



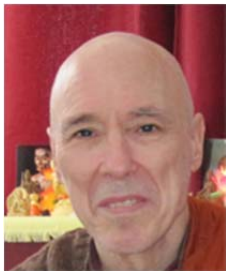
buddhist global relief



helping hands newsletter

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## A Walk Can Be More Than A Walk



**By Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi** - Walking can be viewed in bare physical terms as an intricate interplay of nerve impulses, muscles, and bones resulting in a change of location. Viewed pragmatically, walking is a means for getting us from one place to another, from our starting point to our goal. But the process of walking can bear a significance greater than bodily mechanics; it can play a wider role than satisfying our everyday needs. Walking can be an act of conscience by which we project our values and ideals from the inner recess of the heart out into the world. The process of walking can move minds and motivate action. It can even change the course of

history, causing empires to tumble and unjust systems to bend.

Walks have taken on this role numerous times in the past century. Gandhi's walks along the dusty roads of India were part of his peaceful strategy for freeing his country from the grip of the British Raj. Martin Luther King's walks in the cities of the South helped win civil rights for millions of disenfranchised African Americans. Maha Ghosananda's "Dharma Yatras" in Cambodia attempted to heal the wounds left by two decades of brutal conflict. Mass walks in Washington have protested our country's wars in Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

Over the past year, the long walk has become a method for Buddhist Global Relief to raise funds to sponsor our projects helping poor people escape the ravages of poverty. The seed of the BGR walk was a dream I had several years ago in which I walked the length of Manhattan. I acted on this dream in May 2010, accompanied by Evan, a young man staying at my monastery, and Sylvie Sun, a BGR board member. We started from Sylvie's home in Fort Lee, New Jersey, walked across the George Washington Bridge into Manhattan, and continued walking until we reached Chinatown, a distance of about fourteen miles, which we covered in six hours.

When word of this walk spread among my students, one suggested organizing a long walk to raise funds for BGR. Thus last October we held our first walk, "10,000 Steps Against Hunger," at South Mountain Reservation in New Jersey. This year, over the weekend of Sept. 10th and 11th, BGR walks took place in three locations: New York, Michigan, and the South Bay of California. Accounts of these walks will be found elsewhere in this newsletter. Next year we plan to add walks in Los Angeles and Seattle.

While the ostensible purpose of this walk has been simply to raise funds, the act of walking in unison for several miles has a more profound spiritual meaning, serving as a means by which we lay bare our fundamental moral convictions. On reflection I can discern in our "Walk to Feed the Hungry" three layers of significance. While these might be distinguished in thought, in reality they are inseparable, the three blending and reinforcing each other with every step that we take.

At the most obvious level, the walk is an expression of generosity and compassion. By walking together, we raise funds. By walking together, we manifest concern for the poor and hungry. Our steps are acts of compassion intended to alleviate suffering. Through collective action we express our belief that all human beings are essentially alike, that we all merit the resources essential to a decent life. We also make a commitment—a bold and unstinting commitment—to extend a helping hand. We reach out across oceans, continents, and cultures to lift up those cast down by life's circumstances. Or, even better, we equip them with the means to uplift themselves: with education, training, tools, food, and seeds.

At a second level, our walk encapsulates our sense of conscience; it affirms our awareness of an impersonal imperative pointing us towards social justice. By walking we express the recognition that something is fundamentally skewed with a global social and economic system that treats human beings as disposal. We resist a system that pushes a billion people into the pits of poverty and crushes them beneath the weight of incessant hunger. We express moral revulsion at the cruel miscarriage of social justice that occurs when, amidst an abundance of food, ten million people—over half of them children—die each year from malnutrition and hunger-related illnesses. With our silent steps we proclaim that the global food system must ensure that no one goes hungry, that we must guarantee everyone a sufficient quantity of healthy nutritious food. More broadly, we advocate for a new world order founded on the pillars of social justice and respect for the inherent dignity of every human being.

