
Granny Bulletin

December 6, 2006

Good afternoon!

We are happy to send you the latest Granny Bulletin! There are now more than 120 granny groups across Canada, and believe it or not, more are still forming every day! Please share this bulletin far and wide – with your members, your family, your friends and anyone else you think might be moved into action!

As you know, we recently shared news of your efforts to raise awareness and funds to help ease the pain of HIV/AIDS in Africa, with the African grandmothers and projects that your hard work helps support. We did this by sending snippets from some of your emails, in your own words, that described your successes and highlighted the fact that the grandmothers of Africa are in your hearts. Although we cannot send snippets from *every* email we get describing your efforts, we will try our very best to make sure the bulletins we send are representative of the commitment and ingenuity so evident in your thoughtfulness and actions. We will endeavor to do that for the African grandmothers every month, so if you have a success that you want them to know about, send it to us at: campaign@stephenlewisfoundation.org!

As always, we are moved and buoyed by your dedication to the grandmothers of Africa, the orphans in their care and communities, in their struggle to cope with the devastation of HIV/AIDS. As you will see from this bulletin, your hard-work and funds means so much to so many. In the same way that grandmothers in Canada were inspired by the courage and heroism of grandmothers in Africa, so too were grandmothers in Africa inspired by the commitment and boldness of grandmothers in Canada!

The following are the responses we received through the projects in Africa, followed by the original bulletin we sent! As Ilana wrote to me when she first received the responses, "I had tears in my eyes this morning from the lovely responses... I'm so delighted that this meant so much." We hope you feel the same way!

Warmly,
Julie

PS. Don't forget to tune into CBC tonight at 8pm EST to watch Stephen on The Nature of Things: The Man Who Couldn't Sleep!

Some of the Responses from Africa

What a really fantastic idea! really excellent! hug mike

Dear Ilana,

Reading through this e-mail brought tears to my eyes. It is so humbling to know that there are so many people out there who really do care enough to actually do something. Thank you all at Stephen Lewis for sensitizing people to the plight of the people in Africa.

Regards,
Julie

Wow!!!! Congratulations for the good work!!! It is very motivating to hear the good results of the conference and the commitment to SLF. The Canadian grandmothers are really working hard as we can read. We shall share this information with our grandmothers who have been having their own support groups and we believe this statements will really renew their commitment to the work of the project, especially those who came to Toronto. Joyce and Roselynder have been doing alot of meetings with the grandmothers to encourage them on the importance of support groups as they share their experience in Toronto.

We have so far seen three that are really committed with weekly meetings, and have initiated merry go rounds amongst other activities that PDI is supporting them. They have also benefitted from the Loans and they are really committed.

Knowing that someone is out there working and thinking of supporting them will really inspire them and renew their energies..

Keep up the good work.

Regards, SARAH KISAKA

Wow, this is absolutely awesome ... to say the least!

I cannot believe how motivated and determined these women are to make a difference. And it's not just the grandmothers – its younger women from universities and schools as well.

I am actually overwhelmed to read some of these stories – and realize that this has become an enormous project. The Foundation, through its efforts, has managed to mobilize people in various areas across Canada. Wouldn't it be marvelous if this project could be duplicated in every country across the world because it is not only a way of raising funds, but more importantly – about raising awareness and since HIV affects us globally, this seems to be such an effective way of communicating the message in aid of women and children who are impacted by HIV/AIDS.

Thank you for the work you are doing in order to raise the necessary funds to support organizations such as Cotlands. We realize the amount of work that needs to go into this type of campaign and we are extremely grateful for your kindness and support.

I am forwarding your email to some of our project leaders who work within the various communities of the projects supported through the Foundation. And who knows... we must never underestimate the opportunities that can be born out of ideas such as these – because through the beginning of small works - great things happen!

Allison

Greetings from TII KI KOMI WOMEN'S Group,

The Grandmothers were very happy to hear of the support you together with the Canadian grandmother are putting in to help them live a meaningful life.

They have said I passed their sincere thanks for the school fees support that has enabled their grandchildren go through successfully this year.

Also they said I passed their thanks for the ' bicycle ambulance' they have recently received which has greatly eased transport problems.

They are looking forward for a peaceful Northern Uganda so that you can visit them in their real home and not in the camp in the year to come. You are now their born again mother!!! Long live SLF, Long live Tii ki komi.

Dear Ilana

Thank you very much for your marvellous and challenging job. The news of fundraising are quite encouraging especially for grandmothers in Africa. Thank you million times. This is unique. Have a good day.

Marko, Chiedza Child Care Centre

Hi Ilana,

Good news from Ottawa and Congratulations!

We believe that this movement will grow and give a hope for Grandmothers and their grandchildren in Africa!

God bless SLF and give enough power for Canadian Grannies.

Best regards,

Angelo Amaro

Madame Ilana,

Thank you so much for the update on what is going on in Canada after the Gathering.

While I hope this mail finds you in good health and strength, it sounds so amazing to hear the various initiatives that the grandmothers are taking to make the situation different in Africa. Its amazingly wonderful. Mr Lewis briefly made mention of it when he visited us.

