

# From Bees to Buffalo: Community Asked To Help Launch Ark For The Millennium

by Georgia Moore

Most of us can relate to the biblical story of Noah and his family and the animals that marched two by two into the ark. Using this story as an example of the power of two, three local residents are working diligently to provide needy families with pairs of animals that will provide them with food and income through Heifer Project International.

By the end of 1999, Robert Soens, Amani Bedford-Coleman and Gary Gunderson hope to have raised enough funds to build a \$5,000 "gift ark" enabling them to purchase 15 animal couples, which in turn will be sent to those who need them. Families are matched with animals suitable for their environment, culture and economy. A family in the United States for example, might receive chickens or cows and a family in Bolivia might receive a pair of llamas. Most of the animals are not eaten but are used to provide income, said Gunderson, who is a Heifer Project International board member. The animals are used for their milk, fur, and other products and in some cases as sources of transportation and labor.

Gunderson, who works for the Carter Center Interfaith Health Program, said that Heifer Project International, created in the 1930s, is one of the most significant entrepreneurial models for helping families and entire communities become self-sustaining by work-

ing through the "ripple" principle. For instance, a family who receives a cow can use its milk to eliminate malnourishment and prevent illness in the family. Extra milk can be shared with neighbors or sold for income. The income can then be used to buy other food; to pay school, home, or medical expenses; or to buy land.

Families who receive the offspring of these animals can then enjoy the same benefits. Through Project International, families are taught how to take care of their animals and to use them in a way that sustains and protects the environment which may include learning how to manage grazing, plant trees and crops, and how to use natural fertilizer.

"We live in a wonderful community and this is a way of reaching out and sharing that," said Soens, who owns Pinnacle Custom Builders, Inc. and is president of the Community Center of South Decatur's board.

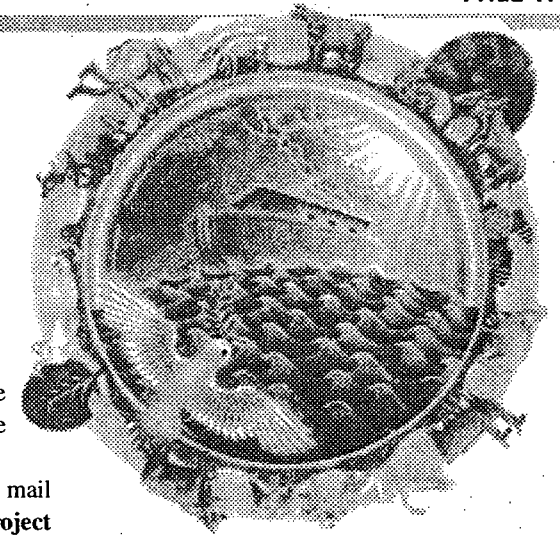
"And what's so neat about this gift is that it keeps on giving," said Bedford-Coleman, who is a community organizer and Heifer Project International volunteer. Families who receive animals are required to give away some of their animals' female offspring to other needy families, who then do the same, passing the gift on indefinitely.

On Nov. 15, the Decatur City Commission gave its official endorsement of the project, commending the participants for their willingness to personally take on such a

worthy project for the city and its residents. The commission agreed to receive donations for the local project through the middle of the new year.

To help build the ark contact please mail your donations made out to the **Heifer Project Internation** and mail to the following address:

Heifer Project Internation  
C/O City Hall, City Manager's Office  
P.O. Box 220  
Decatur, Georgia 30031



For more information visit the website:(<http://www.heifer.org>) or call Amani Bedford-Coleman at 404/687-0173.

## "GIFT ARK" RESPONSE CARD

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE # \_\_\_\_\_

GIFT AMOUNT

\$20  \$50  \$100

OTHER \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**To meet the Dec. 31 goal, PLEASE RESPOND BY 12/19/99**

MAIL ALL "GIFTS" TO Heifer Project Internation

C/O City Hall, City Manager's Office