



oomama

Supporting African Grandmothers
and Orphans Through the
Stephen Lewis Foundation



2023 Spring Newsletter

Celebrating!



the
Stephen Lewis
FOUNDATION

20 Years

See Page 4



March 2023 Oomama General Meeting

Dell, Leslie, Bev, Sandy, Susan, Pat M, *Back row:* Carolyn A., Judy P., Anne, Pat B., Barb, Wendy

Greetings from the Oomama co-chairs - Pat McKee and Barb Podgorski

Barb stepped in as co-chair last fall and Pat is so grateful.

We are thankful that we again feel comfortable meeting in person again, enjoying the socialization along with the serious business of supporting the Grandmothers Campaign. And we are happy to welcome a new member - Pat Barnett.

It has been an eventful few months since our last newsletter - both good and sad.

We have had some successful in-person Marketplace events. On page 3, you will read about our wonderful "Resilience" fundraising event that took place last fall. We had two fantastic speakers and the MC for the evening was our own enthusiastic Rita Hutton. She worked closely with the planning committee on a script that set just the right tone for the evening. Barely two months later, our dear Rita succumbed to cancer.

Rita's obituary reads: Rita was many things - wife, mother, Nonna, teacher, knitting virtuoso, proud choir member, aspiring pickle-ball player, an incredible friend, and the kindest and most generous person you will have ever met. She was someone who improved the lives of everyone around her - giving of her time and talents across the incredible number of hobbies and groups she was a part of. Rita was someone who truly made the most of every day, and an incredible example of how to live life and give love. In-lieu of flowers, go out and do something kind - Rita would love it.

Rita was a very passionate Oomama member and the members of the Speakers group spent many long, laughter-filled hours planning presentations to groups such as CFUW, Rotary, Probus, Girl Guides and various schools. Our group has been shaken and is grieving her untimely death. We want to honour her memory, and we have talked about how we can do that. There are many choices, and a final decision is yet to be made.

In reflecting on the chair's message in the fall newsletter, I wrote about the wonderful celebration to honour Judy Pearsall on her 90th birthday. Judy quoted from Buddha "The problem is, you think you have time." Little did we think that it was Rita, probably the youngest member of our group, whose days were so few. We miss her so much. So, "go out and do something kind - Rita would love it."



Stride to Turn the Tide 2023



**Donate to the Stride
Halton/Peel Team!**



Check out our
progress online
oomama.org

The Halton/Peel Virtual Stride Team began striding virtually on March 1st in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and are following the 10,254 KM route which ends in Gaborone, Botswana. Our aim is to return back on the route as far as we can until June 30th.

We had our Launch Party via Zoom on March 23rd. Alanna Wallace, Deputy Director, Philanthropic Partnerships at SLF, talked about how our Stride donations are being used in the projects in Africa. Stride is just one of the fundraising events of the *Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign*.

We now have 27 striders who are walking, exercising and counting steps from March through to the end of June. When you donate to one of our striders, you are supporting the grass-roots projects funded by the SLF, who in turn, aid the courageous *Grandmothers* who are committed to the well-being of their grandchildren.

The \$15,000 fundraising goal was surpassed last year and we are hoping to do the same this year. Then it will be time to have a celebration party in September. Watch for announcement of date, time, and place.

Joint Captains of the Halton/Peel Virtual Stride 2023
Wendy Merson, Leslie Kulokas and Carolyn Archer



Speakers/Education Committee



A cheeky photo of Rita that we and her family thought captured her spunkiness!

The members of the Speakers group are finding it difficult to come to terms with Rita Hutton's death.

We don't have any presentations lined up for 2023 yet. 'Yet' is a hopeful word because Rita was such an integral part of designing them and she was a fabulous presenter.

Because Education is a prime mission of our committee, we will take on the job that our fundraising committee usually does - set up information tables for fundraising events. In September, we will help Oomama Co-Chairs find good speakers or videos to show at the beginning of our *OMG Meetings*.



