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Documenting the state of children orphaned by AIDS has become a kind of industry. Year after year, outfits like UNICEF, UNAIDS and USAID produce reports on the numbers of orphan children — reports filled with statistical tables and graphs, country by country. Occasionally, there’s a variation in the figures; suddenly the experts will decide that orphans should be all kids under the age of eighteen rather than fifteen, and the numbers will swell.

Of course, there are also learned analyses of how the children exist ... how many in orphanages, how many in what’s left of the extended family, how many in the community, how many cared for by faith-based organizations.

Recently, there was the mother of all such reports, something called the “Joint Learning Initiative on Children and HIV/AIDS” which purports to be the definitive study of its kind. And it contains some fascinating material, no question, but fundamentally it misses what all similar studies miss: the extraordinary emergence of a vast culture of orphans and grandmothers that now dominates orphan care in the high-AIDS-prevalence countries of Africa.

I’m not sure why that’s the case. I know only that if one-tenth of the research that’s been devoted to a compulsive gathering of data, had been devoted to figuring out how to support orphans and grandmothers, children would be vastly better off. We wouldn’t have so many African governments literally traumatized by the dollar cost and human dimensions of the problem.

So let me show my true colours. I’m really proud of the Foundation for stepping in to help to fill the breach. The Grandmothers Campaign, focused on orphans, is helping transform life for hundreds of thousands of kids. It’s desperately important to remember that these children are deeply bewildered, wounded, agonized by the sudden, inexplicable loss of their parents.

Our new determination to ‘Turn the Tide’ on the pandemic is very much an effort to reach huge numbers of orphan kids — literally a million of them over the next five years — and restore joy and hope to their future. It’s not just a matter of school fees, and health care, and clothing and shelter; it’s equally a matter of creating an environment for the children that will liberate their young lives.

All the studies show that the best prospect to make that happen is the orphan-grandmother equation.

I don’t understand why so many international organizations don’t seem to understand that simple truth, but we certainly understand it. And the Stephen Lewis Foundation is committed, as never before, to reach the grassroots, to bring resources to community level, to show the world what can be accomplished when you worry less about clinical, antiseptic statistics and more about flesh and blood children, their needs and their rights and their future.

For that we make no apologies: it fills us with determination to give every single orphan child the prospect of a life both fulfilled and abundant.

Stephen Lewis
Chair of the Board
OUR WORK

WHAT WE DO

The Stephen Lewis Foundation supports community-based organizations working to turn the tide of HIV/AIDS in Africa. Since 2003, we have funded more than 300 projects in 15 countries. These grassroots groups are the lifeline for their communities: they provide counselling and education about HIV prevention, care and treatment; distribute food, medication and other necessities; reach the sick and vulnerable through home-based health care; help orphans and vulnerable children access education and work through their grief; and support grandmothers caring for their orphaned grandchildren.

HOW WE FUND

We carefully consider every proposal we receive, no matter how small or remote the organization or how ‘unpolished’ the proposal. Before funding any project, one of our field representatives will visit to assess their capacity, accountability systems and their connection to the community. Our initial grants range from $10,000 - $35,000. As the projects grow, our funding can grow with them – we often approve larger grants when an organization increases in strength and capacity. We maintain close relationships with the projects through field visits and regular communication.

Since 2006, Canadians have donated more than 25 million Aeroplan miles to the Stephen Lewis Foundation, which we use to book flights and hotels. Your donated miles make our work possible. Learn more at: www.stephenlewisfoundation.org/aeroplan

HIV AND AIDS: GET THE FACTS

In the 2008 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic, UNAIDS estimates that:

• There are 22 million people living with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa, accounting for 67% of all people living with the virus worldwide.

• The burden of caring for children orphaned by AIDS often falls on the elderly, especially grandmothers. In Namibia, Tanzania and Zimbabwe, grandmothers care for 40-60% of orphaned children.

• Fewer than 1/3 of people needing antiretroviral drugs in sub-Saharan Africa are receiving them.

