



Newsletter - Fall 2020



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GRAN
New! Online Marketplace



Co-Chairs' Report

~ Pat McKee and Sandy Malukovic

Stride

*You know, we grands, well we went walking
Naturally we did quite a bit of talking
About this amazing land of ours
Loved our virtual walk to the stars
(Our virtual walk left no scars)*

*Iqualit in Nunavut is where we started
Then through all the provinces we charted
As well as all the territories too
Good excuse for brand new shoes
That's right, rain or shine
We walked, we climbed
Then we wine and dined*

*About our stride
We share much pride
Raised over ten thousand dollars
Treked more than seventeen thousand kilometres
In solidarity for our sisters in Africa
Whose challenges have no replica*

~Anne MacKenzie-Thompson

See page 3 -4 for more about Stride!

The year 2020 has been, in a word, challenging. We went from planning exciting and informative guest presentations for OMG, to just keeping our heads above water as COVID-19 closed down our communities.

So we had to re-group. The Stephen Lewis Foundation has supported our foray into Zoom, and in March we quickly shifted to Zoom meetings. Zoom has allowed us to meet together, but there is nothing like seeing and being with others in person. It is sometimes difficult with our routines turned upside down, no hugs, and constant uncertainty to maintain one's mental health.

Generally, the Zoom meetings have offered moral support rather than official business, but we were always glad to check in to see how everyone was doing. In July, some of us had a wonderful in-person gathering in Alison Belair's back yard, and that was not only fun, but comforting, as well.

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Chairs' Report continued from page 1...

Although the Zoom learning curve has been a challenge for many of us, Pat, Bev, and Rita managed not only to conquer the everyday Zoom dragon, but they presented a complicated Zoom presentation (for the *University Women's Club*) at the very same time that Oomama members were in the Zoom audience. I guess that was a two-for-one for the ages!

The fundraising committee continued to raise funds throughout the pandemic. Their creative fundraising ideas and the sales of our products have been impressive. See the fundraising report below.

The grandmothers of Sub-Saharan Africa, though hard hit by the pandemic, have once again demonstrated their resilience by making adjustments to deal with COVID-19 and by supporting the most vulnerable with the help of a variety of non-governmental organizations supported by the SLF. Although we ourselves are also under the duress caused by the pandemic, our African Grandmothers lack the consistent incomes, healthcare and safe comfortable homes that comfort many of us.



Current Fundraising Projects

Wendy Merson and Leslie Kulokas Reporting

Online Marketplace: Oomama has already sent over \$3300 to the SLF for merchandise sales, and still has over \$1000 in the bank! Now there is a new Oomama Online Marketplace! Be sure to check out this enticing and professional site. Click here to browse and order all the products: oomamamarketplace.wixsite.com/marketplace

Shopping for Gift Giving & Yourself!

Bags, Go Green, Masks, Jewellery, Miscellaneous

Our crafty members have many useful and gorgeous items for sale, including reusable bags in three sizes which you can take to the grocery store, thus avoiding plastic bags. there are a myriad of other uses for these bags - lunch, shopping, jewellery, and what-have-you! Masks are also available in colours and fabric patterns for everyone on your list - kids, sports fans, foodies, art lovers, travellers, etc. Visit Galleries of Antique, Beaded, and Netted Jewellery.

Each year in June, one of the OMG co-chairs steps down. This year, however, there was no one ready to step up, so Sandy agreed to stay on a bit longer and Beverly Carr has generously offered to help Pat in various capacities. So now, while Beverly helps out, we would like to encourage members who may be interested, to contact either Pat or Sandy and we can have a chat, orient you, and do whatever you need us to do, to feel supported in the role of co-chair.

It's a great chance to get to know your co-chair (we really like each other!) and learn more about the ongoing help that the Stephen Lewis Foundation provides.

We would like to wish all of you good mental and physical health as we move into the fall. Be kind to yourselves. These are tough times for everyone.

Final word from Pat: I would like to thank Sandy for being a wonderful co-chair. I have learned a lot from her and we have had a lot of fun collaborating and sharing ideas. She is a wise woman with lots of interesting and valuable life experiences. I am so grateful that she stayed on a bit longer as we got used to doing things differently with COVID. I will miss her but I know I can turn to her for advice and direction if I need it.

The fabric products are sewn by Leslie, (our crafty bitch), and now helped by Rita Hutton, Carolyn Hitchinson and Zorica Bosnjakovic. The beautiful beaded jewellery is made by Susan Savage and Melanie Burns. The Marketplace website was put together by Beverly and Melanie, and led by Leslie. Since the Marketplace has gone online, lots of orders are coming in! Please pass the link on to your friends and family. oomamamarketplace.wixsite.com/marketplace

More Online Fundraising – The challenges during the pandemic have prevented us from presenting bazaars and concerts. But the clever fundraisers at Oomama have provided us with an opportunity to put our names online under TeamOomama, on the SLF site of GrandmothersGeneral Pledges 2020. You'll be able to Register for TeamOomama, Donate, or simply Login and have a look around. We have high hopes that this will be another avenue for our friends and family to donate to this worthwhile cause.

