that she had always been eager to do things she (or her parents) had never done before. She also realized that she had been fortunate enough to have those opportunities. She concluded that amidst today’s youth there must certainly be those with her kind of inclinations. They only need be given the opportunity. It would be a bargain at any price if she could set in motion steps toward a more peaceful world.

Kathryn made up her mind to establish “Projects for Peace” when she turned 100 and she decided a year later that her 101st birthday demanded no less than another round of Projects for Peace in 2008. She reiterated her birthday pledge: “I want to use my birthday to once again help young people launch some initiatives that will bring new energy and ideas to the prospects of peace in the world.”

**THE PROCESS**

Throughout the past academic year, competitions were held and selections of projects were made on the many American
college and university campuses already part of the Davis United World College Scholars Program as well as through the world-wide International Houses and the Graduate Institute in Geneva, Switzerland where Kathryn had earned her doctorate. All students on these campuses—to make this as inclusive as possible—were invited to design their own grassroots projects for peace which they themselves, if their proposals were among the winners selected, would implement anywhere in the world during the summer of 2008. Each of the winning projects was awarded $10,000 from Kathryn’s philanthropy, though each project’s total budget could expand as enterprising students might raise other funds or partner with existing initiatives or organizations.

As in the year before, no clear definition of what a “project for peace” was given to the students. The idea was not to limit the students’ own imaginations and to see what might come about. Kathryn wanted to continue to encourage creativity, innovation and social entrepreneurship. She did expect, as it had been in 2007, that many projects would span the globe, but again, there was no direction given on locations; they could take place anywhere, including in the U.S.

Each of the participating institutions was free to promote the competition among its own students and design its own evaluation process for selecting the most compelling proposals. The idea was to push down the decision-making to the campus level, making it more empowering and engaging for each educational community. Some college presidents became so captivated by the idea and potential value of this initiative that they ended up funding additional projects beyond what Kathryn’s philanthropy made possible.

Again in 2008, thousands of proposals were written across the nation and around the world. The impact on campuses was inspiring. As one college official reported, “This opportunity and the proposal development process have produced a wonderful, exciting buzz on campus and among our students.” Kathryn’s vision and spirit had taken hold in 2007 and the momentum and participation expanded in 2008. The winning proposals for 2008 were announced in the spring and then it was up to the students to do their projects—demanding focus, engagement, commitment and a high degree of personal responsibility. This volume illustrates the results.
Projects for Peace and the Role of Higher Education

by Brian Rosenberg, President, Macalester College

It is a privilege and a pleasure for the Institute for Global Citizenship at Macalester College to partner with the Davis United World College Scholars Program to sponsor this volume commemorating the second iteration of the Davis Projects for Peace, a product of the insight and generosity of Kathryn Wasserman Davis. The Institute is a new initiative at Macalester whose mission is to support learning, scholarship, and service that prepares students for lives as effective and ethical global citizens and leaders. This particular effort is among the first undertaken by the Institute and among the most rewarding with which I have been associated in my years at Macalester, in large part because of its embodiment of the core mission of higher education in our time.

One might reasonably ask the following question: what are, and what should be, the central goals of higher education in America? To this question there has never been a singular or easy answer, though there has been no shortage of groups and individuals attempting to provide one. For the commission appointed by Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings, the answer delivered in its widely publicized 2006 report was to provide individuals prepared to succeed in the “knowledge-driven economy” of the twenty-first century. For the faculty and trustees of Yale University, writing in 1828, the answer was to spread “intellectual culture” by providing the requisite knowledge and habits of mind and not to focus purely on the economical or even the practical. For many parents of college students today, it is simply to prepare their children to lead more fulfilling and secure lives.

While none of these answers is without some merit and truth, my favorite remains the one suggested by Thomas Jefferson, among whose accomplishments may be listed the founding of the University of Virginia. Writing in 1816, Jefferson observed that “if a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was, and never will be.” For Jefferson, and for Benjamin Franklin (who founded what is now the University of Pennsylvania), and for many other thinkers about democracy before and since, the one essential component of a free society has been a properly educated citizenry, that is, a citizenry provided through education with the skills, knowledge, and motivation to be active participants and leaders in civic life. In the recent words of philanthropist Eugene Lang, “an educated citizenry is the essential instrument for promoting responsible social action and community well-being,” and colleges and universities are or should be charged with providing that citizenry in return for their privileged status within our society.

