

## **MISSION:**

To restore St. Mary's reputation as the *breadbasket of Jamaica* through 21st century organic farming and be a leader amongst the other Jamaican parishes in economic prosperity through agricultural development.

## **PURPOSE:**

To teach the next generation of Jamaicans and their parents how to make a living through organic farming, free of pesticides and hormones. To develop sustainable farming practices, powered by solar energy, which protects the environment. Use natural water capturing and filtering techniques to provide a clean drinking water source and develop a self-sustaining product to increase jobs and protect the environment.

## **FACTS:**

St. Mary used to be #1 in agricultural farming, producing the finest fruit on the island. However the illiteracy rate of its people is as high as 80% in some areas. The Jamaican community is willing to work, but lack education about farming techniques and available farmland is in limited supply. Many families have several children, but cannot afford to send them to school. The parents, for many different reasons, are jobless and sometimes homeless. While the adults are willing to work, they simply have no marketable skills to attract employers. Through 20 years of work in the region, we have found most adults with limited education are willing to learn and work if given the chance. Returning to school is not a viable option as their children remain the priority for education when funds are available, hoping the next generation of Jamaicans will have a better life. Additionally, there is a growing need for places of safety and protection for children who are being left alone on the streets to fend for themselves. These children are falling into treacherous hands, frequently abused and neglected. On a daily basis, the local newspaper reports more incidents of child abuse. We have seen a huge increase in abuse and even murders of our children in the Port Maria area.

## **PLAN:**

Green Life Farms wants to help change the future of neglected children in St. Mary by teaching them to live self-sufficiently and competitively in a global market where natural resource consumption is limited. We believe that we have a plan that will not only train up our children to be successful and restore St. Mary as the capital of agriculture, but also become an eco-tourism business for our region.

## **PHASE I –**

Lease or purchase approximately 100 acres of land near the Port Maria area. Divide it into 3-5 acre lots and prepare the land for planting. A local established NGO would sell franchises through its micro-loan division for a Green Life Farm plot. The franchise would provide the farmer and his family with full training and consultation on how to grow food organically. If

purchasing a three-acre lot for example, one acre would be used to provide food for the family for the year. The other two acres would be “cash crops” where Green Life Farms would designate the type of vegetables/fruits grown. GLF would provide the original preparation of the soil and the slow drip irrigation system to insure success and freedom from drought.

Once the soil is prepared and the irrigation system is in place, the farmer would be taught by an expert Agriculturist & Organic Professional how to plant and grow a crop. This would continue throughout the seasons of planting, growing and harvesting.

Once the crop is ready to harvest and sell, a GLF agent will purchase the crop and pay the farmer for his crop minus the loan. The loan would be set up at a low interest rate with a reasonable payback period so the farmer would have plenty of opportunity to begin a new crop season. A draw would be made available to keep him and his family operating during the first year.

## **THE MARKETING SIDE:**

Green Life Farm would handle the marketing part of finding buyers such as the hotels, businesses, and restaurants. We would also have trucks traveling across the island delivering produce with the message, “Green Life Farms: Organic Vegetables from St. Mary”, helping to advertise our products.

Our plan would dramatically increase employment in the area by offering jobs for trucks, drivers, mechanics and sales. Through local established programs, an avenue for recruiting potential farmers is already in place. Teachers are also recognizing the nutritional needs of their students and many of the parents would be overjoyed with the opportunity to learn farming. Through these established programs we have the ability to reach out to local school children, football players, and unemployed families.

## **PHASE II –**

Upon successful completion of Phase I, we will move into our second phase: Green Life Farm Children’s Village. We will duplicate the plan for the existing farm by leasing or purchasing an additional 100 acres of land. However this time, we will begin by building eight to ten 1000 sq. ft homes, modeled after the original Jamaican country homes. The homes will be self-sustaining using solar power and water filtration systems from water captured and stored. Each home will have 3 bedrooms and two bathrooms and house up to 8 children and 2 house parents.

Through a program with the ministry of health, we will take in children in need of care and education. The homes will be designed to bring a safe family environment to these children through daily living. Our focus is to train, teach, and restore while providing a safe and comfortable living situation. Each home unit will cook their meals from food grown organically in their own back yards. They will learn personal hygiene, household responsibilities, and skills, better enabling them to contribute to their community as young adults.

Statistically, most children suffering from abuse or disablement have fallen behind educationally. Therefore, it is imperative that they are provided an educational opportunity to get up to speed academically. We want this to be a donation to the surrounding community so these children will not be isolated, but rather integrated in the community. All the while, we will provide an excellent source of learning for not only our children, but also the local children.

The Ministry of Education will be involved as with any other public school. Teachers will come from the public sector and through the ministry as well as volunteer educators from abroad. The school will not only offer the academic basics, but also music, dance, debate, sports, 4 H, and many other extracurricular programs.

In working with the Ministry of Health, we have developed a very good relationship with our local Ministry of Health in St. Mary. We have been given permission to have a full counseling program for children as well as a medical and dental clinic that would assist not only our children but also the entire community. The ministry would send us professional counselors and medical personnel as well as foreign volunteers specializing in the area of restoration to children.

## **ECO-TOURISM:**

Being close to a large tourism area, Ocho Rios, we propose to market to the hotels and cruise lines a “Cultural Experience Tour” through Green Life Farms. A tourist visiting Jamaica for the day or week would have the unique opportunity to experience a 21st century, self-sustaining, organic farm run by the children of Jamaica and the farming community.

Tourists would walk through the farm and see firsthand our crops and organic farming methods. They would be fed a home-grown lunch of all organic fruits, vegetables and meat; then enjoy a cultural song and dance show performed by the local community, including our children. On the way out, visitors would have a chance to shop at the Green Life Farm store, where they could purchase some hand-made Jamaicans toys, Blue Mountain Coffee, and other locally-made products. The revenues from the store would go back into the farming community.

## **THE END PRODUCT:**

This is going to take a lot of hard work, financial assistance and professional help to create a green, self-sufficient environment that restores our children and helps the environment. We believe we not only are up for the job, but with your help we can make this a reality. St. Mary is a sleeping giant that will awaken to a new method in farming, producing a product that is earth-friendly and in high demand. Jamaicans’ pride in St. Mary will once again produce a self-sustaining and thriving economy.