

Dear Carol, Paul and all friends and family of Lucas Drummond,

Please receive this warm greeting from Costa Rica...We have been working very hard to find the best way to honor and cherish Lucas and his life in a way that will be long lasting and meaningful. I want to thank you for having the faith in us to fulfill this mission and hope that we will be able to work together.

I would like you to know a little about me so that you can understand why this event that happened to Lucas is somehow tied to a higher purpose...

I arrived in Costa Rica in 1977 with the US Peace Corps. This is a program devised by John Kennedy to provide service to underdeveloped nations in all areas of their needs. From the first moment I heard about this program I was determined to become part of it – I was 13 at the time – and indeed, circumstances allowed me to do this. I came to Costa Rica, thinking I was heading for an island on the west coast of Africa...For the first year I worked with the Ministry of Education setting up special education programs all over the country and then, in the second year, transferred to a remote indigenous reserve in the mountains of Talamanca.

This was when my life took a radical turn and my world view changed dramatically. Living in a small corner of the classroom, bathing in the river, washing clothes with the indigenous women in the river, walking for miles every day through the jungle and knowing the people of the community changed everything for me. I began to understand that there is a strong spiritual force that moves things in ways that we can not really understand because it is something that always has our best interest as a human race in mind that will always do what is needed at any given time. I think it is a benevolent force, even though at times, we don't see how that is possible.

After Peace Corps, I went back to the US for a year and realized that my mission in life was not linked directly to my own country any more and came back to Costa Rica. Here, I continued my work with indigenous, began a program for Salvadoran refugees victims of a brutal war, "adopted" a group of forty Street children and then began to work in the impoverished community of La Carpio.

In 1997 I legally registered the Costa Rican Humanitarian Foundation with the Costa Rican government and began to receive volunteers from all over the world to help me fulfill my mission.

The mission statement says: We support at risk populations so they can improve the quality of their lives while, at the same time, educating providers of goods, services and financing so that they will make more informed decisions in the future about where to use their resources.

Everything I've done over the years has followed two main principles:

Stay true to the mission

If it is good for a child, it is good for the world.

Thus, this organization has directly and indirectly been led by children.

I met Lucas when I went to visit the indigenous community where we have worked for more than twenty years while he was on his service learning Project with UWC. I do recall getting into a lively discussion with him about the importance of not imposing anything on the indigenous...I was glad to hear his deep thoughts about this very important concept. And I was determined to look him up when we got back to San Jose to continue our talks. Also, during this two day visit I had with the students and teachers, I walked back from the mountain with Brian, the teacher of the students. We spent more than two hours talking about indigenous spirituality and our shared interest in all things indigenous.

Alas, I was not to have this discussion with Lucas and was left wishing something more had come of our knowing one another. I'm sure that all of you share this feeling. Alas...

However, I am completely convinced that there really is a higher meaning to what happened to Lucas. I am absolutely sure that it is not a coincidence that Lucas shared his last service time with us and that it is not a coincidence that I was contacted to receive financial support to make something of Lucas' passing and here we are.

I have done a lot of thinking, meditating and receiving about what to do ...

Here is what I have come up with so far...

There is a couple, Jeny and Leonel, who have worked with us for twenty years. They are Cabecar indigenous and have been dear friends and reliable partners in all our work in the Cabecar reserve. They have offered their beautiful land for us to build on.

What will we build? I don't know, but it will be something like the "Lucas Drummond Spiritual Community Center"...The name will have to be worked on by all of us, but the concept is that it will be a place for volunteers to stay and learn about the indigenous cosmovisión – like I did all those many years ago – and to provide service to the indigenous communities. They need schools to be built, Access to knowledge from the outside, responsible computer skills building, food, and a chance to access what we can give to them.

We have been doing all of the above for many years, always in keeping with what the people ask us for, and always in balance. It is a model for development that would take many pages to explain in depth.

Today, I am going with Jenny, Leo and a small group of our dedicated volunteers to visit another indigenous Project in the community of Amubri, where I was in Peace Corps 30 some years ago. The hope is that we will be inspired by what is happening there and will be able to replicate some parts of that model in the Cabecar community.

We will take and send pictures to you so that you can be informed of everything and we would love to have your feedback, I assume on your Facebook page or ours...

Volunteer Eli Rosenberg has kindly offered to be our liaison between your group and what we are doing here.

Finally, we want you all to know that we will be very careful to respect Lucas. We appreciate his youth and his inquiring mind and we want to choose everything with him in mind. The name we choose will be very important and we have asked Jenny and Leonel to find a Word in Cabecar that will be "le mot juste"...just what we need.

Jenny has also prepared a gift to be sent to you, that you can keep in a special place in your house.

So, once we return from our trip today, I will be able to write more and let you know how things went.

For the moment, all the kind financial donations are still in the paypal account – I will not transfer this money into our general funds account until we have a better idea of how it will be used.

Please accept my condolences for the loss of Lucas but also my assurance that he will be remembered for now and ever with the Project we are devising.

Warm regards to all of you,

Gail Nystrom