While this truth may not have changed in the past two centuries, what has changed—and dramatically—is the nature of the world into which college graduates will be moving and therefore the nature of the education that best prepares them for constructive engagement with that world. Our nation has become more diverse; boundaries between nations and cultures have become more permeable; technology has radically altered the nature and speed of communications; the dominant arrangement
within society has become increasingly urban; and the lives of people across the planet have become more intertwined. Higher education in America, if it is to fulfill the role envisioned by the founders of our democracy, must prepare students for life as responsible global citizens living under this particular set of conditions.

This is why it has been such a privilege and such a benefit for Macalester College to partner with the Davis United World College Scholars Program. Macalester’s commitment to education as a global enterprise is longstanding: Charles Turck, one of my predecessors as president of the college, wrote in 1945 that every Macalester student and every Macalester graduate should be a “citizen of the world.” That goal, the driving force behind our creation of our new Institute for Global Citizenship, has been pursued in part by bringing to the college talented young men and women from more than 80 different countries, allowing them to interact in classrooms, organizations, and residence halls, and fostering thereby better communication and deeper cross-cultural understanding. I believe that this experiment in internationalizing the college, now well into its seventh decade, has produced over time a body of alumni whose vision transcends the parochial and who view the gift of education not simply as a personal benefit, but as an obligation to contribute over a lifetime to the public good.

Thanks in large part to the vision and generosity of Shelby M. C. Davis and the leadership of Phil Geier, an increasing number of our international students have been drawn from the United World Colleges, whose devotion to service and international understanding parallel in many ways Macalester’s own. These students have enriched immeasurably the educational experience of everyone on campus and have, we hope, contributed as well to fostering more familiarity with and deeper appreciation of both the strengths and challenges of American democracy in the countries from which they come.

The Davis Projects for Peace commemorated in this volume and so brilliantly envisioned and generously supported by Kathryn Wasserman Davis seem a natural outgrowth of the goals I have been describing. The idea is simple and compelling in the way of all powerful ideas: invite students from colleges with commitments to internationalism to imagine projects that will, in the near or long term, contribute to peace in the world, provide them with funding, and turn them loose to make a difference in local, national, and transnational communities.

The true excitement of this effort lies not so much in what we know about the results—some of which are detailed and all of which are summarized in this volume—as in what we do not yet know about the additional projects and efforts and, eventually, solutions that will grow in the future from those results. This I can promise: from the Projects for Peace that have been undertaken in the past two years and that will be undertaken in the future will arise initiatives that will shape the world for the better over the coming decades. In that sense, this volume is a record not of completion but of a breathtaking and hopeful beginning—a beginning in which we at Macalester are honored to have played some small role.
As these projects demonstrate, today’s youth—tomorrow’s leaders—are engaged and want to make a difference. They see the need to build a foundation for peace out of many different building blocks. They see that peace is more than the absence of war. They see that peace takes focus, persistence, cultural sensitivity, and plain hard work. And they are inspired by the vision and generosity of Kathryn Davis.

On the following pages are brief sketches of a cross-section of the projects, informed by student reports and photographs. A complete list of the projects, participants, schools, and the countries where the projects took place can be found at the back of this volume.

Through these projects, many small yet meaningful steps have been taken toward “preparing for peace.”
The Deheishe refugee camp was formed in 1949 when hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were evicted from their homes. Rosi Greenberg went to Deheishe last summer with a plan to create a summer arts program that would engage resident children in a mural project in which they would not only brighten the concrete walls of their surroundings and learn basic artistic skills, but also begin to see and engage the world in more positive and hopeful ways. Throughout the summer, forty children and ten local counselors from all over the Palestinian political persuasion participated in the first mural arts project in their refugee camp. At the beginning of the camp, when asked to express themselves artistically, most children drew some variation of a Palestinian map with barbed wire. Over the weeks, these images blended with new ones of beaches, playgrounds, and nature, as sixteen murals were completed. Families and neighbors became involved in the project as they watched the process and offered encouragement and more walls for more murals. At the end of the summer, ten children were chosen to continue their training and more mural painting throughout the school year.

“When resources are presented, the children rise to their potential as artists, able to express their struggle, proud to add color to their alleyway playgrounds, and empowered in owning the process and product as they paint pictures of hope.”

Rosi Greenberg, Brown University

Painting Pictures of a Peaceful Future

Rosi Greenberg
Brown University
Israel
Wells for Clean Water

Shabana Basij-Rasikh
Middlebury College
Afghanistan

Shabana Basij-Rasikh was born in Kabul. When she was six, education became “illegal” for girls under the Taliban regime, so her parents dressed her as a boy and for the next five years she walked the 45 minutes each way to school. She lived the hardships of life in Afghanistan and is devoted to making life better there. Her project, to provide six new water wells in and around Kabul, is a reflection of her desire to start with the basics.

