ecoViva is partnering with the Honduran youth organization OYE on a leadership exchange between youth from El Salvador and Honduras.

Founded in 2005, the Organization for Youth Empowerment (OYE) engages, educates, and empowers disadvantaged youth to break the cycle of poverty and generate positive change in their lives. Our partners at the Mangrove Association also know youth are an important part of successful community organizing for environmental justice and sustainable development. Thanks to our supporters, they provide leadership training, environmental education, scholarships, entrepreneurial support, and...
Let’s build bridges, not walls

The “America First” rhetoric of the current administration is promoting a withdrawal from constructive engagement with the rest of the world. Already, the administration has signaled it wants to slash international aid and increase military spending. Domestically, it seeks to gut environmental protection, social services, and the arts, and deport thousands of migrants, deny refuge to people fleeing war, and build a wall on our southern border.

But if we’re going to solve the real problems facing this world we need to build fewer walls and more bridges of cooperation and solidarity. We need one another if we’re going to solve the climate crisis and build an economy that values fairness and dignity.

Already we’ve seen the effects of grassroots international collaboration. Your support has helped protect thousands of acres of mangrove forest, release over a million sea turtles to the ocean, train the next generation of young leaders, provide safe drinking water to communities, and enabled hundreds of farmers to grow climate-resilient crops in Central America. We hope you are inspired by all that we are accomplishing together.

I also want you to know that we recently lost Hal Baron, a founder and longtime board member of EcoViva. We dedicate this issue of our newsletter to his memory and legacy. Hal Baron, presente!

In Memoriam

Remembering Harold Baron, longtime leader & supporter of EcoViva

On January 18, Hal Baron, a founder and board member of EcoViva, passed away at his home in Chicago. Hal was 86, but his commitment to social justice and his contributions to the causes and people he loved never diminished. He was organizing and making connections to support our partners to the very end.

Hal was an activist, scholar, philanthropist, and champion of progressive politics throughout his life. Through their foundation, Hal and his wife Paula made strategic grants to advance the causes of self-determination and environmental conservation.

Hal guided EcoViva to work in true solidarity with our partners in Central America. He used his incredible mind and abilities to serve others, and was driven by a profound love and compassion for his fellow people.

At his memorial, people from various facets of Hal’s life came together to share their stories about Hal. They spoke of his work in progressive politics in Chicago and his insights on institutionalized racism in the US. Hal was a teacher, mentor, and ally to so many people working for social justice.

Hal gave so much to EcoViva, and we hope to honor his legacy by continuing to work for justice and peace in Central America.

You can read a complete tribute to Hal Baron by board member Jeff Haas on our blog at www.ecoviva.org/blog.
opportunities in art, theater, and radio to youth in the Lower Lempa.

Both organizations share the belief that when young women and men engage with their peers and exercise their organizing skills, they realize the power of their collective voice and its ability to create social change. The exchange promises to build on the young participants’ strengths through interactive, peer-to-peer learning opportunities over the course of two retreats in El Progreso, Honduras, and the Bay of Jiquilisco, El Salvador.

OYE’s proven model of youth development that places young people in decision-making roles, its successful scholarship program that eases barriers to education, and its use of the arts to cultivate leadership skills and boost self-esteem can serve as a positive example to Salvadoran youth. In return, the Mangrove Association’s experience in social organizing to fight climate change, its community-based approaches to natural resource management, and its exceptional radio station powered by youth voices will enhance OYE’s own outreach efforts.

This unique program will enrich two extraordinary grassroots youth organizations cultivating the next generation of Central American leaders.

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Thanks to the Waitt Foundation’s Rapid Ocean Conservation small grant, we launched a community-based effort to protect 4,000 acres of at-risk mangrove forest in the Bay of Jiquilisco. The initiative helps fishers protect their livelihoods by limiting destructive practices and using resources sustainably, while raising awareness about coastal conservation and climate change.

In March EcoViva teamed up with three researchers from the Scripps Institution of Oceanography. They traveled to El Salvador to study the effectiveness of our sustainable fishing and sea turtle conservation initiatives, conducting over 50 interviews with small-scale fishers and community conservationists.

We saw great results in sea turtle conservation again this season. Between October and February, the two community-run hatcheries we work with in Isla Montecristo and Ceiba Doblada took in and incubated 150,456 eggs and released 136,726 hatchlings to the ocean. That’s a hatching success rate of over 90%! Thank you to the Wildlife Forever Fund and Izote for supporting this important work.

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Connecting young leaders (continued from page 1)

Want to see for yourself the impact your solidarity has? Travel to El Salvador with other supporters to meet our partners and see their programs. Our next trip is October 22-31, 2017. Details at www.ecoviva.org/travel.
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► A tribute to founder and longtime supporter Hal Baron
► Progress in mangrove restoration, sustainable fishing, & sea turtle conservation

YOUR IMPACT

BECOME A VIVA FUND AMBASSADOR
Want to help us raise funds for art and leadership programs for young people in El Salvador? Join our online Viva Fund campaign this summer.

Learn more about it at www.ecoviva.org/VivaFund2017

WHAT WILL YOUR LEGACY BE?
You can help restore crucial ecosystems and build thriving rural economies for years to come by including EcoViva in your will or other legacy giving plan.

Contact Karolo Aparicio at karolo@ecoviva.org to learn how you can make a lasting impact.