• Africa has 11.6 million children under 18 who have lost one or both parents to AIDS. UNICEF estimates that by 2010, as many as 15.7 million children in Africa could be orphaned by AIDS.
As the AIDS pandemic nears its third decade, communities throughout Africa are taking matters into their own hands. They are pioneering remarkable programmes to support millions of children affected by AIDS and the grandmothers and extended relatives caring for them.

In December, we invited fifteen of the projects we support to a roundtable meeting on orphan care. For three days, they exchanged strategies on reaching vulnerable households, providing care and psychosocial support, and creating programmes that give children the chance to become leaders in their communities. “What we’ve learned from the projects is that support to children must include more than providing daily meals, or paying school fees,” says Ilana Landsberg-Lewis, SLF Executive Director. “It’s creating an environment that nurtures them, gives them a sense of self-worth and a prospect for a brighter future. These grassroots groups are creating a sense of possibility, of hope, of opportunity, that simply didn’t exist before.”

There are enormous strides being made – not just in the number of people being reached, but in the way that their lives are transformed through the work of these community-based organizations. Children like Carol (p.7) wouldn’t be alive today to serve as a role model for other youth without the medication, home visits, and counselling provided by Ripples International. Child-headed households like that of Lloyd and Faston (p.9), rely on volunteer mentors to provide the critical adult guidance and nurturing that they need. For grandmothers like Verelina (p.10), the grandmother support group that she walks miles to attend is an extended family that she relies upon for support, advice and comfort as she cares for her four young grandchildren.

All of the organizations featured in this issue of Grassroots are doing innovative work to help children stay in school, overcome their grief, protect themselves from infection and realize their potential. They are living proof that across sub-Saharan Africa, communities are rising to the challenge and are changing the face of AIDS as we know it.
Small children who are heartbroken by the death of their mother or father, and who are themselves suffering from AIDS, are often lost in a place of grief beyond words.

Thabo, age 4, was brought to the hospital shortly after his mother’s death. Traumatized and terrified, he wouldn’t stop kicking, screaming and crying. Two music therapists sat beside him and began to weave the pitch of his crying into their songs. Still tearful, he finally allowed himself to be carried into a music therapy session where he tentatively banged at a drum. When the therapists demonstrated their empathy by picking up his beat on their guitars, Thabo’s face lit up with delight. Now, months later, he is “well-integrated” and attending preschool.

Siyasanga was just 3, gravely ill from AIDS, tiny, and utterly unresponsive. Only her huge eyes moved as she sat silent and sad in the group music sessions. Little by little, over weeks and months, Siyasanga began to move her hands, and then to sing in a hesitant small voice. Now stronger from her medicines, and emotionally on the road to healing, she runs joyfully to sessions and can’t be stopped from singing and dancing.

Caylem, age 6, was just 3 when he witnessed his father being murdered. When he first came to music therapy, he immediately regressed to toddler behaviour. Patiently, tenderly, the therapists joined their voices to his babyish outbursts. By the fourth session, Caylem suddenly acted out the scene of his father’s death. The bass drum “killed” the piano, was banged loudly, and then exiled to the other side of the room where Caylem refuses to touch it. Now his angry behaviour has calmed, and he is able to join in his regular classroom.

Children in the Heideveld choir sing about how AIDS has affected their lives

This sophisticated, loving and creative approach is one of the most positive we have seen in helping children to release the flood of grief inside and finally begin to heal.

These extraordinarily moving stories of transformation are a daily event in the crime-ridden area of Cape Town where the Music Therapy Community Clinic does its soul-healing work. “Most of our work now focuses on grief,” explained one of the therapists. “Music contains all emotions that need to be expressed, and it is usually safer to express oneself through music.”

MTCC’s work is so innovative and groundbreaking that it has inspired a number of other grassroots organizations to replicate their programmes, and has been cited internationally for its contributions. This sophisticated, loving and creative approach is one of the most positive we have seen in helping children to release the flood of grief inside and finally begin to heal.
AIDS has burned through South Africa like a brush fire out of control. One of the most devastated areas is KwaZulu Natal, the mountain region better known for its spectacular beauty. Its lushness is in sharp contrast to the stricken lives of the local people. In the blaze’s wake, grieving, abandoned children are left in the care of grandmothers (‘gogos’) who are hard pressed by hunger, bewilderment and loss.