Ask for a donation to SLF instead of getting a gift.

From Wendy: Have you ever had a family member or friend say they would like to give you something for your birthday or for Christmas and you feel you have enough stuff and think they would be willing to donate on your behalf to a charity? This is one of the reasons we have set up online **TeamOomama** as a way of fundraising. This will be similar to the Stride, but you can put your own name on Team Oomama and direct people to make their donation by giving them your URL to your own page. To set up your own page start here: <https://SLF.akaraisin.com/ui/GrandmothersPledges2020>

From Pat: If you are helping someone with something and they want to pay you, instead **ask for donation to SLF**. Pat has done that by helping people with their hand problems. SLF has received \$600 so far!



Past Fundraisers 2020

At the end of February, Oomama presented a wonderful concert: "Sounds of Love and Hope," featuring *The Chamber Choir* and *A Few Good Men* from *The Oakville Choir for Children and Youth*. The music was uplifting and Oomama was able to send \$6,420 to The Stephen Lewis Foundation. Because of the COVID pandemic, it is unlikely that we will be able to have another concert in 2021.

Virtual Stride to Turn the Tide

Despite the country being closed down for the pandemic, Oomama and Bronte Grandmothers were able to join together for a *Virtual Stride to Turn the Tide* and the Halton/Peel Virtual Stride Team once again managed a virtual walk around Canada, starting at Iqaluit, in the Nunavut territory (you may remember it as Frobisher Bay) and walking south, west, north, and east all the way back to Iqaluit - in a kind of 'wonky' virtual circle!

At our Virtual Stride Celebration party, we toasted ourselves for completing our walk and raising \$11,745. We also congratulated the two prize winners – Susan Eadie for walking the most kilometres and Wendy Belcher for fundraising the most money. These winners were each presented with a copy of the 2020 Virtual Stride Blog Book, generously donated by Tina and Anne. We're all looking forward to the next Stride.



Iqaluit to Iqaluit

Tina Agrell and Anne MacKenzie-Thompson entertained the walkers with blogs about the cities and countryside they were virtually seeing. The two bloggers then compiled their blogs into a "**2020 Virtual Stride Blog Book.**" This was an amazing accomplishment - 280 pages showing the 17,399 km that the participants walked as a team. In addition to that, the team 'banked' 882 km. for next year's Stride. Watch for news as to how you can get a digital copy.

Future Fundraising Event:

The evening with Barbara Dickson, the author of the "Bomb Girls," had to be cancelled for this November 11th. It has been rescheduled hopefully for 2021.



Speakers/Education Report



Pat, Rita, Beverly

In the Spring, we had to cancel presentations that we had lined up. Schools were closed and we didn't think using Zoom to talk to groups would work for us. However, when the Bloomsberry2 group of *The Canadian Federation of University Women* asked us to give a presentation via Zoom, we decided to give it a try. Pat, Rita, and Bev worked on the new PowerPoint presentation and the technology of sharing screens and showing videos. Rita and Pat presented it to the Zoom monthly meeting of Speakers/Ed and received excellent feedback and ideas. We then presented it to 15 members of the Bloomsberry2 group on November 3rd. Included in our presentation were two videos - one of Stephen Lewis praising the grandmothers, and the other of Idah Mukuka Nambeya talking about what life is like in Zambia during COVID-19. We encouraged the women to join us, and to visit our online Marketplace. Their warm, enthusiastic reaction made it all worthwhile. They will tell others in CFUW about us and they donated \$100. ~ Co-Chairs Rita Hutton and Beverly Carr.

GRAN Grandmothers Advocacy Network

[Visit https://grandmothersadvocacy.org](https://grandmothersadvocacy.org)

Find out about their current advocacy efforts in Ending Violence Against Women, Ensuring Access to Affordable Medicines, Ensuring Access to Education, and more.



And The People Stayed Home...

And they listened, and read books, and rested, and exercised, and made art, and played games, and learned new ways of being, and were still.

And they listened more deeply. Some meditated, some prayed, some danced. Some met their shadows. And the people began to think differently.

And the people healed..

And, in the absence of people living in ignorant, dangerous, mindless, and heartless ways, the earth began to heal.

And when the danger passed, and the people joined together again, they grieved their losses, and made new choices, and dreamed new images, and created new ways to live and heal the earth fully, as they had been healed.

~Kitty O'Meara,
a contemporary wordsmith who lives in Madison, WI



For those of you on Facebook: Remember to forward the Oomama posts to your friends. Just hit the 'share' button. This is a wonderful, easy way to get the word out to lots of people.

Closing words from Anne:

*Hope you're stay safe & well
This COVID stuff is like h***
Shhhh, yes I swore
Please don't tell
Promise I won't swear more....*

Editor: Beverly Carr Copy Editor: Judy Pearsall

