“MAY THIS BE THE DAWN OF THE GRANDMOTHERS’ MOVEMENT.”  TORONTO STATEMENT, P. 3-4

As of December 1st, the Stephen Lewis Foundation (SLF) has provided funds to more than 150 projects in 14 countries across sub-Saharan Africa.

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DEAR FRIENDS:

I admit that this is slightly self-serving, but I do want to say how proud I am of the Foundation. Not only is our remarkable staff getting vast sums of money out the door and right to the community grassroots of Africa as promised, but with the astonishing success of the Grandmothers’ Gathering, the Foundation took a step to becoming an international presence in the world of HIV/AIDS.

I had always dreamed that might be possible, but never expected it to happen so speedily. The Gathering was Ilana’s brainwave, and has it ever taken off. Not only are we hearing from grandmothers and their supporters right across Canada, but we’re also hearing, more and more frequently, from the African grannies, many of whom came to Toronto and now feel completely comfortable about writing to the Foundation and listing their needs.

I knew we had struck an international nerve when I received, in early October, a phone call from the World Bank, expressing an interest in helping grandmothers in Africa, but wanting to consult with the Foundation first! I’ve never been a fan of the Bank, and I must admit that I was grinning throughout the day.

All of which is to say that the Foundation is carving out for itself a vital role in the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Africa. The grandmothers are a dramatic example of that, but the constant rollout of grants and support for projects gives us our strong and continuing rationale.

Naturally, I want to express endless appreciation for the extraordinary country-wide support we receive. We treasure it. Africa treasures it. The Foundation is saving lives and meeting needs and doing it with great heart, commitment and respect.

Many many thanks,

Stephen Lewis

THE GRANDMOTHERS’ GATHERING

In August 2006, on the eve of the XVI International AIDS Conference in Toronto, SLF hosted the Grandmothers’ Gathering, an unprecedented meeting of 200 Canadian grandmothers and 100 African grandmothers and project facilitators from 11 countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

The Grandmothers’ Gathering brought together a remarkable group of women from diverse backgrounds and experiences; joined by a profound sense of solidarity, resolve and a willingness to listen and learn from one another.

The Gathering provided a forum for African grandmothers to set the agenda for support and talk about the intense challenges they are facing. Even in the midst of grappling with loss, poverty and isolation, each of the women assembled displayed tremendous courage.

Canadian grandmothers came from all walks of life, and quickly realized that they had the potential to form a national grandmothers’ movement, in solidarity with and in support of their African counterparts.

The grandmothers’ concerns and key points were incorporated into the Toronto Statement (reprinted on p.3-4), which was presented to representatives from UNAIDS and the XVI International AIDS Conference at the close of the Gathering.

The extensive media coverage of the Gathering helped to put the voices, experiences and needs of African grandmothers on the world stage, and has generated a flood of enthusiasm for the Grandmothers to Grandmothers campaign.

Since the event, more than 80 new groups have formed in Canada, raising awareness and funds. In Africa, grandmothers have also been mobilizing in their communities: many projects have created new initiatives that target grandmothers caring for AIDS orphans.

The Grandmothers’ Gathering film and report will be available in early 2007.
As grandmothers from Africa and Canada, we were drawn together in Toronto for three days in August 2006 by our similarities: our deep love and undying devotion to our children and grandchildren; our profound concern about the havoc that HIV/AIDS has inflicted on the continent of Africa, and in particular on its women and its children; and our understanding that we have within us everything needed to surmount seemingly insurmountable obstacles. We are strong; we are determined; we are resourceful; we are creative; we are resilient; and we have the wisdom that comes with age and experience.

From one side of the globe we are African grandmothers, raising the children of our beloved late sons and daughters. We come to the end of this historic gathering filled with emotions: we are grateful for the chance – at long last – to make our voices heard. We are relieved to have had an opportunity to tell our stories, to share our experiences, to describe our hardships and our pain, to share the anxieties and express the sadness that descended on us late in our lives, and to receive respectful acknowledgement for the ongoing grief that scars our daily existence.

Each of our stories is different, each of our experiences is unique, and yet we are here as representatives of countless women who share in our tragedy: for every grandmother here today, there are fifty, sixty, seventy thousand at home. We have needs today, needs for the short-term and needs that will never go away. It is our solemn duty to the millions of grandmothers whose voices have never been heard that gives us the courage to raise those needs to demands — on their behalf, and on behalf of the children in their care.

Grandmothers are worth listening to. We demand to be heard.

