



# SowHOPE Newsletter

*"Where there is despair, let me sow hope."* FRANCIS OF ASSISI

## JOY & INSPIRATION IN AFRICA

**W**hat is the actual impact in the life of an impoverished woman when she participates in the benefits of a SowHope project? This is what SowHope Board Members Wes and Melissa Miller wanted to see for themselves as they joined SowHope CEO Mary Dailey Brown on a recent trip to Africa. One day, as they were traveling from one town to another, they spotted a woman sitting by the side of the road, and it was soon apparent that she had heard that Mary was coming that way and she did not want to miss her!



*Melissa & Klementina*

**T**he jeep stopped and everyone piled out as Mary received a huge greeting from the woman. She introduced herself as Klementina, and she talked about the microloan/literacy group in which she participated. She quickly responded to their questions about how the money had benefited her and her family. Her husband stood quietly nearby as her enthusiastic responses described the purchases of young pigs and goats, and successful farming.

**K**lementina learned in the group that if she bought young animals and raised them to maturity, she would make money, since the adult animals were worth more. She purchased a baby pig for 30,000 shillings (\$12) and as an adult it was worth 60,000 shillings (\$24). She now realizes that if she were ill and the family needed funds, they would simply sell an animal – it is her insurance!

**T**he profit from the sale of animals and produce has allowed Klementina's children to attend school, now that there is money for school fees. Her pride in her accomplishments was displayed in her entire being – her posture, her face – demonstrating her joy in being able to contribute so meaningfully to the welfare of her family.

### **\$1,000,000 MILESTONE**

SowHope celebrates millionth dollar donation.  
See page two for details.

**F**inally, as Wes and Melissa were trying to pronounce her name and that of her son, she gestured to take their notebook and pen, which Melissa eagerly gave her. As Klementina wrote, the question was asked, "Could you write your name before the literacy class?"

**"No"**, said the translator. "How do you feel now that you can write your name?" Wes asked. To their amazement, Klementina began jumping up and down, dancing with her face full of joy and delight!

**F**urther questions to her husband made it clear that he deeply respects her, her accomplishments, and the positive results she has brought to the family. Klementina is evidence of the change SowHope brought to one woman – but which benefited an entire family.

**A**s Melissa says, "It is so very evident the pure love and respect these women feel for Mary Brown as she and SowHope believe in them and their potential when the world told them not to hope."

**W**es was deeply impressed, understanding the role SowHope had in creating self reliance in the women he met. In his words, "During the trip I would sometimes feel immense sorrow for the children who had open wounds, tattered clothing, and no shoes and wished that I could somehow send the materials that they were lacking. However, I have become a firm believer in SowHope's strategy of inspiring and empowering the mothers of those children as a means to sustainable and holistic development for their families and communities."

For an on-the-scene glimpse of Klementina's joy-filled dance, see the one-minute video clip at [SowHope.org](http://SowHope.org). Don't miss it!

## WHAT WOMEN AROUND THE WORLD ARE SAYING ABOUT SOWHOPE



In response to the question - "What part of the Microfinance Weekly Club do you like most?" Many ladies from Bangladesh said, "Please keep the weekly trainings. We love them; they are the only education we have!"

## CREATIVE CONTRIBUTING FOR SOWHOPE



Abigail Inn

When Landey Patton heard the plans for SowHope during its beginnings, he knew immediately that he wanted to support it financially. Landey, long-time friend of Doug and Mary Brown, is a person of faith who takes seriously the phrase “do unto others as you would have them do unto you” and he saw the SowHope vision of inspiring impoverished women around the world as fulfillment of that concept.

Landey and his business partner in Abigail Inn, a bed and breakfast in Lexington, Virginia, decided to contribute 2% of the Inn’s gross revenue each month to SowHope. The inn is a seasonal business, so some months they are able to contribute more than others. Referring to months when things are slow, Landey says, “When we are working on some mundane task, we are often motivated to persevere, believing that our efforts could result in providing someone less fortunate than us to have a chance for a better life.”

He also feels strongly that the arrival of monthly support is a terrific confidence builder for SowHope, and he encourages everyone to consider dedicating a small portion of their income regularly. Landey believes that doing this fosters a sense of partnership with the organization, sharing in both its joys and its challenges.

In addition to contributing to SowHope, the owners offered Abigail Inn to SowHope as a place to gather for a weekend of planning. Last year, volunteers from Florida, Illinois, Maryland, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Washington, DC stayed at Abigail Inn to discuss ways to promote the organization. The ability to do this without cost was a wonderful gift to SowHope.

The owners of Abigail Inn realize that, as Americans, they are regarded as wealthy by the majority of the world. Landey says, “We’ve been blessed beyond anything one could imagine, so why shouldn’t we contribute something to those who have so little?” Indeed, Landey lives what he believes, and is doing for others as he would have them do for him. Visit [abigailinn.com](http://abigailinn.com).

Landey, his wife and five daughters have been very encouraging to SowHope with hospitality, events, meeting new people, and strategy anytime SowHope arrives in the DC area. Thank you Pattons!

SOWHOPE  
EXISTS

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

## THANKS A MILLION

As a SowHope Board Member, Beth Leeson was aware of the organization’s goal of reaching the cumulative million-dollar donation mark before the end of its 7th year of operation in 2013. What she didn’t know, was that she would be the instrument to make it happen.

Beth heard about SowHope in 2011, and learned about its history in a meeting with its President, Mary Dailey Brown. As she listened to Mary, “who gets this (helping the poor) right down to her bones”, share her passion for helping the

world’s poorest women, she also heard that the first years of the organization were financed by the sale of inherited land Mary and her husband had planned to use to fund their retirement. Beth “tucked this story away in her mind” and left that meeting knowing her own passion for helping the disadvantaged had found a new home as a SowHope volunteer.

This past November, volunteering included a trip to Africa with a SowHope team. Beth saw first-hand the power of the organization’s strategy of utilizing local leadership to impact the lives of disadvantaged women.

She saw something else too, something truly remarkable – the transformational power of hope. “It’s nearly impossible to find the words that articulate the incredible revolution that hope gives to the women who are desperately poor,” Beth shared.

One day, as she listened to another hope-filled talk Mary was delivering to a group in Uganda, an idea struck. “It hit me like a little lightning bolt. ‘I know what I can do – I can sell my property!’” She decided on the spot that the “most beautiful piece of property in Kent County”, which she was holding onto for a future dream of her own, could provide a present and growing dream for many, many women.

ASTOUNDINGLY, upon returning home, her property was listed, sold, and the check that would meet SowHope’s goal donation was joyfully written on the last day of 2012.

Beth Leeson: for all of the women whose lives will be altered by life-giving hope, “Thanks a million!”

THIS MOTHER’S DAY  
HONOR A WOMAN IN YOUR LIFE!

From May 1-15 make a donation at [SowHope.org](http://SowHope.org) and designate it to be given in the name of a woman you want to honor. We will be posting names to our Women’s Honor Roll. Honor a special woman in your life by inspiring the lives of impoverished women around the world with wellness, education, and economic opportunities.

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