“Walk for Water” brings couple to Kennebunkport, meeting with former president

By Laura Dolce, ldolce@seacoastonline.com

May 28, 2009 6:00 AM

KENNEBUNKPORT - Thirteen days into their "Walk for Water," Esu and Ina Anahata found themselves in the surprising position of being able to plead their cause to a worldwide celebrity: former President George H. W. Bush.

Bush - the 41st president and father to the 43rd President George W. Bush - was greeting people at the Kennebunkport Memorial Day parade when the Anahatas approached him with information on their mission to draw attention to the need for clean water in the western African nation of Burkina Faso.

"He said he's been there," Esu Anahata said. "He said he had business interests there."

The encounter with Bush was just one of the many the Anahatas have had since beginning their walk May 11 outside of the United Nations in New York. Sunday found them arriving in Kennebunk, where they were hosted by the Unitarian Universalist Church.

"We had a wonderful welcome by the community," Esu Anahata said, adding that cars passing honked their horns and dozens of people came out to greet them.

The Anahatas are being led in their walk by Danny Garcia, known as the "Walking Man" for his travels around the world for the past 13 years. Garcia said he's walked more than 25,000 miles in that time in his quest for world peace. On Monday, he walked in the Kennebunkport parade along with fellow veterans as the Anahatas followed behind, filming him.

All of it is part of their project to help build wells in Burkina Faso, Esu Anahata said, to help eradicate the extreme poverty there. The Anahatas have made it their life's work, even establishing the nonprofit Barka Foundation (www.barkafoundation.org), with chapters in Massachusetts and Burkina Faso.

"It's all about creating connections," Esu Anahata said of their work.

The Anahatas are creating those connections throughout Maine, continuing their journey through Portland, Auburn, Augusta, Waterville, Newport and finally Bangor, where they will end their journey May 30. It will be a homecoming of sorts for Ina, Esa said, since she lived outside of Bangor for 30 years. And the couple loves Maine, he said, for its "progressive, activist orientation."

That feeling meshes well with what the couple is trying to achieve.

"It's a tremendous grassroots effort," Esu said.
FOUNDATION LEADS WALK THROUGH SEACOAST TO HELP AFRICAN NATION

BY DEBORAH MCDERMOTT, dmcdermott@seacoastonline.com

MAY 27, 2009 6:00 AM

YORK, Maine - This past Memorial Day weekend, a former Marine and a Massachusetts couple walked in honor of the memory of those from the impoverished African nation of Burkina Faso who died from malnutrition. The group continues to work to provide a means by which to save others from Burkina Faso.

Esu and Ina Anahata, founders of the Barka Foundation, and former Marine Danny Garcia, who has walked more than 25,000 miles around the world in support of children and families, teamed up to embark on the Peace, Water and Wisdom Walk to bring drinking water to the people of Burkina Faso.

On Sunday, they stopped in Portsmouth, N.H., en route from the United Nations in New York City to Bangor, Maine, a 500-mile walk that took them through Kittery and York to Kennebunk, where they met former President George H.W. Bush and participated in Monday's Memorial Day parade.

The walk raises funds and awareness for the Barka Foundation's work in Burkina Faso, ranked 173 of 179 countries on the Human Development Index. Barka is an African word meaning "thank you."

"We're planting seeds along this walk," said Esu. "And the response has been amazing. People really get it. Maine and New Hampshire have got it. They're revved up."

What they're revved up about is helping the foundation to install wells in villages in Burkina Faso. Esu said when a village has well water, women don't have to walk miles each day to a river to collect water of questionable safety; the well water can be used for irrigation to help the villages' prosperity, livestock survives and disease declines.

"We're connecting with people along the route over issues of clean water," he said. "People really want to help. They want to see a positive change in the world, and they want to be a part of the change."

As each well costs $10,000, Esu said, the walks are important to fund-raising.

While in Portsmouth on Sunday, walkers attended South Church, a Unitarian Universalist congregation. UU churches provided support and a place to stay for walkers, Esu said. He said he and his wife plan to return to Portsmouth at some point to work with local schoolchildren, as education is another goal of the foundation.