In the scattered and remote villages where the Rob Smetherham Bereavement Services for Children (RobS) works, small miracles are taking root in the ashes. RobS, with its highly skilled and caring facilitators, trains local grassroots groups to offer bereavement support to gogos and children.

It’s a tough sell. Often, the overburdened local grandmothers turn up at initial meetings expecting food aid, and cannot understand the value of the psychosocial support offered.

Thembi, 55, a strong and locally respected figure, arrived at the group frustrated and angry. She had raised this orphan from childhood and was hurt and angry that the girl had dropped out of school, become disrespectful and wanted to live elsewhere. (Imagine the youths’ inner grief and turmoil: half the 15 year olds in South Africa will not live to 60).

Explaining the crisis to a group of grandmothers, Thembi wept bitterly. The others sympathized — they, too, were at a loss to deal with these difficult youngsters. Hitting was their all-too-common response, further harming the relationship with the child.

Patience, the RobS Community Facilitator persuaded the gogos to join in making dolls, and then use the dolls to play-act their own childhood feelings. Amidst high-spirited laughter and some tears, their resistance began to crumble. Soon, Thembi was taking home the lesson of ‘affirmation’. She sat with her granddaughter, held her hands, and tried to tell the girl how much she was loved. She spoke, not in reproof, but of all that she found to cherish in the child. And at that moment, their lives began to turn around.

Thembi’s young granddaughter is back at home, at school, happier and co-operative. Thembi finds ever more patience and love to express — and now works to encourage other gogos to participate and persevere.

RobS, using therapeutic play techniques, works with many local development organizations as well as directly with hundreds of children and their caregivers to embed this message of hope and healing: Children who receive everyday care and affirmation from the people they love grow up more resilient. Africa has never seen an entire generation of children so bereft. And Africa is going to depend on their resilience.

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**Did you know?** After meeting at the Orphan Care Roundtable in December, the Executive Directors of RobS and the Music Therapy Community Clinic (see p.5) met in Cape Town to continue the conversation: “It is like we are sisters in our principles and practice in doing psychosocial support work, and feel that there is much we can learn and share with each other.”
no young child should have to sit by and watch their parent die. But at age 7, Carol had the grown-up responsibility of tending to her mother during her agonizing final days.

After her mother’s death, Carol went to live with her grandmother in the Meru district of Kenya. She soon developed painful sores and persistent infections, and it became clear that she was living with HIV. Carol’s grandmother, desperate to save her young life, began selling off pieces of land to pay for her care. Treatment wasn’t readily available or affordable to most people in Kenya at that time, and her grandmother watched in anguish as the girl deteriorated before her eyes. After years of hospital visits, the doctors gave up hope – at age 11, Carol was sent home to die.

A neighbour suggested they contact Ripples International, a small faith-based organization that had recently begun working in the area. Run by husband and wife Chidi and Mercy Ogbonna, Ripples was one of the few organizations in Meru providing support and assistance to families affected by HIV and AIDS. Ripples filled an important gap, since the poverty-stricken region had little access to health care and the highest HIV infection rate in the country.

For children like Carol, Ripples’ intervention in their lives has been nothing short of miraculous. Shortly after she was released from the hospital, community health care workers began visiting her at home. They nursed her back to health – putting her on antiretroviral drugs and treating her for tuberculosis – and offered grief counselling to help Carol work through the trauma of losing her mother. Slowly, the sores disappeared, and she regained her strength.

Three years later, at age 14, Carol entered Grade 5, eager to resume her lessons. She excelled at school. When she was accepted into a prestigious high school, Ripples was there to pay her school fees and buy the supplies that would allow her to continue her education. They supported Carol’s grandmother by sending the family regular food baskets and giving her a goat to earn a small income.

With support from the Stephen Lewis Foundation, Ripples has been able to reach thousands of children and families in Meru and surrounding districts. Today, the organization is a bustling hive of activity, with more than 50 staff and 23 community support groups.

