

PRAIRIE REGION UPDATE

April 2014

Welcome to a newly minted grandmothers group in our Region, from Treherne/Rathwell, Manitoba. They started their group in late 2013, and have already done some fundraising. Here's what they say about themselves: "We are excited to be the newest kid on the block for G2G groups. We call ourselves Grannies Go 2Gether. Just a group who are small but like spending time together and really feel we can have some fun, maybe do some good in our own small communities, and the extra bonus will be some monies raised for those amazing grandmothers of Africa! We have already raised about \$300 by going to our villa (55plus) and offering coffee and goodies for a toonie. Expecting extra goodies for sale, we asked them to bring their own containers. They were thrilled, we had a great social time and it broke up the winter for us all! They wanted us back for Valentines and Easter!"

Fabulous News! Are you ready for this? How do you like the number **\$21 million**? Well, that's how much the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign has raised since its inception in 2006!!! And if that isn't enough – there's more to tell: the SLF has now funded 1100 separate initiatives through its partnership with the more than 300 community-based organizations. But we can't slow down now. Over the last few years, although there has been just enough to support many new initiatives within the existing organizations, there have not been sufficient funds raised, to date, to support any new organizations. Let's hope that 2014 will be the year to begin to reach this fundraising goal!

The Grandmothers Campaign 2014 Trip to Africa was a resounding success. The 22 Canadian grandmothers, along with the SLF staff, spent nearly three weeks on the continent, meeting with African grandmothers and learning about some of the incredible community-based organizations that are turning the tide of AIDS. In the next few issues of this newsletter, we will share some stories about the experience. Before we do that, we just want to remind you that we raised Aeroplan miles to cover the costs of our flights and our own funds to pay for all other costs – no Foundation funds were used for the trip expenses.

Visiting Kigali, Rwanda – We arrived at the Rwanda Women Network (RWN) Village of Hope project to the sight of dancing and singing grandmothers – so happy and proud to welcome their Canadian guests. After hugs all around (and plentiful kisses on both cheeks), we heard testimonies from these wonderful women, purchased lots of beautiful crafts they made to generate income, had a tour of the facility that supports them, and a lovely lunch which included typical Rwandan dishes. Later in the day, we travelled to the Polyclinic of Hope (more dancing and singing grandmothers there), and watched a drama performance in which the grandmothers, some young people, and some men from the project illustrated the issues that affect women such as their human/legal rights, HIV/AIDS sexual gender-based violence, etc. One of our translators was so engrossed in the unfolding story that she forgot to continue translating! The next day, we visited the Kigali Genocide Memorial which contains oral testimonies, documents, publications, and artifacts from the genocide, including clothing and human remains. Our guide was a young woman who spoke gently and movingly about the history of colonization and the events leading to the genocide. Each of us was deeply moved and affected by what we



heard and saw, and were grateful to be able to honour the victims as we laid flowers at the memorial site containing the remains of around 260,000 people. As I write this piece, Rwanda is holding a week of national mourning and commemoration of the 1994 genocide. The people of Rwanda have made enormous strides in the effort to rebuild their country. The Rwanda Women Network was founded by women who were raped and sexually violated during the genocide and who were HIV positive as a result. To call these women strong is to understate all that they continue to accomplish – they are powerful women. Although there is so much still to be done, we saw how the grandmothers are moving forward with the support of the RWN and our Canadian contributions. ~Sheila Fahlman

Highlights from the April Conference Call of the Grandmothers Regional Liaisons

The Tribunal: The film about the Tribunal should be ready by the end of June. But since so many groups do not meet during the summer, the launch will occur at Regional Gatherings across the country in the fall. Ilana Landsberg-Lewis will travel with the film and, along with the Saskatoon organizing team, we are working out the details of the timing of her visit to the Prairie Region Gathering.

The Grandmothers Book: Work on the book continues, as a few more interviews with Canadian grandmothers will be held to fill in some gaps to round out the content. Once a publication date is near, we will be notified so we can plan book launch events. Watch the Granny Bulletin for information on a moderated Town Hall conference call, where Joanna Henry, the SLF's Co-Manager of Learning and Resource Development, will talk about the process of going into communities, building trust with the African grandmothers, how the interviews were conducted, and how that translates into content that appears in the book. Joanna will also have some stories to tell as a window into the final product.

Stride to Turn the Tide: The new fundraising pages are up and ready to use, along with several new and updated documents! Be sure to check out the video Stephen has done for this year's event, as it has a surprising message! Anyone needing help with getting set up, or with questions, is encouraged to contact Sydney Oastler at 1-888-203-9990 x309, or stride@stephenlewisfoundation.org. One important piece of information is around insurance. If your group is holding a Stride event, **please send your registration forms to Sydney by May 16th**, so she can notify the insurance company to ensure your group and participants will be covered. One last thing – if your group is holding a Stride event this year, or if you are thinking about one for next year, please let Deb and Sheila know so they can support you, or put you in touch with another group that has some experience. Attached to this Update is some more Stride information.



Speakers' Bureau Training Kit: Work on the resources package continues. We'll certainly let you know when it is ready for use.

