



spirit of service

A PUBLICATION OF SEVA FOUNDATION®

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Critical Impact: Aurolab

Longtime Seva Eye Care Partner Aurolab Opens Giant New Facility

Aurolab is accustomed to breaking new ground. Back in 1992, Seva helped launch Aurolab, the manufacturing division of Aravind Eye Care Systems



in Madurai, India. Working together, the partnership identified new methods of making the lens implants used to restore vision after cataract surgery.

The result was revolutionary: Aurolab perfected a way to make lenses of the highest quality, yet so inexpensive they could be made available to the poorest of patients in developing countries. In the 15 years since, Aurolab's lenses have benefited millions of people.

Now Aurolab has *literally* broken new ground — with a sparkling new 100,000 square-foot facility that opened October 1.

"It's a big expansion designed to meet the demand for affordable lenses," says Dr. Suzanne Gilbert, Director of Seva Foundation's Center for Innovation in

Eye Care and a key member of the original Aurolab launch team. "Aurolab's breakthrough on low-cost lens implants made it possible to provide top quality cataract surgery results in public health settings. That's generated a boom in the number of surgeries worldwide. The new facility will dramatically increase Aurolab's capacity — and that means we can bring top quality eye care to millions more people."

At a time when foundations and non-profits are looking to build models of "social entrepreneurship," Seva has already proven the value of this approach. That's why the Council on Foundations has honored Seva with the prestigious *Critical Impact Award*.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

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Our heartfelt thanks go to all our photographers for generously donating their work. Please visit the photographer's gallery in the "About Seva" section of our website.

Critical Impact: Aurolab (cont. from page 1)

SEVA MAKES A CRITICAL IMPACT

This year, the Council on Foundations, a Washington DC-based association of more than 2,000 grantmaking foundations and corporations, chose Seva to be among the first to receive its new Critical Impact Award. Seva is being honored for "...revolutionizing the ability of community based eye care programs to restore eyesight for poor people affected by cataract blindness..." through our work in helping to create Aurolab.

The beauty of Aurolab's approach is that efficiency in production doesn't come at the expense of their employees. "Aurolab built its operation in a way that respects the health and well-being of the staff," Suzanne says. "Most of the people working in production are young women hired from surrounding villages. Often, these women end up working in very tough situations, factory jobs with poor conditions and poor pay. At Aurolab, it's completely different.



"The new facility will dramatically increase Aurolab's capacity – and that means we can bring top quality eye care to millions more people."

Seva provided funding, technical expertise and operational support that enabled Aurolab to develop a way to manufacture high quality, low cost intraocular lenses (IOLs). "IOLs are the key to providing patients with good vision after cataract surgery," Suzanne explains. "Before Aurolab, the market price for an IOL was more than \$200, prohibitively expensive for use in public eye health care programs. Now, Aurolab IOLs sell for less than \$5 each — and that produced the 'revolution' in eye care."

QUALITY AND QUANTITY

Aurolab challenges the conventional wisdom that low cost equals low quality. "The message here is that the price is not indicative of the quality," says Suzanne. "People naturally tend to think that if something costs \$200 instead of \$5, then it must be better quality." But Suzanne begs to differ. "The lesson of Aurolab — and of Aravind and Seva — is that quality can be very affordable. You just have to work at it."

"Aurolab's gleaming new facility puts employee well-being front and center. The new production rooms have huge glass windows looking out on beautiful landscaping. Employees live in a comfortable apartment complex by a lake on the 85-acre campus, and enjoy access to a recreation area and fresh food from the nearby organic gardens.

SUSTAINABILITY SUCCESS STORY

Today, Aurolab is a self-sustaining enterprise that carries on its own research and no longer requires funding from Seva.

"Aurolab is now one of the top producers of intraocular lenses — a real global leader," says Suzanne. "They produce about ten percent of the world's intraocular lenses. And while Aurolab has increased its share of the commercial market for IOLs, its core commitment remains focused on the public health sector. About 85% of the lenses they

make are still going into community-based eye care programs like the ones that Seva supports worldwide."