Now, let me also share with you that we had a very interesting and happy time with him when we had our Grandmother gathering to share the Toronto Statement which we translated in our local language for everyone to appreciate. We are planning to get both versions publicized through the press and directly sent to Heads of missions and responsible government departments.

You may wish to note that we had an indirect feed back from the State President who a week after the Gathering which on Malawi Television and National radio arranged to provide food parcels and other items to the grandparents in the southern part of the country. WHILE AT THAT FUNCTION, HE MADE A CALL TO ALL ORGANIZATIONS THAT ARE WORKING WITH ORPHANS TO REMEMBER SUPPORTING THE GRANDMOTHERS THAT CARE FOR THEM. EXACTLY OUR CALL DURING THE GATHERING.

The Toronto Statement has since been received by the Minister responsible for Women and Child Development and we do not know what may happen after that. I hope it will be taken further to the next sitting of Parliament.

The function was Filmed and when it is fully done we will share it with the Foundation. ONCE AGAIN THANK YOU AND THANKS TO ANURITA FOR ARRANGING IT IN SUCH A WAY THAT MR LEWIS BE PART OF THE GATHERING IN MALAWI. IT WAS WORTH IT.

Sincerely,

Alfred

The Original Email to the African Grandmothers and Projects

Dear friends,

As many of you know, the Grandmothers' Gathering in Toronto, Canada in August (which brought together almost 100 African grandmothers from 12 countries, and 200 grandmothers from Canada) was an enormously intense and moving experience for everyone involved. We can't thank the participants from projects in Africa enough for initiating such thoughtful and rich discussions. The report from the Grandmothers' Gathering will soon be ready and we will be sending it out to all of you!

When the Gathering took place in Toronto, there were 50 grandmothers' groups in Canada. Now there are 120 groups across the country, raising awareness and funds to support grandmothers in Africa in the work and burden which they carry in the context of the AIDS pandemic. We are fortunate that these groups have chosen the Stephen Lewis Foundation to channel their funds to support the courageous and resilient grandmothers in sub-Saharan Africa through the projects which support them!

We are happy to provide you with your first update on the work that Canadian grandmother's groups are doing to support African grandmothers!

In order to best share the overwhelming enthusiasm and dedication of Canadian grandmother's groups, we have chosen to include a number of email excerpts that exemplify the creative work happening all across Canada – it is just a small sample of many many activities happening across the country. We hope you enjoy them!

*Warmest regards to all of you,
Ilana*

Grandparents Day on Parliament Hill

Patti Koeslag of Grandmas and Friends in Ottawa, Ontario

On September 10, 2006, grandmother's groups from Ottawa and the surrounding area marched together on Parliament Hill – the seat of Canada's federal government – to raise awareness of the costs of HIV and AIDS for grandmothers in Africa. They plan to make the march an annual event!

Here are their plans for next year's Grandparent's Day March:

October 21st email:

Sep. 9, 2007 (Grandparents Day) will be our second annual march on Parliament Hill on behalf of the Grandmothers of Africa. All the Ottawa groups and some outlying groups will be participating in the organization of this. We will be putting out press releases and have some very capable lobbyists and public relations people on our team. We have a multi-group planning meeting scheduled for early in the new year.

We are thrilled to tell you we made \$900 on our yard sale and then Mr. Garby said he was sending us a cheque for \$1,000!!! As well the Green Door Restaurant is looking at Nov. 27 for a dinner fundraiser... I think all the groups in the area are going to get together on this...all monies go to SLF anyways...

Purses Raising Funds

Ellen Monaghan of Ujama Grannies in Calgary, Alberta

October 18th email:

Our sale was a resounding success and we were all absolutely delighted with the crowd and the overwhelming comments of support. We sold out before noon hour but even those who came later often stayed for coffee and a chat. The best part of the whole sale was that people were so interested in what we are doing, in the Stephen Lewis Foundation and in the situation in Africa. We have a wonderful list of new people who would like to become purse producers or volunteer for general fundraising so the future looks so exciting.

We had 181 items for sale (if only we had been able to produce more we would have been able to sell so much more - next year!) and took in just over \$8,100 with sales and the coffee bar. We are looking at expenses of approximately \$1,600 - pay back for our producers and \$100 hall rental- so shall have profits of over \$6,000 to send to you plus some other profits from bags sold individually over the past few months.

We are having so much fun doing all this and we are growing by leaps and bounds. Was at a large high school yesterday to work out a plan with the fashion and design teacher who wants to get all her classes doing a "bag" assignment - the students seem really keen - and have enquiries from another high school to do the same. It would be wonderful to get some young people involved and thinking about Africa.

October 23 email:

My name is Lisa Jo Sun Walk and I am a grade 11 student at Sequoia Outreach School in Gleichen, Alberta, Canada. I am 18 years old and I have a 6 month old daughter named Aiden. Earlier this year I learned to make purses. I am also good at beading and other traditional art. (Did I mention that I'm a member of the Siksika Nation - Blackfoot tribe of Southern Alberta).

