



Newsletter - Fall 2021



Oomama & Bronte Grans
(To the tune of The Happy Wanderer)
Lyrics by Anne MacKenzie-Thompson –
edited by Pat McKee

Grans love to go a wandering
Through Africa - Hoo-ray
And as we go, we love to sing
That hope is on the way

Chorus:
Joyfully - Bronte Grans
Harmony - Oomama
Ma, ma, ma, ma, ma, ma
Hand in hand on we go
In Solidarity
[Chorus]

19 thousand clicks we've done
That's lots of steps per day
Crossed much of Africa in fun
And Hope is on the way
[Chorus]

Our virtual stride's a big success
Raised more than 16K
To help them out we do our best
And hope is on the way
[Chorus]

Grans love to go a wandering
Through Africa - Hoo-ray
And as we go, we love to sing
That hope is on the way
[Chorus]

A message from Pat McKee, Chair, Oomama

The Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign recently celebrated its 15th year anniversary with an amazing online event that can be viewed at:
<https://youtu.be/SiWUZWk0RUQ>. If you haven't yet seen it, I highly recommend it. There are some marvelous videos included in the presentation.

I am now into the third year of my two-year term as chair. What was once a co-chair position has become a single chair position with no obvious successor in the wings. But I am not complaining or looking for gratitude. Quite the contrary, it is my pleasure to express sincere appreciation to all the awesome Oomamas.

The Fundraising Team, with the support of a well-developed online marketplace, developed largely by Beverly Carr, has been busy creating and selling sewn items – mostly masks and produce bags – as well as beeswax bowl covers. Leslie K – the self-named “Crafty Bitch” has ably led the group of scintillating sewers (not the kind that are underground), resulting in impressive fundraising results. Leslie's mask designs have evolved since March 2020 and now include adjustable ear cords, flexible nose wires and a pocket to insert a filter cloth. And note the “Vaccinated” mask on page 3.

The annual Stride to Turn the Tide was an amazing success, resulting in more than \$16,000 raised by the joint efforts of Oomama and the Bronte Grans. The first-place fundraiser was Anne MacKenzie-Thompson. Over the 4 months while we strode, Anne and Tina wrote poems and provided insights into the geography, history and SLF involvement along our virtual Stride route through sub-Saharan Africa.

In mid-October, we celebrated our Virtual Stride with an in-person picnic in Lakeside Park, Mississauga. Anne put her talents to work, composing lyrics to the tune of the Happy Wanderer, which we sang together.

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Fundraising Report

Stride Wrap-Up

On October 14th, 20 of our Halton/Peel striders met at Lakeside Park to celebrate our achievements in this year's *Stride to Turn the Tide*. Over four months, March to June, we were guided and informed by our poetic bloggers, Anne MacKenzie-Thompson and Tina Agrell and the Speakers/Education team, about the countries we were virtually trekking through and the SLF projects we were walking by, in Africa.

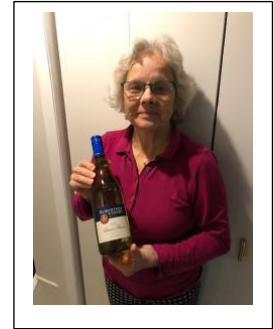
We all had a lovely lunch of croissant sandwiches and cupcakes. Sandy Milakovic brought greetings from the SLF staff who thanked us for striding and fundraising for the Foundation and the grandmothers in Africa who are working hard to Turn the Tide in these turbulent times. Pat McKee and Wendy Belcher talked briefly about the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign's 15th Anniversary.

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. 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, Netted Jewellery and Jewellery Repair. www.oomama.org/marketplace

Leslie Kulokas, who tracked all the kilometres and steps of our 26 striders, reported that we covered 19,089 kilometres from Botswana to Uganda and part way back again to Botswana. She announced that Peggy Brightwell (photo on right), who had covered the most kilometres, had won a bottle of wine in a lovely Stride wine bag. Unfortunately, Peggy was ill that day and unable to attend the party.



Wendy Merson, who was responsible for signing striders who were fundraising onto the Stride website, congratulated the 20 fundraisers for realizing \$16,175 for SLF. She presented a bottle of wine to Anne MacKenzie-Thompson, the top fundraiser at \$4000. (See Anne singing on page 1)

Wendy also thanked Geraldine Bernard, who is not a member of a grandmother group, for raising \$1370 on the Halton/Peel Stride team. Geraldine was invited to become a Super Friend of Oomama. Wendy also thanked Leslie and Carolyn for making the Stride masks from Stride scarves. See the amazing *Story of the Scarves* on page 5. The Wrap-Up Party was a great success and enjoyed by all attendees. We can now look forward to the 2022 Stride. We will start planning after Christmas.



Oomama's Creative Fundraising Committee



Get your 'Vaccinated' Mask!



Marketplace

In spite of the fact that we have been unable to hold any 'in person' events, our Marketplace is still going strong. We are selling lots of masks, bags, 'Go Green' items, custom and vintage jewellery and

performing many jewellery 'repairs.' Word of mouth has been fantastic with respect to both the Marketplace items and repairs. As soon as Halloween is over, the stores will be full of Christmas decorations, stocking stuffers and gifts. Please don't forget to check our **Marketplace** for all of our Christmas fabrics as well as lots of ideas for gifts. We are open to custom orders so don't be afraid to ask. Keep visiting oomama.org/marketplace for all of our items for sale at very reasonable prices!

'Speakers' Event

Unfortunately, after much planning and discussion we have had to once more postpone our speakers event scheduled for this fall. We had negotiated a partnership with the local legion, had obtained two sponsors, contracted with the Toronto Bagpiper and The Small Arms Building as a venue. The Small Arms Building was a perfect locale, since it is one of the places where women built munitions for the Second World War. One of our speakers would have been Barbara Dickson who wrote "The Bomb Girls." Our second speaker, Max Eisen, author of "By Chance Alone" is well into his nineties, so we're not sure whether he will be able to join us next year.