In addition to the lenses, Aurolab now produces other items, including micro-surgical needles, eye drops and solutions, ophthalmic instruments and supplies, and hearing aids. With the new facility, the benefits of Aurolab's revolutionary approach will continue to spread — whether it's creating good jobs for local residents or delivering better eyesight to someone halfway around the world.

Seva's staff and volunteer advisors continue to collaborate with Aurolab in areas such as marketing and new technologies. "This is a really great example of what we mean when we talk about Seva building sustainable solutions," Suzanne concluded. "And it's a great example of how our network of Seva supporters can make a critical impact."

WHAT OTHERS SAY

Here are some excerpts from the letters nominating Seva for the Critical Impact Award, which honors our work in launching Aurolab with Aravind Eye Care Systems:

"Seva has been a pioneer in catalyzing an entirely new business model that combines access and equity with quality and cost efficiency. Seva is a testament to the catalytic role that foundations worldwide can have on supporting innovation and tolerating a level of risk that no business or government is willing to undertake."

Pamela Hartigan, Executive Director
Schwab Foundation for
Social Entrepreneurship

"...One of the most important breakthroughs in international ophthalmology in recent decades."

Dr. Bruce Spivey, President
International Council of Ophthalmology

"The relationship between Seva and Aravind clearly goes far beyond the act of grantmaking and into the realm of true global partnership. This grant exemplifies the highest goals of poverty alleviation, improvement of public health, and development of a new paradigm for international collaboration and innovation."

Gregory Miller, Managing Director
Google.org

Get Involved!

You can help keep this work growing. Visit www.seva.org to:

- Learn more about our Sight Program
- Make an online donation
- Send an eCard to let friends and family know how they can help



Supporting Women Leaders

Mayan Women Get Training They Need to Build a Better Life

Like many indigenous Mayan women, Hermelinda Cantí Xol works long hours grinding corn, preparing food for her family, and hand-washing the laundry. She is also a hardworking primary school teacher and a widow who cares for her mother and daughter. Because of these rigorous demands, she never dreamed of taking a leadership role in her community — until now.

Recently, Hermelinda joined The Women's Commission of Santa María (COMCASMA), a newly formed association of 48 women representing 24 indigenous Mayan communities living in remote areas of Guatemala. COMCASMA is one of the community groups supported by Seva's Community Self-Development Program, which provides funding, training and mentoring.

Hermelinda is now a vice-chair of COMCASMA, an experience which has opened new doors for her. She now attends community meetings and speaks in public — something she never dared to do in the past.

"Before, the women here didn't think they had the right to work, or the right to participate in any kind of meetings," she says. "Now, we are keeping in mind that we as women are moving forward! We won't just stay in the house all the time. We are ready to participate — this is the objective we have in our association."

EMPOWERING WOMEN AND COMMUNITIES

COMCASMA is supported by Seva's vibrant Community Self-Development Program (CSD), which has worked side-by-side with indigenous Mayan groups in Guatemala and Chiapas, Mexico, since 1986 to provide training, tools, financial resources, and networking opportunities. A core principle of CSD is that local people should define their own needs and build organizations that will support their own vision for social change.

This is precisely what's happening with COMCASMA. With support from Seva, the group has developed workshops for women on a variety of topics: domestic violence, women's rights, micro-enterprise and leadership skills, in addition to literacy classes. The hope is that laying this critical groundwork will empower women with the skills and knowledge they need to bring healthcare, educational opportunities and other essential services to their communities.

"When I was young, nobody spoke of these things with me, so I didn't know what was possible," says María Cucul Tzalam, 32, who lives in Tulia and is a co-chair of COMCASMA. "But I'm teaching my children a different way, and I hope someday they'll get involved and participate in the organization, too."

CROSSING THE GENDER DIVIDE

As is the way in most developing countries, rural women in Guatemala and Mexico work incredibly hard and don't have much free time. Many girls drop out of school by second grade and never return, and women are expected to stay in the home. It's a combination of factors that makes it extremely challenging for girls and women to develop the skills they need.

Promoting gender equity is a cornerstone of the CSD Program and Seva's work with Mayan women. "Part of what we do is try to help families see the benefit of educating girls," says CSD Program Director, Julie Rinard.

