



# One good turn deserves another

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### Woodstock couple devoted to Heifer Project International

By Eileen Millard

**R**ich Eyre, Woodstock, heard about Heifer Project International 30 years ago, working as a Peace Corps volunteer in Bolivia. The project began when HPI started sending heifers to war-torn Europe in 1944. Today, heifers and other livestock are sent to 40 countries, assisting more than 200,000 families with income and food-producing livestock.

"In the old days, cattle went on planes and ships," said Susan Eyre, who along with husband Rich owns Rich's Foxwillow Pines Nursery in Woodstock. The Eyres have served as trustees for the Heifer International Foundation and this year Susan Eyre will become the chair of the foundation. "In a service organization, your reward for work is more work," she joked.

In addition to heifers, other donated livestock includes rabbits, sheep, water buffalo, and llamas, "We send whatever is appropriate," Eyre said. "The stock is pretty much propagated overseas now, because a lot of the time our animals are not resistant to the diseases over there."

"The one great thing about HPI is when you get an animal, like a heifer, you're obligated to give one or more of the animal's offspring to another family in need," Eyre said. "It helps solve hunger problems and also empowers the community by helping your neighbor. It's like with us, when we divide a hosta plant. You can put half back in the ground and sell the rest. You still have as many next year as you do this year, because they reproduce."

The Eyres donate all proceeds from the perennial sale portion of their nursery to HPI. "Last year we were able to raise \$36,000 for HPI," he said.

In 1998, the Eyres donated a group of trees to Lincoln Park. In return for the favor, Lincoln Park Conservatory is letting HPI host a fundraiser. The event, called, "Graze and Grow," will take place in the conservatory at 6 p.m., Sunday, Sept. 12. Tickets are \$75 per person and include drinks and food from some of Chicago's finest restaurants. Carolyn Collins, Crystal Lake, owner of Collins Caviar of Chicago, is donating caviar as well as coordinating all the donated food for the event.

The plant sale from Rich's Foxwillow Pines Nursery will benefit the foundation, as will proceeds from a silent auction. Music will be provided by classical guitarist Julia Peterson and the Steve Sandner jazz trio.

"This year they are passing on the millionth animal, in China, on Oct. 8," Eyre said. "We were invited, but couldn't make it then. But Rich and I are going to China in 2000. We've been to India and Honduras so far, seeing how the donated animals benefit the people there. That million count doesn't even include the offspring. Everybody who gets one, gives one."

For more information about the benefit, call Rosemary Larson at 773-279-9022. Tickets are \$75 and can be purchased at the door on the night of the event, but Eyre advises calling first to reserve a spot.