As in all developing countries, waterborne illnesses account for many health issues in today’s Afghanistan. Shabana remembers the hours she spent with her siblings carrying water to their home. She’d like to spare the next generation those hours and free up their time for more school and play as well as spare them the health problems that come from contaminated water. As a result of her project, there are six new wells in several communities in Kabul, in a school, a kindergarten and a mosque. By partnering with local communities who will ensure the ongoing operation of the wells, this project will reap permanent benefits.

“This project reassured me of why I love my country, Afghanistan, and of my need and passion to be involved in the future-making of Afghanistan. It also verified my feelings that approaching the process of nation building on different levels is and should be a priority.”

Shabana N. Basij-Rasikh, Middlebury College
Since the beginning of the war in Iraq in 2003, one in eight Iraqis has been displaced. Of the two million Iraqis who have fled their homeland, 750,000 have relocated to Jordan where they are not recognized as refugees, but as illegal immigrants. Of these, the Iraqi children have been the most severely affected. It is estimated that only four percent of these children attend school, many live in stunning poverty, are forced to work as child laborers, and experience few of the joys of childhood.

Anouk and KK are serious college athletes and know that sport and play are not only fun, but also powerful tools. Sport and play teach confidence, communication, team building, leadership, and fairness. With this in mind, Anouk and KK established four weeklong sports day camps for Iraqi girls outside of Jordan’s capital, Amman. With the help of Jordanian high school volunteers, 25 to 30 girls played hours of soccer, basketball, capture the flag, and during breaks, were introduced to English thanks to donated picture books.

Anouk and KK are working hard to make sure that this summer was just the beginning of opportunities for these girls. With the creation of a non-profit organization in the U.S., they are already planning more camps and more activities for next summer.

“Nothing could compare to the moment when a girl previously resigned to a life of poverty and oppression told us of her big dreams for herself: becoming a doctor and a singer on the side.”

Anouk Dey and Katherine Krieg, Williams College
“It is our conviction and guiding philosophy that economic development and stability is an integral foundation for long-term peaceful coexistence between an Israeli and Palestinian state.”

Sam Adelsberg and Andrew Dudum, University of Pennsylvania
Mujda Amini left Afghanistan when she was three years old to live in the United States. Recognizing how much she benefited from her life in the U.S., Mujda set her sites on returning to Afghanistan for the first time with a goal to create a library.

Mujda built her library in a high school in Mazare-Sharif in rural Afghanistan. The high school building was badly damaged during the Taliban regime and the first phase of the project included the complete renovation of a space for the new library. Working every day beside the builders, Mujda became a familiar face to the students, teachers, and parents. As they realized the library was actually going to materialize, more and more people pitched in to help renovate, organize books, bring food, or just offer support. By the end of the summer, a fully functional library with over 2,000 books was opened and available to all students, girls and boys alike. A manager was chosen to oversee the daily operations of the library and plans are underway to establish a website to encourage donations and volunteers.

Mujda now dreams of replicating the “Library of Hope” many times over across Afghanistan.

“At first I was daunted by cultural constraints, clashing work ethics, and a lack of community pride. Yet within a week these seemingly insurmountable barriers started to break down.”

Mujda Amini, International House, Columbia University
The essence of the Maypole Garden is the cultivation of relationships; relationships between people of all ages, backgrounds, and histories, between people and organizations, between people and the natural environment, between people, art, and living culture."

Brendan Hudson, The School of the Art Institute of Chicago
Swarthmore Bosnia Project

Jess Engebretson
Andrew Loh
Trude Raizen
Lisa Riddle
Deivid Rojas
Swarthmore College
Bosnia

The city of Zenica, the fourth largest in the country, was largely destroyed during the war in Bosnia and remains, more than 15 years later, a depressed and divided city. A group of Swarthmore students set out over the summer to make a difference in the lives of 150 children in Zenica through a summer program aimed to bolster communication in English and Bosnian and teach conflict resolution skills.

Meeting daily in small groups, the Swarthmore students taught English and positive communication skills through games, arts and crafts, creative writing exercises, and speaking activities. Progress was measured by the confidence with which the youngsters began to express themselves in English and by their willingness to attempt to solve conflicts without resorting to physical or verbal attacks. As in any good educational experience, while the young Bosnians benefited from increased abilities in English and a basic understanding of non-violent methods of communication, the Swarthmore students left Bosnia having learned as much or more than the Bosnian students about cross-cultural communication.