In the short-term, we do not need a great deal, but we do need enough: enough to safeguard the health of our grandchildren and of ourselves; enough to put food in their mouths, roofs over their heads and clothes on their backs; enough to place them in school and keep them there long enough to secure their futures. For ourselves, we need training, because the skills we learned while raising our children did not prepare us for parenting grandchildren who are bereaved, impoverished, confused and extremely vulnerable. We need the assurance that when help is sent, it goes beyond the cities and reaches the villages where we live. In the long term, we need security. We need regular incomes and economic independence in order to erase forever our constant worry about how and whether our families will survive.

We grandmothers deserve hope. Our children, like all children, deserve a future. We will not raise children for the grave.

(continues on p.4)
From another side of the globe, we are Canadian grandmothers, arriving at the end of our gathering enlightened, resolved, humbled and united with our African sisters. We stand firm in our commitment to give of ourselves because we have so much to give — so many resources, such a relative abundance of time, so much access, so much influence, so much empathy and compassion. We recognize that our African friends are consumed each day with the business of surviving, and so we have offered — and they have accepted — the loan of our voices. We pledge to act as their ambassadors, raising the volume on their long-suppressed stories until they are heard, understood and acted upon. We promises to apply pressure on governments, on religious leaders, and on the international community.

We are committed to mobilizing funds, and recruiting more ambassadors among our sisters in Canada. We are dedicated to finding ways to make it clear that Africa’s grandmothers hold a place in our hearts and in our thoughts not just today, but each day. We are acutely conscious of the enormous debt owed to a generation of women who spent their youth freeing Africa, their middle age reviving it, and their older lives sustaining it. We will not rest until they can rest.

Africans and Canadians alike, we arrived at our Grandmothers’ Gathering with high expectations, but also with nagging apprehensions. We worried that the grief – our own and our sisters’ – would be overwhelming. We harboured fears that the language barriers would separate us. We Canadian grandmothers worried that our capacity to help might be reduced to fundraising alone; we African grandmothers worried that our dire straits might cast us as victims rather than heroes. But we were motivated to make the trip by the special love that every grandmother knows, and we were emboldened to face our fears by the wisdom of our years. Our courage paid off. The age-old African ways of speaking without words broke down our communications barriers. We gestured and nodded. And we sang. We danced. We drummed. We laughed and clapped and wept and hugged. Through our new discovery — grandmother to grandmother solidarity — we carried ourselves and one another through the grief to where we are this morning.

May this be the dawn of the grandmothers’ movement.”

GRANDMOTHERS’ VOICES

“Can you imagine what it must be like to bury all your children [and] care for your grandchildren? ...And yet their courage, their humility, their back-breaking work and their loving positive energy and smiles are keeping their countries marching forward to conquer this monster.”

— Sharon Swanson, Perth, ON

“[The Gathering] was a great experience and it gave us insight into other African countries’ granny problems. We are already offering assistance to grannies here, but... now we are able to see what is lacking and we now know that we can get information from other grannies in other countries on what they do to overcome common problems through networking.”

— Cwengekile Nikiwe Myeni, Hillcrest AIDS Centre Trust, Durban, South Africa

ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN:

The Grandmothers’ Gathering was part of the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign, launched by SLF for International Women’s Day in March 2006. The campaign was developed in response to reports, from SLF-funded projects, that grandmothers were increasingly left with the burden of caring for orphan grandchildren, and labouring to hold families and communities together. At the time of the campaign launch, there were a handful of Canadian groups providing support to projects working with African grandmothers at the grassroots. Today, there are more than 120 grandmothers’ groups across Canada, with many more in the process of forming.

Visit the Grandmothers to Grandmothers section of our website for updates, event listings and resources.

HOW CAN OTHERS BECOME INVOLVED?

- Join an existing grandmothers’ group or create your own
- Hold a screening of the SLF film, “Grandmothers: The unsung heroes of Africa” (Available upon request)
- Raise awareness – the first step to building support for African grandmothers
- Contribute to the campaign
OUR MANDATE

The Stephen Lewis Foundation was established in March 2003 and provides funds in four critical areas to:

❖ ease the plight of women who are ill and struggling to survive, so that their lives can be free from pain, humiliation and indignity.

❖ assist orphans and other AIDS-affected children in every possible way, from the payment of school fees to the provision of food.

❖ support grandmothers, the unsung heroes of Africa, who bury their own children and then care for their orphan grandchildren.

❖ assist the remarkable efforts of groups of people living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHAs), courageous men and women who have openly declared their status.

