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PRAIRIE REGION UPDATE

The Prairie Region Update is intended to keep grandmothers groups across the Prairies connected to each other and informed about the SLF Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign.

November 2014

NEWS FROM THE STEPHEN LEWIS FOUNDATION

Grassroots: The Fall 2014 issue of *Grassroots* newsletter is on the way. Its focus is on children and orphans.

Each year, a sixteen to eighteen page *Grassroots* is issued in October or November, followed six months later by a smaller publication called *Spotlight on Grassroots*. The spring 2014 issue, *How we work*, focuses on the Foundation's partnerships with community-based organizations.

You may wish to order print copies of these publications to raise awareness or for your fundraisers in your community. *Grassroots* is also available on the SLF website.



2015 SLF Calendars

G4G Saskatoon has a supply of unsold calendars. If your group would like to get some to sell, please be in touch with Patti at patti.soltys@gmail.com. It is recommended the calendars be sold for \$20 each.

If it happens that any group has leftover calendars at the end of the year, rather than returning unsold calendars to the SLF, groups can continue to sell them as fundraisers in January for \$10.

When you have sold your calendars, simply submit a cheque 'payable to the SLF' for the total amount you received.

SLF Outreach Beyond Canada

As part of its outreach into the United States, the SLF is trying to schedule some Tribunal film screenings and is looking for groups to host an event. So far, Colorado has shown an interest, and in California, an eager student wants to organize a screening in collaboration with a musician.

The SLF is working towards a gathering in the US where there is some interest in forming groups, should they be able to find funding support for the gathering.) A leading cleric in Scotland had also shown an interest in having the film shown in parishes there as it ties in with their HIV/AIDS programming.



Canada's snowbirds might be another point of contact for forming groups as many stay in the US for extensive periods of time. If you have a family or friend connection, or are a 'snowbird', and would like to host a film night, please contact Yasmin at ymussa@stephenlewisfoundation.org.

Tribunal Film DVD

Each Grandmothers group, through the main contacts, will be receiving a free copy of the Tribunal Film "African Grandmothers Tribunal: Seeking justice at the frontlines of the AIDS crisis" to support your local Grandmothers work. The DVDs were put in the mail on November 5th, so your group should receive it shortly. If you do not receive it by the end of November, please contact Laura Fraser, Campaigns Assistant, at 1-888-203-9990, ext. 302 or lfraser@stephenlewisfoundation.org.

Africa 2015 Trip

A plan is underway to have a National Gathering in Uganda, possibly in September 2015, with participation from Canadian grandmothers. Details regarding the number of grandmothers and other logistics are being discussed. The date will be determined by the projects. Watch for details later.

An SLF Gift Catalogue – Why Not?

The question comes up quite often: "Why doesn't the Stephen Lewis Foundation have a catalogue of Christmas gifts such as blankets, chickens, goats, etc.?" The issues in African communities are far more complicated than giving a chicken or a goat. Because of the grassroots model of partnering with projects, the SLF lets the projects take the lead in terms of needs and the holistic approach to address these needs. While donors do get a sense of satisfaction from this gift giving, the fine print states that funds may be redirected.

A large part of what the SLF does is to change people's perception of what **support** means. The projects understand the needs of the whole person within their local community context versus a product. The priorities of the projects are aligned in a holistic way of dealing with the pandemic in a community approach.

"The foundation approaches donations differently. We prefer not to pick one item over another but rather to take a more holistic approach. Yes, \$20 can buy a pair of shoes and paper and pens for school, but if a child doesn't have grief counselling to repair a fractured life from the loss of parents, or food to eat, or safety from sexual predation on the way to school, or kerosene to do homework ... that one item just isn't enough."

~ Ilana Landsberg-Lewis

NEWS FROM OUR PRAIRIE REGION

Prairie Region Gathering 2014

St Paul's United Church in Saskatoon was the setting for the 2014 Gathering of more than 80 Grandmothers and Grand-others from Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Calgary and Ottawa on September 26 and 27th. We came together to celebrate our successes, make new contacts, exchange ideas and renew our purpose. Mother Nature provided a bonus with lovely autumn weather.