Esu said the people of Burkina Faso have much to teach Americans "about sustainability, community - things we've forgotten along the way."

"We're feeling a deep need to bring the wisdom of ancient Africa to the USA," he said. "That's the wisdom part of the walk. As for the peace part, you can't have peace if you don't have water. You can't have peace if you don't have the basics for survival."
Walk for Water coming to Auburn

Friday, May 22, 2009 05:00 am

AUBURN - The Barka Foundation's 500-mile, 20-city Peace Water & Wisdom Walk will arrive here the evening of Tuesday, May 26.

Through its 20-city Walk for Water tour, the Barka Foundation, based on Housatonic, Mass., hopes to raise awareness about water as a basic human right and the need for developing sustainable solutions to address water scarcity in West Africa.

"Women in Barkina walk for miles every day to get water. When a village has a well, women can sustain micro business, girls can attend school, and irrigation leads to increased crop yield and disease declines. It is the single most important thing" that can be done to improve quality of life, according to a statement from the Barka Foundation, founded by Ina and Esu Anahata.

Participants stepped off from the United Nations in New York on May 11, and will finish their walk on May 30 in Bangor. Their path will take them through Danbury, Conn., Pittsfield, Mass., Brattleboro, Vt., and Manchester, NH, before arriving in Maine on Sunday.

On Tuesday at 7 p.m., the First Unitarian Universalist Church on Pleasant Street will show the film, "Barka! Barkina," which documents the efforts of the Barka Foundation to establish a well in every village in Barkina Faso by 2015.

The evening will include performances by Leah Wolfsong, Darlene Jarome and Godfrey Banda, a native of Zimbabwe.

The group will leave Auburn on Wednesday, May 27, at 9 a.m. from their starting point at Auburn Hall, and is scheduled to arrive in Augusta later that day.

For more information, go to www.barkafoundation.org
Walkers to raise awareness, funds for Burkina Faso

Published: Friday, May 15, 2009

By DAN IVERS

A procession of nonprofit workers and others will be walking through the Northwest Corner Friday to promote awareness and raise funds for Burkina Faso, a destitute and water-deprived country in West Africa.

Danny Garcia, an ex-Marine and ordained minister who has walked more than 25,000 miles around the world to benefit various causes, has partnered with BARKA, a non-profit group that has gotten behind the cause. His first walk was one from San Francisco to New York, and after that, he just kept on walking.

“When I finished the walk, I didn’t think it was that hard. It was like Forrest Gump - I gave up everything I had,” he said.

Now, Garcia takes various walks for all kinds of causes, and his latest endeavor has brought him to the area. Garcia and others began walking from the United Nations in New York City on May 11, and will end their trip in Bangor, Maine, on May 30.

They reached Danbury on Wednesday before walking to the Kent/New Preston area, where the Boulder’s Inn provided them with two free rooms. On Friday, they will walk up Route 7 through Kent, Cornwall, Canaan and North Canaan toward their next destination of Great Barrington, Mass.

Among those traveling with Garcia are Esu and Ina Anahata of BARKA, who have traveled to Burkina Faso, which is one of the poorest nations in the world, many times.

“We wanted to raise funds and awareness about BARKA’s work to make clean water available in Burkina Faso,” said Esu. “A friend at the U.N. connected us to Danny, and being the kind of guy he is, when he heard about what we’re doing, he said lets do it.”

Money donated to the project will go to help drill for water there, which will in turn make the country more able to sustain itself and less dependent on foreign aid, said Ina.

Many women in the Burkina Faso walk more than six miles a day to obtain water, including young girls who cannot attend school because they are needed to help their mothers with the task, she said.

If a system is set up to provide clean and easily accessible water, disease will be better controlled and many will be able to become better educated and successful, she added.

“They’re able to become self-sustaining, instead of just everyone keeping on sending aid,” she said. “It all starts with water, if you don’t have water you don’t have life, and if you don’t have clean water you don’t have quality of life.”

The group who have been walking have been staying mostly with friends along their trip, so rooms at the Boulder’s Inn were a great surprise, they said.

