

## Social and Environmental Changes

# Cleaning up the towns

■ BARKA Foundation announces new initiatives for the Berkshires.

By Jenn Smith  
Berkshire Eagle Staff

WILLIAMSTOWN — For the BARKA Foundation, change and progress is coming on in the forms of dance, art, water filters and the sounds of electronica.

Formerly based in Housatonic, and now a mobile, BARKA is a United Nations-affiliated non-profit, volunteer-run non-governmental organization working to promote social change and

clean-water policies, procedures and infrastructure in the West African nation of Burkina Faso.

On Wednesday, the International Day of Peace, co-founders Ina and Esu Anahata announced new BARKA initiatives and partnerships with the Berkshires.

“One of our main goals here in the Berkshires when we left was to make sure to connect with anybody and everybody to really reach out to children of all ages, from kindergarten through college,” Ina said.

This included an after-school program at Crosby

BARKA, continued on B4

### If you go ...

**What:** Burkina Electric, from the capital city of Burkina Faso, West Africa performs a music and dance concert to raise awareness of the country. Williams dance troupe Kusika will also perform.

**When:** Friday at 9 p.m.

**Where:** Lasell Gymnasium, Williams College campus, 871 Main St., Williamstown.

**Cost:** Free and open to the public.

**Info:** Email Carrie Tribble at [cmt2@williams.edu](mailto:cmt2@williams.edu) or visit the BARKA Foundation website [barkafoundation.org](http://barkafoundation.org)

### BARKA from B1

Elementary School in Pittsfield, clean water access awareness walks in South County, holding a career talk at Williams College and coordinating various service-learning activities for schools between Great Barrington and Williamstown. In Great Barrington, town officials have agreed to begin initiating a sister city partnership with a village in Burkina Faso.

Over the years, small school and community fundraisers have yielded \$25,000 to be used for a well-building project in Burkina Faso.

Area elementary schools that BARKA worked with, as well as students from the Berkshire Hills Regional School District, created public service announcements, ranging from water-source awareness to personal hygiene were recorded as videos, which BARKA will bring to schools in the Burkina Faso village of Tantiaka on its next visit.

The Anahatas' next visit will also include drilling a well for clean water in the village, rehabilitating an old well, and designating gender-specific composting toilets for use where no toilets exist. The group is also looking into creating an effort to install and use residential ceramic water filters in the area.

“Now the seeds we planted last spring are beginning to bear fruit,” Esu said.

Carrie Tribble, a member of the Williams College Class of 2013, was so inspired by the organization's work that she worked as an intern with the Anahatas in Maine, seeking to find grant and other educational outreach opportunities.

Coming up Thursday and Friday, BARKA will partner with Burkina Electric, a world music and dance group that blends tradition with electronica, to present workshops at Williams and Mount Greylock Regional High School, as well as perform a free public concert Friday at the college's Lasell Gymnasium.

The Williams programs, coordinated by Tribble, are supported through initiatives of the Williams College Multicultural Center and student Minority Coalition.

“She's really helping to move the ball forward, which is what we wanted to see happen,” Esu said of the college student.

He said that part of BARKA's mission is to impress upon young people the ideas of “global citizenry and planetary responsibility.”

Lisa Buchinski was principal of Crosby Elementary School last year before taking the same role at Williams Elementary School in Pittsfield this year. At Crosby, at students' requests, the principal set up an afterschool program with BARKA where students made “Washed Art,” small papier-mâché washing machines with water conservation tips on them that could serve as reminder or be filled with change to help with BARKA's efforts.

“By working with students here we're integrating them into the global village,” said Ina. “We're asking kids to step up and be active participants, showing them it's [their] opportunity to take on responsibility and become a world citizen.”