Carol, who was one of Ripples’ first beneficiaries, is now an eloquent and outspoken Grade 9 student who dreams of becoming a doctor, inspired by the experience of caring for her mother. She does peer-to-peer counselling for other youth and has spoken to the entire student assembly about her life story and her HIV-positive status. “I am so grateful to Ripples and to my grandmother for not giving up on me,” she says. “Ripples has been my mom and my dad. They have given me hope for the future.”
n the far north of Namibia, where there are no good roads and the Zambezi River floods its banks every rainy season from December to March, malaria thrives and the HIV/AIDS prevalence rate (31.7 per cent) is the highest in the country. The climate and local conditions can turn the simplest acts into a daunting challenge. Even when Catholic AIDS Action (CAA) offers school uniforms to orphans, the local women may have to wait for the material, or the orphans may lack soap to wash their new school clothes. Home care workers in the rainy season are hindered for want of umbrellas. Among CAA’s training materials for volunteers is this revealingly titled pamphlet: “It Costs Almost Nothing — Beneficial Indoor Games from Rubbish and Recycled Materials”.

No matter the challenges, CAA reaches out through its trained volunteers to provide loving support to more than 1,000 orphans in the region. Although an ambitious maize farm to feed the orphans was wiped out in the floods, the volunteers manage to run a soup kitchen for school children. Any day after school, you can see bright-eyed Mpambo, a clever 15 year old orphan, enthusiastically helping the younger children with their homework as they wait for their food. The little ones follow her around as she helps serve the soup; later, they all pitch in to follow her example in cleaning up. Because she can attend school, Mpambo is a picture of resilience, a leader, a symbol of Namibia’s hope.

So is 16 year old George. His father abandoned him as useless because he has a disability and is on crutches; his mother died and now George lives with a fragile elderly grandfa-

ther. Still, with all the blows life has dealt him, George shines at school. He soared through his exams and, with the help of CAA is clearly headed toward university, like seven other bright lights currently studying at a post-secondary level with full support from CAA.

Everywhere Stephen goes in Africa, children tell him that the one thing they want above all else is to attend school. School offers release from backbreaking labour... and the possibility of making a better life.

Everywhere Stephen goes in Africa, children tell him that the one thing they want above all else is to attend school. School offers release from backbreaking labour, the excitement of learning, the happiness of companionship and the life-affirming possibility of making a better life. With the Foundation’s support, CAA is providing school uniforms and fees to 473 orphans and vulnerable children, and is reaching far more through its home-based care and youth outreach and education programmes.

When you consider the staggering impact of the pandemic, plus the crushing burdens of poverty and underdevelopment, the strength and resourcefulness of the Africans is awe-inspiring. Out of practically nothing, they have built vast networks of home care workers, feeding stations and training programmes to cope with the rampaging impact of the virus.

How could we turn our backs on George, Mpambo and the thousands of hopeful youth who have already lost so much — and still not given up?
Even the most experienced activists for CAHA – Central Action on HIV/AIDS in Zambia – were shocked. A vast and determined network of volunteers started by youth, CAHA fans out across 90 communities to do door-to-door canvassing, offering rapid counselling, testing and support services as well as AIDS prevention and care. But when they started to discover house after house with only children at home, they realized the challenges had escalated.

In the devastated area of Lukanga Swamps, they found children like Lloyd and Faston, who live in a ruined mud-floored shack. Lloyd is 8. He has been on his own since he was six, when both his parents died. He faithfully looks after 6 year old Faston. At night, in the vast and friendless dark, the children sleep on a flattened cardboard box, with no blankets or covers, and cling to each other for comfort.

When the CAHA volunteer came, Lloyd said it was a lucky day. He had caught a fish that morning, and sold it to a local woman – now he and Faston would have a meal of corn flour that evening.

CAHA is working to develop support networks for children like Lloyd and Faston. Community mentors are being trained to visit regularly. Shelter, food, school fees and books can turn a catastrophic situation into one of optimism and courage.

