

# PRAIRIE REGION NEWSLETTER

June 2014

## South Africa brings home the point that we are all only an event away...

As one of the fortunate 22 Canadian grandmothers who participated in the educational tour to Africa, I was struck by the deep appreciation and gratitude shown by the African grandmothers for the Canadian women who were on the tour. When it was truly I who was thankful for this opportunity to learn directly from the grandmothers and the children in their care about their experiences with HIV/AIDS pandemic and how they are turning the tide to make a difference in their local communities.

Today's visit was to Umlazi Project Visit in Siyaphambili in South Africa. As we drove to the project site, we noticed that on the right hand side of the road there were nice houses, and on the left hand side of the road the houses were more shanty houses made of tin. These tin houses were the houses that we would visit later in the afternoon.

We were warmly greeted by Mama Zodwa, the project lead, and her youth volunteers. The youth greeted us with a welcoming 'condom' song that they sing in community as they pass out strips of condoms to encourage safe sex.

Interestingly, a number of the youth volunteers used to participate in the school aged children feeding program and are now giving back to the project and the community.



Mama Zodwa spoke to us passionately about the aspects of her community based program; namely, home based care, a school children feeding program, and education about HIV/AIDS transmission. She showcased how she partners with others to get the resources and supplies that she needs for the program. An example that she shared with us how she exchanges rubber gloves for volunteer hours. She also gathers pamphlets from local clinics and distributes them in her community. The organization is solely volunteer based with youth and adults from the community who have been affected (not necessarily infected with HIV/AIDS). They are very proud of their work and their engagement in the community.

Mama Zodwa has been involved in her community since 2001. Just recently, in the last year, the SLF has been involved in this project with a seed grant of \$10 - \$15,000, As result of our visit, the Centre will be able to purchase 2 sewing machines for the women to be able to sew and learn together at the Centre; expanding what they already do.

After we learned about the work of the Centre, the volunteers took us on home visits to meet the women that they work with. So off to the shanty tin houses we went. The first home that we visited was a woman who lost her own 7 children and her husband to HIV/AIDS. She is now supporting 11 community children. Surprisingly, her home was very modern with wooden kitchen cupboards, a fridge, and a stove. Apparently when her family was alive they had more money available to the family. She now has problems with her legs and for her to walk up and down the rugged hills is incredibly difficult. Her story brought home the message that we are all only one event away from a situation like this happening to any one of us. Her story deepened our understanding of the importance of the work of the project and their role of care in the community. ~ Deb Radi, Winnipeg

## NEWS FROM THE STEPHEN LEWIS FOUNDATION

### Stride Update

To date, 35 walks across the country with 60 participating groups have registered for Stride to Turn the Tide 2014. If your group hasn't yet registered your event, please contact Sydney at the SLF: [soastler@stephenlewisfoundation.org](mailto:soastler@stephenlewisfoundation.org). In order for your group to benefit from the liability insurance coverage, the SLF needs to have your information.

### Tribunal Film

How would you like a special SNEAK PEEK trailer of the upcoming African Grandmothers Tribunal Film? At the Tribunal, African grandmothers from Uganda, Kenya, South Africa, Swaziland and Zimbabwe testified about their struggles and their hopes, issuing a joint Call to Action for further support and systemic change. Canadian grandmothers bore witness to these testimonies, listening and responding with strength and tenderness – recommitting to the promise they made in the Toronto Statement, “We will not rest until they can rest”. To view the trailer, please [click here!](#)



Ilana will be travelling to the Prairie Region Gathering to show the film and speak to it in person. That's another great reason to attend the Gathering in Saskatoon this fall.

### Down Under

Following a documentary on the Australian Broadcasting Corporation about the Canadian Grandmothers Campaign, the SLF received several phone calls expressing interest in the movement. A recent conference call with three Canadian Grandmothers and a few interested Australian women just might lead to the formation of some more groups 'down under'.

### Speakers' Bureau

The Update is nearly done! Just a few finishing touches and it will be uploaded to the Members-only section of the Grandmothers Campaign website. The document has three modules – the first includes basic information that every member should know (for those coffee-time or over-the-garden fence conversations), the second module is designed for those of you who are delivering presentations, and the third module is for members who will train others on how to make presentations.

### Grandmothers Book Town Hall

There will soon be an announcement of a June town-hall conference call. Please watch for an update in the Granny Bulletin later this month.

### Merchandise

The unique storybook, [38 Ways to Entertain your Grandparents](#), contains – you guessed it! – 38 different fun-filled activities for children and adults to share. When the characters in the story do something really fun that you'd like to try, simple step-by-step instructions and recipes are right there, and each requires only easy-to-find, around-the-house objects. This book has been gaining popularity with Grandmothers groups because 100% of sales go to the SLF. If you'd like to find out how to obtain some to sell in your community, please contact Sallie Mark at [salliemark101@icloud.com](mailto:salliemark101@icloud.com) or 1-416-523-9953.

With the Kazuri distributor in Canada winding down business over the next couple of years, solutions to obtaining goods from the African continent are being discussed. This is a very complex issue, and if and when a process is sorted out, you will hear about it in the Granny Bulletin.