Donations to the cause can be made by visiting Garcia’s Web site at www.globalwalk.cc or the BARKA Web site at www.barkafoundation.org.

Dan Ivers can be reached by e-mail at editor@registercitizen.com.
AUGUSTA, Maine - Danny Garcia, an ex-Marine and ordained minister who has walked more than 25,000 miles around the world to benefit world peace and children's causes, will be walking to Augusta on Wednesday, May 27 and spend a complimentary overnight at the Best Western Senator Inn and Spa. Garcia teamed up with the BARKA Foundation to lead the 500-mile Peace, Water & Wisdom Walk, starting from New York and ending in Bangor, Maine. The walk is a campaign to raise awareness about the importance of making clean water available to the rural population in Burkina Faso, West Africa. Garcia will enjoy a complimentary spa service and overnight in one of the Senator Inn's spa suites.

"We are pleased to support this grassroots effort to bring attention to the critical need for clean water in countries like Burkina Faso," said David Hopkins, general manager for the Senator Inn and Spa. "Mr. Garcia and the BARKA Foundation's efforts are to be applauded and the Senator Inn staff is looking forward to hosting this honored guest."

After his overnight at the Senator, Garcia will continue his walk north to Waterville. For more information on the Peace, Water & Wisdom Walk, please visit http://www.globalwalk.cc/; to learn more about the BARKA Foundation, please visit http://thebarkafoundation.org.

The Best Western Senator Inn & Spa is an Augusta, Maine based hotel committed to health and relaxation. The Senator Inn & Spa is a full-service getaway that houses the award-winning Cloud 9 Restaurant, offering all-natural, local, and organically certified dishes that are as healthy as they are delicious. A 123-room property, the Senator Inn & Spa includes popular banquet facilities voted the area's best for the past 13 years. A full-service spa features a saltwater lap pool, state-of-the-art gym and fitness studio, a spa Boutique and 10 treatment rooms for spa services including massage therapy, facials, body treatments, pedicures, manicures and hair salon services. A member of the Green Hotel Association, the Senator Inn & Spa is a designated Environmental Leader, and pioneer in bans on smoking and trans fat. For more information, visit www.senatorinn.com.

Contact
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Raising awareness step by step

By RANDOLPH T. HOLHUT, Reformer Staff

BRATTLEBORO -- In rural towns in the West African nation of Burkina Faso, it’s not unusual for families to walk five or six miles to get their water.

That’s why Danny Garcia is willing to walk 600 miles to call attention to the plight of people living in one of the poorest nations in the world.

Garcia, a 64-year-old minister from Leesburg, Va., teamed up with Ina and Esu Anahata, ministers who founded of the Housatonic, Mass.-based Barka Foundation, to walk from Burkina Faso’s mission at the United Nations headquarters in New York to the Unitarian Universalist Society in Bangor, Maine.

The route of what they call the "Peace, Water & Wisdom Walk" took them through Brattleboro on Tuesday. On Wednesday, the 10th day of their 20-day trek, they were bound for Peterborough, N.H.

Esu Anhata, 43, said Barka is an African word meaning blessing and gratitude. The Anhatas nonprofit foundation is working to raise money to help the 14 million people who are without access to clean water in Burkina Faso build wells.

"So many good things can happen once a village gets water," he said. "Families don’t have to walk for miles, and can do other productive work. There’s less disease, so families are healthier. There’s water for irrigation, so families can grow more food. Whole villages can thrive once they get clean water."

Walking long distances is nothing new for Garcia, a native of Spanish Harlem in New York and a former Marine. Over the past decade, he estimates he’s walked more than 25,000 miles on five continents for various causes.

"Ina and Esu are doing a phenomenal thing," said Garcia. "They asked me to help, and I’m happy to do it."

Ina Anahata, 55, said they’ve received plenty of support during their walk, and said the people they’ve met in Brattleboro were particularly receptive to their mission.

"This is a great town and we hope to build on the connections we made here," she said.

