



# SowHOPE Newsletter

*"Where there is despair, let me sow hope."* FRANCIS OF ASSISI

## HOPE & SELF-RELIANCE in the DRC

**M**ary Dailey Brown, CEO of SowHope, and Dr. Pam Ogor were present for the graduation of tailors in Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). These women, led by local leader Claudaline Muhindo, learned to use sewing machines to create clothing for themselves, their children and finally to sell to others. This vocational training has also taught the women the strength that comes in community as they support one another and work toward a common goal – self-reliance.

**C**laudaline leads two groups in this effort, in different centers. One of the groups consists of women who have AIDS as a result of rape and who have thus been rejected by their families. These women, referred to as AIDS widows, have no hope. Under Claudaline's

guidance, they weave tote bags and inspire one another as they share their experiences and find solutions for survival from their trauma.

**S**owHope has provided funds for sewing machines, rental of classrooms, and the purchasing of material. Some graduates are now working in industrial tailoring companies, while others are self-employed or working together in groups. The result is that many are making money of their own for the first time in their life.

**C**laudaline expressed her profound thanks to SowHope for the funding that brings such achievement. The support, she says, allows her to "assist women who are poor, vulnerable, powerless and isolated."



*Pam, Claudaline & Mary*

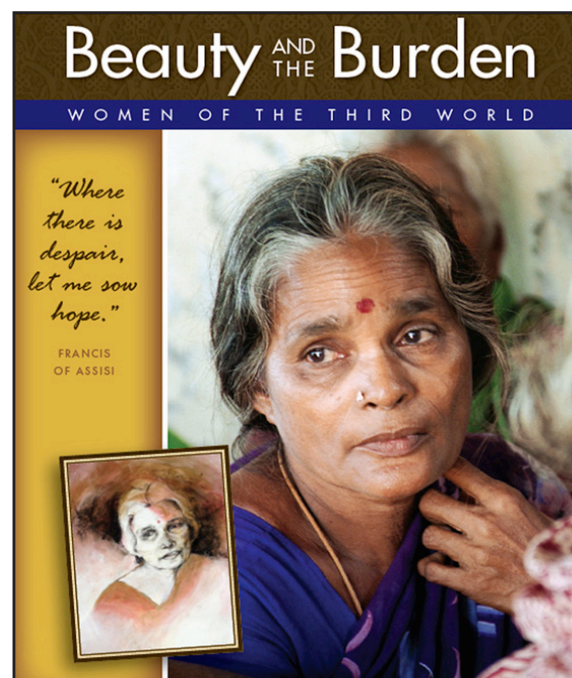


*Some of the 32 graduates from the tailoring class.*

## NEW! PHOTO EXHIBIT EXPANDS

**A**s a result of the growth of SowHope support, there will be two regional fundraisers this spring – one in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and another in Washington, DC. This expansion serves as a great encouragement and confirmation of the goals of SowHope.

**T**he Grand Rapids event will be held at The Goei Center on Saturday, March 24, 2012, at 7:00 p.m. Featured will be more than 30 photographs depicting the life of women in the developing world as well as paintings of the photographs by two local artists,



*Photo Exhibits 2012 - Grand Rapids & Washington DC*

Loralee Grace and Kimberly Grace Gill. The mission of SowHope will be presented and live music, hors d'oeuvres and drinks will add to the evening.

**T**he Washington event will be held on Thursday, April 5, 2012, at 6:00 p.m. at the Public Citizen Reception Hall, easily accessible from the Dupont Circle Metro (Q Street exit, on red line), and will also focus on the needs of women in the developing world, displaying photos of them, and informing attendees of the specific way that SowHope is inspiring women. Wine and appetizers will be served.

**D**on't miss the opportunity to attend one of these events, to hear about the encouraging news of hope for women who make less than \$2 a day, and to offer your financial help toward the expansion of the mission of SowHope.

**F**or information for either event, call 616.433.1575 or go to: [www.sowhope.org](http://www.sowhope.org).



## NEW CHAIRPERSON of the BOARD



*Ruth Posthumus -  
New Chairperson of  
the SowHope Board  
of Directors*

**B**oard Chairperson Ruth Posthumus was moved to tears when she listened to Mary Dailey Brown present the mission of SowHope. It struck Ruth that this organization can save the children of the world, break the cycle of poverty and bring dignity to all involved. She immediately wanted to be part of this.

**A**s a middle school principal, Ruth has spent her life with young people, and she saw the effectiveness of working with women to bring change to the children in their life. She loves the fact that, in honoring women, children are also affected positively and given hope.

**R**uth sees a responsibility to tell others about the organization and the lives that are being changed through it. Whether family, friends, or co-workers, she wants them to hear about change being made one village at a time. She brings her passion for the education of young people to the board table, believing that SowHope makes a difference in young lives by educating the women who influence them.

**R**uth sees that SowHope is expanding as applications for new projects are coming in at a faster rate. She sees that the word of hope is spreading as Mary Brown makes connections with local leaders in her travels.

**S**o, is it worth giving hours to such an organization? Ruth Posthumus gives a resounding "Yes" as her answer.

## WHY INVEST in WOMEN?



*Tailoring student sewing her last project,  
her graduation dress!*

SOWHOPE  
EXISTS

TO INSPIRE  
WOMEN AROUND  
THE WORLD  
BY PROMOTING  
WELLNESS,  
EDUCATION, AND  
ECONOMIC  
OPPORTUNITIES

**A**ccording to USAID, programs that provide women opportunities to better their health, education, and well-being have effects far beyond a single individual. A woman multiplies the impact of an investment made in her future by extending benefits to the world around her, creating a better life for her family and building a strong community. (from 50.USAID.gov)



*News about SowHope is spreading! Tailoring student is interviewed for  
the nightly TV news program in Goma, Africa.*

## SPREADING the WORD ABOUT SOWHOPE

**S**owHope presentations have been given at luncheons, college gatherings and formal meetings; they've been held in living rooms, schools, churches and civic halls across the country. The emotional impact of the needs of women in developing countries is so profound that people are moved to help. A 7th grader's father wrote, "Our daughter was so inspired when you came to her school this past year that we decided as a family to contribute to your organization." The family has donated over \$2,000.

## MORE WAYS TO HELP SOWHOPE

- Invite SowHope to speak to your community or social club, school, workplace, house of worship, or women's group, etc.
- Host a fundraising event in your home to inform your friends and family about the important work of SowHope.
- Include SowHope in your company's matching gift program.
- Encourage your friends/family to "like" us on facebook.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Ruth Posthumus - Chairperson  
Al Longtin - Vice Chairperson

Richard Butler - Treasurer  
Wes Miller - Secretary

Dr. Robert Cunningham  
Marybeth Wardop

Sylvia Juta  
Melissa Miller

David Kelson  
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