“From the children, our homestay families, and from interacting with local residents, we gained unforgettable insight and perspective. We learned that it takes a very long time for a post-conflict society to heal.”

Swarthmore College students
While much has changed in Kosovo, so too, much has remained the same. Ethnic tensions are high; intolerance and distrust are pervasive. Whole cities, communities, and even schools and universities remain divided, limiting opportunities for the building of trust and a common future.

The goal of this pilot project was to contribute to the re-building of trust between the Albanian and Serb communities in Kosovo by establishing a network of student mentors who would work to provide guidance and support to high school students, beginning in Mitrovica and Pristina. Training workshops were held in Montenegro during the summer, covering topics from actual mentoring to team building and leadership skills. Despite different ethnic backgrounds, a cohesive group of mentors emerged ready to carry on throughout the year meeting weekly with mentees, providing much needed guidance and support for a population critical to peace in the region. If the next generation is going to be instrumental in building peace, they must begin by getting to know one another. As the project is evaluated, it is likely to be expanded and replicated in other places in the Balkans, increasing its impact and potential.

“We believed we could engender a process of slow reconciliation by bringing Albanian and Serb students together and making them work towards a common goal. Small steps are needed, where local problems are addressed together in order to create a sense of shared experiences and community over time.”
“Sharing painful histories through dialogue and education provides a historical context that is essential to working towards future peace and tolerance. We must begin this process of remembering in order to better understand how hate and genocide can be prevented for future generations.”

Leah Roth-Howe, Macalester College

The Khmer Rouge genocide is not a part of the curriculum in Cambodian classrooms, and those who survived rarely reminisce about the atrocities. This leaves a generation of Cambodians and Cambodian-Americans with many questions and few answers. Leah Roth-Howe sought to provide opportunities for young people in Chicago and in Phnom Penh to learn about the past and take ownership of their history.

In Chicago, Leah worked with the Cambodian-American Association of Illinois, leading youth workshops designed for thoughtful discussions on history and political identity. After two months, the young people were interviewing relatives in an oral history project designed to answer some of the questions.

In Cambodia, Leah quickly discovered that her workshops needed to initially focus on teaching actual history in addition to providing opportunities for creative expression and communication. The workshops were so successful that additional ones will take place with adult survivors of the Khmer Rouge and with former Khmer Rouge soldiers.

Leah will return to Cambodia to lead workshops at the International Youth Peace Conference in Siem Reap for over 350 young people from post-conflict regions around the world.
Malaria kills more people than any other disease in Burma. Especially at risk are the many internally displaced people who have been forced from their homes and now live in constantly moving communities in the hills along the Thailand border. With little access to health education, information, care, or services, this population is especially vulnerable to malaria. The original goal of this project was to work with health organizations to distribute treated nets to people along the border to help stop the spread of malaria. When the Kalamazoo students arrived in Thailand and began to work with local health care providers, it became obvious to them that they needed to expand their project to include both prevention and treatment.

Over the course of the summer, the Kalamazoo students helped the Free Burma Rangers develop a public health strategy for malaria prevention and treatment and distributed 400 treated nets to cover 1,000 people. Through the Karen Department of Health and Welfare, they provided mosquito nets, medicines, and malaria tests for 400 people in three high-risk villages.

Back in the U.S., they created the Burma Empowerment Action Team (BEAT) and established a website with the goal to continue to fundraise and sustain the malaria project well into the future.

“Recognizing that health care and peace are inextricably tied, we hope to continue providing funding for malaria prevention and striving to create a global campaign focused on bringing sustainable health care, and eventually, peace to Burma.”

Arianna Schindle, Julianna Weaver, Stephanie Willette, Kalamazoo College, Burma
Solar Cooking for Tibetan Communities

Nanjie Caihua
Zhuoma Gadou
Duke University
Tibet

Nanjie and Zhuoma grew up on the high Tibetan Plateau in Western China, and although now students at Duke, they are committed to improving the lives of ethnic Tibetans. Largely nomadic, generations of these families have relied upon wood for fuel, resulting in large-scale deforestation. The Chinese government has restricted woodcutting to several weeks a year and levied huge fines on anyone cutting wood at other times. Because it is impossible to collect enough wood in the allotted timeframe, the Tibetans turned to yak dung as an alternative fuel, and that has led to soil depletion on the prairies. The government’s response is to urge Tibetans to relocate to urban slums. Solar energy provides a way in which these families can continue their traditional way of life.

