

December 2007  
Christmas Edition

# The Caia Connection

## Special Interest Articles:

- Grannies and Gogos
- Do Your Bit – Give a Day's Pay! .
- News from the Field

## HAPPY HOLIDAYS



We would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. This past year has been one of challenges and accomplishments. Things are really taking off in Caia and we would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Jill and her team for the tremendous work that they have done on the ground in Mozambique! Cheers to their hard work, perseverance and commitment.

It is because of the dedication of people like Jill and the support of people like you that we can truly make a difference in the lives of the people of Caia. Your caring directly supports the women and children involved in our programs as well as the worldwide fight against HIV/AIDS and poverty.

As so many individuals and families around the world struggle to make ends meet, we hope that everyone takes the time this holiday season to reflect on how lucky we are and to consider what we can do to help others make their dreams for a better future come true.

## LIGHT UP A HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

A brilliant feature of our holiday season celebration is the beautiful festive lighting that we see everywhere. For this holiday season, consider celebrating with us in a very special way - by contributing to the purchase of a solar panel for our project in Caia.

Light up a Home for the Holidays! There are close to two billion people in the world without access to electricity who rely on unsafe and unhealthy fuel-based lighting.

With your contribution to this initiative, you will be providing a solar panel for installation in one of our foster homes or our Ray of Hope Centre. In addition to helping to light homes....you will be illuminating lives with the tremendous social benefits that reliable low cost lighting brings. For example, Cottage industries emerge and bring greater revenues to a household and studies have shown that reading and literacy improves by 50% when reliable lighting is available. The Caia Connection is working in collaboration with the Light Up the World Foundation and Canada World Youth to bring light to the Caia District.

Be a part of someone's brighter future and give the gift of light this year! *Together we will light up the world – one house at a time!*

**If you are interested in participating in this project on a bigger scale, or would like to get your school or class involved, please contact Debra Salverda at [caiaconnection@gmail.com](mailto:caiaconnection@gmail.com) or phone (250) 707-0713.**

## Grannies and Gogos



**Adapted from the Vancouver Sun, October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2007, by Kelly Sinoski**

VANCOUVER - She has already raised seven children and buried three of them, but Matilda Mwenda's mothering days are far from over.

The 57-year-old African grandmother is now rearing a new brood of eight children -- the orphaned offspring of two daughters who died of AIDS, and of a son dead from tuberculosis. This time, though, Mwenda's not doing it all alone.

She and other African grandmothers, who are the primary caregivers to AIDS orphans, are getting a hand from the Canadian Grandmother to Grandmother Campaign.

The 170 groups across Canada have raised more than \$1 million for grassroots projects in Africa since 2006. The money goes where it's most needed: food, school fees, counselling, even a coffin. It has also provided sewing and knitting machines and vegetable gardens.

"It has really helped us, they are doing a great job," said Mwenda, who has a five-year-old grandson with both AIDS and tuberculosis.

*"Grandmothers are the unsung heroes of Africa"*

**The HIV/AIDS pandemic in Mozambique has reached the second phase. The first phase is a high rate of infection; the second is a high rate of opportunistic infection and death.**

HIV Prevalence in Mozambique is estimated at 16%. HIV Prevalence for the town of Caia is 30% which has resulted in over 5,000 children in Caia alone being orphaned.

Eight female AIDS activists from Africa, including Mwenda, met with Canadian grandmothers in Vancouver on Thursday for the premiere of the Stephen Lewis Foundation's documentary *Women: The Face of AIDS*.

Lewis, former UN special envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa, said twice as many women as men are likely to contract AIDS, while women also tend to be the caregivers for those who are sick.

Those attending the premiere hoped to share ideas and spread the word on how to educate and empower African women to guard against the AIDS pandemic.

Too often, women are raped, either by their HIV-positive husbands or strangers and rejected by their families, Dr. Lydia Mungherera said.