For more information about the Peace, Water & Wisdom walk and about the Barka Foundation’s efforts in Burkina Faso, visit www.barkafoundation.org.
NEWPORT/DEXTER (NEWS CENTER) -- The African nation of Burkina Faso is one of the poorest countries on earth. It’s not uncommon for women to walk several miles just to get water.

To illustrate the need for fresh water, members of the Barka Foundation are walking through Maine.

Ina and Esu Anahata began walking on May 12th from the United Nations in New York. Since then, they’ve covered nearly five hundred miles en-route to their final destination of Bangor. Friday, the pair arrived in Newport.

They plan to arrive at the Bangor waterfront at 4:30 on Saturday afternoon. So far they’ve raised more than 25 thousand dollars for the drilling of fresh water wells in the African nation.

The Anahatas have been joined on their journey by Danny Garcia.

Garcia has spent the last 13 years circling the globe on foot. He’s walked more than 25 thousand miles - hoping to spread peace.

When he arrived in Maine, Garcia went out of his way to meet with other peacemakers.

He spent the evening meeting with students from the "Maine Seeds of Peace" program in Dexter.

The group met at the Brewster Inn, Garcia spent an hour answering questions about his travels and listening to the students experiences at the camp in Otisfield.

Garcia said he draws inspiration from the camp and the idea that students from warring nations can come together even if only for a short time.

He added that informal meetings like this, reassure him that he isn’t the only person trying to make the world a better place.

Garcia said after the Walk For Water” he’ll take some time off. But, he is already planning a concert for peace in Washington D.C. next July and he will then embark on another walk around the world.

Garcia says he hopes to host a walk with the campers from "Seeds of Peace" to promote their mission.
Trio walking 500 miles for clean water in Africa

The walk to raise funds and awareness for Burkina Faso began in New York and will end in Bangor.

by MELANIE CREAMER, Staff Writer
May 27, 2009

The women of Burkina Faso in West Africa walk for miles every day to get water.

Now, the BARKA Foundation and Danny Garcia of Global Walk are walking to help them.

The Massachusetts- and Burkina-based nonprofit organized the Peace, Water and Wisdom Walk, a 500-mile journey through 20 cities to raise funds to provide clean water for the people of Burkina.

The small, arid country of roughly 14 million people is listed as the third-poorest in the world.

Ina and Esu Anahata, co-founders of the BARKA Foundation, and Garcia passed through Kennebunk on Monday and Portland on Tuesday, raising money and awareness for the people they consider family.

Esu Anahata, also known as Howard Ross Patlis, said they traveled to the country in 2000 to learn the spiritual wisdom traditions of Africa.

He said the experience changed him.

“Our lives have been touched by the people of Burkina Faso,” Esu Anahata said.

“There is a real bond of love and sense of family that we experienced with each other. They practice traditions of healing and ways of being in the world that we think are so important to the planet. When we went there, it wasn’t long before we felt compelled to do something to help change their lives."

So far, they have raised an estimated $25,000.

The foundation has enough money to drill the first well, said Ina Anahata, a Maine native who co-founded the nonprofit in 2004.

She said having clean water will support agriculture, empower women to sustain micro-businesses and give children a chance to attend school.

“We believe it is a human right for everyone on this planet to have access to clean water,” Ina Anahata said.

“When they do, there will be less disease. Nations won’t be sending money to take care of things that can be taken care of with water.”

The foundation is working with the United Nations, government agencies and communities throughout the Northeast to raise awareness of their cause.

It reached out to Garcia, an ex-Marine and ordained minister who has walked more than 25,000 miles around the world to benefit world peace and children’s causes.

On Monday, the group got a warm reception walking in a parade in Kennebunk.

Garcia said they are grateful for the support they have received.

In Maine, businesses have donated free meals and hotel accommodations.

“I walk and pray, and I trust in God. We started with nothing, and every step of the way, people have donated money,” Garcia said.

“(Ina and Esu) are simple and real people. Something touched them to do this. The bottom line of this walk is love.”

The walk began in New York on May 11.

The trio will walk through Augusta, Waterville and Newport, and end their journey at the Unitarian Universalist Society in Bangor on May 30.

Esu Anahata said Mainers’ support has been incredible.