Once awarded their Projects for Peace grant, Nanjie and Zhuoma applied for and received a DukeEngage grant that enabled them to devote the entire Projects for Peace award toward the purchase of solar cookers. Four hundred solar cookers were purchased from a local manufacturer (only 300 miles away) and distributed to families in four villages.

Nanjie and Zhuoma believe that families with solar cookers will be more likely to resist pressures to move to urban areas and that women and girls, largely responsible for fuel collection, will have more time to devote to education.

“In addition to contributing to environmental improvement and Tibetan’s health, when people everywhere expressed their gratitude to Mrs. Davis, we felt great satisfaction at being able to represent in a personal way a world that most people there could scarcely imagine.”

Nanjie Caihua and Zhuoma Gadou, Duke University
Consecutive droughts, years of crop failure, pervasive poverty, and the highest prevalence of HIV in the world have combined to result in an acute protein malnutrition epidemic in Swaziland. Rural poverty there encourages diets of inexpensive high carbohydrate foods with little nutritional value. These diets, consisting mostly of maize and very little protein, cause widespread stunting in children and can lead to severe malnutrition and death.

Edward, Abhi, and Alexi’s goal was to introduce the Moringa Oleifera to Swaziland in an effort to fight malnutrition. The moringa is drought resistant, fast growing, non-invasive, highly productive and remarkably nutritious. Eaten like spinach or ground into a powder, the moringa leaf can greatly fortify daily maize meals.

After securing government support and working with partner institutions in Swaziland, including Waterford Kamhlaba United World College, seven trial and demonstration plots were planted across Swaziland. The moringa is ready for a first harvest within six months of planting, and workshops and training are continuing to promote the nutritious benefits to be reaped.

“The work this past summer, in addition to being an incredible learning experience, has added moringa to the arsenal in the fight against malnutrition in Swaziland. With our partner organizations, we are helping Swazi farmers cultivate the moringa tree and use it to fortify their diets naturally and sustainably.”

Edward Lin, Abhi Lokesh, Alexi Theodore, University of Florida
The Lawra District Hospital provides clinical services for some 40,000 people living in northern Ghana and Burkina Faso, and serves as a community center for this impoverished, rural population of different backgrounds, cultures, and nationalities. With only two resident doctors and shortages of funds and supplies, it is a challenge to provide comprehensive health care or teach preventative measures.

After spending the summer of 2006 volunteering in Ghana, Emma Lawrence saw a need to supplement the existing, limited healthcare outreach there. She returned in 2007 with several other UNC students and spent time distributing basic first aid supplies and leading health education workshops. By the summer of 2008, the UNC students were ready to make a permanent contribution by building a children’s library and medical resource center at the Lawra District Hospital. Through their hard work, the library became a reality and is filled with more than 1,500 books, basic medical texts and pamphlets, maps, tapes, and toys. The library is a resource for hospital staff, for patients, and for the community and is the setting for monthly health education workshops on topics ranging from malaria prevention, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and basic first aid and nutrition.

Project Heal has more long-range goals, and in Chapel Hill students are busy raising funds, raising awareness, and attracting volunteers for future work promoting health in Lawra next summer.

“We witnessed firsthand the challenges inherent in global health initiatives in a developing country, and learned the importance of community collaboration to produce relevant and sustainable outcomes.”

Emma Lawrence and Lauren Slive, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
The Pujehun Youth Center for Peace and Wellness creates a space where young people from across the district and beyond can gather, learn, share, and grow as individuals and as a community.

Elizabeth Nowak, Harvard College

During Sierra Leone’s ten-year civil war, most children were denied access to school either because they were in active combat or because the schools were closed or inaccessible. This leaves many young people uneducated, unable to find work, and jeopardizing their health and their futures with dangerous behaviors.

Members of the Harvard College Sierra Leone Initiative used their Projects for Peace grant to create a youth center in the Pujehun district in southern Sierra Leone. Working for two months, students renovated a war-torn building, putting in a new roof, staircases, windows, plumbing, electricity, doors, and painting the whole facility. During construction, they ran a summer school for almost 400 students ranging in age from 12 to 25. They taught basic computer skills, English, mathematics, history, business, health, leadership skills, and photography to young people who walked as many as 12 miles each day to attend classes.