The G4G Saskatoon Sassy Strutters and Reta Taylor entertained us with a delightful song and dance routine to "kick off" the event. This was followed by a showing of the African Grandmothers Tribunal film made in Vancouver hosted by Stephen Lewis Foundation (SLF) staff– Yasmin Mussa and Ida Mukuka Nambeya whose presence and comments were appreciated by the attendees. The evening was "topped off" with a chocolate fountain reception which was a big hit in addition to the opportunity for dialogue with each other in an informal setting.



On Saturday, the Gathering opened with singing of the Saskatoon G4G song composed and played by G4G member Pat Thompson. Yasmin and Ida shared greetings from the SLF. The day's program focused on work within G4G in addition to learning about other projects and activities taking place in Africa, through workshops, plenaries, and sharing sessions. The Networking luncheon, featuring an African menu, generated great interaction and camaraderie among participants.

Workshop topics featured: 1) Sowing Seeds: Grandmothers Campaign Presentations for Children and Youth by Alison Flensburg; 2) Kenya and Beyond: Youth Initiatives in Africa presented by three young women: Elianna Pyle from North Battleford and Megan Antaya and Larissa Tress from Saskatoon who want to make a difference in the world and who shared their activities in the Free the Children organization; 3) Tips for Keeping Financial Records by Bob Reid who annually reviews of the financial records of G4G Saskatoon; 4) Violent Connections: Cell phones, Conflict Minerals and Violence Against Women presented by Saskatoon's GRAN Liaison, Jenny Neal; 5) Steps in Development/Implementation of a Sponsorship Package by Fay Puckett who initiated sponsor requests for the Saskatoon fundraising dinner; 6) The Mozambique Training for Health Renewal Program from the University of Saskatchewan by Don Kossick, one of the Coordinators.

The plenaries highlighted a number of topics. In the Keynote address Sheila Fahlman and Nina Logan held the audience rapt as they recounted their experiences with the SLF Trip to Africa earlier this year. Bev McGibbon, National GRAN representative, helped to demystify the GRAN organization in her presentation. Elaine Zakreski joined by her husband Peter from Saskatoon spoke about their many achievements in improving the quality of life in Malawi through their Hope for Malawi Foundation.

The Sharing Sessions provided an opportunity to exchange ideas: 1) Fundraising Ideas chaired by Wilma Roosdahl and Nina Logan and 2) Speaker's Bureau with Chair Toni Cooke, generated much discussion resulting in a summary of the ideas. The Market Place, located in the Plenary room, had displays of unique African crafts made by some of the Grandmothers groups, as well as Kazuri jewellery from Africa. Ten Thousand Villages also participated with a table.

The closing ceremony with Brenda Bird and her students from Sutherland Public School dressed in cultural costumes signing the song: "Let the children have a world" was poignant, and a fitting way to conclude this collegial event. We departed feeling renewed, reenergized and looking forward to Gathering 2016 in Winnipeg.

We would also like to acknowledge all our sponsors, especially Leona Larson who donated the beautiful quilted hanging, and Mary Lou Ast who made the African bags for the speakers.

~Respectfully submitted by Maura Gillis-Cipywnyk and Lily Krause, Gathering Co-Chairs 2014

Feedback Request: Deb and Sheila, as Regional Liaisons, have requested feedback from participants on the 2014 Regional Gathering. If you have not, as of yet, received this request, and would like to provide feedback to assist in planning future Gatherings, please get in touch with Deb or Sheila and we will forward the feedback form to you.

Grandmothers 4 Grandmothers Moose Jaw

Grandmothers 4 Grandmothers Moose Jaw is hosting a fundraising **Tea, Bake & Knick Knack Sale** on November 22, 2014 at St Andrew's United Church, 60 Athabasca Street East, from 1:30 to 4:00 pm. Entry is \$5.00 per person. Donations of baked goods, small crafts, jewelry, books, DVDs, and small knick knacks are wanted for this event. 306-691-0386. Enjoy a tasty dessert of strawberry shortcake and check out the goodies for sale. They may have your perfect stocking stuffer!