“We just got a $20,000 donation. People are stopping their Chevy trucks to give us $1, which means just as much,” he said.

Staff Writer Melanie Creamer can be contacted at 791-6361 or at: mcreamer@pressherald.com
Walker shares message with Dexter, Bangor

By Diana Bowley
BDN Staff

BANGOR DAILY NEWS PHOTO BY DIANA BOWLEY

DEXTER, Maine - He has walked 500 miles on foot since May 11 to promote peace while raising funds for the Barka Foundation, an organization working to provide well water to residents of Burkina Faso in West Africa.

Danny Garcia of Global Walk, a former Marine who has walked more than 25,000 miles on foot across five continents for peace and for various humanitarian projects over the years, ended his latest walk today at the Unitarian Universalist Society church in Bangor. He has raised about $25,000 for the project.

Garcia, who started his walk at the Burkina Faso Embassy at the United Nations in New York, stopped Friday at the Brewster Inn in Dexter, where he met with members of Seeds of Peace from Dexter Regional High School.

"I'm always walking for causes. I love to walk and it gives me an opportunity to get rid of the garbage in my mind; it's very refreshing for me," Garcia told the students. At the same time, it gives him the opportunity to educate people about his humanitarian efforts and to spread peace and love, he said.

Everybody that I've met wants to be loved," he said.

Garcia praised the local members of Seeds of Peace for fostering good relationships and encouraged them to spread their message that wars should end and peace should prevail.

I would like this to be the beginning of something," Garcia said of the meeting with the students. He urged them to listen to people and not to be concerned about making mistakes.

The students were encouraged to join Garcia in Bangor on Saturday and to attend his July Fourth celebration concert in Washington, D.C.

Garcia and his fundraising companions Ina and Esu Anahata of the Massachusetts-based Barka Foundation walked into Bangor from Hermon on Saturday evening, just ahead of a drenching thunderstorm. A crowd of about 50 well-wishers met them on Main Street by near the Bangor Waterfront Park, and accompanied them to the Unitarian Universalist Church on Park Street.

BDN writer Meg Haskell contributed to this report.

dianabdn@myfairpoint.net
Supreme Master Ching Hai Donates $20,000 to The BARKA Foundation for Water Initiative in Burkina Faso

Mon Jun 1, 3:01 am ET

A charitable donation is being made by spiritual leader Supreme Master Ching Hai to The BARKA Foundation in support of the Peace, Water & Wisdom Walk designed to raise awareness and funds about the need for clean water in Burkina Faso. Funds will go toward BARKA's operating expenses and the drilling of the first "BARKA well" in La Petite Village, Fada N'Gourma. The BARKA Foundation focuses on clean water as a way to achieve the UN's Millennium Development Goals in Burkina Faso. Excerpts from BARKA's documentary film "BARKA! BURKINA" and Live Footage from Peace, Water & Wisdom Walk to be Featured on Supreme Master Television.

Bangor, Maine (PRWEB) June 1, 2009 -- Supreme Master Ching Hai has made a charitable donation to The BARKA Foundation in the amount of $20,000. This generous donation was granted in the midst of BARKA's Peace, Water & Wisdom Walk, a 500-mile, 20 city in 20 day journey through 6 states starting at the United Nations in New York City and ending in Bangor, Maine.

The objective of the "Walk for Water" is to raise awareness and funds about the extreme need for clean water in Burkina Faso, West Africa, one of the world's poorest countries. The BARKA Foundation works both locally in the US and internationally in Burkina Faso. Through creating connections with US-based schools, women's associations, faith-based organizations, businesses, and civic and political leaders, BARKA is pioneering a grassroots model for joining hands on the local level to work practically on international issues of poverty eradication, peace-building and the preservation of the world's remaining indigenous cultures and their spiritual wisdom traditions. Specifically, BARKA functions as a bridge to indigenous communities in rural and urban areas of Burkina Faso.

