



MATT BRADLEY / Special

The Heifer Project International provided a camel to Paul Okida, a member of a semi-nomadic tribe in Tanzania.



RENEE HANNANS / Staff



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Heifer Project International's Southeast regional director, Hilary Smith, (above) displays material about the group in her Decatur office. Server Christy Hutcherson (left) works for Atlantic Star, one of 14 Decatur restaurants donating a share of their proceeds to the Heifer Project.

Restaurants collaborate to aid charity

By Karen Hill
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Today, you need not feel guilty about turning your back on the Thanksgiving remnants lurking in your refrigerator. If you go to one of 14 Decatur restaurants today, they'll donate 2 percent of your tab to a hunger relief charity.

The restaurants have donated a percentage of Thursday receipts throughout November. The money is part of a pool gathered by the city of Decatur for the Heifer Project International. Decatur was the first municipality in the world to fund a Heifer "ark," or \$5,000 worth of farm animals. The project sends the arks to an impoverished family in one of 45 countries.

Heifer Project officials said restaurants in no other town have banded together in such a fashion.

"It's quite something," said Hilary Smith, the project's Southeast director. She has asked volunteers in the seven Southeastern states under her

HELPING OUT

Donations can be sent to Decatur Ark Campaign, P.O. Box 220, Decatur, GA 30031 or to Heifer Project, 315 West Ponce de Leon Ave., Suite 815, Decatur, GA 30030. To learn more about Heifer Project, visit www.heifer.org.

direction to take the idea to other cities.

Previously, most donated arks came from churches, Smith said.

The ark is a reference to the boatful of animals saved by the biblical figure Noah to repopulate the world after an angry God flooded the earth. Each Heifer Project ark includes chicks, sheep, rabbits, beehives, guinea pigs, llamas, camels, donkeys, goats, oxen, cows, ducks, water buffaloes and geese.

Heifer Project is a Little Rock-based charity started by World War II veterans haunted by the devastation they had witnessed in France.

Impoverished people are trained in animal husbandry and then given farm animals. They are required to pass along their animals' offspring to others in similar circumstances.

Decatur donated its first ark last year. This year, a citizens group wants to raise \$15,000 by year's end for three more arks.

Robert Soens, a Decatur builder, helped organize the ark campaign after he received a catalogue from Heifer Project in the mail last year. He said he had never heard of the organization but liked what he read.

That reaction is typical, Smith said. "It's the idea of self-reliance they like," she said. "As more people find out about it, more people respond."

Participating Decatur restaurants are: Atlantic Star, Brickstore Pub, Cafe Alsace, Cafe Lily, Corky Dean, Eddie's Attic, Johnny's New York-Style Pizza, Maui Taco, Mosaic, Our Way Cafe, Pastries A-Go Go, Raging Burrito, Santa Fe Cafe and Sweet Melissa's.



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Decatur restaurants help international hunger relief

Dine out today in one of 14 Decatur restaurants (such as Atlantic Star, left) and you'll be helping an international charity project. Participating eateries will donate 2 percent of the tab to the Heifer Project International, a hunger relief effort that the city of Decatur has thrown its support behind. **J9**