At a third level, walking becomes a way of expressing our own real nature, of manifesting the deep potentials for generosity and goodness inherent in the human heart. By walking in the company of spiritual teachers and kind-hearted friends, we blow open the narrow walls of self-concern in which our personal dramas normally unfold. Instead, we rise to a new perspective—a universal perspective—that takes the good of all as our guiding ideal. By walking in solidarity with the world's poor, we repudiate the rampant cynicism of the dominant culture which regards human nature as corrupted by incurable selfishness and greed. Rather than yielding to the dictates of blind self-interest, we show that, as individuals, we flourish best when we nurture our innate impulses to generosity, love, care, and concern. Even more pointedly, we express the hope, trust, and conviction that humanity as a whole flourishes best when we all flourish together. We walk because we look upon one another as lost brothers and sisters. We walk to share the burden of suffering with the weakest in our midst, and we rejoice in discovering our power to uplift those who urgently need our help.

By walking to feed the hungry, we recover what we have almost lost—our own souls, our hidden potentials for generosity and compassion and selfless love. Despite the propaganda of politicians and policy analysts, it is not economic competition that is going to redeem our world. It is not strategies of aggression, domination, and repression that are going to make us safe. The secret to transforming the world, the key to security and safety, lies in cooperation and collaboration. It lies in respect for all human beings, and in compassion for all beings in the wider web of life. The key to our redemption from the brink of self-destruction is exactly what the enlightened spiritual teachers of humanity have always emphasized: helpfulness, generosity, and love, channeled into selfless action on behalf of all sentient beings, including people we will never know or see. As we travel through this journey of life and death, we walk together as a way of demonstrating our primal unity. We walk together to embody in action our intrinsic and inseparable solidarity in the quest for well-being, happiness, and security.

**The New York and Bay Area walks of 2012 will be held on October 13th. The walk in Seattle will be held on October 6th, the walks in Michigan and Los Angeles on October 20th. Details will be announced later, but those living in these areas can reserve these dates now.**

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## BGR Grant Feeds Hungry Children In Port-au-Prince, Haiti



**By Tom Green** - Buddhist Global Relief awarded a grant enabling the What If? Foundation to provide food relief to hungry children in the Tiplas Kazo neighborhood of Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Using the community-based food program, Lamanjay, the BGR grant provided over 3,000 hot, nutritious meals of rice, vegetables and protein each month during the first half of 2011. BGR will continue funding this highly successful program by providing an additional six-month grant good through December 2011.

The What If? Foundation has partnered with members of the Tiplas Kazo community in

Port-au-Prince since 2000. The foundation has brought desperately needed food and educational opportunities to impoverished children. The foundation helps provide 9,000 meals each week, 212 school scholarships, an after-school program for 240 youth, and a summer camp for 550 children. BGR's grant is especially vital. It provides many impoverished children, survivors of the January 2010 earthquake, with their only meal of the day. Some children walk miles to receive it.



Lamanjay (Haitian creole) has also been consistently dependable. In a recent update to BGR, the What If? Foundation reports Lamanjay not only provides "nutritious food for thousands and thousands of children whose lives were devastated by the earthquake, it has also fostered a critical sense of stability in the Tiplas Kazo neighborhood." It does so by offering support to families who are unable to feed their children; this enables the families to remain together.

Doudji Jean Marie, provides a good example. His story is told in the What If? Foundation's July 2011 "Success Stories" report to BGF. Doudji has always lived in a tiny one-room cinderblock in the Tiplas Kazo community with his mother, grandmother and younger sister, Roseline. In 2007, his father abandoned the family, leaving Doudji's mother with no source of income. Consequently, she sent Doudji to the Lamanjay food program located in a rectory building. For four years, Doudji has benefitted from this food program now funded by BGR. Often he returned home with food in a plastic bag to share with his sister. Also in 2007, a member of What If? Foundation's education team befriended Doudji. He noticed Doudji's thin and tattered appearance as the boy came in the rectory daily for food. Consequently, this education team member helped Doudji obtain a scholarship to start first grade in the What If? Foundation's Port-au-Prince education program.