Vancouver grandmother Barbara Clay, coordinator of the Greater Vancouver Gogos -- the African word for grandmother -- said many African grandmothers have lived through apartheid and are now raising their children's orphans. **"They've paid their dues, holding up half of the sky, and now they're doing it again," she said.**

## Calling all Grandmothers

We are looking for someone to help set up a local **Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign**.

The Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign seeks to raise awareness and mobilize support in Canada for Africa's Grandmothers. The campaign was launched by the Stephen Lewis Foundation on March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2006, on the eve of International Women's Day. Since the launch, more than 150 groups of Canadian Grandmothers have taken up the call to action. These campaigns help to provide grandmothers with much needed support, such as food, housing grants, school fees for their dependant grandchildren and grief counseling.

*Interested? Give us a Call and learn how you can get involved here in The Central Okanagan!!*

## Give a Day's Pay.....to help those with AIDS

**December 1, 2007 (adapted from the Global National)**

TORONTO – A few years ago, Jane Philpott was asked to give a talk to colleagues at her hospital about how HIV and AIDS is devastating Africa. The Ontario family doctor went further than that - she asked each of the doctors who attended to donate one day's pay to an AIDS charity.

"It really was an epiphany kind of moment," says Philpott, 46. "There was a little joking in the group. We all know each other quite well... 'Who's going to be on plastics clinic or fractures clinic, that day? Who's going to make the most money on World AIDS day?'. So there was a little collegial joking around."

That year, Philpott was able to raise \$33,000 for AIDS charities. The next year, the Give A Day campaign expanded to eight hospitals in southern Ontario, raising \$100,000.

Philpott's commitment to fighting AIDS in Africa has its roots in her own experience there. She spent nearly a decade working with Doctors Without Borders in Niger - a desperately poor country in West Africa, with one of the highest child mortality rates in the world. Sadly, it was while striving to save the lives of people in Niger that Philpott lost her own child to meningitis, at the age of just 2.

"So that really gave me a sense of what an African mother goes through," said Philpott. "Even though it was obviously very difficult for me at the time, what came out of that was an understanding that African mothers lose their babies by the thousands every day. And so, as hard as it was for me, why should an African mother expect that 25 per cent of her children won't live to the age of five?"

One of the gravest challenges facing Africa is the AIDS pandemic; the disease is the biggest single killer of Africans. The United Nations estimates 24-million people carry the AIDS virus in sub-Saharan Africa alone. So, when Philpott returned with her family to Stouffville, Ontario to set up practice there, the grim realities of life and death in Africa stayed with her and became the motivating spark to continue doing something to save lives.

Now that spark - Give A Day - has become a flame. "It literally has taken a life of its own," she says. "Now there are business people, and lawyers, and teachers, and school kids who have paper routes who are giving a day's pay. So, it really has shown that sense of global solidarity (from) Canadians across all walks of life." And, it isn't just in Ontario any more.

All across Canada, people are inspired by Dr. Philpott's example to 'Give a Day'; last year, about a half-million dollars was raised. Despite the grim statistics, Philpott underlines that AIDS is a treatable disease and that a little money can go a long way. ***"A hundred dollars, for instance, can provide anti-retroviral medication that can keep a person alive for 9 months."***

It is a challenging life being a doctor in a busy family practice as well as the mother of now 4 children. Give A Day takes many, many more days than just one for Dr. Philpott - but she brushes aside any suggestion that she's doing something extraordinary.

"There's a brilliant AIDS activist by the name of Zackie Achmat, and he said 'nobody wants to be a hero on a platform of skulls or skeletons.' Honestly, I'm doing such a little wee bit. The heroes are the people that face this every day: the grandmothers, the children who rise to be the leaders of sibling-headed households. I'm really just doing my bit."

**You can "do your bit" too. From now until January 14<sup>th</sup>, The Caia Connection is asking people to "Give a Day's Pay" to go towards our AIDS Education Program in Caia. Challenge your workmates and your employers to do their part too!**

## From the Field.....

### Associação Raio de Esperança

The creation of the Ray of Hope Association is well under way. The 10 founding members have been selected and consist of individuals from both political parties. Half the members are male and half are female.

