

# TREES THAT FEED



*Mary and Mike discover a young breadfruit tree growing in the wild. Costa Rica.*

Storms are getting worse, while both floods and droughts are getting more frequent. Food is becoming more expensive and scarcer. Island countries that import most of their food are becoming more vulnerable. What's the solution? Growing our own food. Diverse foods. And why not!? Jamaica and other islands have good soil, rainfall, and year-round sunshine.

Mary has been concerned

about the environment for many years. She wanted to do something about it, and not just worry and fret. She decided to plant trees for their many benefits. Her husband, Mike, suggested fruit trees that not only capture carbon and purify the air, but also feed people. Fruit trees earn their keep! In 2008, Mike and Mary

McLaughlin founded Trees That Feed Foundation (TTFF).

As of this writing, the foundation has supplied over 300,000 fruit trees, about half of which are breadfruit, one of the most ideal crops, to thousands of farmers.

Mary went to high school at St. Andrew's, and Mike went to St. George's College. They met at a CYSO meeting at Peter and Paul Church Hall in 1968 and dated while at UWI. The pair married

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years ago at the University Chapel, behind which stands a beautiful breadfruit tree.

Mary and Mike now live in the US near their two married daughters and six grandchildren. From their headquarters near Chicago, they've supplied fruit tree seedlings, food processing equipment, training materials, children's schoolbooks, and last but not least, over a million meals to schoolchildren in Jamaica and Haiti.

In rural Haiti, TTFF contracts with artisan factories that use excess breadfruit to create breadfruit flour. That flour is used to make a nutritionally dense, bun-like product called a konparet. Just one makes for a substantial and well-liked breakfast for at-risk children. TTFF donates the same type of product, breadfruit bullas, to a few Jamaican schools.

*Plant a Tree and Good Things Happen* is an educational activity book created by Trees That Feed Foundation and distributed in several countries and languages. Children and their families learn about the value of fruit trees. This prompts more planting and more benefits for the community.

Mary and Mike have forged countless partnerships with other entities that want to fight hunger, malnutrition, poverty, and climate change. They have a strong relationship with The Forestry Department of Jamaica. TTFF donates thousands of fruit trees to Forestry, and they distribute the seedlings to

smallholder farmers across the island. Food for the Poor is one of many other groups that receive a large number of trees from TTFF.

Trees That Feed Foundation is quite the success story, now working in over 20 countries in the Caribbean area, Central America, and Africa. Mary and Mike have received several awards including the Governor General's "I Believe" award in 2015. They were also honored by The Forestry Department in 2022 with the Forest Hero award.

Mary and Mike's greatest reward is seeing Trees That Feed Foundation's mission being fulfilled and its beneficiaries becoming self-sufficient. They will continue to plant fruit trees to feed people, create jobs, and benefit the environment in Jamaica and beyond.

For more information, visit <https://www.treesthatfeed.org/> or write [info@treesthatfeed.org](mailto:info@treesthatfeed.org). You can support this important mission by contributing at <https://www.treesthatfeed.org/donate/>.



*Breadfruit konparets donated to schoolchildren in Haiti*

## LENTEN QUESTIONS.

Lent is a penitential time for prayer, fasting and alms-giving. When considering prayer, we can ask: "In what way do I need to grow closer to the Lord?" When considering fasting, we can ask: "What do I need to get rid of in order to be more free to love and serve the Lord?" And when considering almsgiving, we can ask: "Where do I believe that I am called to give or serve?"