Today, Doudji and his family are enjoying a much better life. Now 10 years old, Doudji is much healthier, less thin. He is in 4th grade, goes to school every morning then walks to the food program in the afternoon. "His smile lights up the room, as he is so grateful that he and his sister have enough food, and that he gets to school. He tells us how much happier his mother is now that she knows her children are fed, and have a 'real chance at life' " (July 2011 "Success Stories" report to BGR)

For detailed accounts of BGR projects in the second half of 2011, see our website at: [www.buddhistglobalrelief.org](http://www.buddhistglobalrelief.org)

*BGR is pleased to support the work of the What If? Foundation. We are deeply grateful to all our donors who make it possible for us to support the What If? Foundation and our other partners who work to give the world's poorest citizens the opportunity to lead lives of dignity and purpose. For more information on the What If? Foundation, please see the What If? Foundation website..*

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## New Fall 2011 Approved Project Summaries

We are happy to announce the funding of several new projects this summer. They address varied aspects of the problem of hunger around the world.

### **Cambodia, Lotus Outreach, Family Water Wells**

This BGR grant to our partner, Lotus Outreach, will provide funds for the construction of ten community wells in the Chantrea district of Cambodia, where 70% of the households lack access to stable clean water supplies. At present, villagers, especially women, have to walk 1.5 km to fetch water. The wells will provide them with a stable source of clean water, enabling the women to engage in economic activity and the children to attend school. The availability of water will also improve health and sanitation in the district, reducing the prevalence of hygiene-related diseases. The project will also host six public education sessions on hygienic practices such as hand washing, water boiling, and toilet use.

### **Cambodia, Lotus Outreach, Working Capital Assistance**

BGR will provide funding for Lotus Outreach to start a microfinance program in the Cardamom Mountain range. The funds will be loaned to families for non-animal agricultural activities. Families will use the loans to purchase seed varieties (mungbean, soybean, peanut, etc.) as well as agricultural tools such as axes, hoes, sickles, spades, and rakes. In addition, some families may elect to invest in agricultural equipment such as machinery for producing tahini and soy milk. Surplus seeds from the cash crops grown with BGR's funding will be "paid forward" to other families who decide to partake in this agricultural income generation in following years. This will create a multiplier effect, amplifying the burgeoning culture of community cohesion. Besides protecting the local ecosystem, the provision agricultural loans will greatly

improve the families' overall financial and nutritional status, directly affecting the health and school attendance of their children.

### **Haiti, What If? Foundation, Community Food Program**

BGR will continue funding the What If? Foundation's program that provides hot, nutritious meals to hungry children in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. A local community food program, Lamanjay, runs this highly successful project. BGR's grant will provide about 14,400 meals to children, for most of whom the food they receive at the program is their only meal of the day. The meals provide children with nutrition critical to their growth, development and well-being. By feeding the children, Lamanjay also supports the parents and other adults who are responsible for the children as they seek to rebuild their lives with limited resources.

### **India, Bodhicitta, Education for Poor Children**

BGR has agreed to continue its partnership with the Bodhicitta Foundation, an organization promoting the welfare of the Dalits and other poor communities in Nagpur, India. The project we will support focuses on women and girls, in an effort to counter the deep and pervasive gender bias in Indian society. The project will sponsor ten children to attend school. It will also provide food supplements for 25 undernourished children twice a week, and offer classes in English, computer technology, dharma, and personality development. A separate part of the project provides classes for older youth and women, including classes on health awareness.

