



The Caia Connection

AN UPDATE ON THE RAY OF HOPE PROJECT

Volume 1

Issue 1

October 2006

A Message from The President

By Martin McDermott

WOW our first newsletter!! It has been quite a year after returning home from a month in Africa with Brendan, my son. Both of us have experienced personal growth. We now view our world differently. We see that the world needs our help in anyway we can provide it!

I would like to be the first to share with you that we have just completed a documentary called the Caia's Connection, which was produced, directed, filmed, narrated, and edited by Brendan McDermott. Yours truly hosted the film. This film was shot while we were in Caia last year. Viewers will have the opportunity to see the harsh reality and challenges faced each day by the people who live in this heavily affected AIDS area. View a shortened version of the documentary at www.myspace.com/caiasconnection; and learn more about this young inspiring filmmaker. We are in the midst of organizing an evening documentary debut FUNDRAISER. The location, date, and ticket price will be announced soon. We hope you can attend and bring your friends with you. I guarantee you will experience an uplifting and emotional evening with us!

I would like to give a very heart felt thank you to Kathy Canuel, Gail Hodgson, and Terry Griffiths, part of our hard working executive team. They really are the heart and soul of this organization. Many thanks to Jill Claus and Manuel Miandica, our ground troops in Caia; and to my son, Brendan, my hero who went from a teenager to a young man in such a short time.

The Caia Who?

The Caia Connection is a grass roots organization that was started by a small group of individuals from Kelowna, BC, who were inspired by the desire to give a helping hand to fellow citizens of the World. Our purpose is to raise funds and provide support to a newly formed project called "The Ray of Hope" project in

Caia, Mozambique. This project is under the umbrella of a registered society in Mozambique called "The Kapasseni Society".

The purpose of The Ray of Hope project is to assist the HIV/AIDS afflicted District of Caia. The District has an estimated population of 92,000 and they have approximately **8,000 AIDS orphans**. The project provides programs involving orphan care, HIV/AIDS education, self-sufficiency programs for orphan caregivers, and support for women at risk.

The Ray of Hope Project Coordinator is Manuel Miandica, a native of Mozambique. Manuel stole our hearts on his visit here last year as he shared his passion for making a difference in his country. He has a gift for working with youth through music.

The Ray of Hope Project Manager is Jill Claus. In August of 2005, Jill sold her house in Ontario, quit her job, and moved with her 15-year-old daughter to Caia. Jill has a background in banking, computers, and project management, all of which have been so valuable to the project.

CIDA Shows Us The Money!!!

In March 2006, we applied for the HIV/AIDS Small Grants Fund that was being offered by CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency) and overseen by CSIH (The Canadian Society for International Health). In June, we were informed that we were one of the 20 recipients out of 140 that were awarded the grant!!! The grant is in the amount of \$100,000.00, to be paid out over the next 2 years. This will enable us to help support the Ray of Hope Project's programs such as "The Breakfast Program", "Sponsor an Orphan Program", "HIV/AIDS Education Program", "The Self-Sufficiency Program for Orphan Group Homes" and "The Orphan Life Skills Program".

This grant will cover approximately 35% of the expected budget for The Ray of Hope project over the next two years, which means we'll be doing a lot more fundraising!

Laying The Foundation

Our executive has been very busy over the past year laying the foundation for The Caia Connection. This hard work has given us great results...

October 2005 – *Non-Profit Status* granted!

February 2006 – *Charitable Status* granted!

The Money Keeps Rolling In . . .

Recent Fundraisers:

“Getting Higher Choir” Fundraiser
Shivon Robinsong - Victoria - May \$10,000

“Letz Sing” group of choirs from Vancouver
Island raised funds for the Caia Community
Youth Music Program – Tina Erickson - April 1,200

African Dinners in February 2,180

Gigantic Garage Sale – June 1,490

Henri McKinnon, of Insight Training
and Counselling, and his workshop
participants donated:
Leadership Workshop – June 2,839
Relationship Workshop – August 5,812

Scotch Tasting Fundraiser sponsored by
Nathalie, Martin, and Amanda Lewis and
Josee Balfour - June 360

African Dinner in July 1,620

Many thanks to all those who have worked to raise these funds as well as to all of our generous donors!

A Very Special Thanks!

By Terry Griffiths

We are so grateful to Henri McKinnon of Insight Counselling and Training for his continuing support and belief in The Caia Connection. He has helped us keep our vision alive. Henri has very generously donated funds to The Caia Connection and has inspired many of his trainees and workshop participants to open-heartedly donate as well. Due to his support, some members of his training programs have been motivated to start Caia Connection Chapters in Edmonton and Calgary. Thank You Henri!!

THE RAY OF HOPE PROGRAMS

Orphan Breakfast Program

By Jill Claus

The Orphan Breakfast Program began last May with 20 orphans. The children were selected with help of the local Social Work Department and the local Chiefs. It was a sad process. All of the children on the “long list” were in dire situations; going several days a week with no food at all. We were careful to make sure we enrolled the orphans that were living in households alone, with no adult supervision, first.



Orphans enrolled in the Meal Program enjoying breakfast

All of the enrolled orphans receive a nutritionally fortified porridge for breakfast each day. The porridge is made with ground maize, oil, milk, salt, sugar, ground peanuts, and Moringa powder. Drying and grinding the leaves of the local moringa tree make Moringa powder. It has seven times the vitamin C in oranges, four times the calcium in milk, four times the vitamin A in carrots, two times the protein in milk, and three times the potassium in bananas! It is an amazing powerhouse of high nutritional value!