The constitution was created, approved, and notarized. Police Clearance Reports for each founding member were obtained and a meeting took place where the President, Chairman, and Auditor (Jill Claus) were elected for the first term. All of the paperwork has been submitted to the Sofala Province Governor's office for approval. We are looking forward to this new governing body and the accountability and expertise it adds to the Ray of Hope Project.

### World Food Program Partnership

There are currently 70 orphans and vulnerable children in the meal program. The increase took place during June, July, and August. During that period, the social work department began referring orphan families and single mother families (vulnerable children) to the project site with a letter indicating that they were to be enrolled in the Meal Program. The project management team is now working with the Social Work Department to have the letter reworded to say that the orphans/vulnerable children are being referred to the project and that it is recommended that the children listed be placed on the waiting list. This will allow the project to visit the referred family and assess eligibility according to the predefined criteria and available funds.

The World Food Program (WFP) visited the project site in October and they were impressed. As a result, a new partnership has been formed and we have received confirmation that starting January of 2008, they will be sending food for 250 children (and their families)! This number will increase by another 125 part way through 2008 and again by 125 in 2009 to bring us to 500 by the end of 2009. Grandmothers and widows will help with the meal program in exchange for monthly food kits (also provided by WFP). We are very excited about this new collaboration!!

Exciting times but also means increased pressure for us here in Canada to hold up our end of the bargain and continue to fundraise to help support the great work that Jill and her team are implementing on the ground. The increase in the number of children and caregiver families that we are now going to be supporting means that we will also need to raise more funds to help cover the additional costs associated with this increase. Part of our mandate is to ensure that we support all of the children in the home. That means caring for our **sponsored orphans** as well as those enrolled in other programs and that in addition to food, we provide them with health and educational opportunities that will allow them to grow into healthy, self sufficient adults. **These children truly are the hope of Africa.**

We are therefore desperately in need of school supplies and uniforms. If you know of a class that would be interested in participating in a fundraiser ear marked for raising funds for these purposes, please let us know!



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Nearly 80% of the people of Mozambique live on less than \$2 a day. Imagine, a \$60 contribution could therefore support an African Grandmother caring for her orphaned grandchildren for a month! And, \$100 could support two orphans and their caregiver families, including healthcare, school fees and food for a month or provide 9 months worth of anti-viral medications! A little goes a long way...

Do your bit!

## Canada World Youth

Since September, The Caia Connection has been pleased to host two Canada World Youth participants from the Kelowna-China Program. Thanks to Yuechan of Montreal and Andy of Beijing for their work on the Make Poverty History Campaign, the Light Up the World Solar Panel Initiative and their help with the CIDA Voluntary Sector Fund Training that The Caia Connection coordinated on behalf of the British Columbia Council for International Cooperation in November. Yuechan and Andy will soon be leaving for the second half of their program in China....we would like to wish them and the rest of their team all the best in their future endeavors'. We would also like to thank the Golden-Mozambique CWY program for fundraising for solar panels for our project and transporting them back to Caia!!

## Visiting Student – A Special Thanks!

Heather Gow, from Brantford Ontario, left Canada for Mozambique on September 11<sup>th</sup> and has been assisting with all aspects of the project since. She originally volunteered for one month, but has enjoyed Mozambique so much, she has extended her visit to three months and will be returning to Canada in December. Heather has one class left to complete her social work degree and is also experienced in animal husbandry. She wants to return to Mozambique, hopefully via an Internship for a longer stay once she completes her last class. Thanks Heather for your dedication and hard work!

## Sponsor-An-Orphan Program

The goal of our Sponsor-An-Orphan Program is to improve the orphans' quality of life and increase the chance for these children to grow up to be healthy and self-sufficient adults. Orphans are placed with carefully selected caregivers such as a grandparent or family friend.