Nanyangwe, 16, had despaired before CAHA came to her door. Trying to raise 6 younger siblings, ages 4 to 15, with no means of support, had brought this bright teenager to a point of no return. The house was silent, except for the younger children crying from hunger. The 7 and 9 year olds had taken to stealing and crushing bricks, then trying to sell them.

CAHA has done for Nanyangwe’s family what it did for Lloyd and Faston: now there is regular food, all the children are in school, a mentor visits three times a week, and the children even have shoes. Nanyangwe herself is excelling at school — and she is smiling again. She has a future.

The mentors help orphans to talk about their feelings and needs, settle disputes among siblings, reassure them that their parents’ death was not their fault, and try to keep these youngsters from taking to a lawless life on the streets.

We speak of the resilience of the AIDS orphans, and the astonishing gains they can make with the smallest amount of material and emotional aid. Equally amazing is the resilience of the volunteers, with their unflagging work on behalf of the starving, the sick, the abandoned. With SLF support, CAHA reaches 1,440 Zambians. Anything we can do to help them, in the grip of the pandemic, will be repaid a thousandfold in human happiness.
I recently returned from a trip to Malawi where I visited a number of impressive organizations, including Hope for the Elderly (HOFE), which works with grandmothers and the children in their care. It was during this visit that I met 96-year-old Verelina, a witty and youthful grandmother caring for her four orphaned grandchildren.

When their parents died of AIDS, Verelina took in her four grandchildren. Traditionally, women could rely on their children to support them in their old age. But in a country where AIDS has caused the average life expectancy to plummet to 43 years of age and three-quarters of the population lives on less than $2 a day, grandmothers like Verelina have found themselves caring for young children with no social safety net and little outside support.

After her children died, Verelina fell into a deep depression. She was acutely aware of the hurdles she faced, trying to raise these young children, yet saw no way to provide for their basic needs: meals were scarce and the grass thatch roof on her small home was constantly leaking onto the mud floors and making their lives miserable. The floor was uneven, which meant that collecting water was a breeding ground for mosquitoes and a risk for malaria; the whole place was in shambles.

People like Verelina live with you for a long time.

That’s when Hope for the Elderly (HOFE) stepped in. HOFE reaches 102 grandmothers in 12 villages. Through a group of 40 committed volunteers, they work to rebuild houses, cultivate gardens, bring water and deliver food packages, lead support groups and visit the sick and frail in their homes. Not only is HOFE one of the few organizations in Malawi responding specifically to the issues grandmothers are facing in the context of HIV and AIDS, they have successfully mobilized communities to be part of the response.

HOFE volunteers rebuilt Verelina’s house for her. They bring her food parcels and check in regularly. Verelina also joined a HOFE support group for grandmothers. Each week, the women gather under a tree or in someone’s home to talk, share and even laugh. When you speak to the grandmothers who walk for miles to get there, rain or shine, you understand how important it is to be part of the group. For so many women, the groups are a reason to get up in the morning – they have become a kind of extended family.

Verelina was so proud to show me her home and to tell me about how well the children are doing in school. It was remarkable to see the transformation that had taken place in her life. In meeting with the other grannies, she has found a purpose – she is a support to other women, and she wants to be around to see her grandchildren finish school. “You know, I used to cry all the time and just wish that I would die,” said Verelina. “I would ask myself, ‘Why am I still alive?’ And now I don’t do that anymore, because I’m not alone looking after these children.”

I think about Verelina often. To see how Hope for the Elderly has given a 96-year-old grandmother a renewed sense of purpose and belonging is a perfect example of what turning the tide is all about. People like Verelina live with you for a long time.
**Canadians from coast to coast are holding fantastic fundraising events:**

**THE HANDY GRANDIES** meet at the Cordova Bay School in Saanich, B.C., so it seemed natural to approach the principal, show the SLF’s Grandmothers film to students, and raise money for the Foundation. Linda Hallet, a Victoria Grandmothers for Africa member, spoke to the grade four class at Cordova Bay and the students were surprised to learn that it costs money to go to school in Swaziland. “To make a difference, our family has a jar that we are collecting money in,” said one student. “We will donate that jar to the Foundation.” In Linda’s words, “out of the mouths of babes come words of wisdom.” If you would like a grandmother to speak at your school, please contact us at 1-888-203-9990 x230.