Through its work and relations with the United Nations, The BARKA Foundation came to understand the centrality of water's role in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. As a way to raise funds for its clean water initiatives in Burkina Faso and to create relationships with new communities in the northeastern US, it organized the Peace, Water & Wisdom Walk. Joining the Walk for Water campaign is Danny Garcia, internationally known as the "Walking Man", who has walked more than 25,000 miles on 5 continents for various causes over the past 13 years. When Ina & Esu, BARKA's co-founders, told him of the urgent needs of the people of Burkina Faso, and how women walk for miles every day to carry water to their families he felt compelled to help. Danny agreed to do a Walk in order to raise funds for BARKA's efforts to address the problem both here in the US through education and awareness raising, and in Burkina directly through projects such as well drilling, irrigation and water purification. "I was walking from Greenfield, MA to Brattleboro, VT when Ina & Esu told me the news about the donation from Supreme Master Ching Hai," said Danny. "I began to cry and thanked God for this generous expression of support."

"Our hearts are overflowing with gratitude for Supreme Master Ching Hai's recognition of our work and the intense need that exists in Burkina Faso. We are working in solidarity with her and Supreme Master Television to work toward a sustainable future for our children's children," said Ina & Esu.

Through documentary filmmaking BARKA is able to connect people, schools and organizations together in the US and Burkina Faso through an ongoing 'filmic dialogue' in which entire communities are able to be in conversation despite geographic separation. At FESPACO, Africa's largest film festival, "BARKA! BURKINA" a feature-length documentary about BARKA's work premiered. Supreme Master Television will broadcast excerpts of "BARKA! BURKINA" and feature live footage of the Peace, Water & Wisdom Walk as it arrives in its final destination of Bangor, Maine on May 30 at the Unitarian Universalist Society of Bangor, Maine where the $20,000 donation will be presented to BARKA's co-founders.

The funds will be used for BARKA's operational expenses and to drill its first well in Fada, the eastern region of Burkina Faso.

About Supreme Master Television

Supreme Master Television, founded by Supreme Master Ching Hai, is a 24-hour free-to-air satellite TV station with exclusive focus on uplifting news and inspirational, constructive programming. Supreme Master Television offers audiences a new way to view television—in a constructive light. From its live broadcasts of peace-building events, to interviews with presidents, celebrities and the extraordinary peace wishes of ordinary people, Supreme Master Television is a bridge for understanding through its features on the beauty of all nations and cultures.

www.SupremeMasterTV.com

Quote From the Supreme Master Ching Hai: Now concerning water: one serving of beef is 1200 gallons; one serving of chicken, 330 gallons and one complete vegan meal including tofu, rice, vegetables etc. is only 98 gallons. Now everybody was talking a lot about food shortage and water shortage, the main cause is again, livestock raising. That is not including the contamination of most world bodies of water and related usages. We cannot afford it forever like this. We have to stop the meat consumption. We have to stop the meat, in order to even survive.

About Danny Garcia and Global Walk

Garcia is 64 years old, a native of New York's Spanish Harlem, a former Marine, former law enforcement officer, and an ordained minister. The aims and purposes of all Danny's walks throughout the world are the same: to facilitate, promote, and support the needs of children and their families, which include engaging in humanitarian aid to victims of fire, poverty, flood, earthquake, or war. On July 4th, 2009, a new chapter will begin with a Peace Walk across the United States, South America and Asia. For more information, visit www.globalwalk.cc.

About The BARKA Foundation

The BARKA Foundation is a 501(c)3 charitable organization based both in the US and in Burkina Faso, West Africa. BARKA works with the support of UN agencies, Burkina Faso and US governments, and indigenous villages to eradicate extreme poverty, empower women, foster education and co-create a culture of peace and sustainability for the global village. On Peace Day 2008, The BARKA Foundation unveiled the BARKA Burkina Consortium, an international collective of organizations working collaboratively toward an innovative model to achieve the UN's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), BARKA and Consortium partner ZZYX Entertainment/Global Harmony are co-producing the Peace, Water & Wisdom Concert and Festival in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, September 19-21, 2009, to raise funds for the Consortium's "Clean Water for All" initiative designed to ensure a well in every village in Burkina Faso by 2015. BARKA is a member of the Culture of Peace Initiative, a project of Pathways To Peace.

