experience! Everyone was overwhelmed by their generosity.

We visited cooperative communities and farms which sell coffee, fruits and vegetables, milk and eggs.

We also visited SINA (Social Innovative Academy), a large cooperative that is helping Ugandans develop businesses, many that utilize recycled materials (including making building materials out of plastic bottles). SINA is a living community with the mission to enable the local people in becoming entrepreneurs and developing self-sufficiency.

Off-site visits meant we were able to stand on the Equator as well as visit the source of the Nile River on Lake Victoria. We were treated to a wonderful show at the Ndere Cultural Center — spectacular!

Kusafiri ended with a grand celebration of Ugandan culture—drums, dancing and dinner! It’s so fulfilling to be around such energetic and incredibly talented women, global leaders of the future, and come away inspired to promote the mission of the World Foundation.

Friends of the World Foundation were well represented at the December 2018 Kusafiri cultural event in Kampala, Uganda. In all, there were 16 participants from the USA among the 147 participants representing 42 countries.

On International Day each of the countries presented skits; shared facts and items from their cultures. We also attended workshops covering three WAGGGS sponsored programs. (ABC about body image and self-awareness; Stop the Violence, and Free Being Me)

We learned Ugandan crafts (beaded earrings or bracelets), danced with a local drum and dance troupe, and learned to prepare traditional Ugandan foods such as Matoke, a steamed banana dish.

We were hosted for dinner by families from the Uganda Girl Guides in their homes. What a marvelous and varied event!
WAGGGS Vision 2020... to create a future in which “all girls and young women are valued and take action to change the world”.

Helen Storrow Seminar: Lasting Impact

On June 20, 1998, I wrote a journal entry that still makes my heart soar with happiness, “I received a life-changing letter from GSUSA today.” It is twenty years later and that one simple sentence is still living up to its expectations. That letter was my acceptance to participate in the 3rd Helen Storrow Seminar at Our Chalet. I was one of 23 delegates from 16 countries around the world who gathered at the WAGGGS World Center in Switzerland from December 27, 1998 - January 13, 1999.

The seminar centered around issues related to refugees, including building awareness and developing strategies to bring back to our respective countries. Not only did we return home more informed and full of a confidence that can only be gained through Guiding and Scouting, but it created a network of young leaders, friends, and sisters.

Over the winter holiday, I travelled back to Our Chalet for the 20-year reunion of our group—lovingly named the “International Squirrels” because of the Center’s mascot at the time. Together with eight of our original participants, one of the seminar’s facilitators, our spouses and four children, our scurry of Squirrels were reunited. We have kept in touch over the years through an annual newsletter and a private Facebook group, but seeing each other in person was nothing short of epic. We embraced our similarities (we still love the snow adventures of sledding and snow tubing), and we celebrate our differences. We have gone in different directions professionally, but we are, and will always be, united by a life-changing experience through WAGGGS.

When I think about who we were, who we are, and who will be in the future, I am reminded that the group of extraordinary women I met 20 years ago is why I am a part of the Friends of WAGGGS USA. It is a chance to pay it forward and provide another young leader the opportunity to open her horizons and see what she can do to change the world.

-Kaela Sáenz Oriti, member of Friends of WAGGGS USA, Phoenix, Arizona

Member Spotlight: Angelica Podias

Girl Scouts allowed Angelica to find her voice. Very shy growing up, she learned from her two leaders who were wonderful role models and allowed Angelica to flourish and become an outgoing person. This definitely helped her early in her career at JCPenney. Angelica loves to give back to her community and found that she wanted to do this through Girl Scouting at her local council. When her daughter quit at 14 (she is turning 36 soon) her daughter asked her why she was continuing with her old troop. She answered "I want to empower young girls and help them find their voice and empower them to become outstanding young adults that can succeed in anything they set their minds to".

She continues to give back by mentoring new leaders and lending a hand when difficult times arise. She has worked with her girls to earn their Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards. She has promised her current troop 10 more years with them as all graduate HS and earn their Gold Award.

Her goal is to visit a World Center, and knows that her financial contributions to WAGGS gives the young women an opportunity to learn and grow girl scouting around the world. Angelica is a lifelong Girl Scout, Service Unit Manager and lives in Plano, Texas with her family.
WAGGGS World Board Appoints its Youngest Member

The World Board is pleased to announce the appointment of its youngest member, Chamathya Fernando, following a very competitive selection process.

Chamathya joined the Sri Lankan girl guides when she was eight. Since then she has contributed greatly to the Movement. From running a Stop the Violence campaign in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, to addressing the United Nations in New York, Chamathya has shown herself to be an outstanding ambassador for girl guiding and girl scouting.

The US State Department recently named her as one of the top ten young leaders globally.

By appointing someone below the age of 30 the board hopes to identify the barriers young women face in participating in governance and decision-making across the Movement.

"Girl Guiding helped me become the person I am today - confident, courageous and compassionate. I have been involved in Girl Guiding for the past 17 years and the experiences and exposure I have had not only helped me to grow as a person but also taught me how important it is to share my knowledge and skills with other girls and young women, so they too are empowered to take leadership. This opportunity would enable me to serve the worldwide movement for girls and young women."

Chamathya Fernando, New Young World Board Member

Because of you, the world is a better place!
A Message from the Board of the World Foundation…

On behalf of the 10 million girls in 150 countries around our globe who are Girl Scouts and Girl Guides, thank you for making a difference!

Your financial contribution to the World Foundation for Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, Inc. allows us to provide girls and young women with life-changing experiences in the areas of leadership, advocacy, climate change, and literacy. It allows us to ensure that we have safe, well-maintained places in Mexico, Switzerland, the UK, India, and Africa where girls can meet to build international friendships, to learn from one another, and to serve the local communities. It allows us to ensure that girls, all girls, have the opportunities to make their dreams for a better world and a better life.

Because of you, our world is a better place for each of us. Thank you!

Thank you for your generous donations…

Thank you; Merci; Danke; Gracias; Multumesc! Every donation to Friends of WAGGGS USA is greatly appreciated, whether it is big or small. These donations are combined and used to fund grants submitted by WAGGGS and/or GSUSA that support global experiences for girls and young women.

WAGGGS Mission is “to enable girls and young women to develop their fullest potential as responsible citizens of the world” and their vision is that “all girls are valued and take action to change the world”. Girls and young women are at the center of WAGGGS' work, including education, leadership, and advocacy.

Thank you again for your generous donations!

The Friends of WAGGGS USA Committee
World Thinking Day 2019: February 22
Leadership

Celebrated since 1926, World Thinking Day is a day of international friendship, speaking out on issues that affect girls and young women, and fundraising for 10 million Girl Guides and Girl Scouts in 150 countries around the world.

World Thinking Day 2019 will begin the triennium theme Leadership-Diversity-Peacebuilding, by celebrating the impact that the Movement has on the lives of members and their communities. As part of the World Thinking Day challenge, girls are encouraged to understand the meaning of Leadership: practicing collaboration, creative thinking, building bridges, connecting our world.

Leadership: 110 years of adventure will take you on a journey through time by combining experiences of the past with the chances and choices of our present and future. This World Thinking Day 2019 game invites all girls to set out on an exciting adventure as we practice leadership together.

For more information, please visit www.worldthinkingday.org

This newsletter was published by Kate Marx, Friends of WAGGGS USA Newsletter Editor
It may be reproduced for distribution to Girl Scouts and friends.
Photos are reprinted courtesy of WAGGGS
The cost of printing and mailing this newsletter was paid by individual donations