**THE HUMAN PROMISE** is a group of highly motivated high school students affiliated with the Quebec Jewish Congress in Montreal. Their motto is: “No human is more human than the other.” They held an event called Bingo with Bubby: “Share your love of Mother’s Day through this special gift of hope for African bubbies.” The intergenerational bingo game was intended to educate Jewish seniors and students about the pandemic and the work of the Stephen Lewis Foundation. For more great intergenerational fundraising ideas, visit the Share Ideas section on our website.

**THE AMAZING RACE AGAINST TIME** is a creative spin on the title of Stephen Lewis’s book, Race Against Time. It’s a fundraiser run by the $Million or More Oakville Campaign, in Oakville, ON. On October 3rd, teams will compete for three hours in challenges designed to test their mental and physical abilities. Team leader Gillian Zimmerman says, “My friends and I have led very happy and comfortable lives. It has been an eye-opening experience for us to learn about the Foundation and the AIDS pandemic in Africa. Pulling together to organize this race has allowed for an enormous amount of personal growth for each one of us.” Get involved at: www.amazingraceagainsttime.com

**STUDENTS HELPING ORPHANS IN AFRICA WITH RELIEF (SOAR),** an initiative launched by schools in Peel Region, ON, has raised more than $16,000. “Our students give us hope for a better world when we look at their determination to help those less fortunate,” said SOAR organizers. “We heard stories about a student who raised funds by clearing snow from driveways, and students who got together and organized bake sales and candy grams. Students also learned about Africa and its cultures through music, art and education.” If you’re with a school in Peel and want to join the SOAR Campaign next year, call 416-533-9292, x223.

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**WE’RE HERE TO HELP:**

Need more information? Want to tell us about an event? Got a great idea? Please e-mail us at community@stephenlewisfoundation.org or campaign@stephenlewisfoundation.org for the Grandmothers Campaign or call 1-888-203-9990 x223.

www.stephenlewisfoundation.org
A grandmother in Soweto, South Africa drops to the ground in anguish over the deaths of her children to AIDS. She sobs and wonders aloud how she will find the strength to care for her orphaned grandchildren on her own.

A moment later, a group of grandmothers gather around her. Slowly, one woman begins to sing in a low voice. One by one, the others join in, their voices blending together in unison. They move closer to the gogo lying on the ground and help her to her feet. She wipes away her tears and after a few moments, joins in the singing. The songs are a way for the women to heal, and to offer each other solace and support.

On March 25, 2009, more than 50 groups of grandmothers in 11 African countries and 6 Canadian provinces gathered in their communities to perform a cross-continent solidarity action. This symbolic act was inspired by grandmothers at Kitovu Mobile AIDS Organization in Uganda who created a short play to illustrate the struggles that they face raising their orphaned grandchildren.

The idea was simple but powerful: Canadian and African grandmothers gathered in a public space in their respective communities. After a short time, the rest of the group began to sing, dance and take the hands of those on the ground to pull them out of their individual suffering and offer them strength.

The group then formed a circle while singing and dancing to show the power of communities to turn the tide of AIDS in Africa.

At Phoebe Education Fund for AIDS Orphans and Vulnerable Children (PEFO) in Uganda, grandmothers found that the message hit close to home: “This [type of action] is based on the true daily experience which the grannies go through when caring for their orphaned grandchildren,” said PEFO staff. “But the most important part of it is that their determination and hope never fades.”

In Canada, grannies added their own flair through choreographed dances, candlelight dinners and even by marching through the streets. “It was a very goose-bumpy moment when we realized just how many people in so many countries were going to be doing just what we were doing here,” said the members of Grandmothers Embrace in Alliston, ON. “True joy is what we have gotten from our tiny part in helping our wonderful granny friends. And in the process, we have made new, lifelong friends, [and] had some great times that have improved our community a bit too by bringing us together. It just doesn’t get any better!”
Grandepritiors and schools working together... what could be better!

