



We sow hope... and hope is growing!

# NEWSLETTER



Jane and Annette are part of SowHope's sponsored microfinance group.

## DEVELOPMENT THROUGH MICROFINANCE

**M**Meet Jane and Annette, co-wives who are now widowed. These women, who are good friends, have been part of a SowHope-sponsored microfinance group in Uganda since 2009. And despite being widowed, they are very successful.

**I**n the photo, the women are standing in front of Jane's beautiful new brick house. With the microloans Jane has taken from the group, she has been able to successfully grow crops and save money to build a better life for her family. She said that before joining the group, she did not know how to budget her earnings. Now she can budget the \$90 profit she earns over 3 months toward things like her children's school fees.

**Two of her children are currently in primary school, and her son recently became the first person from their village to graduate from university!**

**A**nnette has used her microloans to invest in cows, pigs, and crops including mangoes, bananas, pineapples, and various grains. Like Jane, she has witnessed improvement within her family because she is able to pay school fees for her children. She can also hire a field worker. Annette opened a business nearby to sell her bananas and pineapples for daily income. Because she is able to pay a worker, Annette also has time to teach a SowHope-funded literacy class. She says the literacy program is challenging due to language differences when Rwandan immigrants attend. Also, some women cannot regularly attend class because their husbands are threatened by the prospect of them becoming literate. Despite these obstacles, Annette's dream is constant. She inspires other women by teaching them to read and write. With literacy, the women of the village are able to run successful microfinance projects, express their thoughts and feelings, **check their children's homework, and read legal documents**. When asked how teaching literacy makes her feel, Annette said, "It's like farming - when you grow crops and harvest, you feel good!"

### \$2,000,000th GIVER: IT COULD BE YOU!

SowHope is on track to reach the \$2,000,000 mark for all-time donations THIS YEAR! You could be that donor! SowHope's \$1,000,000th giver was Lizbeth Leeson.

#### SOWHOPE EXISTS

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

## GET TICKETS NOW!

### SowHope's 2nd Annual Fundraising Dinner

"WE SOW HOPE"

**Thursday, September 29th, 6:30pm**

Frederik Meijer Gardens, Grand Rapids, Michigan

**Tickets are available thru 9/19.**

Please purchase tickets or register online at:

**[www.sowhope.org/dinner](http://www.sowhope.org/dinner),**  
or call 616-433-1575.

## MIDDLE SCHOOLERS DONATE

**C**EO Mary Dailey Brown loves middle school students. "They get it," she says. A recent opportunity to speak in a Michigan school resulted in a school-wide effort to raise funds for Syrian refugees – primarily because of the strong response from the 6th graders, who sold holiday crafts, raising over \$600 dollars for SowHope. In the American International School in Abu Dhabi, this same age group raised over \$1,500 with a bake sale.

**S**tudents wrote of the inspiration Mary gave them to help others, and many expressed their understanding that they could make a difference in the lives of those who have few rights. One student's response to Mary's story of starting SowHope was: "She thought about what she wanted to do and actually did it!" Know some middle schoolers? Ask Mary to tell them about the plight of women and watch what happens!



Kenowa Hills Middle School students proudly display their crafts.



## A DECADE OF VOLUNTEERISM



Board Chairperson Lizbeth Leeson greets guests at SowHope's Ten Year Celebration in the SowHope headquarters, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

When SowHope turned 10 this January, it also marked the 10-year anniversary for our dedicated volunteers. SowHope's model has always meant a dependence on the good will of helpers. An average of 93% of SowHope's revenues have gone directly to programs that inspire impoverished women, made possible through the generosity of our volunteers' consistent service. As we reflect over the past decade of work, we acknowledge those who have reliably given their time, energy, and talent to SowHope since the very beginning. A heartfelt thank you to:

- Doug Brown: Co-Founder & IT Director
- Bonnie Conley\*: Travel Updates Writer
- David Crawford\*: Bookkeeper
- Debra Kaiserlian-Reyburn: Events Decorator
- Annie Kendra: Marketing Team & Photographer
- Doreen Mangrum\*: Program Team Leader
- Dr. Pam Ogor\*: Field Project Evaluator
- Ginger Sisson: Marketing Team & Newsletter
- Jessica Swanberg: HR Team Leader
- Lori Vezina: Graphic Designer

### Honorable mentions:

- Tony & Amy Himmelsbach: Volunteer Supervisors
- Marcia Vela: Special Event Hostess
- Alan Salmon: Special Event Master of Ceremonies

*\*Indicates members of the founding Board of Directors*



Mary presents service awards to Ginger Sisson and Bonnie Conley.



Join the ranks of these great volunteers today! Find out what you can do at [www.sowhope.org/volunteer](http://www.sowhope.org/volunteer).

## HEALING SYRIAN WOMEN

This year, SowHope has formed a new partnership in the Middle East. In Jordan, the Global Hope Network (GHN) reaches out to refugees from Iraq, Syria, and Palestine, offering them classes in building self-esteem, tailoring, jewelry making, and using computers. GHN realized that these uprooted women needed emotional support as well as the ability to make enough money for their families to survive. So they created programs for just that purpose and asked for assistance in funding, which SowHope provided.

Encouraged by the empathy of middle schoolers around the world, SowHope is supporting an outreach program for Syrian women run by Global Hope Network. SowHope's Jordanian partners have formed groups of Syrian refugee women in three areas and travel to gather them regularly and provide basic necessities and counseling. Most of these women are secluded, as refugees, suffering alone the traumatic effects of war without a support system. By gathering the women together and providing childcare for them during the meetings, the women are encouraged to openly share their stories. This process is healing as it emphasizes that the women have worth and value.



A Syrian woman in Jordan tells the SowHope team her story.

## RELIABLE LOCAL LEADERS

The Pakistan Vocational Center was started over a year ago with 80 women enrolled in tailoring classes. For those who already had some knowledge of tailoring, a 3-month course was developed, while those who knew very little were enrolled in a 6-month course. Some of the graduates are already tailoring in their own homes, while others are taking orders from boutiques and creating dresses on demand.

Recently the Pakistani government shut down all non-profit organizations in the country due to concerns about terrorism being funded through non-profits. SowHope's Pakistani partner had money left over, and amazingly, they sent it back to SowHope! This is how greatly they understand and value the needs of impoverished women, wherever they may be. It reinforces our confidence in the integrity of SowHope's local leaders.

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