Photos: You'll be happy to know that new photos will be added to the Photo Gallery, and they will include several from the recent trip to Africa. A new section with photographs of grandmothers and children will also enhance the collection.

AIDS-Free World: Stephen Lewis is co-founder and co-director of AIDS-Free World. On Fridays, through video commentaries, he addresses the latest news and developments in the global response to HIV and AIDS. View his messages at <http://www.aidsfreeworld.org/Publications-Multimedia/Video-Commentaries.aspx>, OR, if you sign up, you can get them sent directly to your Inbox every Friday.

Globetrotting Grandmothers: Here's a message from Calgary: "Hello Canadian Grandmothers! Knowing that many of you are intrepid travellers, we have created a new group, Globetrotting Grandmothers, in the hope that some of you may be tempted to join us on our travel adventures." For information on the mission and activities of the group, please visit their website at <http://globetrottinggrandmothers.weebly.com>. You can also sign up to receive information about the upcoming trips. A portion of the trip cost will be donated to the Stephen Lewis Foundation.

What's Happening within the Prairie Region?

Grands 'N' More Winnipeg's 3rd Annual Scrabble for Africa. Saturday, May 3rd, 2014 from 1 to 4 p.m. at St. Andrews Anglican Church, 2700 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg. To sign up to play, or for more information, contact Nina Logan at ninalogan@shaw.ca.

G4G Regina's 8th Annual Dinner and Silent Auction. Friday, May 9th, 2014 at Queensbury Convention Centre, Regina. The evening includes a buffet dinner with some African-themed dishes, entertainment by Bev Zizzy and Black Magic, guest speaker Sheila Fahlman on her recent Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign trip to Africa, silent auction, raffle, and Granny Marketplace. Tickets \$65 per person. For ticket information, please check the website www.grandmothers4grandmothersregina.com.

Grandmothers and Others for Change, Swift Current. *Kitchen Witchery Sale* of gently used kitchen supplies. Saturday, May 24, 2014, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Swift Current Mall. Shop for cookbooks, small appliances, serving bowls, platters, pitchers, pie and cake pans, rolling pins, frying pans, glasses, cups/mugs, potholders, linens, peelers, corers, slicers, whisks, graters, storage containers, cookie cutters, measuring spoons, coffee and tea accessories, and more.



Prairie Region Gathering. You are invited to attend the Prairie Region Gathering to be held in Saskatoon on Friday, September 26 (evening), and Saturday, September 27th until 4:00 p.m. at St. Paul's United Church (454 Egbert Avenue). Please mark these dates on your calendar and plan to join us for two days of sharing and fun. A poster advertising the event has been sent out; if your group did not receive a copy, please contact the planners at the address below. When considering accommodations we will be able to provide you with the names of hotels that might suit your needs and we are asking our membership if they are willing to billet participants. If you wish to set up a display, or to have items for sale in our market place, please let us know on the registration form. More information will come out later; in the meantime, if you have questions, please email the planners at prairiegathering2014@gmail.com. There is also discussion underway to rent a bus that would start in Winnipeg and gather grandmothers on the way to Saskatoon. Please contact Deb Radi dradi@mymts.net if you are interested in exploring this opportunity further. **Deadline to show interest in the bus tour is June 1, 2014.**

Visiting Local Groups. As the weather is starting to warm up on the Prairies and the snow is starting to melt, Deb would like to try before the summer to come out and visit your groups as she is new to the Region. Could you please let her know when you are either meeting as a group and/or having an event as she would like to meet the "grandmothers" and "others" who are working in support of our African grandmother sisters. For

those groups in Saskatchewan that would like Sheila to visit, please be in touch with her so that arrangements can be made for a visit.

Recent Events

G4G Prince Albert. On March 30th, *Arioso and the Jazz Guise* concert took place at St. Marys' High School. For the past seven years, G4G P.A. has been the recipient of the proceeds of this concert. G4G entered into an agreement with the three Arioso performers, Linda Jansen, Eunice Mooney and Ruth McIvor, who personally plan and perform in this event. G4G's commitment was to sell the 243 concert tickets at \$15 each to family, friends and the public. The group was responsible to talk to the media; they were happy to do this, as it afforded them the opportunity to create awareness as to what the Foundation is doing for the African grandmothers impacted by AIDS.

As part of this fundraiser, the members baked delicious granny cookies which were sold at \$3.50 per dozen; this year they sold over \$1100 worth of cookies! At the time of writing, the final figures were not tallied, but they expect to be able to send over \$4000 to the Foundation. To show their appreciation to the Arioso trio, the group has bestowed Honorary Membership in G4G P.A. on Linda, Eunice and Ruth. G4G P.A. is fortunate to have such caring citizens supporting the Grandmothers cause.

NEWS

Please let us know of any events your group is holding, or have held recently, and we'll post it here for all to learn what great FUNdraising and/or Awareness activities our Prairie groups are doing to support G2G.

If you would like more information on any of this material, please let us know. We're also here to support you and your groups, so please don't hesitate to reach out to us.

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