

With no major fundraising event planned for the fall I was expecting this newsletter to be fairly short but again you've managed to surprise me and exceed all my expectations. As of today we've raised \$21,022.71. Who knows we may even make it to \$25,000.00 before the end of 2006. Check out my website <http://www.gigiclimbskili.com/> for all the news and photos.

Please let me know if you do not wish to receive these bi-monthly updates or pass them on to anyone you feel would be interested in helping Africa's Unsung Heroes - the Grandmothers! Your comments/suggestions are always welcome.

100 Days to Reach the Summit

Yes, I'm there (dizzy but ecstatic). I can't believe that in 100 days your support has catapulted me to the top of Kilimanjaro. I continue to be amazed and humbled by your generosity and unwavering faith in my effort. Thanks to an extremely generous donor who has been keeping tabs on us and obviously so impressed that he donated over \$2,300 on October 16th to make this the best birthday present ever.

I now have a new friend, Liza Badham from Fitzroy Harbour, who has decided to join me on my climb of Kili. I hope that you will show her the same faith and support to help her reach the summit. Same rules apply; all the funds raised go to support the Stephen Lewis Foundation's Grandmothers to Grandmother Campaign. Let the race begin... Will Liza make it to the top within the 100 days?

Halloween Pig-e-Bank Campaign --- Congratulation to our young fundraisers! Amazingly enough 6 children signed up for the campaign and raised a whopping \$237.96 (a little more than 2 months pension for a South African Grandmother). My grandson, Ryland (2 ½) was the top fundraiser with a whopping \$147.82. Kayla, my youngest niece (12), raised \$37.00 but gave such a convincing plea to one of her neighbors that he pledged to give \$100.00 per month for 12 months. Thanks to the wonderful parents who supported the effort by bringing their child's pig-e-bank to work, rolling and counting the coins, etc.

Christmas Campaign --- These wonderful wreaths basically sold themselves and raised \$560.80. Special thanks go to Sharleine Haycock of Mississauga who single-handedly raised almost half of that amount through her church and neighbourhood. My sister, Francine, and I raised the other half. I would also like to thank the DeLong Farm for graciously agreeing to deliver the wreaths and centrepieces to Sharleine in Mississauga at no additional cost to us. Their in-kind donation is certainly recognized and greatly appreciated. Hopefully, next year more of the Grandmother Groups will join in this campaign.

Speaking Engagement at the Food for Thought Luncheon --- Wanda Keenan, the organizer of the Food for Thought luncheons invited me to speak about my climb and fundraiser. The group meets on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month for lunch with a different guest speaker for each luncheon. It was a wonderful experience and I enjoyed meeting everyone. They truly are a sympathetic group and it is always so inspiring to see and feel the compassion, understanding, caring and love for others less fortunate (even if they are a world away). Although their interest lay mostly in my climb of Kilimanjaro, they quickly became aware of my underlying purpose and the enormous challenge that grandmothers like them face every day on the other side of the ocean. This event raised \$127.00 from a small (21) but extremely sympathetic group of individuals. Thank you Wanda for the opportunity and I look forward to a return engagement when I come back from Africa.

Centerpiece Raffle at St-Rémi --- My mother and step-father generously donated one of the centerpieces they purchased in support of the Christmas Campaign to their parish as a raffle item. The proceeds were split between the parish and my fundraiser. We sold tickets before and after the Saturday and Sunday masses and raised \$117.90 in sales plus an additional \$20.00 from a donation. But more importantly by

raising the awareness of the African Grandmothers plight in this very warm and welcoming francophone community, found a champion for the cause who is interested in starting her own Grandmother Group and others who just want to help. Good Luck Lucie. Hope to read about your future plans and projects early in the New Year.

