



# SOWHOPE NEWSLETTER

*"Where there is despair, let me sow hope." - Francis of Assisi*

MISSION STATEMENT: "TO INSPIRE WOMEN AROUND THE WORLD BY PROMOTING WELLNESS, EDUCATION, AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES."

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## Bangladesh Project Complete

SowHope has just completed a three-year project in Bangladesh that has funded micro-loans for more than 2400 women. The \$60,000 project started in 2007 and resulted in women having the opportunity to begin small businesses. This project also helped women develop good health practices, and learn legal rights.

The women belong to one of 178 micro-loan clubs – groups of 10 -15 women with one trainer – whose desire is to take a small amount of money and make it grow. To support the women in their venture, the trainer of each club educates them about nutrition and health, sanitation, good business practices, legal rights, and empowerment.



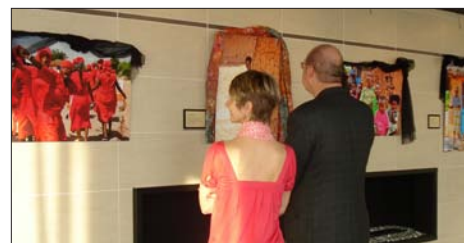
Trainer and micro-loan group gather to report success and learn new skills.

The Bangladesh non-profit organization partnering with SowHope has been the local leader in this endeavor. Micro-loans are part of their mission, and they have an excellent track record in this enterprise. Joining SowHope in the funding of this project has been the Tear Fund, begun in Britain in the 1950's, now worldwide in its scope. Micro-enterprise is one of its chief activities, and so they were very interested in doing this project with SowHope. Such alliances allow SowHope to join in very large endeavors, meeting its goals across a substantial population.

The end result of this holistic, integrated project has been the formation of a variety of enterprises, depending on the background of the women. Some have begun small farms, raising chickens, and selling eggs; others have begun businesses weaving, tailoring, sewing, or making furniture or boxes. Women make a profit, pay off their loans, and support their families. When a woman is allowed to earn money with a small business, she, her family, and her community all benefit.

## Photo Exhibit a Success

The 2nd Annual Photo Exhibit was a success, netting over \$10,000. With the theme "Beauty and the Burden", the photos reflected the need of women dramatically.



Paul and Leisa Snow, viewing Dan Watts' photos.

## Hosted Events

We are always looking for ways to share the vision of SowHope. Please consider hosting an event to let your friends know about our organization. Contact [Trish@sowhope.org](mailto:Trish@sowhope.org) or call the office at 616-433-1575 for more information.

A Hosted Event can be an invitation for wine and finger food on the deck, an easy breakfast some morning, or just coffee some evening. The occasion is not the focus - but simply offering a casual, personal way to inform others about the mission of SowHope. Your guests will be intrigued by your introduction to such a valid endeavor.

## A Lot for a Little in Nigeria

With just \$500 dollars, partners in Nigeria have been able to begin four businesses as well as equipping their center with a computer and a knitting machine. Our partner, Sarah - a local leader - states in her latest report that Mary Azanya has created three sets of children's sweater and cap sets with her knitting machine. Her husband sends his appreciation to us all. Five more women have been selling sugar cane, knitted garments and other products. The woman pictured here is now sewing garments that she sells to support her family. The DIWOM center has produced bed sheets, which sold out, gaining 300 naira (Nigerian money). The profit will be used to produce more bed sheets.



Nigerian woman sews on machine provided by SowHope.

## Meet a SowHope Board Member

Chandy Colley, board member of SowHope, recently explained her commitment to the organization and its goals. As a colleague of Mary Dailey Brown, Chandy had witnessed the birthing of SowHope and realized then that she wanted to be part of it. "I have always had a desire to use my passion and energies to help people in third world countries," she said.



What does a board member do? Chandy describes one of the responsibilities as "ensuring the integrity and accountability of the organization. SowHope strives to be completely transparent in its operations," she states. "It is why we publish our financial reports and have open board meetings."

The board consists of people from many walks of life, all of whom bring individual strengths to the table. Chandy believes that her many years of business management plus her present experience in the medical field as

an RN offers her the opportunity to assist in the practical details of planning efforts in the area of wellness. In fact, she is currently investigating plans for a medical clinic that would offer support for Josephine, who is the SowHope partner helping women with AIDS in Kenya.

As she looks into the future for SowHope, Chandy would love to see donors be able to meet the women and partners involved with SowHope projects. But her primary desire is to see growth in awareness of SowHope and its mission, resulting in an increase of the "funding of projects and the inspiration of women around the world".

## Volunteer Opportunities

Often people wonder what kind of help is needed at SowHope. "What can I do as a volunteer?" is a question we often hear.

Below is a list of tasks that would be helpful to us, done on a regular (monthly or quarterly) basis - some of which can be completed from your own office or home:

1. Opportunities to share SowHope's mission with organizations, businesses, civic groups, etc.
2. Know someone that can reach lots of people at once? We have a wonderful media/PR volunteer, who would love to have even more contacts for SowHope.
3. Computer skills for data management
4. Management of Facebook Cause page and exposure
5. Website management and maintenance

## Wish List

In this economy, funds may be more difficult to offer SowHope than things you have and are not using. Here is a list of things we use on a regular basis that would be deeply appreciated:

- Airline miles
- Hotel discounts
- Battery operated picture lights (for photo displays)
- Large, heavy duty, crosscut paper shredder

## Big Thanks!

SowHope offers thanks to the juniors and seniors of the first hour geography class at Greenville High School for raising funds to help our Literacy and Microloan programs.

## A Volunteer Explains Her Passion

Why do people choose to volunteer for SowHope, when so many worthy non-profits need help? And when they do volunteer, how are their talents best used? As we asked questions of Debra Kaiserlian Reyburn, who has volunteered since the inception of SowHope, she responded, "I believe every person has a talent or gift that is natural to them. Has anyone been blessed with money, a home, or contacts overseas? Then they can make a difference in the lives of women who have far less."

Deb is an artist and a part-time family case worker. She also has a large family, whose needs come first for her. How does someone this busy accomplish something for SowHope? At the first SowHope Photo Exhibit, Deb saw that the unframed pictures could be enhanced with native designs. As she draped fabric around the edges, the faces of the women came alive with color! She also used costumes from the representative countries, bringing the vibrancy of the culture into the room. Deb has since been placed in charge of the decorating details for all of SowHope's events, including the Women's Expo booth, Hosted events, and the Photo Exhibit.



Deb's eye has also been used on trips overseas to meet new SowHope partners. She has photographed women in those countries, helping to bring home the picture of poverty and despair in the lives of those that are being changed by SowHope. Through Deb's involvement, her family now often joins her in volunteering for SowHope events and causes.

This lovely farm wife, busy with mothering, found a way to use her gifts to further the mission of SowHope. What are your gifts? Deb says, "We can sow hope into these women's lives, their children's lives, and the life of their village." Come along - volunteer yourself - you'll find your niche!

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