



SowHope.Org Newsletter

"WHERE THERE IS DESPAIR, LET ME SOW HOPE."
FRANCIS OF ASSISI

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VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2

Mission Statement:

"To inspire women around the world by promoting wellness, education, and economic opportunities."

Board of Directors:

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Mary Dailey Brown

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We're on the Web!
www.SowHope.Org

SowHope is a 501(c)3
Nonprofit Organization

SowHope.Org Granted 501c3 Status by the IRS

After the submission of pages of application materials in early 2006 and months of waiting, SowHope has finally received notification from the Internal Revenue Service that it has been granted 501c3 status as a non-profit organization. With the 501c3 status in place, SowHope is exempt from federal income tax and able to offer the benefit of tax deductions to donors on all contributions to SowHope. All gifts previously given to SowHope have a retroactive charitable status. Securing the 501c3 status also makes it possible for SowHope to apply for grants to help fund its many projects.

If you would like to make a difference in the lives of women around the world by sowing hope through education, wellness and economic opportunities, visit our website at www.SowHope.Org and make a tax deductible gift today.

Strategic Business Plan

SowHope's strategic business plan is complete! Months of work on this document have culminated in a comprehensive plan that will shape the future direction and development of SowHope. Many thanks go out to Dave Buhr, Michelle Snoek, Tim Beals who helped edit this important foundational document. Copies are available upon request.

Volunteers

As a non-profit organization, SowHope depends on the gifts of time, talents and skills of volunteers. From its inception, SowHope has been blessed with willing workers who have given generously of themselves to carry the message of hope to women they've never met living half a world away.

If you would like to volunteer your time and talents at SowHope, please contact Mary Dailey Brown, Founder and President of SowHope.Org at 616-433-1575 or by e-mail at Info@SowHope.Org.

Bangladesh Micro-Loan Project

Microfinance is the practice of making small loans for the purpose of establishing or enhancing a small, self-sustaining business. Micro loans that target women are the most common and the most successful in regard to the positive effect on the family and community. Additionally, repayment rates are much higher for women than for men. Studies have shown that women are more likely to invest their earnings in the well-being of their families and in the further expansion of their businesses. As their businesses grow, the community benefits from increased availability of goods or services as well as the creation of jobs. In societies where women are often marginalized and discriminated against, micro loan programs serve to elevate the status of women within their families and their value in their communities.

Bangladesh Project Proposal:

Provide 2400 women with micro loans to start or improve small entrepreneurial businesses.

3 Year project.

Target start date January 1, 2007.

Cost per person \$22.92.

Total project cost \$55,000.

Fall Activities

The fall months of 2006 have been busy ones for Mary Brown as she represented SowHope at a speaking engagement in Lansing, Michigan and spent the last two weeks of October two weeks in Egypt following up on past and researching future projects.

The Lansing Chapter of the National Association of Women in Construction welcomed Mary as she spoke at their October meeting. They responded to Mary's presentation of the plight of women in developing nations around the world with understanding and empathy. Mary's presentation included rich storytelling of her personal experiences and observations along with compelling photos and a media presentation that were followed by many questions and lively dialogue.

Accompanied by Bonnie Conley, SowHope's Board Secretary, Mary traveled to Egypt for the later half of October. Bonnie and Mary spent much of their time teaching, interacting and building relationships with post graduate students, visited three villages where they attended literacy classes and observed clean water projects. They also met with prospective partners on behalf of SowHope.Org's proposed literacy project. Approximately 50% of all adult women are illiterate with that percentage rising to near 70% in rural areas. This is due to the old custom of giving preference to boys over girls in all aspects of life, including education. The economic strains families face cause them to not send their daughters to school, or to take their daughters out of school, handicapping them for life.

The Egypt project proposal is a two year project targeted to start in July of 2007. During the course of this project, 405 women and girls will be taught how to read, write and do basic math, at an approximate cost of \$75 per student, for a total project cost of \$30,000. At the end of the project it is expected that each of these students will be able to pass the government testing in math, reading and writing at a fourth-grade level.

The upcoming winter months of January and February will include work on grant writing and possibly the launch of an international photo contest to raise funds so that SowHope may continue to implement programs helping needy women.

The following is a list of the programs that SowHope supports:

Wellness Program

A. Physical

1. Providing immunizations.
2. Promoting good nutrition and hygiene.
3. Improving water conditions.
4. Treating illnesses and diseases through medical services and pharmaceutical distributions.
 - a. Aids prevention and relief.
 - b. Women's healthcare.

B. Emotional

1. Providing counseling for gender related issues.
2. Supporting safe havens and recovery centers for victims of rape and forced prostitution.

Educational Program

1. Basic literacy classes.
2. Vocational and technical training.
3. Scholarships for higher education.
4. Seminars on leadership and motivational speaking.

Economic Program

1. Micro economic loans.
2. Small business training.

SowHope's established **Partner Agreement policy** is to attempt to provide to approved partners with:

1. Funding for outcome based projects.
2. Encouragement through:
 - a. Bi-annual on-site visits of projects.
 - b. Bi-annual regional conferences for partners.

SowHope will require from approved partners:

1. Agreement with our values.
2. Completed application of outcome based projects.
3. Accountability for resources given

As 2006 draws to a close and 2007 begins, SowHope looks forward to increased impact in the lives of women around the globe. Join us, won't you? Your partnership with us will go far in the fight against despair. Together, we will continue to sow hope into women's lives through targeted projects in education, wellness and economic opportunities.

If you would like more information about Mary's availability to speak to your group or organization, please contact her by phone at 616-433-1575 or by email at Mary@sowhope.org.

For more information regarding SowHope and its current projects, please logon to: www.SowHope.org/projects