

## *Gisele Mansfield Exceeds Original Fundraising Goal In Just 100 Days*

by Lindsay Valente (West Carleton EMC, October 27, 2006)

A Dunrobin woman has reached her sky high goal with generous help from the community.

This past July Gisele Mansfield decided to climb Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, Africa to celebrate her 55th birthday and raise funds to fight HIV/AIDS in memory of her brother who succumbed to the disease in 1995.

She set the goal of raising \$19,335.60, the height of the mountain, for the Stephen Lewis Foundation's Grandmothers to Grandmothers campaign which is in place to help African women raise their grandchildren who have been orphaned by AIDS.

Mansfield had hoped to have the funds in place by the time she travelled to Africa for the climb next year but amazingly has already exceeded the amount.

"I really didn't expect this so soon, I thought my original goal would be quite a challenge," she says. "It's amazing to see how such a small effort can achieve so much."

Since July Mansfield has seen overwhelming support from many people and says every little bit has helped to make a difference.

"I get goose bumps when I think about it," she says. "You can't even imagine what this money can do for the grandmothers in Africa."

In addition to raising close to \$20,000, Liza Badham of Fitzroy Harbour will be accompanying Mansfield in her quest to reach the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro. Badham has a rich history of volunteering with Help The Aged Canada, a non-denominational, non-profit international development organization formed in 1975 with the goal of assisting elderly people living in poverty.

"Now we are going to try and get Liza to the top too," says Mansfield. "It's going to be fabulous."

Mansfield has planned two unique fundraisers to help raise additional funds for the Grandmothers to Grandmothers' campaign.

She recently launched the Pig-e-Bank Halloween Campaign. This will see young trick-or-treaters carry around boxes, provided by the GiveMeaning Foundation, on Halloween night. Every penny raised will go straight to the Stephen Lewis Foundation in support of the Grandmothers to

Grandmothers Campaign. Mansfield also encourages participants to display the boxes in their office, lunchrooms and local convenience stores to increase awareness and help raise much-needed funds.

The Christmas Wreath Campaign has also been launched. The wreaths are hand made in a small village in Nova Scotia and orders must be made through Mansfield by Nov. 10. The wreaths are wrapped in a humidity controlled gift box to preserve the fragrance and keep them fresh.

Mansfield stresses the importance of supporting African grandmothers who she describes as courageous and beautiful.

"These women have such an amazing strength of character," she says. "People always tell me they can't imagine the suffering people in Africa have to endure but they do suffer day in and day out."

Mansfield says many people have been touched by the campaign and want to get involved. Recently she received an uplifting email from Ottawa resident Peter Ellis and his wife Donna who made a donation to the campaign.

"I'd like to say that Donna and I are so happy to contribute to such a worthy cause – you should be very proud of yourself for what you're doing – you're making a difference not only in the lives that you are helping in Africa, but also to your own life and those you touch around you here in Canada – and a truly privileged life we have," wrote Ellis.

Mansfield feels humbled by the support she has received and most importantly is thrilled that people are standing up to support African Grandmothers.

"A lot of people were ignorant of what's happening there," she says. "But through the campaign people are beginning to know and understand and want to help do something about it."

To make a donation to Gisele Mansfield's fundraiser for 'Grandmothers to Grandmothers' visit <http://www.gigiclimbskili.com> or send them to her home at 4197 Armitage Avenue, Dunrobin Ontario, K0A 1T0 or directly to the Stephen Lewis Foundation at 260 Spadina Avenue, Suite 501. Toronto, Ontario M5T 2E4. Please specify that donations are for "Gigi Climbs Kill" fundraiser to ensure that the donation goes directly to the 'Grandmothers to Grandmothers' campaign.