



We sow hope... and hope is growing!

NEWSLETTER

RITA - THEN & NOW

Last October, Mary Dailey Brown, president of SowHope, visited several projects in Nigeria. Our partner there is conducting projects in three states of Nigeria, and Boko Haram, the notorious terrorist group, is active in all three. The well-known kidnapping of 276 school girls was executed by Boko Haram. They have caused the torture and killing of tens of thousands of people, displacing 2.3 million people trying to flee their wrath.



While visiting SowHope-funded projects, Mary met with village people who had recently been under attack by Boko Haram. These people are understandably severely traumatized by the horrific actions that they have witnessed and survived. Your donations are making a difference in their lives. The projects funded by SowHope help women learn money-making vocations, start small businesses, and do extensive farming. Over 500 female farmers are benefitting from the agricultural projects led by our partner, Sarah. The projects you are funding serve to bring hope and healing to the people of North East Nigeria.

Sarah began by teaching her neighbors basic skills like sewing, knitting, and bread making. She even taught basic literacy and word processing on a computer run by a generator. On Mary's first visit to Nigeria in 2007, she met Rita on Sarah's front porch where she was beginning to learn how to sew and run a business. Rita has been able to make a living for herself by sewing, but she has done so much more than that!

Rita now has a small store where she sells beautifully made dresses. She also wanted to help others learn to sew, so they could make a living too. She has started a sewing school in her store and 12 young adults spend entire days with her as she teaches them how to sew and run a business. She also teaches them how to live and all of the students say she is the most amazing person they know. She truly inspires them and gives them hope. Rita submitted a grant application to SowHope to fund three more machines so she can teach additional



women at her sewing school. SowHope was able to award the grant because you are making it possible for women like Rita to be so successful!



Mary with the leader of the sewing training group

SOWHOPE EXISTS

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

LEARNING TO SEW & MAKING FRIENDS

Recently a small team visited SowHope projects in Jordan. Former board members Dr. Pam Ogor and Beth Leeson accompanied SowHope president Mary Dailey Brown to this Middle East country. Jordan has a population of 10.2 million people of which nearly 3 million are refugees from their war-torn neighbors: Palestine, Syria, and Iraq. The refugees are allowed to live in Jordan, but they are not allowed to work for wages. This has created a more safe, yet dire, circumstance for everyone. The team was able to eat lunch in the home of Iraqi refugees and to hear their story of escape from ISIS. War creates a terrible toll not only on those directly involved, but also on those nearby.

SowHope has been funding a project to help impoverished women learn to sew. This is in partnership with the local city as they allow the women to use one of the empty city buildings to store their sewing machines and have their daily classes. The classes not only teach a profit-making skill, they also serve as a way for women to gather together to form friendships and give support to one another. So many impoverished women are isolated and do not have the benefit of close friendships. The classes are a way for these women to get to know other women and share their lives together. These friendships are a source of great joy for the women. Thank you for helping to inspire women all around the world, even in some of the hardest places to live.

SAVE THE DATE!

SowHope's 4th Annual Fundraising Dinner

Friday, September 28, 2018, 6:30PM

Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park

DIANE JOPPIE - NEW CHAIRPERSON

"It is hard for us to imagine women living under the conditions they do in Third World countries," said Diane Joppie. Inspired by Mary Dailey Brown after hearing her tell stories of impoverished women around the world, Diane wanted to know what she could do to make a difference. "We are so blessed to live in the United States," commented Diane, "I believe sometimes we lose sight of how fortunate we are."



Recently elected, Diane serves as the Board Chair of SowHope. She joined the Board of Directors of SowHope two years ago and has been volunteering for the organization for three years. She believes that her biggest strength is as an ambassador for SowHope, spreading the word about what the organization does and educating peers on the importance of the mission of SowHope. "I feel our three programs (Wellness, Education, and Economic Opportunities) make the complete package of what SowHope represents. It is hard to have one without the other two."

Diane currently serves as the AVP, Branch Manager at Independent Bank in Grand Rapids, MI. She first began her career in banking with an internship at Old Kent Bank and has been involved with money ever since, including a family business for many years. Diane also has a history of volunteering and believes firmly in "giving back." "I have been so blessed in my life," Diane explains, "If there is one person that I can make a difference for, I will." This is why she believes that the work SowHope is doing is so valuable and important. "The results we see at SowHope are so remarkable! We are making a difference each and every day in the lives of so many women." She would encourage every person to find a way to give back – not only because it's a growing experience, but because it gives a sense of pride that will stay with you forever.

Those that spend time around Diane believe she is an optimist who is always looking on the bright side of life. She is an open book with a genuine love for people. When we asked Diane if she had any message that she would give to young women around the world, Diane replied, "Women today need to be confident with themselves and realize the opportunities in the world are endless. They need to aim high and reach for the stars; the most important thing to do is never give up hope. Without HOPE, we have nothing!"

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PHOTO EXHIBIT & IWD - MARCH 8

You're invited to help celebrate International Women's Day on Thursday, March 8, 6-8PM at our new office at 3777 Sparks Dr SE, Grand Rapids, MI. International Women's Day has been celebrated all over the world for over 100 years; this year the theme is #Press for Progress.



SowHope will host an exhibit of international photos taken by local photographers. Over 50 photos of the beautiful women of SowHope will be on display.

Come and enjoy wine, appetizers, and dessert. Music will be provided by Mark Lamm. During the event, CEO Mary Dailey Brown will give a brief report about the progress of women as a result of SowHope projects.

This is a free event with an opportunity to help impoverished women around the world by donating to SowHope.

Visit sowhope.org to RSVP and for more information.

MOTHER'S DAY BRUNCH



**Brunch at JW MARRIOTT, six.one.six
Grand Rapids, MI**

**Sunday, May 6, 2018 11AM-1PM
\$100 per ticket**

Visit sowhope.org for more info

HONOR A MAN IN YOUR LIFE

**Brunch at Alpenrose Restaurant
4 E 8th St. Holland, MI**

Saturday, June 16, 2018, 9:30-11:00AM

More info at www.sowhope.org/

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