### **Malawi, Ecology Action. GROW BIOINTENSIVE Training**

BGR will partner with Ecology Action to extend the successful GROW BIOINTENSIVE training program from Kenya to Malawi. The GROW BIOINTENSIVE training increases the self-sufficiency of rural Africans, reducing their dependence on long-term aid. Malawi is ranked 153rd out of 169 countries on the 2010 Human Development Index. Malnutrition in the country is extensive, as high as 30% among children. The long-term purpose of the BGR program is to increase food production and income for the country's many widows and orphans. Ecology Action provides training to 40 people per month; the trainees in turn train people in their own villages and communities. The BGR grant will enable Ecology Action to train two more trainers in a condensed training session at their training center in Kenya. The project will also create centers for teaching, establish seed banks, and provide tools for the training program and maintenance of the teaching farm.

### **South Africa, Dharmagiri Outreach, Community Garden**

A grant from BGR will provide our partner Dharmagiri Outreach with funding to create a large organic, permaculture community garden in the Umqatsheni community of the KwaZulu Natal province of South Africa. This area has high rates of HIV/AIDS, and these members of the community need adequate nutrition in addition to medical care. The community garden will provide organic produce, and will also function as a nursery for seedlings and plants for other farmers in the community. The garden will also provide training in environmentally and economically sustainable agriculture for Umqatsheni and

surrounding communities. The project will result in a self-sustaining, high-yield food production system which, after a couple years, literally feeds and supports itself.

### **Sri Lanka, CENWOR, Girl's Vocational Training for Girls**

BGR will continue its partnership with the Centre for Women's Research (CENWOR) with a grant that supports girls aged 16-19 from low income families to enhance their educational attainments and acquire employable skills. The girls will be trained in computer use, English language, and personal development. These important skills can lead to employment or successful entrepreneurship after graduation, thus enabling the girls to move out of poverty. Many of these girls would otherwise drop out of school and face reduced opportunities to support themselves and their families.

### **United States, Garden Harvest, Greenhouse Construction Project**

Garden Harvest is a not-for-profit farm near Baltimore run by full time volunteers, assisted by seasonal staff, apprentices, and volunteers. Garden Harvest produces hundreds of thousands of pounds of organic vegetables, fruit, and eggs every year for free distribution to the poor. This past year we supported their "Adopt-A-Plot" program, which grows organic fruits and vegetables to supply free food distribution centers for the poor, especially in Maryland and Pennsylvania. This new BGR grant will help Garden Harvest to build greenhouses in order to continue vegetable production during the winter months. The winter gardening project will increase the acreage under cultivation and will give Garden Harvest the capacity for large scale organic food production throughout the winter months for years to come. This will significantly improve food security for the most disadvantaged citizens in the Baltimore Metro area.

*For more information on these and our other exciting projects, go to the [BGR projects page](#).*

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## **New Yorkers Walk To Feed The Hungry**



**By Deena Scherer** - On September 10, Buddhist Global Relief held its second annual Walk to Feed the Hungry at Riverside Park in New York City. Over eighty people, and their children and pets, came out to walk the 3.5 miles under sunny skies to support BGR's mission of feeding the hungry, promoting sustainable food production, and educating poor girls in the developing world.

The walk was inspired by Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi, whose call for compassionate action and global social justice nearly three years ago resulted in the formation of Buddhist Global Relief. In its three year life span, BGR has already funded over twenty projects around the world. Projects scheduled for the near future will be launched in India, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Malawi, South Africa, Haiti, and the USA.

The New York walk was led by Ven. Buddharakkhita, a monk from Uganda and a BGR adviser, who infused the gathering with his contagious joy and energy. He was accompanied by the Ven. Kondanna, abbot of the Staten Island Vihara, and resident monk, Ven. Wimalajothi. Ven. Ji Xing, President of the Buddhist Association of the United States, also joined the walk.



Prior to walking, Echo Bonner and Harry Miller of the Dharma Drum Mountain Buddhist Association led an Eight Form Moving Meditation. They were assisted by Rebecca Li and David Slaymaker, also of Dharma Drum Mountain. This event turned out to be well attended and was much appreciated.

