December 2020

Dear Friend,

We hope this letter finds you healthy and happy this holiday season. In a year full of hardships for so many, we write with a hopeful glimpse into what we like to call the “fruiture.” A time at our project locations where the air is clean, birds sing from the branches overhead, and families harvest life-sustaining, income-generating fruit from the bountiful trees all around them. A place where students grow up fascinated by nature as they witness thriving ecosystems alive in their schoolyard orchards and vow to become staunch protectors of the environment. Where communities gather safely, away from life’s everyday stresses, to be surrounded by the magic of fruit trees and a collective effort to improve food access for all. This is the “fruiture” we dream of—and it is one we see coming to life in FTPF’s thousands of orchards around the world.

This vision has a special way of bringing communities together—and in some cases entire kingdoms—through a shared sense of hope for what a newly-planted orchard will become in just a few short years. We’d like to share one such story from our ongoing project in Uganda, where we’ve established a local partner nursery to grow our own saplings using earth-friendly practices. Last year, after hearing about our tree planting program, His Royal Highness the Chief of Butembe Chiefdom invited the FTPF team to plant trees on the royal grounds for his citizens. After first meeting with chiefdom officials, we went outside, to hold a workshop and get our hands dirty planting trees near the palace.

The chief took notice and immediately summoned one of our team members, Edward Paul Munaaba (pictured), who is also a leading climate change educator in the region. He asked Edward what we expected in return for planting and distributing tens of thousands of fruit trees to families throughout the region along with providing training in proper tree maintenance. Edward responded that we only ask participating families, schools, and public officers for a promise to care for their trees to ensure survival—and to share harvests with others in need. The chief was so impressed with our mission that he stated he wanted someone like Edward in his cabinet and soon after appointed him as the new prime minister of Butembe!
With the honorable prime minister on our team promoting more tree plantings than ever, we were able to expand our programs and overall outreach this year. **We are excited to report that we planted and distributed 96,075 fruit trees around the world in 2020.** We also developed an exciting first-of-its kind initiative to create the world’s first peaceful, fruitful border by planting mango trees around the perimeter of the Butembe Chiefdom. This mango border project, launching in April, 2021, will create a place that offers abundance, sharing, and goodwill to neighboring chiefdoms.

Along the way to this season’s planting totals, we were excited to receive updates from previous plantings where trees are now providing thousands of pounds of fruit for communities and schools. Every year, we share a couple of these stories so you can see exactly how you are making a difference each and every time you support our work (many more examples can be found on our social media sites throughout the year).

**Orchard update** – In Cleveland, Ohio, harvests from Vel’s Purple Oasis are used in classes to teach kids how to cook with and enjoy fresh fruit. Vel Scott, namesake and vice president of the nonprofit garden, wants neighborhood children to think of the orchard as their own, especially in their urban area with limited access to green spaces. This approach has led to a thriving garden that produces 60 pounds of fruit per tree each year! Vel wrote to us: “A fruit orchard … in the middle of a struggling neighborhood that provides fresh, organic, delicious food for us; and it’s all free. Now we know, ‘You don’t have to be wealthy to eat healthy.’ We love it!!”

**Orchard update** – From the ICP Orlando Food Pantry, Etnairis Polanco reports: “In a time of great stress due to Covid 19, our community loves the fact that they are able to enjoy the outdoors safely while taking care of the trees, and hand picking their own fresh fruits. It has been a great mental exercise for the families in our community.”

We often remind volunteers who join us for planting events that once we plant trees together, we are friends for life. We know this is true for those who support our programs in other ways as well, including our donors, who make all this work possible in the first place. We are so very grateful to have you as a friend for life and hope you’ll consider contributing by year’s end to our upcoming projects so we can make the Ugandan fruitful border and so many other groundbreaking projects a reality. **Please donate today knowing that for the tenth year in a row, more than 90 cents of every dollar contributed was used in our life-sustaining tree planting programs.**

For a greener, cleaner, healthier planet,

Cem Akin, TreeEO & Co-creator
Donation Options

- Mail check to: FTPF, PO Box 81881, Pittsburgh, PA 15217
- Online: www.ftpf.org
- Enclosed: ☐ $25  ☐ $50  ☐ $100  ☐ $1000  ☐ Other $________

☐ Optional: For donations of $50 or more, receive FTPF’s Home Orchard Handbook at the following address:

*Printed on 100% recycled paper*