All across Canada, grandmother are reaching out to teachers, school boards and students to raise awareness about HIV and AIDS in Africa. “This problem will outlive us,” said one Hamilton, ON, grandmother, “so youth need to be the focus of advocacy and education and skills development. Teenagers are the perfect age group to work with grandmothers; they have enthusiasm and energy and want to help.”

A retired teacher from Victoria, B.C., and a grandmother activist, has involved children even younger. “When we showed the Grandmothers: the Unsung Heroes of Africa video to students in the middle school, they started to lead the way. The intergenerational aspect was a very positive experience, and taught children about the issues and fundraising skills.”

“Turning the tide is such a hopeful message for students and teachers alike,” a grandmother from Saskatoon, SK. “It makes the all-important point that the grassroots organizations in Africa are making a real difference and that our work here in Canada is an investment in the future of the African continent.”

Since March 2006, more than $6 million has been raised for grandmothers and the children in their care in sub-Saharan Africa.

Outstanding achievements

It’s no surprise that grandmothers across Canada are being recognized for their tremendous work: the Grandmothers Campaign was one of the inaugural recipients of the June Callwood Outstanding Achievement Award for Voluntarism in Ontario; B.C. granny groups were recently recognized for their efforts with a Rosemary Brown Award; and Regina Grandmothers 4 Grandmothers were awarded a local YWCA Women of Distinction Award for Teamwork. Congratulations on all of your incredible work to support African grannies!

Grandmothers Campaign reaches $6 million!

Since March 2006, more than $6 million has been raised for grandmothers and the children in their care in sub-Saharan Africa.

Resources

We’re developing a package of resources and ideas for grandmothers to speak in schools, including: PowerPoint presentations, print materials, fact sheets, activities, posters, and workshop and curriculum guides. If you’d like to order a copy or share your ideas, please contact 1-888-203-9990 x260 or ldelaney@stephenlewisfoundation.org
This July, follow along in real time online as Stephen Lewis visits our projects in sub-Saharan Africa. Read updates, feature stories and view photos about the people leading the response to HIV and AIDS at the community level.

FOLLOW US ON facebook AND twitter!

Visit our website (www.stephenlewisfoundation.org) or text ‘Lewis’ to #101010 to sign up for e-mail updates. You can also join the Official Stephen Lewis Foundation Facebook Group (www.facebook.com) to keep on top of news and updates. Or, follow us on Twitter (www.twitter.com) @stephenlewisfdn and tell us about what you’re doing to raise awareness, hold events, and help turn the tide of HIV and AIDS in Africa!

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS STEPHEN?

CREATE A PERSONAL FUNDRAISING PAGE

Now you can fundraise online for the Stephen Lewis Foundation. The process is simple: visit our website to create your own personal fundraising page or sponsor a friend or family member. Whether you’re participating in a bike-a-thon, receiving donations in lieu of birthday gifts, or holding a Scrabble™ fundraiser, you can use the online fundraising pages to collect donations, track your progress and motivate your sponsors to give. If you have any questions about getting started, call 1-888-203-9990 x223 or e-mail community@stephenlewisfoundation.org.

SHARE THE JOY

If it’s Spring and Summer, it must be wedding season and traditionally a time when couples receive and give gifts. So, here’s something a little less traditional. Instead of bonbonnieres for wedding guests, consider making a donation to the Foundation in an equivalent amount. For more information, call 1-888-203-9990 x223.

A WOMAN OF DISTINCTION

SLF Executive Director Ilana Landsberg-Lewis was awarded a 2009 Toronto YWCA Women of Distinction Award for International Development. “Ilana Landsberg-Lewis has devoted her career to bettering the lives of women as a passionate advocate for human rights,” said the YWCA organizers. “She has captured the imagination of people across Canada and the hope of grandmothers around the world.”

Ilana worked as a labour and human rights lawyer and later became the UNIFEM advisor on the women’s convention (CEDAW). She started the Stephen Lewis Foundation at her kitchen table in 2003. The Foundation’s approach “has been so successful that other donor agencies have taken note and activists praise the Stephen Lewis Foundation as the agency that really ‘gets it,’” says the YWCA.

