



2015 Program Report



Training leaders in the traditions of nonviolence

satyagrahainstitute.org

Welcome



Photo: S.DeLong / flickr.com

The daily news reports no shortage of leaders who champion certainty, immediacy, and defensiveness. And we see no shortage of their essential tools: threat, coercion, and harm. For those who desire a different approach to social change, Satyagraha Institute offers a new program to train leaders in the traditions of nonviolence.

The Institute's pilot project was held August 4-18, 2015 in the Black Hills, a region of spiritual and social significance for several native peoples, located in South Dakota, USA. We met at Placerville Camp, a retreat center nestled deep in the hills.

Our core group consisted of about 30 participants. Over 45 people were involved during the two-week program. We were a diverse group on many counts, including age, gender, race, language, and nationality. What follows is an overview of who was present, what we did, and why.

Participants gave the pilot program high ratings. So, we are looking ahead to 2016 and beyond, exploring options for programs in Mexico, Alabama, Tennessee, and a return to the Black Hills. Please visit our website (satyagrahainstitute.org) for program announcements and updates. Thank you!



“A great experience.”

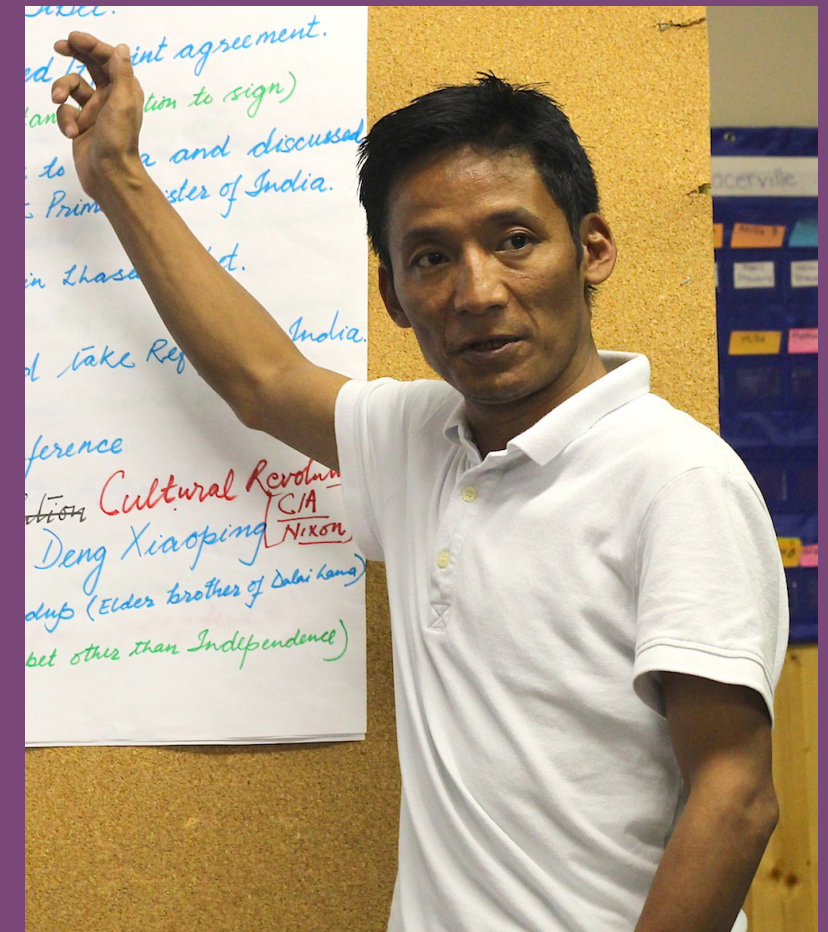
*T. Marie King,
Youth & Community Activist*



Photo: Josie Sanderson

“I appreciate the relationships I built with several of the participants, as I now feel that I have a further community of people to help me grow.”

*Jennifer Arnold,
Elementary School Teacher*



“I learned many things to improve the quality of my workshops.”

*Samphel Dorji,
Tibetan Human Rights
Program Coordinator*

Mission & Goals

Mission

Satyagraha Institute works to promote the understanding and practice of satyagraha as a method for social change.

