

THE SUFFICIENCY FOUNDATION

Sufficiency is our stand that there is enough for all
and our promise of a world alive in this fundamental freedom.

sufficiencyfoundation.org

info@sufficiencyfoundation.org

February 2010

Dear Friends and Partners in Sufficiency,

Recently many questions have arisen about the nature and purpose of various groups standing for Sufficiency in the world. It is my intention here to give background and current information on one of these groups, **The Sufficiency Foundation**. This letter will also appear on The Sufficiency Foundation website, www.sufficiencyfoundation.org, as well as becoming a section in the upcoming book on Sufficiency currently underway by members of sufficiency call groups and others.

Please find below what I hope will present a clear and complete picture of the purpose and activities of The Sufficiency Foundation.

What is The Sufficiency Foundation?

The Sufficiency Foundation is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) [out] organization, created in 2004 by Lester J. Traband (1937- 2008), a longtime activist for ending world hunger. The Foundation's vision is "A world that works for everyone with no one and nothing left out."

Today The Sufficiency Foundation is run by a nine-member volunteer Board of Directors and Advisory Committee from the United States and abroad. Current board members and their offices are: Wynn Waggoner, Marcia Swain (Secretary), Miriam Hawley, Jamie Kistler (Vice President), Mike Scarpone, Martha Russell, Steve Goldflam (Treasurer), Rosemary Tator, and Carol Dearborn (President). Advisory Committee members are Lee Traband, Lynne Twist, Jeroen Hermkens, Larry Hanawalt, and Gary Weinstein. Other volunteers also serve the Foundation as members of various committees.

The Sufficiency Foundation exists for the purpose of bringing the context of Sufficiency to as many people as possible. It does this in part by assisting individuals and groups practicing Sufficiency to arrive at pledge amounts that empower them. The Foundation then gives those monies to organizations at work for Sufficiency in the world. The Foundation also supports various educational activities, described below.

History of The Sufficiency Foundation

Les Traband's fundraising work for The Hunger Project – a venture that also led to his close friend and colleague Lynne Twist's writing *The Soul of Money* – awakened in him a lifelong passion for helping others see and stand in their own Sufficiency, particularly in the area of money. He publicly declared his promise to the world: everyone, everywhere will live in Sufficiency.

Les' dream of world Sufficiency initially took the form of The Foundation for Community Leadership, a non-profit group begun in 2002 with the purpose of raising money to fund education in Sufficiency and possibility (via Landmark Education courses) for community leaders who could then bring these principles to their work and the many people they served.

When this organization was disbanded in 2004 Les continued to search for ways to bring the message of Sufficiency to the world. He wrote and published a book, *Obtaining Your Financial Black Belt* (a second book, *Money, Spirit and Power*, may be available in a posthumous edition) and brought the principles of Sufficiency to his own life via his work, friends, and family. Les always said that anyone was welcome to look at his checkbook – he had no financial secrets. He and his wife, Lee, lived the principle of Sufficiency by giving away larger and larger sums of money, encouraging themselves as well as others to stretch perceived limits of creativity and the capability to generate whatever was needed or desired. It was Les' belief that money could be used powerfully for the good of all if it was kept in circulation, directed toward the areas where it was most needed, rather than stored away in fear of future lack. The feeling of freedom that this new relationship with money created was exhilarating not only for those close to Les but also for anyone who came in contact with him.

If you say you are going to use money in the service of others, you are trusting yourself to invent something. You and I have the ability to invent a reality and then live it moment by moment. I find it exciting to be a pioneer in this new money paradigm. It puts me out on the skinny branches of the tree where I can discover how resourceful I am, and how capable of “balancing.” I use this to produce a state change in myself, something that will blow my mind. ~ Lester Traband, *Obtaining Your Financial Black Belt*

Later in 2004 the idea for the Sufficiency Foundation coalesced, and Les recruited friends and colleagues into the vision of bringing Sufficiency to the world via the Foundation in two fundamental ways.

The Pledging Conversation

First, he challenged each person in his new Sufficiency community to exponentially spread the message of Sufficiency with money by sharing the idea with ten people, who would each then share the idea with ten individuals in their own communities. Those ten

would then communicate Sufficiency to ten more, and so on until everyone in the world had benefited.

The essence of the conversation each person is tasked to have involves a combination of question asking and close listening. The conversation is designed to help the other person see and feel her/his greatness and possibility in the area of money and make a pledge based upon the new, expanded feeling of capability and freedom discovered in the conversation. Les felt strongly that if individuals experience being able to generate the flow of money in their lives *whenever and however much they promise*, they are truly living in Sufficiency. They are free of society's messages about scarcity of money. The Sufficiency Foundation pledge form reads, "Your commitment to being the source of your own Sufficiency starts with making a pledge from Sufficiency."