## The SLF and Advocacy

Over the last few years, there have been frequent requests from grandmothers groups across the country to clarify the relationship between the Stephen Lewis Foundation's Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign, and the Grandmothers Advocacy Network (GRAN). After much thought and consultation, the SLF decided to send a letter and follow-up email to every group coordinator, in order to highlight the SLF's focus on African advocacy and more definitively explain the separation of the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign and GRAN.

You can read the SLF's two letters on the subject along with a letter from the SLF Board of Directors [here](#). If you do not have access to the Members Only section of the Grandmothers Campaign website, please contact [campaign@stephenlewisfoundation.org](mailto:campaign@stephenlewisfoundation.org) to get the password.

## IDEAS FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY

### Square Up!

Square Up is a little square 'gizmo' that allows merchants, like Grandmothers groups, to accept credit card payments on an iPhone, an iPad, or an Android device. The transaction can take place anywhere with a 3G network or WiFi. There is a \$2.75 transaction fee (less than VISA and MC), and the revenue shows up in your organization's bank account within 2 days. There are no activation fees, no cancellation fees, no monthly fees, no inactivity fee! For a demo go to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EK1MR7UeNXI>, and to sign up click here: [www.squareup.com/ca](http://www.squareup.com/ca). A few Grandmothers groups have already tried this and are very happy with the convenience and the small processing cost that encourages more sales due to its convenience. If your group decides to give this tool a try, please do let us know how it turns out for you.

**Globetrotting Grandmothers** In the last Update, we told you about a new group based in Calgary which will organize travel experiences for Grandmothers. The first two planned trips are one to Guatemala (Textiles and Traditions) and the other to Turkey. The intent is to include a donation to the Stephen Lewis Foundation in the price of these trips.



The methodology for this has now been agreed to by the Foundation, and the SLF donation will be set at approximately 5% of the land fees for each trip. This means \$250 will be embedded in the cost of the Guatemala trip and each traveler will be eligible for a tax receipt for this donation. It appears that this trip is almost filled and the Turkey trip is currently on hold due to the unrest in the region. More trips are being planned for 2015. If you wish more information or to contact the group directly, please visit their website <http://globetrottinggrandmothers.weebly.com/>.

## FROM OUR REGION

### Regional Gatherings

Since 2006, the Grandmothers Campaign has grown in size, reach and sophistication. As a result, a number of regional groupings emerged as a way to coordinate groups' activities and resources in cities and provinces across Canada. In order to support this continuing development, and in collaboration with grandmothers groups, the role of Regional Liaison was created.

This fall marks the third Regional Gathering for our Saskatchewan/Manitoba region. The first one was held in Winnipeg in the fall of 2010, and the second one was held in Regina in late September 2012. Scroll down to find information about the third gathering, to be held this fall in Saskatoon.

The **goals** of Regional Gatherings are:

- to provide an opportunity for grandmothers /grandothers to network across the regions about the G2G Campaign
- to hear about and from the Grandmothers of Africa – often there is the possibility of having an African grandmother join the Regional Gathering to bring the voice of our African sisters to the members, sponsored by the Stephen Lewis Foundation (SLF)
- to become more deeply connected to the SLF regionally

Did you know that the SLF can provide keynote speakers and workshop speakers for the Regional Gathering at no charge to the planning group? Did you know that the SLF's G2G campaign staff are available to be part of the planning committee through conference calls organized through the Foundation?



As we approach our Regional Gathering, and as Regional Liaisons, we are wondering where the 2016 Gathering will be held. Is your group interested in providing the leadership to plan the next one? If so, please connect with Sheila and/or Deb to discuss your group's interest in planning and/or supporting the next Gathering. Sheila and Deb will be right there to support you, and bring information from other Gatherings in Regions across the country.

### **Prairie Region Gathering 2014**

Friday, September 26<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, September 27<sup>th</sup>

St Paul's United Church

454 Egbert Avenue, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Friday evening includes local entertainment, the Tribunal Film and remarks from Ilana Landsberg-Lewis, and a reception. On Saturday, there's a full day of plenary and break-out sessions, wrapping up with more local entertainment. If you'd like to join others for a post-conference dinner, so be sure to sign up for it on your registration form (the cost is on you!)

If you haven't received detailed information on the Gathering and the registration form, please contact [prairiegathering2014@gmail.com](mailto:prairiegathering2014@gmail.com). We're looking forward to seeing you there! (Due to low interest, there will not be a bus travelling west starting in Winnipeg.)

### **Grandmothers 4 Grandmothers Moose Jaw**

Congratulations to the Moose Jaw Grandmothers group. They will be sending the proceeds from their recent garage sale - \$1,500 – to the Stephen Lewis Foundation. Well done!