See pages 6 – 9 for highlights of some of our work in Africa.

OUR PROGRAMMES IN AFRICA

I have just returned from 3 weeks in South Africa, Kenya and Lesotho visiting projects we support. Two things struck me in every instance. First, grassroots organizations are making an extraordinary impact in their communities, working tirelessly to combat the devastating effects of the pandemic. Second, there is a breathtaking level of poverty and hunger eviscerating the families struggling to deal with the emotional havoc of losing their loved ones to AIDS. Every dollar we send to the projects is used to provide security, comfort, counselling, food, shelter, education, and glimmers of hope to so many good people.

I write with a renewed sense of urgency and pride – urgency because young women, children and grandmothers are struggling every moment of each day to make sense of their lives and provide a future for themselves; and pride because I can truly attest to the profound difference that Canadians are making — supporting the concrete actions taken by Africans themselves through the terrific projects that the Foundation supports.

— Alexis MacDonald, Director of Programmes

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HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa^1

❖ Of the 39.5 million people living with HIV in 2006, 63% of them (24.7 million) live in sub-Saharan Africa.

❖ 13 million children have been orphaned by AIDS in Africa. It is estimated that another five million will be orphaned by 2010.

❖ Every day 1,400 children under 15 die of HIV/AIDS and another 1,500 become infected with HIV. The vast majority of them live in sub-Saharan Africa.

❖ In some countries, up to 40-60% of orphans live in grandmother-headed households.

❖ Women are disproportionately affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic – on average, there are three women infected for every two men.

^1 Sources: UNICEF, UNAIDS and HelpAge International.
African Women’s Development Fund (AWDF) awards small grants to grassroots organizations run by women, in order to strengthen their capacity to promote African women’s rights and improve access to prevention, treatment and community care for HIV/AIDS.

The Stephen Lewis Foundation has provided funds to more than 150 projects in 14 countries. The following pages include some examples of the remarkable work being done at the grassroots through the Foundation’s support. For more information, visit the ‘What We Do’ section of our website.
IN AFRICA

**BOTSWANA**
The Botswana Retired Nurses Society (BORNUS) runs a Community Relief Day Care Centre in Tlokweng where children receive care and eat nutritious food grown in the community garden. Any extra fruits and vegetables are sold to help maintain the costs of the children’s centre.

**ETHIOPIA**
Kembatti Mentti Gezzimma (KMG) provides educational support to orphans in Ethiopia’s Alaba Special District. KMG facilitates discussions and encourages communities to speak openly about HIV/AIDS.

**KENYA**
Community Asset Building and Development Action (CABDA) supports 180 orphans by providing school uniforms and daily meals. CABDA assists grandmothers to earn livelihoods by establishing kitchen gardens and raising livestock. They also provide business training and small loans to help generate sustainable incomes.

**LESOTHO**
Malealea Development Trust (MDT) has created a remarkable model of community development. Intergenerational groups within each village are trained in HIV/AIDS prevention, basic human rights, and strategies to improve their own livelihoods. MDT also provides home-based care and helps members to access testing, treatment and care at a local Médecins Sans Frontières clinic.

**MALAWI**
Through a large network of volunteers, Consol Homes Orphan Care promotes community participation in the care, education, feeding, and life-skills training of more than 20,000 orphans and vulnerable children. Children and their caregivers also tend to community gardens, make crafts and raise livestock as a means to generate income. Consol Homes also supports needy widows and elderly grandmothers who are caring for orphans.

**MOZAMBIQUE**
Kukumbi supports orphans and people living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHAs) through life-skills training, peer education and home-based care. The organization shares its expertise on children’s needs with other community-based NGOs working with orphans in Mozambique.

**NAMIBIA**
Catholic AIDS Action (CAA) is renowned for its national home-based care programme which provides counselling, medical care and material support to more than 350 families. CAA also helps 1500 orphans and vulnerable children gain access to education and cope with the emotional trauma of loss.

**RWANDA**
Rwanda Women’s Network (RWN) supports PLWHAs and survivors of sexual violence from the Rwandan genocide. RWN’s network of volunteers provides palliative care, counselling, nutritional support, and education on care and treatment. RWN also assists families with burial and funeral-related expenses.

**SOUTH AFRICA**
Through direct action and advocacy, Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) has played a critical role in campaigning for universal access to antiretrovirals. Using songs, photos, pamphlets, stories, posters, videos and drama, TAC’s Treatment Literacy Programme enables PLWHAs to understand their illness and mobilize their communities to prevent new infections.