On a personal note --- Recipient of the NAC's 'Good Samaritan' Award: This Community Spirit Award is presented every year to an NAC employee who contributes personal time and effort to support a cause within the individual's community. The employees nominated for this award have demonstrated exceptional spirit by getting involved in community events or activities ... including those outside the performing arts family. They have volunteered their personal time and effort, and demonstrated initiative and leadership in the role of volunteer. My NAC family has been extremely supportive of my efforts throughout my campaign by poking their head in my office, to wish me luck; by sharing fundraising ideas; by attending my fundraising events; by their generous donations; and now by their nomination for this coveted award. It is such a privilege to have been nominated and such a great honour to have been selected. Julia Foster, Chair of the NAC Board of Trustees and Peter Herrndorf, our President and CEO were both on hand to present me with the award which was thrilling in itself since they have gone out of their way to show their support and recognition. The Inukshuk is the symbol for the award and is very appropriate as it reflects the very essence of my efforts since it ".has been adopted today as a symbol to remind us of our dependence on each other and the value of strong relationships."

Upcoming Events

We are currently working on plans for two major fundraising events in 2007. The first will be our ***annual BBQ for the end of June*** or early July, but this one will be held at Liza's farm in Fitzroy Harbour since this will be a public BBQ and we will need a lot more room. Please let me know if you are interested in helping in the planning. We are always looking for sponsors and donations for the Silent Auction.

The second event is a ***Trail Hike/Run*** to be held in the Kanata area as a send off for us since it will be held at the end of September (just before we leave for Africa). This was my niece, Catherine's idea who is helping me with the planning, but we will need a whole lot of help with this one and more specifically a whole slew of volunteers for the day of the event. Please let me know if you or anyone you know is interested in helping out. The major sponsor for this event is Bushtukah.

Stephen Lewis is Coming to Town - January 18, 2007 at Carleton University and will take this opportunity to meet with the Ottawa Grandmother Groups. Please call me at 613-720-4599 if you would like more information.

Stephen Lewis: The Man Who Couldn't Sleep! -- This feature originally aired on CBC's 'The Nature of Things' with David Suzuki http://www.cbc.ca/natureofthings/show_mansleep.html on December 6, 2006. It is scheduled to repeat on Friday December 29 at 8pm ET and Sunday December 31 at 7pm ET on CBC Newsworld. On Dec 31st, Stephen Lewis's tenure as UN Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa comes to an end. For five and a half years, he's criss-crossed Africa and the world at breakneck speed. His crammed schedule has included endless speeches and high level meetings with Presidents, UN officials and anyone who will listen to his impassioned plea for Africa. Possessing an intricate knowledge of the continent, he's made countless visits to grassroots projects: they give him great hope but also disturb him most deeply because the spectre of death is still everywhere. Each death haunts him. He rarely sleeps on these epic journeys - in fact it's not clear when he gets any rest at all.

Grassroots-December 2006 - The latest issue of the Stephen Lewis Foundation Newsletter <http://www.stephenlewisfoundation.org/> is available online. Let me know if you want to be included on the Foundation's mailing list.

School Presentations --- I'm still hoping to get invited to speak at local schools, primary and secondary, to get the kids involved and to raise awareness. That hasn't happened yet, but I will keep trying. If any of you have any insight as to how I could make this happen, please let me know. As you know, I'm willing to pursue any lead.

Please call me at 613-720-4599, if you have any ideas for a fundraiser that you would like to sponsor!!!!

Grandmothers Gathering

The Grandmothers movement is gaining great momentum since the August 2006 Grandmothers Gathering in Toronto. We can see and feel the results all around us. There are now over 120 grandmother groups across Canada sharing their energy, thoughts and efforts in raising awareness for the plight of the African Grandmothers. Not only is this happening in Canada but we are starting to see ripples in other countries as well. We recently received a Granny Bulletin from the Stephen Lewis Foundation, please go to the Press Box <http://www.gigiclimbskili.com/media.php> on my website and read some of the amazing ideas and plans from the Canadian Grandmother Groups but don't miss reading the responses from the African Grandmothers. Here's just one example, there are lots more:

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

Kilimanjaro Webcam

Check out the "First & Only Live Web Camera at Mt. Kilimanjaro <http://www.kilicam.com/>". Picture refreshes every 5 minutes. All I see most of the time are clouds, but I'm sure there's a mountain there or so I'm told.

GRANDMOTHERS OF THE WORLD UNITE FOR THE FUTURE OF AFRICA!



Seasons Greetings!

May 2007 bring each and every one of you and your loved ones only good tidings!

Luv, Hugs and Kisses.. Gisèle