Mohandas Gandhi, who famously experimented with the possibilities of nonviolence, coined the Sanskrit term *satyagraha* to identify a method of social change. Gandhi proposed that *satya* (truth) combined with *agraha* (firmness) creates a useful social power that does not rely on harming others. Gandhi often referred to this power as “truth-force.” Satyagraha is a way of directly engaging with others to work out the difficult aspects of life without resorting to coercion, harm, or ill intention. Satyagraha is the social power which arises when we act with kindness, respect, patience, generosity, and selfless service.

Goal 1

To increase the number of leaders trained in the traditions of nonviolence.

Our world suffers for lack of leaders rooted in the traditions of nonviolence. When conflicts arise, many

leaders teach us to wield threats, coercion, and harm. When unfamiliar perspectives disturb, many leaders rally us to certainty and defensiveness. When decisions must be made, many leaders encourage us to value self-interest, immediacy, and possession. As we follow these guides, the fabric of our community weakens, and life becomes more difficult for ourselves and others. Our goal is to create a different future by training leaders in the traditions of nonviolence.

Goal 2

To strengthen the community of practitioners, teachers, and future leaders who are committed to experimenting with satyagraha in their work.

Existing and upcoming leaders in our various communities have little opportunity to spend quality time with mentors in nonviolence. Our goal is to create a place where leaders can build relationships with mentors who are familiar with the knowledge, skills, and inner life associated with nonviolent social change.

Mission & Goals

Goal 3

To produce the premiere training opportunity for exploring how to create social change using the principles and tools of satyagraha.

Training in nonviolence typically follows one of three valuable traditions:

In the *academic tradition*, many colleges and universities offer programs in peace and justice studies. These programs are essential to educating our future leaders about the theory, history, and application of nonviolent social change.

In the *activist tradition*, a variety of organizations offer programs to train community organizers how to implement successful campaigns. If we want nonviolent social change to be more than just a dream, we need to invest in developing the skills, techniques, and strategies which these programs set forth.

In *religious traditions* around the globe, adherents are taught that by observing certain principles and values, we

build a peaceful world. Even with our best theory and skills, we cannot create nonviolent social change without tending to matters such as respect, forgiveness, patience, and sensitivity to the well-being of our adversaries.

These three traditions are all necessary. Taken independently, however, they each have their weaknesses. Without academic rigor, activists and religious adherents miss the benefits of critical analysis and historical insight. Without activist skill, academics and religious adherents lack the competence to convert understanding and vision into reality. And without attention to the inner life, academics and activists risk leaving behind our most potent catalysts for transforming relationships and communities.

Our goal is to provide a unique training opportunity by integrating the best of these three traditions, rooting our program in attention to scholarship, attention to strategy, and attention to the inner life.



“To begin each day with a collective silent meditation followed by our discussions on the inner life, was truly a treat for me. This, coupled with daily yoga, our discussions on different faith traditions, and the opportunity to enjoy and reflect on the natural beauty of the Black Hills, created a holistic oasis for me spiritually. I felt inspired and challenged to take care of my spiritual life and to never lose sight of it as an essential component of satyagraha.”

Melissa Arias, Paralegal & Seminary Student

Program



The 14-day program included a variety of faculty, resource people, and training styles. The daily schedule typically ran from 7:00 AM to 9:00 PM, with opportunities for rest, reflection, and socializing.

Morning, afternoon, and evening seminars formed the core of the program. Additionally, each morning, the group gathered for meditation and discussion on the inner life. Each afternoon, there were opportunities for yoga and art. In the spirit of Gandhian ashrams, each participant also shared in some *bread labor*, simple manual labor to support the basic needs of the community.

Five days were devoted to field trips, with opportunities to learn from people, places, and projects related to our theme.

“Nonviolence is not a mechanical performance. It is the finest quality of the heart and comes by training.” *M.K. Gandhi*

Program Highlights



Gandhian Nonviolence - MP Mathai, a widely-respected professor and Gandhian scholar, provided our core theoretical training. His topics included Gandhi's life and worldview, the central principles of nonviolence, Gandhi's experiments with nonviolence, and the dynamics of truth, restraint, and non-attachment.

Case Study of Nonviolent Social Change in Mexico - Fernando Ferrara, along with colleagues Marcela Granados Shiroma and JP Garcia Aguinaga, shared insights regarding their work with domestic violence, gangs, and police in Mexico. Their work led to listening circles, and a peace pledge involving some 400 members of rival gangs.