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Unbottled education

Students fundraise for clean water projects in West Africa

By Jenn Smith
Berkshire Eagle Staff

FLORIDA — Gabriel Abbott Memorial School is pumped about having safe, clean water in the world.

For the past month, all 116 youngsters from pre-kindergarten through Grade 8 have participated in a service-learning program about the worldwide water crisis, focusing on the efforts of the Barka Foundation and the need for clean water in West Africa.

And next Friday, March 20, their efforts will culminate with “Water, Water Everywhere (But Not a Drop to Drink),” an evening celebrating West African food and music, geography and water. It will also include an art auction, with proceeds to benefit the construction of a clean water well in Burkina Faso, West Africa.

“For us teachers, it’s one of those things where the more we know, the more the kids know, and the more they want to learn,” said Lori Austin, a fourth-grade teacher, who was inspired by a similar project done by third-graders at Sullivan Elementary School in North Adams.

Austin is coordinating the program with members of the Student Conservation Association (SCA) Massachusetts Parks AmeriCorps.

“A lot of this has been really cool for us because we didn’t know the extent of the water crisis,” said SCA volunteer Laurie Terry.

Once a week, she and her fellow interns Aja Mathews and Lindsey Campana visit each grade to help teach age-appropriate lessons, from reading African folktales to preschoolers and creating water filtration systems with third-graders, to helping the middle school students make posters, PowerPoint presentations, even a documentary film with music.

“I think it’s been a real eye-opener for the kids,” Terry said. “You can see them thinking and they ask a lot of questions.”

On Wednesday, Austin’s fourth-grade students drew posters for a “bottled water challenge” they’ll be conducting next Friday night. They will see whether people can tell the difference between bottled and tap water in a taste test.

They also learned about how when people drink bottled water, they’re consuming more than just the liquid. “It takes more water to make a bottle of water than what’s actually in the bottle,” explained student Makenzie Wright.

WATER, continued on B3

Laurie Terry, left, and Aja Mathews speak to Gabriel Abbott Memorial School fourth-graders in preparation for a fundraiser to help raise money for clean water projects in West Africa.

Students fundraise for water

While tap water mostly involves a filtration plant and the process of turning on a faucet, bottled water involves tapping a source, printing paper or plastic labels, creating bottles, filling and distributing and marketing them.

“I really hope that people will start to save water, try to make it clean for the environment, and use reusable water bottles,” said Wright.

In addition to the March 20 event, which will be recorded and broadcast by Northern Berkshire Community Television, students will be making a video for YouTube about water conservation. Teacher Lori Austin will also give all the curriculum and lesson plans to the Barka Foundation to be adapted by other schools.

Miranda Wisman, a fourth grader at Gabriel Abbott Memorial School in Florida, works on a project in preparation for a fundraiser to help raise money and awareness for clean water projects in West Africa.
Danny Garcia, in the middle, talks about the BARKA Foundation and his goal to raise money for Burkina Faso, a country in Africa rated as the third-poorest country in the world. To his left is Ina Anahata of the foundation; to his right is the group’s Esu Anahata.

‘Walking Man’ crosses Valley to tap support for water cause

By BOB FLAHERTY
Staff Writer

NORTHAMPTON — Danny Garcia trod on Northampton asphalt Monday, and the pace down King Street was blistering. He was on his way to Greenfield, the sixth leg of a 20-day walk, with the green and red flag of the third-poorest country in the world on his shoulder. He walks for children, he walks for peace, and for the next 14 days he’ll walk for water.

Known as the Walking Man, Garcia claims to have walked over 25,000 miles on five continents since 1996. His travels have brought him into contact with Mother Theresa, Pope John Paul II and heads of state. But his inspiration, he says, comes from the ordinary people who walk and pray with him.

“I’m not trying to run for office, be a millionaire or start a church,” he said, sidestepping a backing-up box truck across from Goodyear Tire. “I’m here to establish relationships.”

