

30-dollar goat helps develop self-reliance

By Sheree Nixon *NewsNet Staff Writer* - 9 Dec 2002

[E-mail](#) or [Print](#) this story



Brooks Dame, from Ontario, Ore., visits the village of Santa Lucia, El Salvador last summer. HELP plans on giving goats to villagers throughout El Salvador and other Latin American countries.

It only costs \$30 to buy a goat, a goat that will give a poor family in El Salvador the opportunity to become self sufficient.

This opportunity for self-sufficiency has inspired Helping Eliminate Poverty (HELP), a non-profit organization designed to assist the poor in third world countries, to create a program specifically for giving goats.

"We are giving a family the possibility of starting their own project," said Warner Woodworth, an organizational behavior professor at BYU and founder of HELP International.

Brooks Dame, a senior from Ontario, Ore., majoring in Spanish, has been involved with HELP International, which started in 1999, since he returned home from a mission in El Salvador.

"You can't just leave the country behind," Brooks said.

Dame, along with HELP International, developed "give-a-goat" to inspire people to work together as a community, receive an income and become self-reliant.

Give a Goat is a program that holds the families who receive a goat responsible for continuing the program.

Twenty-five families who have already been selected by HELP International will each receive one female goat. It is the responsibility of the family members to raise and care for the goat until it can produce offspring.

One male goat is provided as the breeding goat for the community, which allows the

program to expand. Once the female gives birth, the first-born is required to be given to another family in the community.

"It's kind of like the movie Pay it Forward," said Chelsea Smart, a junior from Yakima, Wash., majoring in international studies. "When people are helped, they turn around and help others."

Smart said the program allows people to become involved in the community and to learn to rely on each other.

"They realize there is a need for community service," Smart said. "They have to interact with others to provide for the goat, that is what we want. We want them to help themselves and others."

The goat provides meat, and also will provide money to the families through the offspring that are sold.

"Each goat can create a job," Woodworth said. "The goat will provide nutrients for the family, but once the goat has offspring, the family can sell them to buy fabric to sew clothes, or flour to sell tortillas. They will have an income."

Woodworth also said by providing one job, five family members will benefit from that employment.

To get this program underway, HELP International is raising money to provide goats for the communities.

"A goat only costs \$30 to buy," Dame said. "And it only costs \$700 to fund a community."

HELP International is hopeful the holiday season will provide the necessary funds to continue the Give a Goat project.

"We are trying to get families involved around here and in stakes at home and at BYU," Smart said.

"All my siblings are buying a goat for Christmas," Smart said.

Anyone can give a goat to the community by sponsoring a family and purchasing a goat through HELP International.

Woodworth said HELP International is trying to recruit volunteers to travel to El Salvador next spring and implement the Give a Goat program.

"We need 100 people to help in four countries next summer," Woodworth said.

Woodworth started HELP International in 1999 after Hurricane Mitch slammed down on Central America, claiming the lives of 20,000 people.

"We felt as university students and as Latter-day Saints that we should do something to alleviate the pain, suffering and misery of the people," Woodworth said.

The past two years HELP International has assisted multiple communities in several countries.

After devastating earthquakes in 2000 that crippled small cities in El Salvador, HELP International traveled to the ruined country to rebuild homes.

Last year HELP International provided square foot gardening projects for the communities

"Jana Stanfield said 'I cannot do all the good the world needs, but the world needs all the good that I can do,'" said Woodworth.

For more information, visit the [HELP International Web site](http://www.help-international.org) at www.help-international.org