Resilience



Speakers:
Barbara Dickson and Barry Gilbert



Barry performing a smudging
with Barb



Anne, Leslie, Sandy



Melanie with the Jewellery

Our highly successful fundraising event was held November 4, 2022, at the Small Arms Inspection Building in Mississauga, which was the perfect size for both the speakers' event, our marketplace and silent auction. Because the timing was close to Remembrance Day, our focus on resilience included our veterans and we invited the local Legion to have a table.

Contributing to our success was the fact (which we have observed at previous events) that we were the only vendor. We were thrilled with the unexpected offer of Barry Gilbert, one of our speakers, to do a smudging ceremony before we started.

Of course, as is sometimes the case, a few blips occurred just as we were preparing the day. Our A/V expert and one of our speakers (Robyn Bourgeois) were both ill and could not attend. Although we were sorry to hear that, it did allow more time for our marketplace and silent auction.

We were honoured to have Rita Hutton, in one of her last public appearances, be our emcee and in true Rita fashion, her presentation was exemplary!

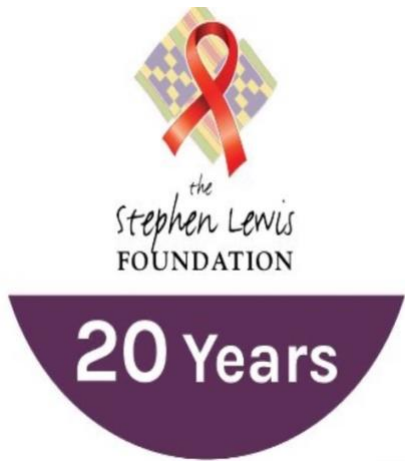
Barbara Dickson, author of *The Bomb Girls* and soon to be released *United for Peace* spoke about the women who went to work in support of the war effort - building ammunition and guns. Many had never worked outside of the home. Their challenges were considerable, and Barbara told their stories with compassion and humour.

Our second speaker, Barry Gilbert, spoke of the resilience of the Indigenous People and the tragedy of residential schools, and spoke of the strength and challenges of the survivors.

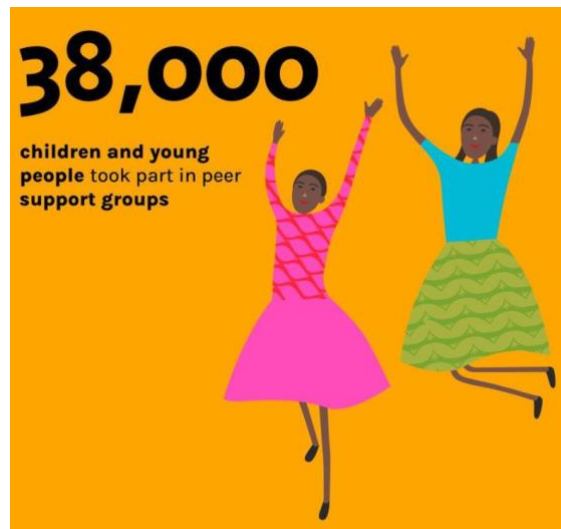
We were thrilled to have the support of three sponsors who covered many of the costs.

Thanks to Assante Wealth Management, Geotab, and Team Nasiry with iPro Realty. In addition, Hardie and Company provided the artwork and Regal Press contributed the printing, all pro bono.

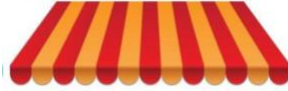
Thanks to the support of our sponsors and donors we were able to donate net proceeds of \$4000.00 to the Stephen Lewis foundation. --Sandy



These images are from the SLF 2022 Year End Report.



The Stephen Lewis Foundation thanks all the supporters of the Foundation in this Thank You video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mVv9yEb8p2A>



Check out our online Marketplace:

oomama.org/marketplace

Find gifts for your friends and family and useful ones for yourself! Fabric items: masks, bags of all kinds, beaded and netted jewellery are handmade by our crafty grandmothers. As part of our 'GoGreen' initiative, we have reusable products replacing plastic. Jewelry Repair too!