Through a partnership with Saving Lives through Alternative Options (SLAO), a non-governmental organization based in Sierra Leone, the youth center will be open year-round and provide workshops based on the interests of the young people. The Pujehun Youth Center is a permanent place where youth can be safe and nurtured, where they can find diversions that are not harmful to themselves and others, and where they can start to shape a better future.
Today there are more than a million AIDS orphans in Zimbabwe. While some orphans are cared for by extended family, there are many left on their own. In Chitungwiza, where Fallon Chipidza grew up, St. Teresa’s parish operates an orphanage and pre-school, home to 156 children. The goal is to prepare the youngsters for primary school, but increasingly, there are no funds available to pay the small fees required for ongoing school. The women who work at the orphanage grow vegetables to sell, but are not able to realize enough funds to do any more than feed the children. They dreamed of a poultry farm but did not have the capital or the training to start such an enterprise.

While at Hamilton, Fallon met a college administrator who owns a farm and raises chickens. There, Fallon learned the basics of chicken farming over her two-week spring break. With her Projects for Peace grant, Fallon returned to Zimbabwe in May, built a chicken run at the orphanage, bought six hundred chickens, and taught the head of the orphanage and a team of eight volunteers how to be chicken farming entrepreneurs. The profits from this enterprise will send 40 children to primary school in January and the parish, the teachers, and the volunteers are committed to sustaining the project well into the future.

“Through chickens, so much hope was instilled in many young souls…It is not the big things we achieve in our lives that matter, but the little things we do for others that make this world a better place.”

Fallon Chipidza
Hamilton College
Zimbabwe
One Mango Tree

Julie Carney
Yale University
Uganda

Northern Uganda is a region ravaged by more than twenty years of armed conflict. The war has claimed the lives of thousands, displaced more than two million, and devastated the local economy. One Mango Tree was founded on the belief that economic independence provides the foundation for lasting peace and development and is focused on providing added income to women tailors in Northern Uganda through design assistance and access to the U.S. market where fair trade prices are paid for products ranging from tote bags to aprons, all made from the vibrantly colored fabrics of the region.

Julie Carney applied her Projects for Peace grant to expanding One Mango Tree’s reach to 20 women in two camps for internally displaced persons in Gulu District. Sewing machines and materials were purchased, training spaces rented, and Lucy and Prisca, tailors already working with One Mango Tree in Gulu Town, taught basic tailoring skills for three months. After graduation, the new tailors had the abilities to sell their goods to the local population or, through One Mango Tree’s website, to consumers in the U.S. The skills learned and the expanded opportunities open to these new tailors have the potential to change their lives and the lives of their families and to impact lives and conditions throughout the community.

“There is arguably nothing more humanitarian in northern Uganda right now that bringing business to vulnerable women. One Mango Tree seeks to bring marketable skills, market connections, and sustainable incomes to women traditionally unconnected to the global market.”

Julie Carney, Yale University
Clean, safe drinking water is not a given in many parts of the world. In the Venda region of South Africa the water comes from the mountains and carries with it contaminants that cause illness and disease. Eric and Ana agreed that they could use their engineering backgrounds to develop a project that would make the water safe.

Their solution was to offer to build slow sand filtration systems in existing water tanks. The systems were designed to be non-electric and to be made entirely from local materials. After meeting with community members in the village of Tshapasha and giving a formal presentation of their proposal, Eric and Ana received enthusiastic support. Ten community volunteers and several students from the University of Venda were enlisted to construct the filters and be trained to maintain the system. With their first-hand experience building the filters and the help of a written manual provided by Eric and Ana, the new volunteers will continue to hold workshops on safe water use, hygiene, and sanitation. They will conduct periodic water testing to ensure the successful operation of the sand filters, and will be able to replicate the filters in other nearby villages, thus expanding the impact of the project.

“The true achievement of our project was not the end product, a successful water purification system, but rather the sharing of information and resources, and the ability to work collaboratively.”

Eric Harshfield and Ana Jemec, University of Virginia
Sinergia is a small microfinance group in northern Peru that loans money to women who want to start their own businesses. Drew McWay believes in the proverb, “If you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day. If you teach him to fish, you feed him for a lifetime.” He partnered with Sinergia for several months and used his Projects for Peace grant to expand their capacity for giving loans as well as to invest in their infrastructure in order to improve their efficiency. As a result, loans swelled by more than 25%, a new computer for the Sinergia director has increased office capability, and a motorcycle for the part-time employee charged with visiting the women has freed up hours for comprehensive visits, as his previous mode of transportation was on foot.