### **Grandmothers 4 Grandmothers Regina**



May has been a busy month for our group. We held our 8<sup>th</sup> annual fundraising dinner on May 9<sup>th</sup>. It was another amazingly successful event, which raised about \$28,000 for the Grandmothers Campaign. The venue looked beautiful, from the tables to the stage, the silent auction, raffle, merchandise and membership tables. It was warm and inviting, and added to the comfort of the guests. Our speaker, Sheila Fahlman, made a great presentation of slides accompanied by stories from her Africa 2014 trip. Sheila was doing just what one of the

Rwandan grannies said, "Always take our testimony with you, talk about our status and challenges... always carry our stories with you."

Then it was a day outdoors at the Cathedral Village Arts Festival Street Fair on May 24<sup>th</sup>. It's a terrific event for making contacts, selling our African and locally-produced merchandise, and for soaking up the spring sunshine.



June 1st marked the kick-off for G4G Regina's 2nd **Art from the Attic** event. Last year the event saw 1200 pieces of art change hands, through our many very generous donors and our very enthusiastic purchasers. If you have any two-dimensional art to donate, please contact us at [g4gregina@sasktel.net](mailto:g4gregina@sasktel.net). We will have drop off locations in Regina and Saskatoon.

**Grandmothers 4 Grandmothers Saskatoon** had its 9<sup>th</sup> Annual **Fundraising Dinner** on March 7<sup>th</sup>. Our speaker Gretchen Roedde, author of "A Doctor's Quest: The Struggle for Mother and Child Health Around the World", was excellent, our African-style menu delicious (served family style), and the room was bright and colourful. It was a very successful event (we raised about \$20,000) with lots of chatter and laughter. We are looking at Friday, March 6, 2015 for our next African Dinner. This will be extra special as it will be our 10<sup>th</sup> – truly something to celebrate. The dinner has grown over the years from a few gathering in a restaurant to this large gathering, strongly supported by our group and the community.

**Stride to Turn the Tide** in Saskatoon will be held on Saturday, June 14, 2014 with registration at 9am and the Walk at 10am, on the Meewasin Trail behind the Mendel Art Gallery. Friends, family and colleagues can pledge online by going to [www.stridetoturnthetide.ca](http://www.stridetoturnthetide.ca). Under search, click on G4G Saskatoon. Join our team and set up your own fund raising page. For more information, contact [patti.soltys@gmail.com](mailto:patti.soltys@gmail.com) or 306-979-4892.

G4G Saskatoon is holding its third annual **Fabric Sale** on October 18<sup>th</sup>, at St Martin's United Church (2617 Clarence Avenue S, Saskatoon), from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm. We appreciate receiving donations for this event: unused fabric 0.5m or more, quilting fabric, thread, embellishments, sewing notions... yarn, knitting needles... no patterns (unless new or for a speciality like crafts, home décor...) People can drop off their donations at St Martin's on Thursday, October 16<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 am to 9:00 pm. For questions or to arrange for donations call Wilma Roosdahl 306-382-2356 / Susan Ashton 306-373-3210 / Jenny Neal 306-343-9448.

**Grandmothers and Others, Swift Current**, held a very successful "**Kitchen Witchery**" sale on Saturday, May 24 at a local mall. We asked the community to donate gently used kitchen tools, dishes, cook wear, linens, etc. and they responded in abundance! We had an avalanche of stuff to make available for sale. Instead of pricing items individually, we make folks aware of the work of the Stephen Lewis Grandmothers Campaign, and ask them to make a donation for the items they want. This approach has worked well for us on other projects. It was a lovely summer day and thus not as much people-traffic in the mall as usual. In spite of that we were able to raise about \$2000 on the day. Our leftover "stuff" went to a lady who works with young First Nations mothers on some of the reserves in the south of the province, a win-win situation.

### **Grandmothers Giving - Portage la Prairie**

**Granny Jars** - We have distributed Granny Jars to many business locations in Portage la Prairie. We leave the jars for the month of May and usually collect approximately \$1,000. Janet Schellenberg wrote a wonderful article which was published in our local newspaper.

**Stride National Walk** - planned for June 22, 2014. We provide a small canteen prior to the walk and this year we are walking through our Island Park.

**SAVE THE DATE: Annual Fall Dinner** - September 14, 2014 - more detailed information will be available closer to the date.

### **Grands 'n' More, Winnipeg**

Our **Annual Gathering** was held on Thursday, May 29<sup>th</sup> with Portage la Prairie and Treherne/Holland in attendance. Nina and Deb shared stories about the projects and people that they met recently, on their educational tour with the SLF, with a presentation called *Africa: Through our Eyes*.

**Stride to Turn the Tide** – Saturday, June 7<sup>th</sup> was set as the date for our STRIDE event at Grant Park Mall. Stations were set up throughout the mall and participants were encouraged to experience a “day in the life of an African grandmother” as they carried water, made balls out of plastic bags, etc. McNally Robinson, our local bookseller, provided space in their store to raise awareness, as well as set out books about Africa.



We've had some lovely feedback to these Prairie Region Updates – here's one example: *Congratulations Deb and Sheila on a really great and informative Prairie Region Newsletter! Great to hear what other grandmother groups across the prairies are doing and what a great way to keep the camaraderie and common goal going! ~ Shelley*

***Please let us know of any events your group is holding, or has held recently, and we'll post it here.***

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

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