**SWAZILAND**
The Swaziland Nurses Association (SNA) established a Wellness Centre for more than 3000 HIV positive health care workers who receive a wide range of services, including voluntary counselling and testing, treatment, prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and stress management support.

**TANZANIA**
Tanzania’s Youth Alive Club looks after the educational, physical and emotional needs of orphans and women living with HIV/AIDS. They run Behavioural Change and HIV/AIDS workshops for community members, using older youth as role models and facilitators.

**UGANDA**
Through educational support, vocational training and the use of mobile farm schools, Kitovu Mobile AIDS and Home Care Project (MAHCOP) helps hundreds of orphans continue their formal education. Many graduates go on to become teachers, nurses, accountants, carpenters and farmers — invaluable skills in their communities.

**ZAMBIA**
Formed in 2001, the ZEBS Mothers’ Support Groups meet weekly to discuss health issues, offer micro-loans to HIV positive women and work to sensitize their communities to HIV/AIDS.

**ZIMBABWE**
The Girl Child Network (GCN) addresses the disproportionate vulnerability of girls to gender inequality and sexual violence. GCN provides girls with counselling, educational support, meals, medical attention, clothing and a means to gain financial independence.

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GRANDMOTHERS AGAINST POVERTY AND AIDS (GAPA)

Five years ago, in townships on the outskirts of Cape Town, South Africa, a group of grandmothers gathered to draw strength and solace from each other while struggling to cope with the impact of HIV/AIDS. The initial group of ten gogos (‘granny’ in Zulu) and a researcher from the University of Cape Town, formed Grandmothers Against Poverty and AIDS (GAPA).

GAPA has since grown to include thirty grandmothers’ support groups with hundreds of members — making it one of the largest organized groups of grandmothers on the African continent. GAPA grandmothers support each other when their children are sick and dying. Together, they strive to care for their orphan grandchildren — some of whom are HIV positive, all of whom are desperately sad.

Each month, grandmother-led workshops are held for new members, sharing information on nutrition, HIV testing, antiretrovirals, human rights, elder abuse, food cultivation, business skills, accessing social grants and drawing up wills. Since 2001, 928 grandmothers have been trained in 28 workshops.

With the support of SLF, GAPA recently began providing bursaries to allow young grandchildren (aged 3-5) to attend pre-school, giving grandmothers some ‘free’ time to attend the meetings and make handicrafts to sell at the local market.

NYAKA AIDS ORPHANS SCHOOL

All of the children who attend Nyaka AIDS Orphans School in rural Uganda are among the poorest of the poor in their communities. Since 2004, Nyaka has grown from 65 to 150 students. Classes go up to Grade 5 and are kept small in order to provide a loving atmosphere for each child. The school covers a wide geographical area; some pupils walk ten kilometers to and from school each day.

Children at Nyaka are encouraged to use music and drama as a form of confidence-building, cultural expression and community outreach. Because the school serves only orphans, it is able to address their needs directly, through counselling, psychosocial support, life-skills training and HIV prevention and care. Staff reports that the children take courage from one another, and no longer feel isolated.

SLF funds educational materials, school uniforms, chalk, pens and pencils, textbooks and exercise books, staff salaries and is helping to expand the community awareness programmes of the Nyaka Anti-AIDS Club.

“I have sisters here at GAPA. We are helping each other. GAPA has changed my life. I can cope with everything now. I feel strong about everything. Before I was feeling that I could also die. I was asking every year, why me? My heart was opened when GAPA opened. I would have died long ago.”
— Alicia Mdaka, 66-year-old great-grandmother and a founding member of GAPA (with her daughter Phyllis)

“The spirit of the children and their love of learning came through with more vigour and eagerness than I have seen just about anywhere. You can’t help but feel that this is a happy place, full of optimism and promise, even amidst poverty and hunger.”
— Lucy Steinitz, SLF consultant in Africa
Reach Out Mbuya is a remarkable faith-based initiative which serves a community of over 2000 clients on the outskirts of Kampala, Uganda. Through the work of hundreds of volunteers, many of whom are clients of Reach Out themselves, the organization provides free medical care, socio-economic, spiritual and emotional support to people living with HIV/AIDS in the Mbuya parish community.

Reach Out distributes antiretrovirals (ARVs) to clients who need them and provides all of the necessary elements which facilitate positive living: “Medicine is useless without food, food is of no consequence when patients are devoid of a future, and the future is bleak when it lacks hope. Reach Out strives to restore health in its entirety, defining each component as necessary in the delivery of a minimum health care package.”

