

## **MORE FROM THE PLANNING MEETING FOR THE MULTICULTURAL GARDEN PLOT**

### ***And a funny thing happened on the way to the garden: We figured out what our first plant donation for the multicultural garden would be!***

Sometimes we are so close to our faces that we cannot see our noses. As we were brainstorming about the various community cultural centers and places for obtaining these plants, I asked Kausha if she grew any plants unusual to Texans in her garden. The answer was yes.

Kausha grows gotu kola (*Centella Asiatica*). It is also known as the Asiatic pennywort or Indian pennywort in English, among various other names in other languages. is a small, annual herb. It is used as a leafy green in Sri Lankan cuisine. A traditional accompaniment to rice and curry, it goes especially well with vegetarian dishes, such as dhali and pumpkin curry. Gotu Kola is considered quite nutritious. Thus we selected the first plant to be included in the Garland Multicultural Commission's Garden. Kausha has also promised a few Gotu Kola recipes.

From each contributor, in addition to the plant, we hope to obtain a few recipes that we can share on the Loving Garland Green website along with some of their memories of gardens and gardeners. I know that Kausha's mother was an avid gardener so I'm hoping we can get a story from her about her mother's garden. We are considering the possibility of perhaps creating a series of these stories--perhaps for Channel 13.



*Kaushalya Siriwardana, member of The Garland Multicultural Commission and founder of Helping Hands, Inc.*

In addition to being the Garland Multicultural Commission's project leader for the multicultural garden plot, Kausha is also the president and CEO of Helping Hands, Inc. (HHI), founded in 2003.

Helping Hands Inc. is a non-profit 501(c)(3), non-political and non-religious organization dedicated to helping under-privileged children around the world. They are committed to providing food, shelter, clothing, health care, and education to enhance and improve the lives of these less fortunate children.

A native of Sri Lanka, Kausha has worked tirelessly to bring attention to the needs of impoverished children throughout the world. Growing up in Sri Lanka, Kausha saw firsthand the disastrous conditions of poverty and the manner in which it can harm the lives of children. Although she has been a citizen of

the United States for well over 30 years, Kausha has never forgotten what she saw during her early years. She has made it her life's mission to combat these conditions and shepherd children across the globe toward a brighter future.

Phase One construction of the HHI Global Center headquarters will soon begin in Hunt County near Greenville, Texas. This center will be the hub for outreach to HHI Global Chapters around the world. The Center will be dedicated to cultural education, fine arts, alternative health, and recreational events in a peaceful, natural environment which will encompass every nation's culture, history and tradition. All classes will be provided to children for free. The intent behind this endeavor is to create awareness and acceptance of other cultures through education and thus lead to more peaceful global resolutions in the future.

A portion of the facility will consist of 200 separate buildings constructed to represent their individual nation filled with artifacts, historical and current information about their country overseen by a national global representative living in the USA who will also be a liaison to their nations' Ambassador at the United Nations which makes this program the only one of its kind. An outdoor theater with 2,000 seating capacity, a world organic center, a center for alternative health education and treatments, a nature pavilion, and artisan villages for artists from every country living here can display and sell their authentic artwork to visitors. A state-of-the art film studio with 125 acres set aside for movie making, a cricket field, two(2) hotels, international culinary establishments and much more all beautifully surrounded by a 150 acre lake with full amenities. It will be a place of education, fun, relaxation, celebration and joy-filled memories created.

Over the past 10 years Kausha has traveled the globe telling people about her vision.