Another essential part of the pledging conversation is the surprising assertion: The Sufficiency Foundation does not need your money. The pledge form itself and the practice of writing a check monthly or quarterly also serves people as a reminder of their commitment to their own greatness and possibility, as well as their commitment to be the source of Sufficiency for their communities and their world.

The Great Commons

The second part of Les' plan is that The Sufficiency Foundation be an agent of flow in the world by receiving people's pledges and immediately passing the funds on to organizations that work to bring Sufficiency to people everywhere. He created a stringent set of criteria by which to measure potential recipients of money pledged to the Foundation, making sure that they operated from Sufficiency in all respects. He particularly specified that such organizations *not need* the Foundation's money. This requirement, unusual in a culture of groups, drives and causes that present themselves as unable to continue their work without "the help of supporters like you," is also fundamental to the work of The Hunger Project. Like The Hunger Project, The Sufficiency Foundation seeks not donors but committed partners in the ongoing living and practicing of Sufficiency.

It was clear to Les that money given automatically and without a sense of participation and commitment only perpetuated the current paradigm of "us" and "them." He believed that in order to break the grip of scarcity one must act from Sufficiency in all areas of life, including by giving one's money and time in of a sense of joint responsibility and oneness, not out of feelings of scarcity or separation.

Underlying the Foundation's challenge to defy the prevalent attitudes people face in societies defined by scarcity is the belief that Sufficiency – not scarcity or lack - is the natural order. Les' particular commitment was that all children everywhere feel this freedom.

Joy comes from not being attached. It's true freedom. If you knew you were going to die and could accept it, you would be a great person to be

around... Joy is natural to human beings. When we take off our heavy armor we can swing out. We can get a sense of this by being with little kids, by listening to their laughter, by seeing the light shining in their eyes. How bright and fresh and unlimited they are! Let the little kid inside you back into your life. ~ Lester Traband

Who is Funded by The Sufficiency Foundation?

Since 2004 the Foundation has given tens of thousands of dollars to organizations like The Pachamama Alliance, New York Youth At Risk, The Hunger Project, The Institute for Noetic Sciences, Project Por Amor, and The World Trust Foundation. These organizations and projects meet the Foundation's guidelines specifying that they be at work on the root causes of scarcity while standing in the new paradigm of sufficiency; that they be inclusive, transparent and effective in achieving stunning results; and that they be working for what Les called *the whole*, or life everywhere.

Does The Sufficiency Foundation Spend Money in Other Ways?

Today the Foundation spends about \$500 a year on minor administrative costs. In 2008 it also spent \$2,195 for the first annual in-person Sufficiency Foundation board meetings. There are currently no other costs associated with running the Foundation as all board members' work and time is given freely on a volunteer basis, from Sufficiency.

What are Other Activities of The Sufficiency Foundation?

Since Les' death the Foundation continues to realize Les' vision by receiving pledges from individuals and groups for whom this practice is an expression and reminder of their Sufficiency.

The Foundation does not actively solicit money or charge for services but rather helps people find the source of their own Sufficiency through the pledging conversation and volunteer-led Sufficiency call groups. The Foundation passes funds directly to organizations such as those listed above at work for the Sufficiency of everyone, everywhere.

In the last year the Foundation expanded its activities to offer guidelines and support to peer groups wishing to conduct their own Sufficiency calls. The Foundation also supports education initiatives, both online and via the sponsorship of seminars and workshops like the annual Global Sufficiency Summit to be held on the MIT campus in Cambridge, MA April 10 and 11, 2010. In addition to its funding of organizations, the Sufficiency Foundation gives special yearly awards to celebrate individuals or groups working in unique ways to forward the being of Sufficiency in the world. The community at large may make recommendations for such awards to Foundation board members. It is the Foundation's honor and joy to spread the word and being of Sufficiency in as many ways as possible, upholding principles of Sufficiency through rigorous discussion and a spirit of fun.

Our Promise

Members of the board of The Sufficiency Foundation are dedicated to bringing Sufficiency to the world in whatever ways are effective. Since our organization began there has already been a shift in global consciousness. It is our intention to continue to be part of the sea change in which societies no longer measure the worth of their members by stature, money, or possessions, and there is enough of everything for everyone to sustain healthy and productive life.

The Sufficiency Foundation welcomes the ideas and partnership of individuals and groups anywhere who are at work to create a sufficient world. Please feel free to contact the Foundation at: info@sufficiencyfoundation.org.

We celebrate your partnership in a world that works for everyone.

Yours in Sufficiency,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carol Dearborn'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'C' and a long, sweeping tail.

Carol Dearborn
President, The Sufficiency Foundation