Ilana was one of seven outstanding women honoured by the YWCA. Learn more at: www.ywcatoronto.org/women_distinction/
OUR FISCAL YEAR

Our fiscal year runs from July 1st to June 30th. A breakdown of our revenue and disbursements for the 2008-2009 fiscal year will be included in the Winter 2009 edition of Grassroots. SLF financial statements are audited annually by Cowperthwaite Mehta Chartered Accountants. Audited statements are available upon request. You can also view our financial information at www.cra-arc.gc.ca. Our charitable number is 89635 4008 RR0001.

TAX RECEIPTS

We deeply value every donation - big and small - but in order to keep our administrative costs as low as possible, we have increased our minimum amount for an official tax receipt to $20. If you have an upcoming event and have already advised participants that they are eligible for a tax receipt for $10, please let us know at 1-888-203-9990 x 230.

WE’re READING...

The Wisdom of Whores: Bureaucrats, Brothels, and the Business of AIDS
By: Elizabeth Pisani

Journalist turned epidemiologist Elizabeth Pisani issues a compelling challenge to business-as-usual in the world of HIV/AIDS. “The Wisdom of Whores is a great read,” says Stephen Lewis. “Some of it is designed to shock. But as the pages turn, the interlocking universe of bureaucrats and sex work and NGOs and agencies yields fascinating insights into the pandemic.” Author of numerous HIV/AIDS reports, including the first two editions of UNAIDS’ Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic, Pisani fearlessly questions the conventional wisdom about the international response to AIDS. From abstinence to prevalence rates, harm reduction to mandatory HIV testing, she leaves no stone unturned. “It should be mandatory, not voluntary, reading,” says Lewis. “Pisani is lucid, colourful, insightful and impatient.”

THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!

We are so grateful to all of the dedicated volunteers who share their precious time and skills in support of grassroots projects in Africa. Across the country, thousands of grandmothers, students, teachers and community organizers are raising awareness, holding events, making and selling crafts, cards and all sorts of amazing goodies. In our office, we have over 50 regular volunteers (like Maggie Strachan, above) helping out with projects, communications, data entry, grandmothers and community events — the equivalent of 8 full-time staff members. This work would not be possible without your efforts! If you would like to volunteer, please call 1-888-203-9990 x0 or e-mail info@stephenlewisfoundation.org.
TAKE ACTION THIS OCTOBER

This OCTOBER 17-25, 2009, we invite you to join thousands of Canadians and be part of a national challenge to help turn the tide of HIV and AIDS in Africa. In one week, we hope to raise $2 million to help build a groundswell of change across sub-Saharan Africa.

The idea is simple: do something to challenge yourself and make a difference for communities in Africa. Participate as an individual. Be part of a team. Be creative. Get your school, faith community, and co-workers to join you. Whether you raise $100 or $5,000, every dollar is a blow to the pandemic.

Here are a couple of great ideas to get you started (more to come over the summer!):

° The Grandmothers Campaign is challenging us all to hold 1,000 or more fundraising dinners in celebration of grandmothers here and in Africa. Pick a night, invite your friends, share stories about grandmothers, and collect donations. Share an evening of food and friendship.

° Challenge yourself to do acts of kindness in your community, and collect pledges for every act. Do home repairs, rake the leaves, babysit for a friend, drive a neighbour, walk a dog. Help out locally... and give globally.

Sign-up now to receive updates on plans for October at: www.stephenlewisfoundation.org/challenge or call 1-888-203-9990 x223.

TAKE ACTION. JOIN THE MOVEMENT. TOGETHER WE CAN TURN THE TIDE!

TRIBUTES FOR TEACHERS AND GRADS

Honour your child’s teacher or celebrate a graduating student with a donation to the Stephen Lewis Foundation. Give a gift that acknowledges the difference they have made. You can make your donation online by visiting www.stephenlewisfoundation.org and send a personalized e-card with your own special message. Or, send a beautiful printed card by calling 1-888-203-9990 x0. It’s a worthy donation and a meaningful gift rolled into one.