For those orphans that do not have adequate living quarters, group homes called "Mudzi's" are being built to house them. The orphans, as well as all of the dependent children in their caregiver's family, are enrolled in school and receive uniforms, supplies and fees to attend school. They also participate in a wide variety of activities that teach basic life skills and encourage expansion of their creative potential. Group homes and foster families are supported by the program in many ways. The first priority is to work with each of them to create or increase their food production possibilities. This includes providing the tools and seeds necessary to start a large enough kitchen garden, and/or assisting them with the provision of chickens, goats, rabbits, fruit trees, etc.

The group homes and foster families are also guided and supported to devise a self-sufficiency plan. This is done through things like the exploration of income-generating ideas and assistance with the implementation of their plan. A meeting with all of the sponsored family caregivers took place in October. The main item discussed was that the families will not have a harvest until the mid-way through the rainy season and most have no other options due to the flood last year. The caregivers agreed to receive smaller food kits until the first harvest, along with other assistance such as seeds, farming tools, and clothing for the children. Sponsored families received food kits in September and October and food kits and clothing for the children were distributed on November 3rd. If you are currently sponsoring a child and would like to send a "gift" for Christmas, please let us know. The most beneficial gift you could give at this time would be a donation to the Orphan Life Skills Program.....*Read on for other ideas.....*



## Give the Gift of Giving....

Looking for an alternative to Christmas Consumerism? For those on your list who have everything, we have just the thing!

You can give a gift on behalf of that special someone on your Christmas list....a gift that will make a significant difference in the lives of the people of Caia. Choose from the list of items below and we will send you a gift card stating that "A \_\_\_\_\_ has been purchased on your behalf! This gift directly benefits the women and children of Caia, Mozambique and the worldwide fight against HIV/AIDS and poverty."

### Items to Choose From:

- **\$8 - Drum or other musical instrument for the Orphan Life Skills program**
- **\$10 - Mosquito net (malaria is still the #1 killer of children in Sub-Saharan Africa claiming over 3000 lives per day!),**
- **\$10 - School Kit for a Primary Student (\$15 for a Secondary School Student)**
- **\$15 - Pair of Rabbits for breeding**
- **\$20 - Month of meals for an orphaned child and their caregiver**
- **\$25 - Tree (25 seedlings!)**
- **\$35 - Goat**
- **\$50 - Set of farm tools and seeds**
- **\$80 - Cow**
- **\$100 - School uniform (for 10 children for a year!)**
- **\$120 - Solar light panel**
- **\$150 - Start up money for a small business initiative**
- **\$300 - Small family farm consisting of a cow, a goat, chickens, rabbits and training**
- **\$420 - Sponsorship of an orphan for a year (or \$35 a month)**
- **\$500 - The seed money needed to run our healthcare program.....**
- **\$??? - The sky is the limit...! Suggestions Welcome!**

## Health Care Program

One of the local employees, Eva, has been promoted to be responsible for the Health Care of all of the children in the program and their caregivers. Duties include taking children/caregivers to the hospital when needed, following up on their care, getting all children currently enrolled and all future children tested for HIV, providing home based care for HIV positive children in the program, arranging for funerals/caskets, HIV/AIDS Education of the children/caregivers, sex education, assisting the children with questions and issues surrounding puberty, nutrition education for the children/caregivers, and other health related issues as they may arise.

So far, 41 of the 70 children have been tested for HIV and two are positive. This number is low because most children born HIV positive here usually do not live for more than a few years. Both children are ill and are taking medicine for their opportunistic infections. CD4 counts are pending and the children will be placed on ARV's, as appropriate, as soon as the results are in. Medicine and ARV's for HIV positive children are currently free in Mozambique.