Volunteers from BGR and Oxfam America worked tirelessly to ensure that the walkers would be inspired, cheered, and encouraged to “bring forth a heart of generosity and compassion,” as Ven. Buddharakkhita expressed it in a thoughtful talk. Ven. Ji Xing also gave a heartfelt talk to encourage the walkers.



The walk had been in the planning stages for months, and the planning paid off. There were many sweet moments, and the joy and determination of the walkers provided a counterpoint to the sadness that permeated New York on the eve of the tenth anniversary of the destruction of the Twin Towers. Along the way walkers had a chance to talk with the monastics about Buddhism and to make new friends. Volunteers appeared at convenient moments to offer refreshing water to the walkers.

After the vigorous walk, a beautiful vegetarian lunch was served to all while a message from Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi was read aloud by the emcee, Michael Roehm, a BGR adviser. Patti Price, chairwoman of the Buddhist Global Relief Programs Committee, spoke eloquently about the programs this walk would fund, and an Oxfam volunteer explained the importance of growing food and the urgent need to stop using corn as fuel, a practice that shifts this valuable crop away from the poor and hungry who need it most. The Venerable Buddharakkhita reminded us that we had not reached the end of our walk, but only the beginning—the long walk to eliminate poverty and malnutrition. To share merits, the monks led a Pali chant, which was translated into English.



After lunch, the walkers sat on the lovely lawn of Riverside Park to enjoy time with each other. They received thanks not only verbally but in the form of gifts which were raffled off from donations by New York institutions such as the Rubin Museum of Art, New York Insight Meditation Center, Gobo Restaurant, and the eminent Buddhist writer and teacher Sharon Salzberg. After the event there were tender “good byes” as people parted to return to their lives, but now invigorated by a sense of generosity and compassion.

The event was supported by the Chuang Yen Monastery whose abbot, Ven. Sak Dhammadipa, raised over \$10,000 for BGR. Other supporters included the Dharma Drum Mountain Buddhist Association, the

Staten Island Buddhist Vihara, and the Uganda Buddhist Centre. Support also came from Tricycle Magazine and the Global Peace Initiative of Women.

Special thanks are due to Daniel Blake and the Julian Lage Group, who presented a benefit concert on September 1st in support of the walk. The concert was held at The Douglass Street Music Collective, in Brooklyn, NY. Sylvie Sun, BGR board member, attended and reported that the performance was extraordinary. The concert and the walk were coordinated by Phil and Frannie Hoff of Brooklyn, with a team of volunteers from Buddhist Global Relief.

We also offer thanks to the City of New York and the New York City Park Commission for permitting us to hold the walk in Riverside Park. The location was outstanding and the day proved a source of inner nourishment for all, a foretoken of the physical nourishment it will bring to its beneficiaries.

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## Walking Despite The Rain



**By Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi** - "We should have come by boat! We need oars and a rudder, not wheels!" Such were the thoughts that ran through my mind as we drove from Troy, a suburb of Detroit, to Kensington Park, in Milford, Michigan, north of Ann Arbor. It was already 9:15 am. Our walk was scheduled to start at 10 am, just forty-five minutes later, and the downpour seemed unrelenting. The road was enveloped in mist, streams of water flew up from the tired of the cars ahead of us, and dark clouds hugged the horizon. I doubted that anyone but a small band of fanatics would turn up for the walk.

The previous evening the Weather Channel reported that on Saturday the weather would be clear in the morning, to be followed by scattered thunder showers in the afternoon. This had lifted my hopes. At least we would be able to complete the walk and return home before the rains arrived. Or so I thought.

But on Saturday morning, I could hear the rain falling in torrents, and I even feared we might have to cancel the walk. My host, Richard Smith, however, always maintained a cheerful and hopeful attitude, more trustful of the previous evening's weather report than I was. At 6:30 am I again checked the Weather Channel, which said that Ann Arbor would have rain until 9 am, after which the sky would clear up until 1 pm, when the rains would fall again. We set out for the park at 8:45 am. The rain showed no signs of abating, and when we hit the expressway it came down so heavily that we could barely see out the front window.