The Caia Connection Committee is selling Orphan Breakfast Program Certificates for \$10 each. By purchasing a certificate, you can feed an orphan for an entire month!



Orphans in the Meal Program feeding each other

Sponsor-An-Orphan Program

By Jill Claus

The Sponsor-an-Orphan program will be kicking off in November! The goal is to improve the orphans' quality of life and increase the chances for these children to grow up to be healthy and self-sufficient adults. Orphans will be placed with carefully selected caregivers, a grandparent, a relative, or a friend of the family.

For those orphans that do not have adequate living quarters, group homes called "Mudzi's" (family compounds) will be built to house them. Each mudzi has four sections, with each section housing 5 orphans and their caregiver.

The orphans will be enrolled in school and will receive uniforms, supplies and fees to attend school. They will also be enrolled in the "Orphan Life Skills Program" at the Ray of Hope Centre. This program will include a wide variety of activities that teach basic life skills and encourage expansion of their creative potential.

Group homes and foster families will be supported by the project in many ways. The first priority will be to work with each of them to create or increase their food production possibilities. This could include 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 project will work with a community developer, the local agriculture office, and also with the new agriculture school when it opens, to devise workable plans.

The group homes and foster families will also be guided and supported to devise a self-sufficiency plan to be successfully implemented within three years. This could be done through the exploration of income-generating ideas, educational opportunities, and assistance with the implementation of their plan.



Orphans enjoying skipping ropes donated by Jolie and Ashley Lawrence of Grand Forks, BC

A Busy Time Ahead Here in Mozambique

By Jill Claus

The next quarter will be a busy time for the project team here in Mozambique!

New Home for The Ray of Hope Project - Enough funds have been raised to construct a few "mudzi's" (orphan group homes), a building for an office and storage, as well as a small, traditional, open-air hall with a thatched roof, on land donated to the project by the local government. All of the project programs will be run from this new site – we are very excited that the project will finally have a home to hang our sign!

With the rainy season approaching, we are also going to start our **Agriculture Program**. We will start by growing maize for the Orphan Breakfast Program. Once we have our first harvest, we won't have to purchase flour for the breakfast program. This will reduce the cost per month to feed each orphan, which in turn, will allow us to enrol more orphans in the program!

We will be putting in a "**Square Foot Gardening**" test garden. It is a method of gardening which should save at least 80% of the space, time, and money normally needed for a garden, and at the same time should produce a better and more continuous harvest with less work. It is said to eliminate all of the thinning, most of the weeding, and a lot of the watering, and will do it all in only one fifth of the area needed for conventional gardening. If the test garden is successful, we will teach the caregivers in the orphan group homes this gardening method!

New Caia Connection Chapters Starting Up in Calgary and Edmonton!

By Terry Griffiths

We are thrilled to announce the expansion of The Caia Connection. There will be a Chapter in Calgary and we would like to welcome Bonnie MacDonald, Charonne Carrington, and Lora Marsten, who will head up this Chapter. Jean Olynyk, Jenny Hogg and Jennifer Korchinsky will head The Edmonton Chapter... welcome aboard! Joining together will provide more impetus to realizing our dream of assisting some of the most vulnerable people who have been affected by the ravages of the HIV/AIDS virus in the Caia District of Mozambique. Thank you so much for caring and joining our project!!!!

Be A Global Citizen & Help Build World Community

by Gail Hodgson

As we understand ourselves better through self-awareness and healing, we come to appreciate and accept more of what's really important in life. Loving relationships with family and friends, connection with a higher power, living a more meaningful life, and living on purpose, become the focus of our thought and intention. As we become more evolved, we may feel inspired to extend ourselves beyond our close circles of people, connecting to the world family. There are many places where there is not sufficient food, shelter and health care, and diseases are ravaging the people. The world needs more of us to become conscious participants in building world community. Caia, Mozambique, and many places like it, have some of the greatest need and require loving support and social action from the sisters and brothers of the world family.

Call for Help . . .

Experienced volunteers needed to fill the following positions in Kelowna:

Secretary
Treasurer
Fund Raising Events Coordinator
Volunteer Coordinator

For More Info on The Caia Connection:

Please visit our website at www.thecaiaconnection.com

Or contact one of us:

Kelowna

Martin McDermott – 250-712-1341
sunvalleywindows@shaw.ca

Calgary

Bonnie MacDonald – 403-289-5153
bonnie-macdonald@shaw.ca

Edmonton

Jean Olynyk – 780-418-1689
jaolynyk@shaw.ca



How You Can Donate

The majority of the donations that you make get to their intended destination. The Caia Connection is administered by volunteers, keeping our administration costs extremely low.

We are a registered charity and tax receipts are available! Please make cheques payable to “The Caia Connection” and send to:

The Caia Connection
P.O. Box 21082
Orchard Park Postal
Outlet
Kelowna, B.C.
V1Y 9N8

You Can Sponsor an
Orphan for \$35.00 per
month or \$420.00 per
year!

If you require a tax receipt, please fill in the following information and return with your donation:

Name:	
Address 1:	
Address 2:	
City:	
Province:	
Postal Code:	
Phone:	
Email:	
Donation:	
Would you like your donation to go towards a specific program?	