Julie has seen firsthand how Seva's partners have vastly improved the lives of many women, and she feels that with continued support the momentum will continue to build. "It takes a long time, but I think that we'll start to see some changes with the next generation as education becomes really ingrained. Then mothers can start transmitting that sort of confidence to their daughters — really reinforcing the idea that they don't have to be limited to the role of domestic caretakers."

María Cucul Tzalam is a wonderful example of how this work can directly impact lives. "Before entering COMCASMA, I was afraid to talk, especially in public," María says. "Now, I can do it without fear. And it will keep getting better, because I'm still continuing to grow."

CREATING INFORMED CITIZENS

Seva's innovative programs in Guatemala empower women to participate in all levels of societal decision-making. Workshops and mentoring programs are designed to educate women about the workings of local government and how to submit proposals for community projects.

Julie explains that many local women don't understand the electoral process or how to vote. "So, part of what COMCASMA will do is meet with women in the community and tell them what a ballot box is, what their vote means, and how they might be able to make a difference and build a better future."

A better future is certainly part of Hermelinda's vision. "I think that my participation in the association will have a good impact on my daughter because I will transmit ideas that will help her learn a better way," she says. "That way, she will not have the same problems as I have had."

Seva's support of the women's association may seem like a small thing, but not to the women who benefit. "I think it's really hard to overstate what a huge difference a few dollars can make in these communities," says Julie. "Everywhere I go, the women tell me how much they appreciate Seva's support. It means so much to them to know there are people far away in the United States that care."



Natural Villages: A Vision of Sustainability

Seva Helps Native Community Build Alternative Housing Model

For Leola One Feather, a house is more than a home. It's a way to create community, a pathway out of poverty, and a place from which the rich legacy of her Native American culture can thrive. As a member of the Oglala Lakota Nation living on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, those concerns are integrally woven together for her.

Now, with support from Seva's Native American Grants Program, Leola is building a house that's more than a place to live — it's a model of sustainable technology and a symbol of strength and hope.

Seva provides one of the very few sources of non-governmental funding available to Native communities. Established in 1996, Seva's Native American Grants Program supports projects working to preserve Native communities and culture for future generations.

"Our program often sponsors innovative projects that are too new or too small to interest other foundations," says Jose Malvido, Seva's Director of Native American Programs. "We regularly give grants of \$5,000 or less — small amounts of money, but in the hands of creative and resourceful community activists, enough to make a big difference."

In this case, Seva awarded a grant to the Wounded Knee Community Council to help fund the construction of a cob home for Leola. Cob homes are gaining popularity around the country because they are affordable and are made from renewable and recycled materials — leaving a light footprint on the environment. Because of this, Leola's new abode is intended as a model of sustainable and affordable home-building for Native Americans at Pine Ridge and across Indian country. In fact, Leola is now working with Natural Villages, a group from California that promotes cob housing, to help spread the word.

LIFE AT PINE RIDGE

Covering over 3,400 square miles of the southwest corner of South Dakota, the Pine Ridge Reservation is home to approximately 30,000 Oglala Lakota people. It's a tough life — the people of Pine Ridge live in some of the worst poverty conditions existing in the United States today.

The 2000 U.S. Census found that about 52% of families with children at Pine Ridge are living below the poverty level, with the unemployment rate at about 17%. Talk to people on the reservation and they'll tell you it's much worse than census stats show, with some estimating that the unemployment rate is actually as high as 45%. That kind of poverty gives rise to all manner of health problems, including infant mortality rates that are five times higher than the national average.

Leola One Feather is a community activist and Executive Director of the Wounded Knee Tiyospaye Project. Tiyospaye (tay-OSH-pah) is a traditional Native American form of community organization that some Native people see as more representative of their spiritual heritage and customary laws than the modern tribal government. One of the priority concerns of the Wounded Knee Tiyospaye Project is the lack of housing at Pine Ridge.

"We still have almost 50% of our people stuck in inadequate housing that isn't suitable for the weather conditions," Leola explains. "There's a federal housing program where you put in the sweat equity and they supply you with materials, but you still end up paying around \$40,000 — and most people here can't afford that."

EARTH-FRIENDLY LOW COST HOMES

Leola and others believe the cob home could be the answer to this housing crisis. Her new home is being made with walls formed of cob, a mixture of clay soil, sand, water, and straw built on a foundation made from recycled bits of concrete. By using recycled and natural building materials, the hope is

to create "the first sustainable model family village," according to the Wounded Knee Community Council's application for Seva funds.