Before long, a patch of clear sky appeared to the north and west, but it seemed far away and unlikely to be reaching us soon. However, as we approached the park, the rain lightened up. People were playing golf and even jogging in the rain. As we drove to the parking area, the rain grew thinner, and in the parking lot I was greeted by a pleasant surprise: a whole fleet of vehicles, all belonging to people who had already turned up for the walk. It was clear that an impressive number of people had



been sufficiently inspired by BGR's mission to come out and join the walk even despite the risk of inclement weather.



We walked up to the pavilion and saw that a sizeable crowd of people had gathered. Over the next fifteen minutes, more walkers arrived, and at 10:15 am I gave the group a little talk about BGR and the purpose of the walk. Just then, the rain stopped completely, the sky suddenly cleared, and we enjoyed a beautiful day with soft, balmy breezes and clouds floating by overhead. It was perfect weather for walking, and throughout the rest of the day the weather was clear and balmy.

Over fifty people gathered for the walk. They came from Lansing, Ann Arbor, and the suburbs of Detroit and represented different Buddhist traditions: Theravada, Zen, Chinese Pure Land, and Vietnamese Buddhism. Perhaps if we had given the Michigan organizers more time to plan the walk, more people would have come, but the idea of holding a walk in Michigan dawned only in early August and thus there was only one month to organize the event.

The organizing team, led by Maureen Bodenbach, had chosen an ideal venue for the event. Our route meandered through gentle woods alongside the Kensington Lake, a large and beautiful body of water on which we could see swans, herons, and other water birds. We walked about two miles to a turn-around point, where team members had set up a table with bottles of drinking water. After a pause to refresh ourselves, we turned around and walked back. The entire walk, out and back, must have been close to four miles. People chatted happily along the way. Old friends renewed acquaintances and new friendships were forged, and everybody was happy to be given this opportunity to walk in solidarity with the world's poor and hungry people.



We returned to the pavilion shortly after 12 noon. We all had a lovely lunch together, generously provided by the team from the Lansing Buddhist Association. After lunch I gave a short presentation on current BGR projects, after which I gave out prizes to the three chief fundraisers and raffled off DVDs and CDs of my lecture series. Finally, I recited blessings in Pali and then we dispersed.

Maureen Bodenbach and her assistants from the Lansing Buddhist Association did an excellent job of planning the walk, and the whole process flowed smoothly, without a hitch. As I was walking to the parking lot, several people approached me and asked whether we could have a BGR walk next year, too. Gauging the level of enthusiasm, I think this is inevitable. Thus it seems a "Walk to Feed the Hungry" will become an annual event at Michigan's Kensington Park. Hopefully next year we won't see even a drop of rain on the day of the walk.

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## California Walkin'



**By Ajahn Gunavuddho** - Taking Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi's request to heart and seeing that there was no walk scheduled for the Bay Area, we made a clear and quick decision to create an event. Though the preparation time was short, we never imagined the results that were to come about.

The walk started in San Jose and stretched eighteen miles up the coast to Palo Alto. In total, more than 200 people participated in the walk, and we collected over \$27,000 in donations; more are still coming in. There is no way to express the depth of gratitude that

we feel for everyone's participation and generosity.

More than a dozen Buddhist sanghas were represented. Throughout the walk, people had a great time getting to know one another. Also, people came who simply read about the event in their local newspapers or heard about it through activist networks. In some cases, old friends appeared not even knowing they would see familiar faces.

It was an extraordinary day. A day of doing more than we thought we could do and all with hearts full of compassion for people who really need our help. There were many sweet moments. Before we arrived at the event we received a phone call from a participant from the Berkeley Buddhist Monastery community who said that she had a fever and could not do the walk as planned. Despite her fever, she insisted on arriving at the starting point of the walk to pay respects to the monastics and bring her donation to BGR. An 85-year-old great-grandmother said to a participant that she would like to go too but didn't feel up for the walk. The participant said, "I will take you on my shoulders, and you will be in our thoughts as we walk".