SLF supports Reach Out’s Bread for Life programme, which provides small loans — on average, about 100,000 Ugandan schillings ($62 CAD) — to help PLWHAs develop businesses and earn a living for themselves and their families. We have also funded the construction of buildings and new rooms for HIV testing and counselling. In addition, we fund weekly home-based care visits and a nutrition programme for the chronically ill.

TAPWAK - THE ASSOCIATION OF PEOPLE WITH AIDS IN KENYA

Over 15 years ago, renowned Kenyan AIDS activist, Rowlands Lenya, established one of the first community-based NGOs led by people living with HIV and AIDS. TAPWAK has gained recognition for its ground-breaking work to ameliorate the impact of HIV/AIDS through education, advocacy and care. Based in the Nairobi and Siaya District, it serves more than 5000 people through group therapy and individual counselling, and home and hospital-based care. One of the key elements of TAPWAK’s success has been in training PLWHAs to become counselors, educators and advocates, putting them in a position to speak openly about living with HIV. TAPWAK lobbies for the rights of PLWHAs and provides innovative outreach programmes from its Drop-In Centre.

In addition to funding some of TAPWAK’s core support services, SLF also funds home and hospital-based care, as well as the provision of medical supplies and kits.

“Stigma is a big problem but the way to fight stigma is through education and love. We accept each other and love each other, so the stigma can’t hurt us so much.”

— Participant in TAPWAK group therapy session
The groundswell of response from Canadians to the AIDS pandemic in Africa has exceeded anything we could have imagined. Below are just a few examples of some creative initiatives that took place this year. To learn more, visit the 'Share Ideas' section of our website: www.stephenlewisfoundation.org/you_shareideas.cfm

In February, 140 students at Toronto’s Ursula Franklin Academy took a Vow of Silence for an entire day. “We decided to put ourselves in the shoes of people in Africa who don’t have a voice,” said student Brittany Levett, 18. The students raised $5000 in pledges from family, friends and teachers.

In March, over 200 people attended ‘Ribbon Rouge,’ a Fashion, Art, Jazz Night at the University of Alberta in Edmonton. The night included a fashion show, silent auction and fabulous music. The organizing group, Kamit African Caribbean Society (KACS), raised $2,816.”

The Tri-Adventure was a three-day triathlon that took place in August. It included a grueling 4-km swim in Lake Couchiching, a 15 km paddle on Lake Simcoe, and a 120 km cycle back to Toronto. Tri-Adventure's 40 participants raised awareness and over $77,000 for HIV/AIDS in Africa! Visit www.triforafrica.org.

In May, the oomama grandmothers’ group held their first fundraiser – a garage sale that began in Oakville, Ontario and continued in Hamilton the following week. Together with their friends and family they raised $22,000 from donations and sales!

The women of Eat My Words Book Club in Vancouver, BC meet regularly to share good books and delicious food. In March, they discussed Stephen Lewis’ Race Against Time and decided to add to their literary pursuits by donating $390 to SLF.

In Florenceville, New Brunswick, the Hunter Brothers created an unforgettable sight this past summer — a six-acre cornfield maze, cropped in the pattern of an African grandmother supporting a child! Families and school-age kids came to find the ten multiple-choice questions hidden in the maze, and learn something about HIV/AIDS in the process. A portion of the proceeds were donated to SLF.

“T
he Give a Day to World AIDS campaign is a powerful expression of global solidarity and compassion. It began in 2004 when Dr. Jane Philpott challenged her colleagues at Markham Stouffville Hospital to donate one day’s pay on World AIDS Day (December 1st) to the Stephen Lewis Foundation. Last year, SLF received close to $100,000. Now, thousands of people are involved all across the country – teachers, lawyers, politicians, flight attendants, children, university communities, small and large businesses and more. For more information, visit www.giveaday.ca

“I envision the year when every Canadian will see December 1, World AIDS Day, as a day when they work not for themselves but for the broader human family. On that day, each Canadian will give up their income to reliable agencies that use these resources to combat HIV infection around the globe.”