"I saw that the cob technique is a way we can build a house with sustainable methods that are naturally energy-efficient — a house that's easy to cool and heat," says Leola. "Best of all, this is a way to build a house for about \$5,000, and we can use a lot of recycled materials. We've got to stop milling the forest, because the forest needs to grow. I believe that with this new building method, we can help with that. A cob house also has the beauty of being a natural home that blends in with the landscape and is pleasing to the eye."

BUILDING A STRONG COMMUNITY

More than just four walls, this cob house has been something for the community to rally around. It's being built with both community members and volunteers from the outside organized by Johanna Parry Cougar of Natural Villages. Leola and Johanna have started a training program to bring knowledge about alternative building techniques and cob housing to others.

"Once you start that first house, it can become a village," Leola says. "That's the whole idea. Seeing my house being built has made other people want to do it."

As her house begins to take shape, more ideas about improving the wellbeing of her community are taking shape as well. "I intend to find a way to make sure that my community isn't going to live in poverty forever," Leola says with determination. For her next project, she wants to build a restaurant that would serve food from her organic garden.

"We don't want a *hand-out* — we want a *hand up*. I want to show that when people do contribute, it really does help," explains Leola. "Plus, I have to look out for the future of my cousins who are younger than me. I want to help them find ways that they can come back to this land."

"I intend to find a way to make sure that my community isn't going to live in poverty forever."



Building a cob home is fun for the whole family!

These are two examples of the wonderful homes featured in *The Hand-Sculpted House*, published by Chelsea Green Publishing. It's a how-to book with dozens of photos of beautiful cob homes built all across America. ▶



- Community members and volunteers are working together.
- Leola One Feather at the construction site with her granddaughter.



Get Involved!

Visit www.seva.org to:

- Learn more about our Native American Grants Program
- Make an online donation
- Send an eCard to let friends and family know how they can help

Visit www.natural-villages.org to learn more about cob housing and Leola One Feather's project.

The Healing Stream

Music CD to Benefit Seva's Diabetes Wellness Program

When you buy Haley Ackerman's new CD, *The Healing Stream*, you'll not only be treating yourself to the soothing sounds of her solo harp compositions, you'll also be supporting Seva's innovative Diabetes Wellness Program.

"We're in business to nurture the spirit of musicians and music lovers by producing recordings of the highest quality," says Michael Barry, President of Laughing Buddha Records in New York and a talented guitarist himself. "But we also want to do some good in the world. That's why we're donating a portion of the proceeds of this album to Seva."

"Some friends told us about Seva, and we were impressed with what we learned," adds Executive Producer, Rex Niswander. "And there's a natural connection between Haley's new CD — *The Healing Stream* — and Seva's work to bring health and wellness to Native American communities."

Released this fall, the project is both a fund-raiser and a friend-raiser. A portion of the proceeds from the sale of each CD will go to support the Diabetes Wellness Program, and the CD's liner notes feature a

description of the program and an invitation to learn more about Seva.

MUSIC FOR MIND, BODY AND SPIRIT

Relaxing, rejuvenating and just plain beautiful, Haley Ackerman's *The Healing Stream* is a treat for mind, body and spirit. As the liner notes suggest, it's intended to be used for listening, meditating and for healing.

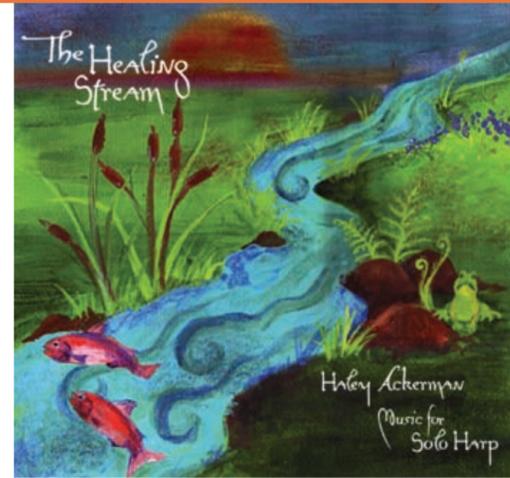
Beginning in Germany and winding its way to her current home in New Mexico, Haley's life has taken her through rich and diverse scenery, providing an intriguing blend of influences that can be heard in her music. As you listen to her play her instruments and sing her poetry, you immediately notice American, European and Eastern textures.