Conflict Resolution - Priscilla Prutzman, Executive Director of Creative Response to Conflict, provided an exploration of the issues and skills involved in resolving conflicts. Exercises addressed topics such as listening, decision-making, providing feedback, and bias awareness.

Working with Groups - Melissa Denton is Program Director for The Unusual Suspects Theatre Company, a nationally recognized theatre arts program for youth and families in underserved communities. Her engaging activities offered useful examples of ways to build community and deepen trust within groups.



Program Highlights



Nonviolence in Native Traditions - Duane Hollow Horn Bear, who teaches Lakota History and Cultural Studies at Sinte Gleska University, welcomed Institute participants to the Black Hills. His stories of personal transformation in the face of systemic violence illuminated the path of nonviolence and provided context for our gathering in this part of the world.

Darlene Pipeboy, a Dakota elder and pipe keeper, shared insights and practices from the indigenous tradition of the northern plains. For her, nonviolent social change is rooted in connection with nature, sacredness of all people, relationship among all beings, ceremony, and humor.

Protective Accompaniment - Amelia Parker, Executive Director of Peace Brigades International-USA, shared how nonviolence is being applied in very difficult situations. Since 1981, PBI has been working to protect human rights defenders around the world by accompanying these people in their daily lives. PBI's work includes physical accompaniment, public relations, networking, observing, reporting, and building international support networks.



Program Highlights

The Inner Life - The practice of satyagraha requires investigating, challenging, and training one's heart. So, each morning our group met for silent mediation followed by discussion on one aspect of the inner life. Clark Hanjian, General Coordinator, introduced topics such as offering generosity, practicing non-attachment to results, monitoring intentions, leaving room for error, and practicing patience.

Direct Action - Clare Hanrahan, an author, activist, and organizer with extensive experience in nonviolent direct action against militarism and racism, shared a wealth of insights and suggestions. Her experiences crossing a variety of lines (some leading to prison) provided concrete examples of how satyagraha can lead to transformation.



And More . . . Carl Kline, Program Coordinator, provided context and continuity for the entire curriculum. In addition to the highlights above, the program included pieces such as:

- Sessions on nonviolence in the traditions of ML King, Jr., the civil rights movement, and the Catholic Worker movement
- Participant-led sessions on nonviolent social change in their respective communities and spiritual traditions
- Daily afternoon yoga with instructor Colleen Natalie-Lees
- A slide presentation of a bicycle tour around the world
- A mural designed and painted by participants
- A comfortable schedule with time to relax and socialize

Field Trips



Kammerer Ranch & Ellsworth Air Force Base - Ellsworth AFB, located just east of the Black Hills, is home to a B-1B bomber fleet which is active in military operations around the world. Marvin Kammerer, a fourth-generation South Dakota rancher who has spent much of his life working for social and environmental justice, lives right next door. Over 30 years ago, three large stone symbols were installed and painted at the end of the Ellsworth runway on Kammerer ranch land. These three symbols (the international peace symbol, the environmental symbol, and a Native American prayer wheel) are visible to bomber pilots as they land at the base. Institute participants met with Marv to hear his story and to refurbish these symbols.

Deerfield Lake - The hills near Deerfield lake contain a type of sand necessary for the process of hydraulic fracturing. We met here with representatives of Dakota Rural Action, a regional organization that worked successfully to stop one company's attempt to mine the sand in this pristine environment. Sabrina King, a community organizer, and Paul Seamans, a rancher directly affected by the Keystone XL pipeline, shared their experiences with the work of nonviolent social change in this area.

Wind Cave & Bear Butte - We visited several sites of significance to native peoples and learned more about the intimate connection they see between the environment, community, and the ways of peace.





“ My knowledge of satyagraha has served me well since I’ve been back home. I have a new sense of patience and tolerance. Really just a new sense of how to love. . . . I feel much less of a barrier between people. We’re all brothers and sisters! I actually crave interaction with people different than myself. This is new.”

Mike Meyer, Recent High School Graduate

How Satyagraha Institute Makes a Difference

Our habits of violence are deeply ingrained, so it is fair to ask “How will this program change anything?” We believe that the path to change is rooted in three key principles:

(1) Change happens one person at a time.