It was inspiring to see people giving the event 100 percent effort. From the starting point it was about 8 miles to the lunch gathering at Chong Tai Zen Center in Sunnyvale, and 18 miles to the ending point. Over a hundred people walked eight miles and twenty walked the whole way. There were children and people in their 70's, as well as everyone in-between. A hundred and fifteen started walking strong from San Jose. People took turns carrying the large banner in front saying "BGR Walk to Feed the Hungry". Volunteers helped walkers cross with the lights in an orderly fashion. The

group rested at the Buddhi Vihara, where the three resident monks provided drinks for walkers to refuel as we explored the beautiful temple grounds complete with a grand Kwan Yin statue. The kind abbot, Venerable Amarabuddhi, gave a short speech and then the monastics all recited a blessing chant from the words of the Buddha.

In Sunnyvale, Master Jian Hu, abbot of Chung Tai Zen Center, graciously and generously led his community in providing a free vegetarian lunch to about 200 walkers, as well as everything else from spiritual inspiration to clean restroom facilities. He had advertised the event to his community, which raised many funds for BGR. Chung Tai Zen Center added many walkers as we started out after lunch. Master Jian Hu, too, came along, helping carry the energy forward. Master Jian Hu said that his community would very much like to do this every year! We said that we would like that, too. Venerable Drimay from the Tibetan tradition and other monastics and lay practitioners of various denominations participated, and it was inspiring for people to see all these groups working harmoniously together.



As people finished their meals, gratitude was expressed for the meal and everyone's efforts to serve this event. Ven. Dharma Master Jian Hu welcomed us and told us a little about the Center. A message from Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi was read out and we offered inspirational messages.

There were tender "good-byes" along the way as people came to their personal end of the walk and caught the bus that ran all along our route to get back to their cars. And, there were bright "hellos" for the new walkers coming from the towns we were moving through. The group stopped for a break at Whole Foods Market in Los Altos, one of our official bathroom locations, pre-arranged with the management. It was time for a snack: grapes, juice, and some chocolate appeared.

About twenty of us had walked the whole way. Happy, tired, feeling proud, not only because of what we had done, but because of what everyone involved had done, with such generosity and grace. And now, one day later, emails are coming in with expressions of gratitude and delight ... and hopes for next year. Sadhu, sadhu, sadhu.



## Other News

### Douglass Street Music Collective Concert



In addition to the "Walk to Feed the Hungry" events in New York City, the California Bay Area, and Michigan, a concert was held on September 1st at the Douglass Street Music Collective in Brooklyn, NY. This event, sponsored by the Ven. Sak Dhammadipa, the abbot of Chuang Yen Monastery, featured jazz artists Daniel Blake and the Julian Lage Group. The well-attended event raised over \$10,000. Thank you to all who attended and contributed!

## **Small Events**

Not all the walks were large. One group in Columbus, Ohio wrote that they decided to meet in a local park on September 10th for walking meditation practice after seeing the article in Tricycle about Bhikkhu Bodhi and the BGR walk. On Saturday morning, seven people gathered at a beautiful metro park called Inniswood Gardens.

They began by standing together in a circle beneath a huge tree and took turns speaking about healing, forgiveness, and transformation of self and society. Then the group began slow walking meditation. Each person had a chance to be the leader, to sound the bell, to choose a spot for stopping and viewing, and to read a verse from the Buddha's teaching.

The opportunity to come together and share both sorrow and hope was deeply energizing and nourishing. One participant said "it was the most meaningful anniversary of 9/11 I've experienced." The walk creates a great precedent for the future, and they hope to participate again in BGR Walks. Another event was held in Bryan, Texas, where BGR assistant director Carla Prater lives. She reports that the Brazos Insight Meditation Society held a "Morning of Meditation on Generosity" to support the BGR "Walk to Feed the Hungry." The intense heat of a late summer in South Central Texas made something other than a walk practical for this group.