THE DIABETES WELLNESS PROGRAM

Native American communities have been hit hard by an epidemic of diabetes. One in seven Native Americans has diabetes, and diabetes mortality rates are four times higher in Native communities than in the general U.S. population.

Seva's *Diabetes Wellness Program* provides a unique solution — one that creates a synergy between modern medicine and traditional forms of healing.

The core of the program is the nationally recognized *Diabetes Talking Circle*, a highly effective training that



helps Native people develop self-managed strategies for diabetes prevention and treatment. The program also supports community garden projects which are helping to reintroduce nutritious, traditional Native foods.

We're delighted to know that more people will learn about Seva and the Diabetes Wellness Program thanks to Laughing Buddha Music and Haley Ackerman!

To order *The Healing Stream*, please visit www.laughingbuddhamusic.com.

Meet Mark Lancaster

Seva Foundation Announces New Executive Director

Seva Foundation has appointed Mark Lancaster as its new Executive Director. Mark brings a wealth of international experience, serving most recently at the Presbyterian Hunger Program, which distributes grants to 30 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. He also served on the board of Heifer International for over 15 years, including two terms as Chair, and was instrumental in guiding the organization to achieve dramatic revenue growth and extend its services to more than seven million people in 125 countries.

RIGHT FOR THE JOB

Dr. T. Stephen Jones, Chair of Seva's Board of Directors and formerly with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, says the search for a new Executive Director was an exhaustive, year-long process. "We wanted to find the best possible candidate, someone who is a natural leader and equally adept at organizational development, fundraising and strategic planning," Steve explains. "I'm delighted to say we found that in Mark. With his professional expertise and his experience with Heifer, Mark is uniquely qualified to lead Seva's efforts to grow."

Former Congresswoman Eva Clayton (D-NC) worked with Mark on several projects, including Joining Hands Against Hunger. "Mark was a trusted colleague in antipoverty work, always looking to address the root causes," Clayton says. "He understands that true solutions need to include the people being served,

and he was effective at building genuine partnerships with organizations in developing countries. I think he's a great fit for Seva."

Mark's varied career includes several years as the Middle Atlantic Regional Director for the American Friends Service Committee office in Baltimore. He has also consulted on projects in more than 15 countries, including working with Habitat for Humanity in Eastern Europe on board development, with Interaction in West Africa on gender equity concerns, and with Interchurch Medical Assistance as it reorganized its international work.

A VISION OF GROWTH

"I am truly honored to join the Seva Foundation team," Mark says. "Seva has a well-earned reputation for creating innovative, sustainable programs that benefit some of the world's most vulnerable populations. But the need for these programs is enormous, so we want to do even more. I'll be working to expand Seva's community of supporters so we can scale-up our investment in new projects around the world."

"With all of our past successes, Seva has a great story to tell," Mark continued. "But we have our eye on the future. We're using the lessons learned over 30 years to increase our capacity to effect lasting change in communities throughout the world."



FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Now that he's been on the job for a few months, we asked Mark to talk about his impressions of Seva.

"Clearly, one of the pieces that differentiates Seva from many other foundations and international development agencies is the recognition that we bring only a part of the solution to any problem — in fact, we really only bring a part of identifying what the problems are in the first place," Mark explains. "For me, you can sum it up in the word *partnership*."

"Seva's approach has always been to first go in and build a relationship — find out who people are, what they're thinking, what their needs are, what kinds of interventions they think they need, and how it is that we might be part of it, if at all. I think beginning from the place of building relationship is the key to what makes Seva programs succeed."

Charitable IRA Rollovers:

A great way to support Seva and save money on taxes!

HURRY — OFFER EXPIRES AT END OF THIS YEAR!

Here is a great way to support Seva — and save some money on taxes while you're at it!

Thanks to the Pension Protection Act passed by Congress in 2006, people age 70-1/2 or older can make charitable donations by rolling over a portion of their IRA investments.