In other words, a community will change only to the extent that its individual members change. To the degree that we, as individuals, shift toward the ways of nonviolence, we create ripples which alter the nature of our relationships, communities, and nations. For this reason, we subscribe to the practice of being the change we want to see. The summer institute provides time, space, and support for individuals to wrangle with the tools of nonviolence and their assumptions about how conflict works.

(2) The path to change requires face-to-face interaction and dialogue.

We believe in the dignity and potential of every human being, and these qualities are best nurtured by direct

contact with other human beings. The summer institute provides guides who are experienced in the application of satyagraha. If we want to adopt new approaches to conflict, we need to spend quality time with those who can help us work through the difficult questions. Cell phones and computer interaction cannot match the power of studying, eating, talking, working, and relaxing with mentors.

(3) Deep change requires time, experimentation, and support.

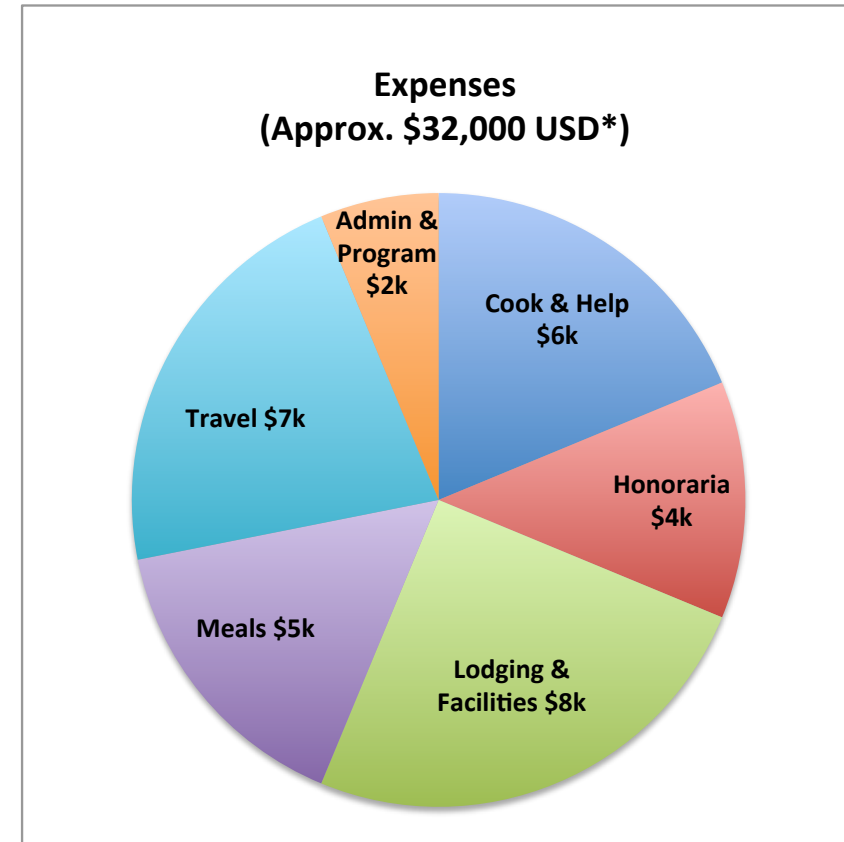
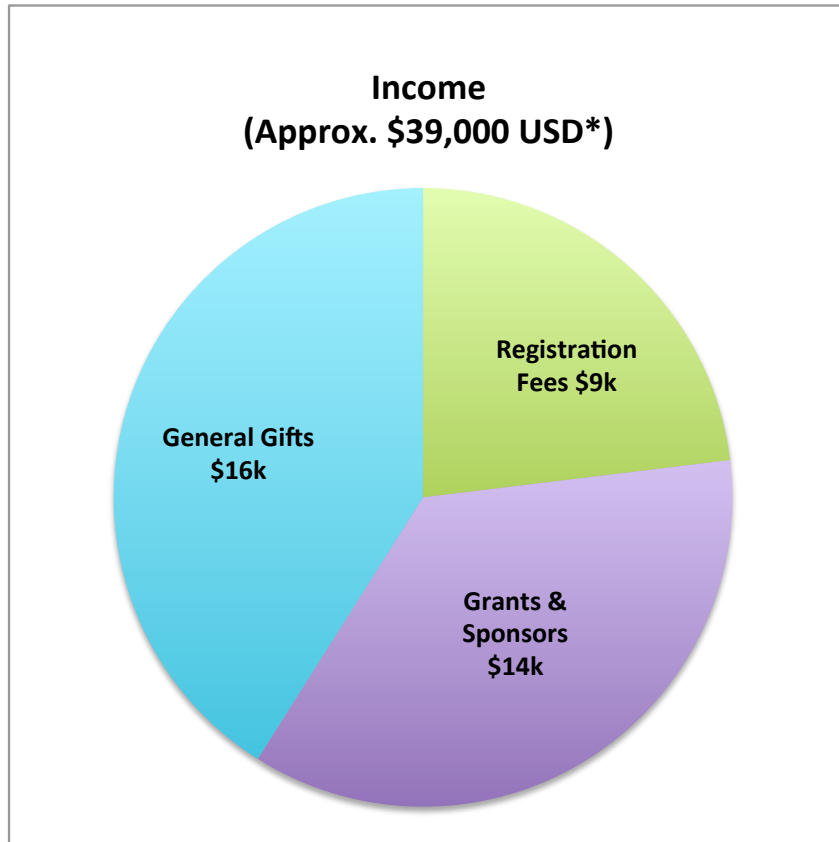
Few of us can make quick and substantial changes for the better. We usually need years to test our options, understand the results, and gradually develop new habits. We also tend to need much encouragement along the way. The summer institute provides a concrete opportunity to support this lifetime of development.