Grandmothers 4 Grandmothers Prince Albert



“In a significant first for Prince Albert’s Grandmothers For Grandmothers, two Stephen Lewis Foundation staff members dropped in for a visit. Coming all the way from Zambia, Ida Nambeya provided the group a first-hand perspective on how their efforts have helped African grandmothers charged with raising their grandchildren as a result of the AIDS pandemic.”

To read the complete article from the Prince Albert Daily Herald, please click here: <http://www.grandmotherscampaign.org/african-field-representative-visits-grandmothers-for-grandmothers>

Grandmothers 4 Grandmothers Regina

Scrabble for Africa: G4G Regina’s 7th annual Scrabble for Africa event was held on **Sunday, November 2nd**. A record 115 participants collected pledges in advance, and then came to play a friendly game of Scrabble. There were prizes for top individual and team fundraisers, top Scrabble table scores, as well as draws and fun challenges. We were pleased to welcome two media teams – Global Regina and the SK Media Guild team (*see picture insert*) from the Leader Post.

Community Activities: Our merchandise and information booth will be set up at the Wintergreen Fine Craft Market. If you’re in Regina between November 14 and 16, please drop by and visit us at the Conexus Arts Centre.



Social Media Seminar: G4G Regina applied for and received a New Horizons for Seniors grant to hold a social media seminar. Happening on December 5, it’s called, “**Social Media: Not As Scary As You Think!**” The goals of the workshop are to teach seniors how to safely use social media to keep in touch with friends and

family, to follow and learn about current events both in the community and internationally through Facebook and Twitter, and to provide an opportunity for organizations that serve seniors to share ideas and learn more about Social Media to advance their causes. Fee for the half-day seminar is \$10, which includes handouts and a continental breakfast. For information or to register, contact Laurie at g4gmedia@gmail.com.

Holiday Social: On Tuesday, December 9th, we'll be holding a social event for our members – no agenda, no minutes, no volunteer sign-up sheets. Just time to enjoy the company of the amazing women who are G4G Regina!

Fabric, Yarn, and MORE SALE: Building on the success of similar events hosted by Grandmothers groups in Alberta, as well as by G4G Saskatoon, the Regina group is embarking on a similar fundraiser to be held next year.

Grandmothers 4 Grandmothers Saskatoon

Fabric Sale: G4G Saskatoon held its third annual event on October 18.

Annual African Dinner Save the Date: We are planning for our 10th annual dinner on **March 6th, 2015**, and envision it is a celebration of the wonderful outcomes that have been achieved by Grandmothers in Africa and locally through our collective efforts.

Grandmothers Giving, Portage la Prairie

Pot Luck Dinner and Draw: Grandmothers Giving's season comes to a close on December 1st with a Pot Luck Dinner and Draw for their **African Fabric Quilt Draw**. This Draw is our last project for this year.

The first prize is a beautiful (84" x 70") Quilt with Adinkra designs symbolizing concepts and aphorisms from West Africa. (See the symbols pictured below.) The second prize is a Lap Quilt (48" x 48") and the third prize a Place Mat Set for six with and matching Table Runner.



"Members donated the African fabrics and local quilters made these beautiful prizes" says Tina Lequier, Co-Chair of Grandmothers Giving. "This is a great way to end a very successful year for our group. Again we raised over \$8,000 for the Stephen Lewis Foundation through our projects," she says.

Another recent success was our annual Fall Dinner. In September we had our 8th annual **Grandmothers Giving Fall Dinner** – the most successful one yet! This wonderful event provides our community with a *"Fall Supper"* while at the same time raising money for the Foundation. This year we raised approximately \$3,000 for the Foundation. We had 235 people attend and our small increase in Dinner fees to \$15 for adults helped our bottom line.

Thank you to Grands 'n' More Winnipeg for participating in our *African Marketplace* at the Dinner. We hope sales were good for your African-inspired bags. As well, the *Marketplace* featured Kazuri Jewellery and we had our Draw tickets on sale with a display of the prizes. A big THANK YOU to our community donors who donated locally grown vegetables (Connery Riverdale Farms, Elm River Colony, and Mayfair Farms), as well as to Fairholme Colony for homemade buns, and the continued support from Portage Supermarket and the Herman

Prior Centre. We greatly appreciate our many volunteers who made homemade pies, as well as those who assisted in the preparation, serving and cleaning up afterwards.