But you have to act soon! This opportunity will expire on December 31, 2007.

For a limited time only, IRA owners age 70-1/2 and older may make gifts directly from their IRA accounts to qualified public charities using an *IRA Charitable Rollover*. The gifts are authorized for the years 2006-2007, and may be as much as \$100,000 each year. These gifts also qualify for the IRA owner's required minimum distribution.

Because Seva Foundation is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization and qualifies as a public charity, you can use this rule to make charitable IRA rollover gifts to Seva. (By the way, Seva's federal tax identification number is 38-2231279.)

BENEFITS FOR SEVA — AND YOU!

You'll want to check with your tax advisor for all the details, but thousands of donors are already taking advantage of the IRA Charitable Rollover. The primary reason people use the rollover to make donations is the convenience of a direct transfer from an IRA to a favorite charity, without incurring any income tax liability for the transfer. Here are some highlights of the possible advantages of the IRA Charitable Rollover:

- While donors don't get a tax deduction for the gift, the transfer amount is excluded from taxable income, so the effect is the same — it reduces your tax liability.
- The IRA Charitable Rollover may be particularly useful for non-itemizers, because it gives you the ability to exclude the IRA distribution from your gross income.
- Some donors find that they have substantial amounts in their IRA, and this is the best way for them to make a charitable gift this year. The Pension Protection Act provides that in 2006 and 2007, a person over the age of 70-1/2 can donate up to \$100,000 from an IRA to most types of public charities and then exclude the gift from taxable income.
- Social security recipients have been able to reduce their income levels and save on taxes. For example, with a transfer to a charity as part of their required IRA distribution, instead of 85% of social security being taxable, now only 50% is taxable.
- Some people find that the IRA Charitable Rollover allows them to reduce their required IRA distribution. This way, they can avoid the 50% penalty for failure to take minimum required distributions after age 70.

There may be other benefits as well. Again, it's best to consult your tax advisor for all the details. But remember — you need to hurry! The IRA Charitable Rollover is only available to you through December 31, 2007.

A LEGACY OF COMPASSION

We also invite you to create a legacy of compassion for future generations by including Seva in your estate plans. We can work with you to develop a special legacy gift that honors your memory and carries out your charitable intentions while still meeting your personal financial objectives for yourself and your family.

For more information, please contact Peggy O'Neill, Seva's Director of Development, by calling 510-845-7382 x301, or email her at poneill@seva.org.



New catalog...
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New ways to help!

The new Gifts of Service® online store gives you an address book of family and friends — so you're ready to go anytime you order a gift!

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Find out all about it at www.seva.org.

Or call 1-800-223-7382 for a free catalog.



"Seva's efforts create hope and happiness worldwide for so many people in difficult conditions. I've always been amazed and cheered by their good works and I've been very happy to help them in their fundraising efforts."

BRUCE HORNSBY

SINGER / SONGWRITER

FALL / WINTER 07

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About Seva

Seva (say-va) is a Sanskrit word for service. Seva Foundation was formed in 1978 with a mission to alleviate suffering caused by disease and poverty.

Our approach is to build partnerships that respond to locally defined problems and create culturally sustainable solutions. Seva currently works to:

- Prevent blindness and restore sight in India, Nepal, Tibet, Cambodia, Bangladesh, Egypt, Guatemala and Tanzania.
- Help indigenous communities in Guatemala and Mexico develop their capacity to meet basic needs and create solutions to poverty and injustice.
- Support Native American projects across the U.S. in the areas of health and wellness, community development, environmental protection and cultural preservation.

Seva's work is made possible by the generosity of donors, foundations, volunteers and friends — all joined together in the spirit of service.

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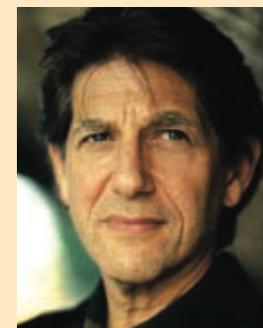
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"Seva takes the impulse towards generosity and turns it into compassionate action that helps people in real need. I honor my friends and relations by giving to Seva in their name — the entire world benefits. I hope you'll join me."

PETER COYOTE
ACTOR / WRITER

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