The small loans Sinergia makes, usually ranging from $50 to $250 are enough for women to start viable businesses. As the loans are repaid, the funds become available to be reinvested into new community businesses and the cycle continues. Each time a business is started, one more woman is saved from unemployment and one more family from poverty. In order to help these women entrepreneurs, Drew authored a job-training curriculum aimed at improving business strategies and ultimately increasing earnings.

“Through this project I gained a wealth of experience in a variety of realms both professional and personal, ranging from how to evaluate borrower risk on a financial spreadsheet to how to evaluate a borrower’s responsibility and trustworthiness through conversation.”

Andrew McWay, Washington and Lee University

Peru
“Chickens aren’t usually seen as a way to promote peace, but when they are a means to care for orphaned, abandoned, and poverty-stricken boys, they become rays of hope in an unstable society.”

Andrew Myers, Lake Forest College
High in the Andes Mountains in Ecuador are communities of indigenous people who exist on diets severely limited by extreme weather conditions. Now, thanks to a Projects for Peace grant, three communities have new greenhouses. People have been trained to sustain and manage these greenhouses, to produce a variety of foods, and been given a basic education in health and nutrition.

By partnering with several local non-governmental organizations, Heather and Marco were able to build three greenhouses and teach the skills necessary to grow a varied selection of crops and therapeutic plants. In addition, they designed and published a book directed at local school children highlighting the benefits of good nutrition and the greenhouses. Children’s health histories were recorded and plans are in place for follow up on the effects of the new greenhouses on the general health of the local children.

“Helping people is providing them with the tools and skills they need to help themselves at the present moment and to help themselves and others in the future.”

Heather Eckhardt and Marco Marin, Methodist University
There are really no words to explain the importance of a basic education in the life of a child— it is one of the few gifts that they will never outgrow.

— Marie Gay, Simmons College, Haiti
Our goal was to empower the children to rise above their circumstances by providing them with new resources and skills, stimulating good behavior, and improving their environment through renovations and safety measures.

Lewis and Clark students traveled to Ceilândia, Brazil to work with the children and staff at the orphanage Criamar. Ceilândia is an impoverished suburb of Brasilia and Criamar is home to nearly 50 children, many abandoned by their families because of dire economic circumstances. Criamar provides each child there with food, clothing, and the opportunity to attend school, but resources beyond that are scarce for any extras.

Working with the staff and the children, the Lewis and Clark group constructed a computer lab, provided over one hundred hours of computer instruction, created a much appreciated behavior incentive system by awarding free computer time for good behavior, and made structural improvements to the sports and play areas and the wastewater system. Looking toward the future, the Lewis and Clark students collaborated with students from the American School of Brasilia who created a volunteer group, “Criamar Tech Team” to continue weekly computer classes into the future.
A team of seven Colorado College students organized and facilitated 25 days of athletics and healthcare clinics for women and children in the department of Intibucá, Honduras over the summer. They instructed 50 children in soccer, volleyball, and American football in addition to teaching health-related topics ranging from water sanitation to trash management. They hosted clinics for coaches to train teachers and local community members in how to lead drills and scrimmages, emphasizing the role of the coach or teacher as a leader in the community. Before they left, they donated 100 balls, 70 pairs of cleats, four volleyball nets, and a collection of health materials to the schools who had sent teachers to the clinics.

As much as was accomplished with the children on the playing fields, the students feel the women’s clinic was their greatest success. Attendance increased daily as the women appreciated the opportunity to play soccer together but also took a genuine interest in learning more about women’s health and empowerment issues. Cover One has been invited to return to Honduras and the team is busy with raising the necessary funds to do just that.

“Our primary purpose was to use sports as a vehicle for providing health information, while also addressing, through sports clinics and empowerment classes, women’s physical and psychological health in a male-dominated culture.”
Despite the 8,000 miles that separates them, Kibungo, Rwanda and Fulton, Missouri have developed a strong connection thanks to a Projects for Peace grant. Students from Westminster College had a goal to forge a sister city relationship between Kibungo and Fulton and witnessed the signing of a declaration by both the Mayor of Kibungo and the Mayor of Fulton. They determined that the most pressing need in Kibungo is a health clinic and the community of Fulton committed to a partnership to make that a reality.

During the summer, the Westminster College team traveled to Kibungo to conduct a health needs assessment in order to determine how best to plan the future health center. Students interviewed over 300 villagers in this process that finalized the location of the clinic, the range of services offered, and how best to address the difficulties of delivery of these services. In addition, students served as goodwill ambassadors of the partnership between Kibungo and Fulton, and met with leaders at all levels from local village community leaders to ambassadors. They videotaped meetings and activities that will be used for presentations to community groups in Fulton.

