

Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign - A Liaison Up-Date November 2012

Greetings all! It's been about 5 months since you last heard from me in this forum and I apologize for the long absence. But---I have been in touch with many of you throughout the summer and at that wonderfully energizing September Grandmothers Conference in Camrose. I only wish more of you could have attended. Hearing the moving talk given by Paola Gianturco, author of *Grandmother Power A Global Phenomenon* was inspirational. It truly 'recharged the batteries'. We were stunned at the end when the elegant black dress she was wearing suddenly lit up with many tiny lights. What a creative way to demonstrate the energetic strength of grandmothers - we stood and cheered to let her know how much we appreciated her words. She reminded us at a deeply spiritual level how powerful 'women of a certain age' are within families, in communities, in their countries and internationally. We left the Gathering excited and ready to re-engage in the busy fall ahead.

More Grandmother Groups

In my last up-date, I talked about the high priority the SLF is placing on the formation of new grandmother groups. I am pleased to announce that a new group is forming in Wetaskawin, growing out of the Grateful Grannies in Camrose. There is also the possibility of another new group forming in Grande Prairie. I again 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 issue I talked about last time was succession planning for the Alberta Grandmother Liaison position. At the September Camrose Conference, we had a productive conversation about the direction of the Alberta Region as a whole and the Liaison position within it. Ellen Monaghan (UJAMAA GRANDMAS, Calgary), Shirley Charloner (GrammaLink-Africa, Red Deer), Mardell Olsen (Grateful Grannies, Camrose), Judy Dube and Judy Haynes (GANG, Edmonton) and myself have formed a core committee to continue the conversation and to bring forward recommendations to the SLF about how to proceed.

At our first teleconference meeting November 1, we recommended to SLF that Alberta have two sub-regions, one in the north and one in the south. SLF is supportive and is encouraging us to continue our conversation, which we are doing, about how to operationalize this approach. To have two co-liaison people in place would bring the liaison person closer to the local G2G groups, help facilitate greater communication and cooperation among local groups and perhaps even help generate workshops to develop/enhance skills. And, it would reduce geographic distances and help facilitate initiatives into non-G2G group areas. Having two people doing the job might also encourage more people to participate in the G2G Campaign at a regional level. How to finance this approach, however, remains the big issue on the table. Please let me know what you think of this approach. If you have any ideas of how to finance this initiative please let me know. I

will keep you up-dated as we make progress in our discussions.

A Regional Opportunity

The Royal City Gogos, New Westminster BC, is launching a travelling art show entitled "Celebrating African Grandmothers, Hero's of the Continent." It will include textile art but not limited to it. They expect a vibrant display that should raise awareness, boost membership and inspire existing members. A previous travelling textile art show initiated in the Northern Vancouver Island region was a huge success and raised some \$250,000 for African grandmothers.

The proposed exhibit will be touring in the prairie region next fall, 2013, starting in September and finishing the end of October/beginning of November. The touring circuit would start in the Edmonton area then move to Saskatoon and Winnipeg returning through Regina and ending in the Calgary area.

This is such an exciting opportunity for us to work together at regional levels. I encourage us to consider forming north and south regional planning groups to bring this wonderful initiative into reality. I will be following up with groups in the Edmonton and Calgary regions to see what the interest levels are. Please contact me if you are particularly interested in getting involved.

Alberta Gathering, 2013

Even though we are talking of having two sub-regions in the Province, we still look forward to a general Alberta G2G Gathering in September, 2013. I'm delight to announce that the Calgary UJAMAA GRANDMAS will be hosting it in Calgary in 2013. Although the date has not been firmly

established, it looks like it could be September 13/14. Keep that weekend open. These Gatherings are such a wonderful time of renewal, networking and making new friends - certainly worth the effort of attending!

As the Christmas season is upon us and we are deep into Christmas craft and bake sales, attending concerts and parties, serving food and whatever else one does at Christmas, I remind you of how much the African grandmothers appreciate and are encouraged by our continuing support. We are achieving much by standing in solidarity with them.

To keep doing this, we must continue to develop and strengthen our own networks within our groups and regions in order to sustain ourselves so we remain steadfast in our purpose and not grow weary.

Standing together we remain strong!

Here is wishing all of you and yours a Happy and Peaceful (maybe even restful) Christmas season.

Vicki Strang
Alberta Regional Liaison
Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign
Stephen Lewis Foundation
1-780-435-0333
vickistrang@shaw.ca