In light of these principles, we believe that Satyagraha Institute offers a foundation for genuine change.

Participants

- Betty Abah (Lagos, Nigeria), Executive Director, CEE-HOPE
- Melissa Arias (Colombian national living in NY, USA), Seminary student & paralegal
- Jennifer Arnold (North Carolina, USA), Elementary school teacher
- Melissa Denton (California, USA), Program Director, The Unusual Suspects Theatre Co.
- Samphel Dorji (Tibetan refugee living in Delhi, India), Program coordinator for human rights and social justice issues
- Caleb Evenson (South Dakota, USA), Bicycle mechanic
- Fernando Ferrara (Nuevo León, Mexico), Founder, Mesa de Paz
- Juan Pablo "JP" Garcia Aguinaga (Nuevo León, Mexico), CEO, Civil Association Leaders United for Peace
- Marcela Granados Shiroma (Nuevo León, Mexico), Interinstitutional Group for a Violence and Addiction-Free Life
- Clark Hanjian (Massachusetts, USA), General Coordinator, Satyagraha Institute & Director, DMZ
- Clare Hanrahan (North Carolina, USA), Author and activist, New South Network of War Resisters
- David Hansen (Kansas, USA), Retired clergy, United Church of Christ
- Sally Hansen (Kansas, USA), Teacher, Southwestern College and Wichita State Univ.
- Connor Hanson (Massachusetts, USA), General Assistant, Satyagraha Institute & student, Black Hills State University
- Duane Hollow Horn Bear (South Dakota, USA), Faculty, Sinte Gleska University. Family also attended: wife Elsie, grandchildren Anjoleah and Mason
- Liliás Jarding (South Dakota, USA), Coordinator, Black Hills Clean Water Alliance
- Bruce Junek (South Dakota, USA), Images of the World
- Marvin Kammerer (South Dakota, USA), Rancher
- Sabrina King (South Dakota, USA), Community organizer and lobbyist, Dakota Rural Action
- T. Marie King (Alabama, USA), Youth and community activist
- Carl Kline (South Dakota, USA), Program Coordinator, Satyagraha Institute & Coordinator, LivingNonviolence
- Sam Lopez (South Dakota, USA), Volunteer with South Dakota Peace & Justice Center
- M.P. Mathai (Kerala, India), Faculty, Gujarat Vidyapith
- Mike Meyer (Minnesota, USA), Recent high school graduate & employee, Diamond Lake Hardware
- Claire Natalie-Lees (South Dakota, USA), Kitchen Assistant, Satyagraha Institute & student, Northern State University
- Colleen Natalie-Lees (South Dakota, USA), Yoga instructor & personal coach
- Amelia Parker (Tennessee, USA), Executive Director, Peace Brigades International-USA
- Darlene Pipeboy (South Dakota, USA), Dakota elder and pipe keeper
- Hoksila & Holly Pipeboy (South Dakota, USA), Community workers. Children and cousins also attended: Shannelle, Hoksina, Casey, and Isaiah
- Priscilla Prutzman (New York, USA), Executive Director, Creative Response to Conflict
- Josie Sanderson (South Dakota, USA), Yoga instructor
- Paul Seamans (South Dakota, USA), Rancher & board member of Dakota Rural Action
- Jan Snediger (South Dakota, USA), Social worker
- Michael Sprong & Beth Preheim (South Dakota, USA), Emmaus House Catholic Worker
- Maxine & Lorne Waditaka (Saskatchewan, Canada), Dakota elders
- Melinda Williams (South Dakota, USA), Cook, Satyagraha Institute & 8th grade teacher