— Dr. Jane Philpott, founder, Give a Day to World AIDS Campaign

The Give a Day to World AIDS campaign is a powerful expression of global solidarity and compassion. It began in 2004 when Dr. Jane Philpott challenged her colleagues at Markham Stouffville Hospital to donate one day’s pay on World AIDS Day (December 1st) to the Stephen Lewis Foundation. Last year, SLF received close to $100,000. Now, thousands of people are involved all across the country – teachers, lawyers, politicians, flight attendants, children, university communities, small and large businesses and more. For more information, visit www.giveaday.ca
FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

This year, we maintained our commitment to send at least 90% of your contributions directly to support communities in Africa. Since the Foundation began in March 2003, we have spent an average of 8.5% of our total revenue on administrative costs. Visit our website for a breakdown of SLF revenues and expenses.

REVENUE

To date, SLF has received nearly 50,000 personal contributions from people all across Canada. In 2005, Canadians raised well over $1 million by holding community events in towns and cities across the country — just part of the $5.4 million we received in total donations, with more than $2 million arriving in the month of December alone!

ALLOCATION

By December 1, 2006, SLF had distributed and committed $10 million to grassroots initiatives across 14 sub-Saharan African countries.

MONTHLY DONATIONS

Monthly donations are a fantastic way to support SLF. They provide us with a financial stability which translates into more effective long-term planning, and sustainability for the projects we fund. Thank you so much for choosing to donate this way.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

As of June 2006, the Foundation’s fiscal year now runs from July 1st to June 30th.

Our accountant is Karen Forrest, CMA. SLF financial statements are audited annually by Cowperthwaite Mehta Chartered Accountants and appear on our website.

SLF NEWS

In May 2006, the Stephen Lewis Foundation became one of seven charities supported by Aeroplan’s Beyond Miles programme. Aeroplan members can now donate their surplus miles to SLF. One of the first ways we used these reward miles was to bring African grandmothers and project coordinators to Canada to participate in the Grandmothers’ Gathering. In the future, we will use these miles to help monitor and evaluate SLF-supported projects in Africa. To donate your Aeroplan miles, please visit: www.aeroplan.com/use_your_miles/donate_miles.do

Canadian celebrities are featured in a new series of 30-second public service announcements (PSAs) which dramatize three main areas of SLF’s work: women, grandmothers and orphans. A fourth spot will highlight Canadian efforts to respond to the pandemic, using examples drawn from the ‘Share Ideas’ section of our website. SLF hopes to secure free airtime on television and in movie theatres across Canada. We are very grateful to the Canadian Film & Television Production Association, Wasserman and Partners, and everyone involved who donated their time and creativity.

SLF is producing four films: grandmothers (premiered at the Grandmothers’ Gathering in August 2006), orphans, women and an introduction to the Stephen Lewis Foundation. The films examine the impact of HIV/AIDS on individuals and communities in South Africa, Kenya, Zambia and Uganda and highlight the work of SLF-supported grassroots projects. They will be rolled out in 2007 and will be available for purchase.

Our deep appreciation to Liz Mars Productions, Avi Lewis and the incredible team that has been working so hard to make these films possible.

Special thanks to the main contributors of the Grandmothers’ Gathering:

Canadian International Development Agency Agence canadienne de développement international

CBC Radio-Canada George Brown The Toronto City College

Aeroplan • CIBC • Rotary Club of Toronto Steelworkers Humanity Fund

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When we launched the Stephen Lewis Foundation in 2003, we hoped to provide support to a few terrifically hard-working projects in several countries hardest hit by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Three years later, we have funded over 150 projects and have expanded our mandate to include courageous African grandmothers who care for the ever-growing population of children orphaned by AIDS. We are committed to visiting every project and developing serious relationships with them, which helps us to ensure that our funding is meaningful and effective.

One of our African consultants recently visited a prospective project in Nairobi, Kenya and wrote: “The situation can only be described as hell and heaven side by side. The slum where the project is located is hell. The place was once a rubbish dumping site and now houses over 40,000 people. Poverty, disease and death are what these people live with every day. The project is led by a grandmother and currently provides support to 15 children who have lost their parents due to HIV/AIDS. They live each day not knowing where the next meal will come from. They rely on the mercy of well wishers.”

This is a compelling and all too-familiar story. SLF funding to this project will provide food and education to the children in a sustainable way. Our grants are small, but the money goes a long way. In this community, $0.63 cents pays for one meal for an abandoned and hungry child and it costs less than $100 dollars to send a child to primary school for a year.

Your contributions – which have exceeded our wildest hopes and expectations – are making it possible for grassroots projects across sub-Saharan Africa to provide solace, support and hope to communities that have been ravaged by the AIDS pandemic.

With deepest thanks,
Ilana Landsberg-Lewis