I am now teaching other kids at my school how to do this. I will earn credits in school also. My teacher told me about the 'Grandmother to Grandmother' program and I thought that we could make basic purses and then invite our Grandmothers in to help finish them. This way we would form our own Grandmother to Grandmother group. I think we could donate our purses to the Calgary group who sells their work a few times a year. Would it be OK for us to do this?

On our reserve Grandmothers are so important. We also lose lots of our young parents to the effects of poverty, drugs and alcohol. Even though our lives are sometimes hard we think they're not as difficult as those Grandmothers in Africa.

Thank-you

Canadian Grandmother to Climb Mount Kilimanjaro
Gisele Mansfield of "Gigi Klimbs Kili for Family" in Dunrobin, Ontario

Gisele Mansfield set a goal for herself of climbing Mount Kilimanjaro next October (2007) and raising over \$19,000 (\$1 for every foot she climbs). We are happy to say she has achieved her goal in only 100 days with the help of 3 fundraising events and a lot of imagination and support! Now she is helping another grandmother who has decided to join her on the climb to raise the same amount. Gisele lost her brother to AIDS.

October email:

Just to keep you informed of what is happening. The line dancing workshop was a fabulous success. Michel and Rhonda who sponsored the event raised \$5,770.00 and that amount is being matched by an anonymous donor to a maximum of \$5,000. So that brings my total to over \$15,000.00.

I also want to let you know that I am being interviewed by TV Rogers 23 (en français) this Wednesday. This is a live to tape interview with Ginette Gratton for her show called "Pour tout l'amour du monde". She has dedicated the entire hour for my interview (she normally has 2 or 3 guests). The actual airing date has not been scheduled yet but it will be sometime in September. I've also been told that I will get a copy of the interview, which Gillian has asked me to forward to you when I get it.

For more information about Gisele's events visit: <http://www.gigiclimbskili.com/>

Fundraising Concert

Diana Alli of the University of Toronto Grandmothers' Group in Toronto, Ontario

October 19th email:

Ilana and Shabnam, as part of my dream with encouraging our tri-campus students, staff, faculty to support and recognizes our Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign I am hoping that one day will be dedicated to Worlds AIDS Day and the Grandmothers Campaign and will be supported at all three campuses of U of T. In fact, my students are planning to make this a national campaign across all Universities in Canada. As I move along in my work with my students, I am hoping many groups will support my plea to raise awareness. I am dedicating 2006-2007 academic year to the Grandmothers Campaign in every possible way I can!

New Group Forms on the East Coast

Sarah Whitehorn of Nova Scotia Grannies in Halifax, Nova Scotia

September 29th email:

As you know, our Halifax area Grandmother's Group in support of the SLF is now forming. We have had 3 Steering Committee meetings so far and our first gathering of the Grandmother's Group is scheduled for October 22nd. There are now 65 on our email distribution list, with additional requests coming in every

day. We don't know how many will be attending our Oct. 22nd meeting, but the r.s.v.p.'s are continuing to come in. Approximately 30 are confirmed so far. We hope it will grow to 50.

Four of us who attended the Toronto conference (Alexa McDonough, Jane Earle, Violet Rosengarten and myself) will talk about our experiences at the Toronto conference. We will speak about the SLF and about Stephen Lewis himself. Information for these presentations will be obtained from the SLF website.

We will also be dividing ourselves into discussion groups with a good facilitator to help us through the process. Our goal is to discuss 3 main points: Advocacy, education / public awareness, and fund raising for the SLF. So we hope to end our event with well defined goals and direction. We all look forward to being able to send funds to the SLF!

With appreciation,
Sarah Whitehorn
Halifax Grandmother's Group contact

Inspirational Benefit Concert

Barbara Sivorot of Creston Gogo Grannies in Creston, British Columbia

October 24th email:

The first annual Benefit Concert held by the Creston GoGo Grannies was held at the Prince Charles Auditorium on September 30th. It was a huge success, raising over \$1600.00 for the Stephen Lewis Foundation. (less a little for expenses!) We had 12 entertainers, who volunteered to assist us. We had mostly singers, but also had a wonderful piano player, Monte Anderson, accompanied by his daughter, Sarah Anderson, playing a fiddle and Karl Sommerfelt, also on the fiddle. Also a group called Wild Mountain Thyme from Bonnersferry in the U.S.A. who sang their hearts out. It was a wonderful evening and I wish you could all have been there. At the beginning our President, Ingrid Voigt, gave a opening speech on who we were, our cause and it went over very well. We even dressed the part, and had the most unique African gowns to wear. Donated to us by one of our members who is from Africa. We also sold many of our items that help us raise money, tote bags with our GoGo Logo, and cookbooks and all occasion cards.

I could go on & on. The best part was raising awareness of the HIV pandemic and the help that is needed. We are so inspired now, so I hope everyone of our Grannies will keep up the good work and never give up.....we can do it!

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