Finances



** These figures are for January through September 2015. All figures are approximate. Unused funds from the 2015 program will be used to produce future programs. A standard financial report is available on request.*

The 2015 pilot program functioned on a lean budget. In an effort to keep the program affordable, the registration fee was set relatively low, not even covering the cost of food and facilities. Except for some modest honoraria, our faculty and administration were volunteer. With the help of many financial supporters, we were able to make this pilot project a success.

Satyagraha Institute is an independent project under the auspices of Creative Nonviolence Center. We are grateful to our fiscal sponsor, Dakota Rural Action, a nonprofit corporation who shares our vision and enables us to receive charitable contributions. To support Satyagraha Institute, visit satyagrahainstitute.org/support.

Thank You!

Satyagraha Institute is fortunate to have the support of the following individuals and organizations for our 2015 pilot program. If we have inadvertently omitted or misspelled your name, please accept our apologies.

Grantmakers

A.J. Muste Memorial Institute
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SD Conference of the United Church of Christ
South Dakota Humanities Council



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Endorsers

Organization names for identification purposes only

Joanna Macy (Work That Reconnects)
David Hartsough (Peaceworkers)
Rabbi Michael Lerner (Tikkun - Network of Spiritual Progressives)
Mel Duncan (Founding Director, Nonviolent Peaceforce)
Michael True (Center for Nonviolent Solutions)
Matt Meyer (Author, UN-ECOSOC Representative for the International Peace Research Association, Africa Support Network Coordinator for War Resisters International)
Jerry Leggett (Executive Director, Dayton International Peace Museum)
Rev. Kristi McLaughlin (Executive Director, SD Peace & Justice Center)
Frank James (Staff Director, Dakota Rural Action)
LeRoy Moore (Rocky Mountain Peace & Justice Center)
Nukewatch
Paul Baggett (Coordinator, Peace & Conflict Studies, SD State University)
Rev. Susan Huffman (Co-Pastor, Rapid City First United Church of Christ)
Frank Kartheiser (Lead Organizer, Worcester MA Interfaith)
Rabbi Victor Reinstein (Nehar Shalom Community Synagogue, Jamaica Plain, MA)

Jennifer McBride (Director, Peace & Justice Studies, Wartburg College)
Frank Pommersheim (Prof. of Law, Specializing in Indian Law, University of South Dakota School of Law)
Rev. Wade Schemmel (Pastor, Brookings United Church of Christ)

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Thank You!

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Tami Hanson
Susan Heafield & Brian Wren
Arlene Hendrickson
Frank Kartheiser





2015 Faculty & Resource People

M.P. Mathai	Duane Hollow Horn Bear
Darlene Pipeboy	Melissa Denton
Amelia Parker	Paul Seamans
Priscilla Prutzman	Sabrina King
Fernando H. Ferrara	Lilias Jones Jarding
Clare Hanrahan	Bruce Junek
Colleen Natalie-Lees	Beth Preheim
Marvin Kammerer	Michael Sprong

2015 Administration & Staff

Carl Kline, Cofounder & Program Coordinator
Clark Hanjian, Cofounder & General Coordinator
Lois Andersen, Treasurer
Jennifer Ehidiamen, Outreach Coordinator/Africa
Abhay Mistry, Technology Support & Outreach Coordinator/Asia
Biggi Unger-Brogden, Outreach Coordinator/Europe
Melinda Williams, Cook & Kitchen Manager
Claire Natalie-Lees, Kitchen Assistant
Connor Hanson, General Assistant

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