



# SowHOPE Newsletter

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

## MIRACLES IN NORTHERN KENYA

In Northern Kenya, one of the local leaders, Josephine, has reported phenomenal success stories she is seeing in her area. One microloan group raised enough money to replicate themselves and now they loan money to other women, who are following the pattern that brought the first group such success. She says, "They train others and now their children, who were not going to school for lack of uniforms and basic support are back in school."

Many of the young boys had joined destructive gangs, but now with the provisions from their mothers, have quit the gangs and



Microloan training in Kenya

are now pursuing education." She also reports that the group has "adopted" two boys and are supporting them, so they can go to school.

What the women have accomplished in their microloan groups has impressed the men in their communities. Now the women are entrusted to delegate responsibilities that were previously not offered to them.

Also, the culture is changing – before, the widows would become the property of their deceased husband's relatives. Now the widows, after being empowered through the microloans, are choosing to raise their own children. The end result is that the boys who often made very bad choices, are now under the charge of their mothers and gang activity is happening less and less.

Amazingly, these women's microloan groups have also helped to reconcile two tribes that have fought each other for ages. These groups have become powerful change agents, and their families and communities are being transformed.

## COMING TO A THEATER NEAR YOU!

As two hundred people filed into a local cinema, munching on popcorn and sipping drinks, the excitement was palpable. Most of them knew a little about SowHope, and some of them knew a lot. All of them were there to see the documentary "Let Me Sow Hope" premiering that night. The 30 minute film would profoundly make clear to them what SowHope does, how it is done, and what the end results are in the lives of thousands of women in the developing world.

There to see and hear about SowHope as first-timers were guests invited by 20 event sponsors, mostly SowHope supporters long familiar with the organization. The response from both groups was the same – awed, impressed and motivated.

The interviews with women whose lives had been changed, the comments from Mary Dailey Brown about the plight of millions of women who make less than \$2 a day, and the explanation of SowHope's methodology – partnering with local leaders using local solutions to solve local problems - made it clear that promoting women is the most effective way to beat poverty. Colorful and visually beautiful, the innovative film challenged all who attended.

Photos by Anne Kendra



Premiere Showing at Celebration Cinema, Grand Rapids, MI  
September 12, 2013





## MEET A BOARD MEMBER



Al Longtin

Al Longtin, owner of ABResources in Frankfort, IL is now actively supporting the organization by serving as the SowHope board treasurer. In addition to his friendship with CEO Mary Dailey Brown, what is there about this non-profit that helped Al choose to devote his energy and passion to it?

Al's response is that his mother, who was his hero, always had time and a heart for those less fortunate, and he sees a similar response in the endeavors of SowHope as they reach out to women in need. He saw in his mother's example that when moms were

helped, entire families benefitted. Al is particularly fascinated with the social entrepreneurship that SowHope offers women, building businesses that can grow exponentially, as the women share their knowledge and resources with one another.

As a board member, Al listens for ideas that could be helpful to the organization's goals, encourages new people to get involved, and gives his time and resources as well. He and his wife Caren funded the first grain grinding mill project in Kenya and more recently they helped to underwrite SowHope's documentary film. He has seen that his work has actually helped make permanent changes in the world, as the lives of women and their communities are transformed through the opportunities offered to them through SowHope. As he says, "It gets me out of myself and into the joy of helping others."

In future months, Al hopes to use his significant experience working with people one-on-one to involve more supporters in SowHope's organization. Knowing that more funding will mean life and hope for women whose future is presently uncertain invokes a sense of immediacy to his goal. He has plans for social events (including sponsoring the Nov 2 documentary showing in the South suburbs of Chicago) meant to develop awareness of SowHope and its life-changing partnerships to women, "the best way to bring prosperity to any community."

## "LET ME SOW HOPE" DOCUMENTARY

COMING SOON! Last day of ArtPrize in Grand Rapids, MI, Oct. 6th, at the Plaza Towers - 5 showings from 1-6 pm. Chicago Suburbs: South on Nov. 2, North on Nov. 3. Details for future showings or how to host one in your city see [sowhope.org](http://sowhope.org) or [www.facebook.com/sowhope](http://www.facebook.com/sowhope).

SOWHOPE  
EXISTS

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

## CREATIVE FUNDRAISER IDEAS



Judy Kohl owns The Mustard Seed in Lake Forest, IL, a Fair Trade store, where clothing, accessories, and products made by people in the developing world are sold. Each spring, The Mustard Seed hosts a fashion show/fundraiser, with the profits going to a non-profit of its choosing. Tickets are sold, the charitable organization is identified and explained.

When Judy was introduced to SowHope, she particularly liked its broad scope – serving different people groups, cultures, faiths and low economic levels. At the show, those attending also heard about SowHope and its purpose, and were given an opportunity to donate. Those donations, plus the proceeds from the ticket sales, and the store sale profits that day were all given to SowHope.

Judy's creative idea will result in many lives being changed for the better. As Judy says, "When you are invested in lives, knowing the stories, a relationship is forged, and giving becomes natural and easy."



[mustardseedfairtrade.com](http://mustardseedfairtrade.com)

## DID YOU KNOW?

Many individuals who are age 70½ or older can transfer as much as \$100,000 a year from their IRA account directly to a qualified charity without having any of that money counted as income. This transfer counts toward the taxpayer's required minimum distribution for that year. SowHope is such a qualified charity.

Ginger Sisson says, "I don't have very much in my IRA, but do have to take out my minimum each year. I really did not want to add it to my income and have that money taxed, and the simplicity of directing it to SowHope meant that both the organization and I profited from this choice."

Lawmakers have extended this provision through the end of this year, so take advantage of this while you can.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Ruth Posthumus - Chairperson  
David Kelson - Vice Chairperson

Alfred Longtin - Treasurer  
Melissa Miller - Secretary

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