The amount of work that went into planning and postponing this event twice can't be understated but at the time of our last meeting opening up the province had not been decided and the expenses would have outweighed the profit based on the number we could have accommodated and keeping admission reasonable. Stay tuned.....

Finally, two of our fundraisers were at Lakeview Farmers' Market wearing our "vaccinated" masks and caught the attention of our local MP Sven Spengemann, who has always been a strong supporter. He has expressed an interest in ordering masks for his team, in Liberal red of course. The moral: You never know when you will be called upon to Promote Oomama and the Stephen Lewis Foundation. Be ready!

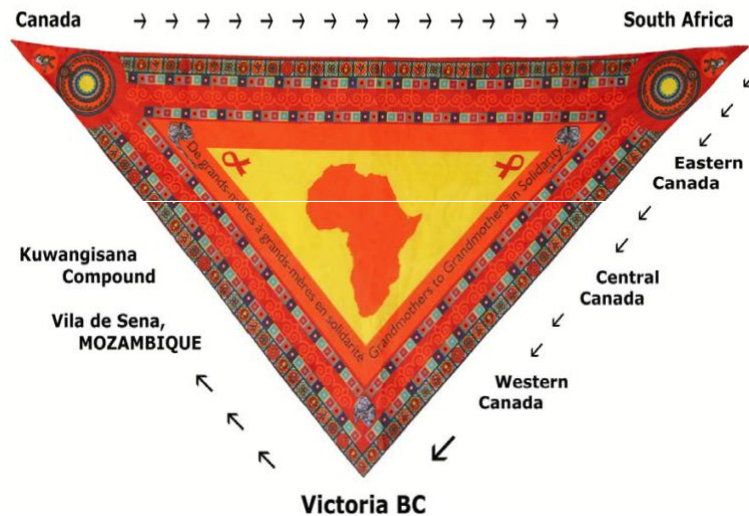


Sven Spengemann with Sandy and Leslie



A "Stride to Turn the Tide" Scarf Journey

"WHAT GOES AROUND COMES AROUND"



The Journey Begins:

CANADA: An idea takes shape to design a brightly coloured African scarf to be worn as an emblem of solidarity with African Grandmothers on a nationwide **Stride to Turn the Tide** Walk.

The design is inspired by a painted stone garden created by the self-taught "Outsider" artist, Nukain Mubusa, and by illustrations of South African tribes and culture created by artist Barbara Tyrell.

SOUTH AFRICA: An expanded order of 5000 scarves was sent from Canada to South Africa in 2011. The order was distributed among a number of South African women's sewing groups. The goal of these "upliftment" groups is to create income for women in poverty-stricken areas. Dozens of women and their families benefited from this scarf project.

CANADA: The finished scarves are sent to Canada and distributed throughout the country. What started off as a grassroots initiative by Pam Farron and the Mountain Grannies became a nation-wide call to all Grandmothers' groups involved in the *Stephen Lewis Foundation's* Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign to walk in support of the "unsung heroes" of Africa, African Grandmothers

Chair's Report continued from page 1....

We seem to have weathered the worst part of the COVID storm and Oomama continues to do good work. After 18 months of Zoom meetings for our monthly gatherings as well as our sub-committees, we have decided that we need to be together, especially since we are all fully vaccinated.



In September, the Speakers group resumed in person meetings, albeit outdoors, with the first one at Lorraine Green's new home in Burlington. We celebrated the birthdays of the three marvelous octogenarians in our group – Judy P, Judy H and Bev C. Subsequently, we have been meeting indoors.

The first OMG for the season was hosted by Wendy Merson in her backyard and Carole Holmes introduced us to a wonderful land acknowledgement which I think is the best I have seen or heard. (See page 7). Going forward, we will meet every second month, for now at Wendy's home.

On November 2, the Speakers group and Wendy Merson met at the home of Judy H to cull and organize a massive Oomama archive collection of newspaper clippings, stories, fundraisers, children's stories, presentations and more. We worked efficiently and at the end I proclaimed that the "Speakers Group had a big dump!"



Many thanks to Judy Henderson for being our long-standing diligent Archivist.

Actually, what we didn't keep was donated, sold, or recycled. Very little went to the dump. Reviewing the documents was an opportunity to revisit the early history of Oomama and appreciate our amazing accomplishments over the past 16 years.

Our Mother the Earth,

Land Acknowledgement by © Duke Redbird August 21, 2021

A great mystery
Formed the universe
And fashioned a blue geosphere
A wondrous planet the Mother Earth
She is the Mother who gave us birth
The genesis of all we hold dear

With all the billions of stars in space
Only the Earth could create
A splendor filled birthing place
A little sphere of cosmic dust
Was the spark of spirit given us.
In all the years of Her existence
With generosity and benevolence
She has never asked for our assistance.

Now our world is in distress
Due to unrestrained excess
Nature reveals
That true progress
Is possessed in every plant and tree
That echoes every breath we breathe
In a symbiotic symphony
Of connected sustainability.

In the tsunami of climate change
The earth may never be the same
With 8 billion people and mouths to feed
The fires are burning, there's less air to breathe
We must treasure the Mountains,
Rivers, Savannahs and Forestry
To ensure our own continuity.

Let's awaken
Contemplate, restore and regenerate
The spirituality of our birth place
We don't choose where we are born
We are the outcome of a cosmic storm
Our journey is to search and find
The natural order of the divine

Joy and enlightenment
Is what this wisdom brings
Adore and cherish all living things
This place of our precious birth
And our Sacred relationship
With Our Mother Earth



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.



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.



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