



We sow hope... and hope is growing!

NEWSLETTER

TRAGEDY IN DR CONGO



Ngadjoy, Mary, Monique - Mary Meets with DRC Partners

Early this year, NASA noticed from satellite imagery that something seemed awry in northeast DR Congo. The imagery revealed systematic burning of villages. SowHope has been supporting projects to empower women in seven of the villages in the targeted district.

Mary Dailey Brown, determined to see if the projects were affected, met with two of our partners from the area. They reported that yes, all of the villages had been attacked by terrorists. Tragically, in one village, nine pregnant women at the birthing center were brutally murdered in the night, along with the nurse who refused to leave them. While the media attributed all of the violence to tribal fighting, our partners were adamant that outsiders had been brought in by the DRC president to destabilize the region ahead of the upcoming presidential elections. They were certain because, over the years, our partners have been forming farming cooperatives and building birthing centers to bring warring tribes together. The tribes now know each other very well.

Conditions in the developing world make it extremely hard for people to thrive. Despite the challenges, this entire region has been prospering like never before and there is peace among the tribes. The economy continues to grow from the microfinance and cooperative farming projects sponsored by SowHope. These leaders are resolute to get the people back to their villages to harvest the crops and rebuild their homes. The president recently withdrew from the election. There is hope.

RSVP TODAY

Annual Fundraising Dinner (& Concert!)

Friday, September 28, 6:30 PM

Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park

See next page for more details

HOME BUSINESSES CHANGE LIVES

Vinita's heart is overflowing. As the local leader of a SowHope funded project at a vocational training center in India, she reports that women are blossoming.

Three hundred women were trained at the center and all of them are now working, most from their own home businesses. The women are earning as much as \$145 per month (or half the

minimum wage of government workers) and a couple of them have even been able to build little houses. Many of the women who learned tailoring are making at least two dresses a day and some are earning more than their husbands.

Before training at the center, many of the women were not even permitted to step out of their homes. They were depressed and totally at the mercy of their families.

Through coaxing by some of the trainers, the younger women's families allowed them to go to the center where they were taught a variety of skills such as henna design, cosmetology, and tailoring. In the tailoring class, SowHope provided thread, material, and the best sewing machines!

Some of the beneficiaries have married and moved to different parts of India, but all of them are still working. Their joy is contagious. Today, they are a happy and confident bunch who have learned to speak up for their rights and to respect themselves as they contribute to their family's income. Vinita ended her report with a big **thank you** for the investment of SowHope into the lives of the women. This project has been truly empowering.



Woman in Sewing Training

SOWHOPE EXISTS

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

SOWHOPE STARS INVITATION

Do you want exclusive access to the untold stories about how SowHope impacts lives? Are you interested in viewing never before seen photos from our field visits to project sites? If you become a monthly donor, you will be invited to be a SowHope Star, where you will enjoy in-depth (and sometimes humorous) stories, photos, and more!



BOARD MEMBER, KATIE KIROUAC

Katie Kirouac joined the SowHope Board of Directors in 2016 and currently serves as the Board's Vice Chair. Before beginning her current role as the Director of Development for Emmanuel Hospice, Katie served in the Peace Corps in Ghana for 2 years. Her passion for local and international causes is what brought her to SowHope. "During my time in West Africa," says Katie, "I saw many dry wells, worn-out shoes, and broken infrastructure left from well-intentioned international aid organizations. But I saw few people investing in the ideas and dreams of the community to improve their own lives...I was immediately drawn to SowHope's approach of partnering with local leaders using local solutions to solve local problems."



Katie Kirouac, Vice Chair

Along with serving on the Board, Katie actively volunteers for SowHope, including being engaged on the Fund Development and Marketing Team, assisting with fundraising, event planning, and donor engagement. She is also active on several boards and committees in the Grand Rapids community. Katie amuses that volunteerism has been ingrained in her since she was a child. "I grew up in a family where volunteering was just a part of life", Katie shares, "My Dad served as a chaplain in a prison ministry, my brother was a missionary, and my Mom spent years delivering meals to seniors for Meals on Wheels. So in some ways, I keep volunteering because I don't know any better!" Katie says she loves volunteering for SowHope because every gift creates a partnership with an incredible woman around the world and she delights in being a part of a world-wide movement that sows hope.

As for the upcoming generations, Katie explains, "You can be generous with the gifts you have, no matter how old you are. Whether it's making cookies for a bake sale or joining a school club for a cause...you will never regret giving your time and resources to something bigger than yourself. Our world NEEDS generous people." Katie believes there is enormous power in investing in women, "Every woman, no matter her background or culture, needs to hear that she is loved, that she matters, and that she can always find the strength to do hard things, no matter her circumstances."

"There are still tremendous healthcare inequalities around the world, and many deaths and illnesses could be prevented by increasing access to clean, safe, and local clinics, community healthcare workers, and childbirth centers", Katie explains, "Even though I'm certainly not rich, famous, or in a position of power, I've found small ways to share my gifts with others. If each of us gave a little of our own talent and treasure to care for our neighbor (whoever that may be), I truly believe we would find greater peace in ourselves and in the world."

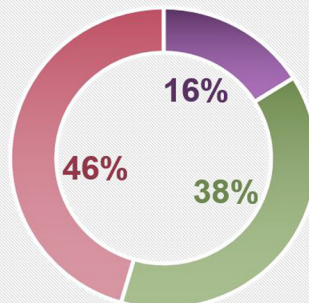
Follow SowHope
on social media:



\$1,000,000 MILESTONE

Thanks to your help, SowHope has given over \$1 million to women in extreme poverty. As of July 2018, SowHope has funded grants in **18 nations** for **190 projects** that served **88,548 women**.

Project Area Grants



- Wellness
\$162,835
- Education
\$389,915
- Economic
\$461,763

Celebrate with us! Thank you...

SOWHOPE'S 4TH ANNUAL FUNDRAISING DINNER

Friday, September 28
6:30pm
Frederik Meijer Gardens

~Concert by Martin &
Lamm after the event~



For tickets or more details about the event:
call 616.433.1575, email info@sowhope.org,
OR visit sowhope.org/dinner

NEW DONOR RECOGNITION DINNER

As a NEW SowHope donor in 2018 you are invited to a fun event to meet the Sowhope Staff and Board. Enjoy food, drink, and good conversation.

SowHope Headquarters
Thursday, October 18, 2018, 6pm
(It's also National Chocolate Cupcake Day!)
3777 Sparks Dr SE, Grand Rapids, MI

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Diane Joppie - Chairperson
Katie Kirouac - Vice Chairperson

Benjamin Borisch - Treasurer
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