Fulton, Missouri is committed to bringing a new health clinic to Kibungo, Rwanda, and it all began with students with a vision and a Projects for Peace grant.

“We worked to organize this project in such a way that the grant money would provide a lever for a much larger endeavor. By establishing a sister community partnership, we have set the stage for a sustainable children’s and women’s health clinic in Kibungo, but also stimulated both communities to brainstorm on ways to partner in other mutually beneficial projects.”

Westminster College students
I wonder if, when Kathryn Wasserman Davis decided to celebrate her centennial birthday by funding 100 undergraduate student projects, she anticipated how profound an impact this gift would have. Here at Middlebury College, her initial $1 million investment in 2007 prompted a deluge of proposals, which revealed a surprising level of sophistication and drive among young people wishing to undertake ambitious peace-themed initiatives. In its second year, the program grew in popularity and influence on our campus, and I am sure this was also the case at each of the participating colleges and universities.

Undoubtedly, a woman who has lived through two world wars knows more than most of us about the roots of human conflict. Perhaps Mrs. Davis also understands something important about this generation of “movers and shakers,” as she calls them, and maybe we, as college administrators and educators, can learn from her approach.

Through a sister program called Fellowships for Peace, Mrs. Davis provides the means for 100 peace-oriented individuals to immerse themselves in critically under-studied world languages at the Middlebury Language Schools every summer. In much the same way that these Fellowships for Peace are transforming lives and making an incredible impact on our Language Schools programs, the Projects for Peace are influencing our students’ perception of what is possible in an undergraduate education—and what the purpose of their education might ultimately be. The program inspires us all to think more broadly about what it means to seek and to provide a broad, globally relevant education.

The Projects for Peace awards Davis Fellows with a $10,000 budget that can be used to achieve any goal in any corner of the globe. The only stipulation is that the project must bring us one step closer to a peaceful world. When you consider the average cost of a college education, this sum might seem modest, but imagine what this opportunity represents to a creative, idealistic, and ambitious young person eager to make a difference in the world.

First, imagine being this young person. All of your life, you have worked extremely hard in school. You have likely pressured yourself—and perhaps been under pressure from others—to make the grades that will open doors for you in the future. Your efforts were rewarded when you gained entry into a college or university with remarkable resources. Maybe financial aid makes it possible for you to attend this institution. If it does, thoughts about repaying loans—and building a future free of debt—might color your undergraduate experience. It might even factor in to your decision about your major. Even if you do not receive financial aid, you are likely motivated by thoughts about life after graduation. Will your chosen profession be both personally and financially rewarding?

Undergraduates should, of course, be cognizant of the future and inclined to make pragmatic choices. On the other hand, those of us who believe in the power of a broad, deep, and diverse liberal arts education also know the value of stretching one’s personal boundaries and going out on an intellectual or creative limb. Too often, students do not feel they can afford to take these kinds of risks;
too often, their innovative spirit is constrained by limits of form—such practical concerns as grades, resumes, and transcripts.

The genius of the Projects for Peace program is that it circumvents these often limiting structures, while providing a uniquely powerful learning experience that challenges students to draw from their existing knowledge and skills. Middlebury sophomore Shabana Natisa Basij-Rasikh did not dig wells in Afghanistan this summer for a grade, and her peers, Zaheens Rasheed and Emily Francis Reed, did not conduct environmental workshops in the Maldives to fulfill a departmental requirement. In partnership with Kathryn Davis, they each brought their creative ideas to fruition for the benefit of the local and global community, out of their genuine desire to make a difference in the world.

Projects for Peace dares young leaders to dream big, and shows us all what is possible when they are given the resources they need to act on those dreams. I can think of no more valuable undergraduate experience than envisioning a project of powerful potential, planning its execution, and learning from the results—all with nothing to go on but faith in yourself and the faith of an elder.

Over the years, Middlebury College has built an extensive network of international resources on the foundation of a broad liberal arts curriculum. Our intensifying global focus and expanding programs give students access to information, ideas, and people from all over the world. I like to believe that by providing a few of the remarkable young leaders featured in these pages with such a globally relevant education, we play a role in their successes. However, the credit must go to Kathryn Davis for forging a partnership between her generation—with its experience, wisdom, and material wealth—and the emerging young leaders of today, with their energy, determination, and creative vision. I find great hope in the Projects for Peace, which are empowering the next generation to make a difference in the world.
### The 2008 Davis Projects for Peace

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- or
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