

Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign - A Liaison Up-Date June, 2012

Greetings to all of you in this busy spring season of Garage Sales, Stride Walks, Fabric Sales, and the many other activities.

Although I have not written to you in a while I tried the interactive teleconference approach earlier this spring with mixed results - only three groups in the south and three in the north participated. The people who did come on-line said it was a great way to communicate and get to know the other groups and their activities better. They suggested that perhaps twice a year might be adequate to achieve this. Let me know if you think this teleconference approach to staying in touch is worthwhile. If it helps to energize and generate new ideas then, most definitely, it is worth the cost.

The New Grandmothers to Grandmothers Web-site

It was finally launched on May 9, 2012 after many delays. I hope you are finding it more user friendly. I certainly am - it is so much easier to navigate! I encourage you to use it to your group's advantage - post your events, up-date your profile, advertize your products, and post pictures highlighting your group. There are so many resources on it to help keep you and your members informed and for use in presentations to community groups and schools.

More Grandmother Groups

A matter high on the SLF list of priorities is the need to initiate new grandmother groups. Earlier this year, I shared with you the SLF concern that many non-governmental agencies (NGOs) have reduced or

terminated their support to African projects because of reduced levels of donations. G7 donors to the Global Fund, the US funding ear-marked for the HIV/AIDS pandemic (PEFAR), and other European funds have diminished considerably. There is deep concern the pandemic will return to the devastation of the past. The SLF too has reached a plateau of \$10-11 million per year of funds going to African projects. Since 2006, the G2G contribution to the overall budget of the Foundation has increased to 19%. As the G2G Campaign continues to be highly productive with more than 250 groups across Canada and with the reduction in overall donations, the need to have more grandmother groups is clearly evident.

My work this spring has focused on this task. I had a G2G display table in Fairview where I attended a weekend Anglican Church Women's Conference. I'm keeping my fingers crossed my follow-up with contacts there will yield some results as there are no groups in the northern region, that is north of Fort Assiniboine. I've also done a presentation in Drumheller and will follow-up with a Kazuri Jewelry sale there in the middle of June. I had a G2G display table, with help from GANG member Joyce Madsen, at the Alberta United Church Conference in Calgary this past weekend which garnered 10 new contacts for follow-up. It certainly looks like there is potential to 'grow' the Campaign here in Alberta. And, I continue to encourage each of you to promote the G2G Campaign within your own network of friends, family and community contacts. If there is any possibility of having a community or small group G2G event in 'non-group' areas please let me know and I will follow-up.

Succession Planning

Another priority within the Alberta region is the issue of succession planning for the Alberta Grandmother Liaison position. I am coming to the end of my 2-year commitment this fall and I am willing to continue for another year but only if someone is willing to be 'junior' with me in this 3rd year to be ready to take over at the end of it. The following are a few of the questions swirling around in my head:

1. How can the person in the regional liaison position be supportive when the groups are so wide-spread geographically?
2. Who is interested in working for the great cause of the G2G Campaign at a provincial level?
3. Should there be two people, one for the northern and the other for the southern regions?
4. If we are to increase the number of groups in province, how can this be a more collective team endeavour?
5. Should a small team/committee be formed made up of members from various groups and charged with the responsibility of helping the Liaison person/s reach out into communities where no groups exist now?

Please reflect on these issues over the summer and let me know what you think. I would be delighted to hear from anyone who might be interested in exploring the Liaison position further with me. Some time has been set aside at the Camrose Alberta Grandmother Gathering, September 7/8, to discuss these matters.

The Alberta Grandmother Gathering in Camrose

The planning for the Gathering is going well. We are in the middle of getting an exciting program in place. Paola Gianturo, an author and documentary photographer, is

confirmed as a key note speaker and will be talking about her latest book, *'Grandmother Power - Global Phenomenon'* which is arriving in bookstores this fall. Her research for the book was done with African and Canadian grandmothers through the SLF. Keeping our fingers crossed - it should be available for purchase at the Gathering. Other books she has written include *'Women who Light the Dark'* and *'Celebrating Women'*. Of course, Zahra Mohamed, G2G Campaign coordinator and perhaps Leah Teklemariam, Director of Programs, will be there to answer difficult grandmother questions about the SLF. In the break-out sessions we hope to have topics such as storytelling - a creative presentation strategy; learning basic computer skills; writing memories to build a 'Food Memory cookbook'; exploring the new GRAN advocacy organization; and, of course, sharing creative fund-raising ideas. These will be short and repeated so attendees can enjoy more than one topic in the afternoon.

We do not, as yet, have a poster ready with all the details but please let your group members know about the date and location of the Gathering so they can get this important and energizing event into their calendars. **The Alberta Grandmother's Gathering is in Camrose, Alberta. It starts Sept 7, 2012 7-9PM and continues all day September 8, 8:30-4PM at the University of Alberta, Augustana Campus, in Camrose. Billeting will be available for those coming from afar.** Truly a great way to celebrate 'grandparents' weekend.

Have a wonderfully warm and relaxing summer! See you at the Fall Gathering.

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