Our group now takes a winter break and then we look forward to a New Year. This year we realized our goal of raising \$50,000 for the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign. Great things can happen in a smaller community when there is an important cause and a vision in how to get it done. Thank you to our members for making this dream a reality!

~ Submitted by Tina Lequier and Janet Schellenberg, Co-Chairs

Grands 'n' More Winnipeg

Peace Award: We are thrilled to announce that Grands 'N' More Winnipeg been selected as **the recipient of the YMCA/YWCA Peace Medallion Award in the Adult Group Category.**



The nomination, submitted by our Awareness Team, referenced the experience of African grandmothers who strive to nurture their orphaned grandchildren and others. It honours the support and hope we offer most respectfully through the myriad of fundraising and awareness activities at Grands'N'More Winnipeg.

It is important to remember our roots including those remarkable folks who have maintained a role since the beginning or near so - Enid Butler, Barb Fletcher, Linda Watson, Jean Sorko, Laurel Garvie, and also all those other members, volunteers and silent partners who have made our work of value and meaning.

Tribunal Film: "Wouldn't it be great if....." This phrase helped focus thoughts at the showing of the SLF Tribunal film, "Seeking Justice at the Frontlines of the AIDS crisis". Over 50 people – teachers, women's groups, students, and our members watched this moving and informative film together, met and shared ideas over snacks, and generously supported various GnM shopping options. Participants were challenged to think about what their organizations, what the SLF, what the Manitoba Teachers' Society, and what they as individuals can do to continue and to enhance their support for the African grandmothers.

The story of the Tribunal in Vancouver was magnified and illustrated with the stories of the women appearing before the panel. The film shows these strong women in their home communities, with their families, with other grandmothers, and in the projects to which they are linked. As one of the grandmothers says, "I don't like crooked things, and I am trying to make them straight." What a powerful image to spur on our efforts! Two themes underlie this film: The women are amazing and the barriers they are overcoming are huge. But, the pandemic continues, and many more grandmothers and orphans need the kind of help the SLF grassroots organizations provide, but, the resources available cannot stretch that far.



The film's images and content were amplified by our panel as each of them reflected on their experiences at the Tribunal and shared more details of the SLF. They gave us all a deeper understanding of the complexity of the pandemic, the grandmothers' and grassroots organizations' innovative and effective responses to the devastation to families and communities, as well as the continuing unmet needs. Many, many grandmothers and the orphans in their care remain stigmatized, isolated and lacking hope. Underlying the pandemic and how governments and nations are responding is that the root cause of many of the challenges and barriers facing the grandmothers is gender inequality.

The Tribunal was a snapshot of that moment in Vancouver, which was the culmination of many preceding moments. As well, it was the springboard for the grandmothers to articulate their demands for consistent and meaningful supports from their various governments. The Grandmothers' voices are being heard!

Sharing this event with the Manitoba Teachers Society helped draw the connections between gender inequality, human rights abuses, and systemic barriers which lead to opportunities for actions by students as they learn about and respond to the many needs in the world, including this pandemic.

~ Submitted by Jean Altemeyer, co-Chair, Grands 'n' More Winnipeg

Potluck: Our next Potluck will be on November 17, at Churchill Park United Church, on Beresford at Nassau at 6:00 p.m. Tickets are \$10 plus a potluck dinner item. The speaker is Shayna Shpeller who will share her experiences in Kenya on a Free the Children work trip, particularly dealing with water issues. Shayna also participated in our Stride to Turn the Tide Walk this past June.

Nipawin and District Grandmothers

The Nipawin group is holding its annual Carol Festival on Monday, December 1, 2014. This event has been held on World AIDS Day for eight years. Community musicians play voluntarily, and a free will offering usually raises around \$2,000. For more information, please contact mccomr@sasktel.net.



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

Disclaimer: we try to get the information accurate – but please be sure to check with the local group before you venture out to an event in case there are any errors or changes.

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

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