GRAND(M)OTHERS ACT
TO SAVE THE PLANET

This video from GASP tells their story well...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eODbXjc6iI>

GASP is involved in several environmental issues - locally, provincially, and federally. The campaigns we are presently working on: Basic Income; getting Canadian Banks and Pension funds to stop investing in fossil fuels; our Ontario Climate Watch Team who are working on sprawl; firm urban boundaries; saving farmland and wetlands; and protesting HWY 413.



GRAN Grandmothers

Advocacy Network <https://grandmothersadvocacy.org>

GRAN Up date

Over the past year, GRAN has updated its vision and mission as well as its organizational structure.

Our vision is a world where the human rights of older women, children and youth, and gender-diverse persons are recognized and protected so that they can achieve their full potential. Our passion for this vision is a deep concern for the human rights and well-being of grandmothers in sub-Saharan Africa and the children and youth in their care, as well as those of vulnerable and marginalized women in communities of the Global South. *The mission* of GRAN is to advocate for the human rights of these vulnerable groups, both globally and locally.

In addition, we have decided to focus on one GRAN-wide advocacy issue annually. For 2023, we are focusing on hunger and have decided on a campaign called Right to Food (RtF). Hunger, starvation and malnutrition are now unfortunately a worldwide issue, dangerously so in sub-Saharan Africa.

I would like to encourage any Oomamas who are not GRAN members to join our mailing list. At least you will receive all the important communications and can decide if you want to be more involved.



Oh, what a beautiful mornin'
 Oh, what a beautiful day
 I've got a beautiful feelin'
 Grans guide Africa each day

There's bright futures glowing in Africa
 There's bright futures glowing in Africa
 Grans help gals and guys - how hard they do try
 It looks like their guidance is reaching the sky

Oh, what a beautiful mornin'
 Oh, what a beautiful day
 I've got a beautiful feelin'
 Grans change Africa each day

All the children are learning like scholars
 All the children are learning like scholars
 They won't turn their heads when they see us
 stride by
 And their happiness shows up in their eyes

Oh, what a beautiful mornin'
 Oh, what a beautiful day
 I've got a beautiful feelin'
 Grans change Africa each day

All the work the Grans do is amazing
 All the work the Grans do is amazing
 They are so busy helping heal everything
 And their diligence is so impressing

Oh, what a beautiful mornin'
 Oh, what a beautiful day
 I've got a beautiful feelin'
 Grans reshape Africa - YEA!

Supporters raising many more dollars
 Supporters raising many more dollars
 Our virtual stride will help the Grans succeed
 Satisfying many Africans needs

Oh how Grans are contributing
 Oh, how their legacy will stay
 Gran's bring a beautiful feelin'
 That better times are coming our way

All their love and help brings joyful music
 All their love and help brings joyful music
 Grans provide health care, counselling & much more
 And Human rights advocacy galore

Oh, what a beautiful mornin'
 Oh, what a beautiful day
 I've got a beautiful feelin'
 Grans reshape Africa - YEA!

Oh how Grans are contributing
 Oh, how their legacy will stay
 Gran's bring a beautiful feelin'
 That better times are coming their way

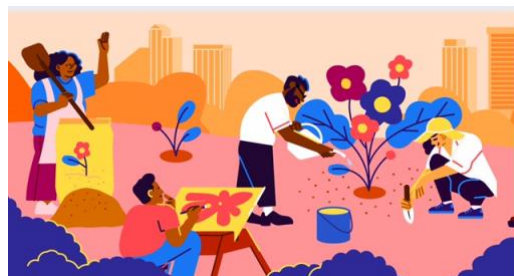
Oh, what a beautiful mornin'
 Oh, what a beautiful day
 I've got a beautiful feelin'
 Grans reshaping Africa - Hoo-Ray
 Yes! better times are coming their way



~Anne Mackenzie Thompson

Find us on

[Facebook](#)



And [Oomama.org](#)