They met at 9 am on September 10th and began with a period of silent meditation, followed by a talk on generosity and a description of BGR's projects led by Carla. Then there was another period of silent meditation, and a time for sharing important occasions in their lives when they either gave or received gifts of money, time, attention or anything else, and how these experiences affected them. Carla said: "It was a very meaningful time for all and deepened the bonds of our sangha." They concluded by sharing a meal and felt very thankful for the bounty they enjoy and the chance to share with others.

## **BGR Featured in Buddhist Magazines**

Feature articles about Buddhist Global Relief appeared in the Fall 2011 editions of two major American Buddhist magazines, Buddhadharma and Tricycle. The Buddhadharma article, written by Andrea Miller, was based on telephone interviews with BGR Chair Bhikkhu Bodhi, Executive Director Kim Behan, and Programs Chair Patricia Price. In late March a team from Tricycle, including publisher James Shaheen, visited Chuang Yen Monastery and spoke to Ven. Bodhi and Kim Behan, who was visiting from Colorado. The article, written by Sam Mowe, evolved from this meeting. Tricycle also promoted the BGR "Walk to Feed the Hungry" in the same issue of the journal. Staff writer Sam Mowe participated in the New York walk.

## **BGR and Oxfam Collaborate on Videos**

Oxfam America asked BGR Founder Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi to make a short video to be aired over YouTube in connection with World Food Day. Similar videos for Oxfam were made by Desmond Tutu and Frances Moore Lappé. Videographer Matt Bockelman prepared the videos at Chuang Yen Monastery. They can be seen at:

[www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)

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## BGR General Meeting - September 24, 2011 - Chuang Yen Monastery



Volunteers joined BGR Board members and founder Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi at Chuang Yen Monastery in beautiful Carmel, New York, for a day of celebration and learning. Attendees enjoyed presentations on the many successful fundraisers held around the country for BGR's recent Walk to Feed the Hungry. Ven. Bhikkhu Gunavuddho and Sister Santussika, who organized the walk in the Bay Area, came from California, and Carla Prater, Assistant Director, came up from Texas. Programs Director Patti Price gave a presentation on the BGR projects presently being implemented and new

projects proposed for the next funding cycle. In the late afternoon, Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi gave a presentation on the dynamics of the world's food system and on the changes needed to prevent food shortages, price instability, large-scale hunger, and malnutrition.

The general meeting was followed by a board meeting on September 25th, at which a number of new projects were approved (for details, see elsewhere in this issue of Helping Hands).

Volunteers are welcome to attend the spring meeting, scheduled for April 21st, 2012. This will be a great opportunity to meet other BGR volunteers and find new opportunities to serve. Details will be provided later.

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### How You Can Help

We have had such an inspiring series of fundraising events recently! This experience has showed us once again that generosity is a practice that can fill the heart with joy. The Buddha said that generosity is the basis of the spiritual life, as it helps us learn to let go of our attachments to things that are of no ultimate value to us.

This period of the year is a traditional time for bringing in the harvest and sharing what we have with those less fortunate. We who live in a country of such relative abundance can often afford to share some of our possessions with others who lack the basics necessary to support life. Please take this opportunity to reflect on your own circumstances, your life's goals and what you can offer as a gift from your heart.

BGR has funded a new set of [projects](#) that will provide food, water, and educational opportunities to many people, both in the U.S. and abroad. If you wish to share with us the joy of giving, you can contribute via PayPal or FirstGiving through links on our [website](#), and checks or money orders can be sent to Buddhist Global Relief, P.O. Box 1611, Sparta, New Jersey 07871 U.S.A.

Remember to ask if your company is listed in Buddhist Global Relief's Corporate Matching Gift Program. Gifts to BGR are tax deductible and will be used to further our mission of providing food and, more importantly, improving livelihoods for those in need. We are an all-volunteer organization, so we are able to keep our administrative expenses low and pass on most of the gifts we receive to the poorest of the poor, in many locations around the world.

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