This month, Garcia has teamed up with Ina and Esu Anahata, co-founders of the BARKA Foundation, a Housatonic nonprofit dedicated to raising funds to build wells throughout Burkina Faso in West Africa, a landlocked country of 14 million people, with no access to clean water.

“If 10,000 people gave one dollar, an entire village has water,” said Ina Anahata. “There are almost a billion people without access to clean water. You can hear the voices of future generations crying out.”


The couple said they asked Garcia to help and he jumped at the opportunity.

“Join us in prayer, or join us on foot,” said the former Marine and police officer, now an ordained minister. “Help us bring bubbling springs from the depths of the earth to give a thirsty land water for life.”

Garcia, 64, was born and raised in the Spanish Harlem section of New York. His mission began on Dec. 7, 1996, in San Francisco. Devastated by divorce, at the lowest point in his life, he said he prayed and asked God for help. The next thing he knew he was walking—walking, he says, to live. “I gave up my house, my car, my dog, everything, and started walking. I had $48 in my pocket.”

Garcia’s first walk was for the Marines’ Toys for Tots program, a three-leg voyage that took him 3,500 miles. “On the second day, the Marines were following me in Humvees,” he said. He’s been walking ever since, at a pace of four to five miles per hour, generally logging about 60 miles a day. He goes through a pair of sneakers a month at a time. His calves ache, his toenails peel off from the constant contact with rubber. “I’ve been hit by sandstorms, mudslides and wild dogs,” he said.

He said a medal given to him by Yasser Arafat’s people in Palestine saved his life when he was held captive in Rafah. He walked in Iraq with 20,000 people, not immediately sure if the mob was following him or coming to kill him.

“I don’t understand the madness,” said Garcia. “It’s just gone wild everywhere. Sometimes it all seems impossible.”

But then Danny Garcia starts walking, having his daily conversations with God, buoyed by the people he meets.

For more information on the Peace, Water and Wisdom Walk, visit www.barkafoundation.org.

“Whatever we raise, I’m at peace,” said Garcia.

Walking for water: Garcia on next mission

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landlocked country of 14 million people, with no access to clean water.

“If 10,000 people gave one dollar, an entire village has water,” said Ina Anahata. “There are almost a billion people without access to clean water. You can hear the voices of future generations crying out.”


The couple said they asked Garcia to help and he jumped at the opportunity.

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Danny Garcia and Ina Anahata are accompanied by their support vehicle as they walk through Hooksett on their way to Concord yesterday afternoon. The pair are walking from New York City to Bangor, Maine, to raise money and awareness of the need for clean water in Burkina Faso, the poorest nation in Africa, and much of the rest of the continent. The funds raised will be used to dig wells for villages that are often a daylong walk to clean drinking water. The BARKA Foundation is the organization that is sponsoring the well-digging project. For more information, go to www.barkafoundation.org.
NYC walkers arriving with clean water message

By CHASE SCHEINBAUM
Recorder Staff

GREENFIELD — A group of three people walking from New York City to Bangor, Maine, to raise awareness about access to clean water in Burkina Faso will be hoofing it into Greenfield this afternoon.

The group — a core trio that will be joined by others for various stretches of the 500-mile, 20-city walk — is expected to stroll into town around 4 or 5 p.m., probably on Routes 5 and 10 from Deerfield.

Along with their message, they will be bringing a documentary film about the work of The Barka Foundation, a nonprofit that works with the governments of the U.S. and Burkina Faso, and United Nations to eradicate poverty and promote peace in the West African country.

The film was directed by Barka’s founders, Ina and Esu Anahata. The foundation seeks to make clean water available to more of the landlocked nation’s 14 million inhabitants.

It is a partner in an initiative that seeks to ensure a well in every village in Burkina Faso by 2015.

“We want to let people know how important this is,” said Ina and Esu Anahata in a press release.

It is the single most important thing.

The “Peace, Water and Wisdom Walk” departed New York City on May 11 and will culminate on May 30 in Maine.

On the walk will also be Danny Garcia, an activist who arranges walks to raise money and awareness for humanitarian causes.

For more information or to make a tax-deductible donation, visit their Web site at www.barkafoundation.org/walk-for-water.