## FOOD FOR HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

(adapted from the web) <http://www.foodbycountry.com/Kazakhstan-to-South-Africa/Mozambique.html>

The religions practiced by the people of Mozambique are Islam, Christianity, and African indigenous beliefs. This is a result of the various cultures that have dominated the country throughout its history. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, roughly 60 percent of the population practiced a form of traditional indigenous religion, 30 percent are Christian, and about 10 percent are Muslim. Some Christians and Muslims also choose to practice their traditional indigenous beliefs.

The strong Christian presence throughout the country makes Christmas a very special time. Portuguese songs are rehearsed, costumes are designed for children participating in Mozambican celebratory dances, and decorations are made to hang on Christmas trees. A dove (symbolizing peace) and a cross form Mozambique's logo for the Christian Council and is often found on trees during Christmas time each year. Those who can afford a nice holiday meal will often have an entrée of meat, accompanied by rice, a vegetable, fresh fruit, and fancy pastries or cakes for dessert. Those closer to the coast will usually eat garlic shrimp or other seafood delicacies. The very poor often receive a food donation of rice, oil, and beans from various organizations. **Christmas Day is also called Family Day in Mozambique.** One part of an average Christmas meal is *Filhos de natal*, or *Christmas Fritters*. *Try some yourself this Christmas!*

### Filhos de Natal (Christmas Fritters)

**Ingredients:** 1 package dry yeast, 4 cups flour, 5 eggs, lightly beaten,  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup honey,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup warm milk, 1 teaspoon salt, 4 Tablespoons brandy (may substitute 2 teaspoons vanilla),  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup hot water, Oil, for frying. **Procedure:** Beat the 5 eggs in a bowl. Warm the milk in a microwave, and dissolve the yeast in the warm milk. Let stand for 5 minutes. In a large bowl, combine the flour and salt. Add the yeast mixture, beaten eggs, and brandy or vanilla to the flour mixture. Knead until the dough is smooth and elastic (about 10 minutes). Place the dough into a greased bowl, cover with a cloth, and let rise in a warm place until doubled in size (about 2 hours). Punch down on the dough and roll out onto a floured board (with a rolling pin) until about  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch thickness. Cut into  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch wide and 2-inch long strips. Fry in hot oil for 2 to 3 minutes until crisp and golden brown, then drain on paper towels. Dissolve the honey in hot water and drip the fritters in the mixture until coated. Serve either hot or cold. Serves 6 to 8.

## The Caia Connection

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### We're on the Web!

Visit us at  
[www.thecaiaconnection.com](http://www.thecaiaconnection.com)

### How to Donate

If you would like to contribute, please send a cheque, made out to The Caia Connection, to the address above or visit the donation section of our website. PayPal is now available!



**The Caia Connection**, in cooperation with our partner organization in Mozambique, **The Ray of Hope**, is working :

To enhance the quality of life of the residents of Caia, Mozambique by providing health, educational, recreational and social activities and services that are accessible and responsive to the changing needs of the community. To support and assist the **women and children** affected by or infected with HIV/AIDS in the Caia District in a manner that will not interfere with the community's cultural beliefs. To support the worldwide fight against poverty and HIV/AIDS.

**The Caia Connection is looking for Volunteers to help out with some up-coming fundraisers....if you are available to donate some time or would be interested in participating in the following, please contact Debra at 250-707-0713...watch your email for additional information...**

Change for Children Campaign - Let your loose change help change the lives of orphaned children! Watch your email for drop off locations coming soon!

Wreath Sales – We are currently selling Christmas Wreaths for \$15 – call or email us if you would like one! Crafty? Like to help us make some more? Caia needs you!

Scratch N Help Tickets - Scratch cards with an apple tree and 50 apples to scratch. You ask people at work or your friends and family to scratch an apple and donate whatever they scratch. The amounts range from .10 cents to a maximum of \$2.50 – Drop us a line or give us a call and let us know how many Scratch cards you would like!

Tax Time is Coming - As a registered charity, The Caia Connection would be happy to send you a tax receipt for any donation you make to help support the work that we do. Donations, in any amount, from individuals as well as business are welcome....!!!