



SowHOPE Newsletter

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

SURPRISING EXPERT KNITTER - NIGERIA

At SowHope, we often say that when you help a woman you are not just helping her, you are helping her family, neighbors, and even whole communities. On a recent trip to Nigeria, we were able to see just how true that concept is. SowHope partner, Sarah M, works tirelessly to help impoverished women in rural areas. She uses grants from SowHope to purchase sewing machines, knitting machines, farm equipment, cooking utensils, beads for jewelry, etc., to take to remote villages. She then teaches small groups of women how to use the things she provides and how to make products that they can sell at a profit.



*Ibrahim, 10 years old, with his mother Altina teaching knitting.
"My son is a very good teacher," says Altina.*

In every village, usually, one or two women rise up as motivated leaders and craftsmen, and Sarah has them teach others the various trades. Altina H. (pictured above) is one such woman. She quickly learned how to skillfully use the knitting machine provided by a SowHope grant. She started a profitable business in the village and was able to buy her own machine. As a way to pay it forward for what she received she has taught over 20 women how to use the SowHope knitting machine. They use the machine to knit items to sell.

Standing next to her in the photo above is her 10-year-old son, Ibrahim. He was fascinated watching his mother use the machine and has become quite an expert himself. He is so good at it, and enjoys it so much, that he has already taught over 8 people in the community how to use the knitting machine. His mother says he is a very good teacher and everyone agrees!

This is a perfect example demonstrating that when you help women, you are not just helping them, you are helping their children, the next generation, their community, their nation, and ultimately, impacting the world! Thank you for helping these women and their children; together we can change the world!



Microloan group members at weekly meeting

SUSTAINABLE PROJECT - BANGLADESH

The first project SowHope funded was to give seed money for microloans in Bangladesh. During the seven year project, 3,087 women joined 174 microloan groups. The project is now completely sustainable and our partner is now starting even more groups with the earnings from the seed money. The money we funded has been utilized repeatedly and some entrepreneurial women have taken more than ten loans and grown businesses that now employ several neighbors.

What is the pay-back rate for our microloan groups? 100%

Benefits being reported by microloan group members:

- women are more respected and there is less discrimination
- husbands and wives are working together
- all children of members go to school, this includes girls who go to school longer and marry later than their counterparts
- members refuse to pay for or accept wedding dowries
- weekly education and special trainings are life-changing
- members are now running for local government office
- group members have accumulated over \$55,000 in savings.

NEW SOWHOPE OFFICE Grand Rapids, Michigan

Multiple donors have stepped forward to cover all costs of rent and utilities of our new office, so that all your donations can go toward helping women. New office address: 2270 Oak Industrial Dr NE, Grand Rapids, MI, 49505.

***Donations can still be mailed to:
PO Box 234, Rockford, MI 49341***

MEET A FUNDRAISER!

Betsy Verwys, college professor and athlete, has long been a supporter of SowHope. She sensed the power and clarity of the SowHope purpose as described in the organization's documentary, *Let Me Sow Hope*, and thought it would be awesome to show the film on Ferris State University's campus.

She was given permission and a space; many students attended the showing. The audience was quick to comprehend the great need that is being met by SowHope – one young man, Tyler Wellman, now volunteers!

But Betsy wasn't done. Her next venture was to run in the Gazelle Girl 1/2 marathon – a race with the goal to honor women. What could honor women more than to raise money for women who live on less than \$2 a day? She suggested support between \$1 to \$100 per mile to make a difference in the lives of women, mothers and their children. She also dedicated each of the 13 miles to women who had been influential in her own life,



Betsy Verwys - celebrates at end of the race

and thinking of them as she ran, she found encouragement to finish the race.

Betsy had hoped to raise at least \$300 in the race. Her actual total was \$1600!

If you desire to support SowHope, but don't have the financial means to offer hundreds of dollars, be inspired by Betsy. Look around you and ask who would like to view a film that shows what a difference SowHope makes in the lives of desperate women. Or be on the alert for events that lend themselves to become a fundraiser!

YOU'RE INVITED!

JUNE 19 - OPEN HOUSE, 4-8PM at SowHope Office - 2270 Oak Industrial Dr. NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49505

OCTOBER 3 - PHOTO EXHIBIT, Beauty & the Burden - Grand Rapids, Michigan (Save the Date!)

SOWHOPE EXISTS

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

SAVE A STAMP!

Did you know that you can have your bank send SowHope a check without you 1) writing a check, 2) putting it in an envelope, 3) addressing it, and 4) putting a 48 cent stamp on it? If you are already paying your bills online, you can do the same for your gifts to SowHope.

Simply add SowHope.org as a payee, listing the address: P.O. Box 234, Rockford, MI, 49341. Then designate the amount of your gift. If asked for an account number, know that you can use anything that identifies the organization, so you can simply use "SowHope" as the account name. The bank will identify you as the individual sending the gift, so you will receive a donation receipt for tax purposes. Whether you do this for a one time gift or set it up to send a gift monthly, this will save you time and money – and will certainly help SowHope. Thank you.

Board Member Sylvia Juta Receives Ph.D.

We offer congratulations to Sylvia Juta, SowHope board member, who recently completed her Ph.D. in Public Administration with a concentration in Nonprofit Administration and Management. Sylvia says she was motivated by her father's wish to be able to call her "doctor", and was also driven by her desire to help her home country, Zimbabwe, through research and teaching. Hoping to do her 6 months internship at SowHope, she wants to help CEO Mary Dailey Brown with administrative tasks, one of which may be the creation of a database that evaluates the work that has been done by the organization, and which could also project the areas where SowHope could best meet its goals.



DID YOU KNOW?

SowHope has impacted over 38,000 women in its 8 years of existence. That impact represents things like having help during birth, learning how to read, or receiving a microloan.

This averages out to helping:

*4750 women every year,
396 women every month,
91 women every week,
13 women every day,
1 woman every 2 hours*

Average cost per woman - \$35

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

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