



Sharing Opportunities with Women NEWSLETTER

FINDING SUPPORT THROUGH TRAGEDY



Renuka with her little girl

A SowHope team recently visited India to evaluate a tailoring training project impacting 160 women. The team was treated to an opportunity to watch the graduation ceremony for 40 women along with hearing stories of how the project impacted their lives.

Renuka took part in the class because she wanted to work from home to be with her two children rather than paying someone else to watch them while she worked. Only 22 years old, Renuka was a happy bride. Just three weeks before the graduation, tragedy struck. Her husband and father-in-law were both killed in a car accident, leaving all of the burden on her to provide for her family. Because of her culture, she must live with and take care of her mother-in-law, and she cannot go back to her own family to receive support. Her mother-in-law treats her badly and does not help Renuka with her children. She cannot marry again and will carry the family's burden for the rest of her life. In western culture, a woman in her situation would likely receive support and sympathy; however, where she lives it is common to believe that she caused the accident and it is bad luck to be around her. People even cross the street to avoid walking near her, because they believe she is cursed.

Through the SowHope funded project, Renuka met women from different religions and cultures who have become a support group for her. These women are usually prohibited from even mixing together. But the local leader resolved this issue by giving a different viewpoint and encouraging them to work together, promoting a loving and caring perspective. **As a result, the women banded together to support Renuka, even attending her husband's funeral.**

As a result of the project, a ripple effect is happening. Renuka's life is positively impacted because of her classmates' ongoing support. Her children will be educated and she can be present in their lives while working. The community benefits as the women begin accepting each other. Although Renuka's life is still understandably difficult, she is persevering day after day. She is grateful for SowHope's project and now has hope for the future.

SOWHOPE EXISTS

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

REUNION IN SIERRA LEONE



SowHope Team Members Beth, Pam, & Mary visit Victoria & Sylvia

Reunited and it felt so good! Dr. Sylvia Jutta, who served on the SowHope Board and Program Team from 2012-2017, hosted a SowHope team that traveled to Sierra Leone in June. Her husband Papa, originally from Sierra Leone, wanted to move back to help rebuild his country. They are both university professors who desire to boost individuals through education and economic empowerment.

Sierra Leone ranks as the 11th poorest country in the world, even though it is rich in agricultural and fishery resources and home to a large deposit of diamonds. After years of civil war and an Ebola outbreak in 2014-2015, there is finally a hint of economic recovery.

During the visit, Dr. Jutta introduced the team to two local women leaders, Abbie and Victoria, who applied for SowHope grants to lead agricultural and sewing projects. SowHope met with several women's groups to hear about the conditions in Sierra Leone. "It was wonderful to see the work of these two leaders to uplift impoverished women. They were both professional, caring women who are encouraging many other women", explained Mary Dailey Brown, President of SowHope. Both leaders received grants for their projects to empower more women. It is thanks to people like Sylvia and Papa that SowHope is able to connect to these outstanding local leaders!

SOWHOPE'S 5TH ANNUAL FUNDRAISING GALA

**Thursday, September 26
6:30pm
Frederik Meijer Gardens
& Sculpture Park**

The Ripple Effect



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

ESTHER GIEDEMAN: RUNNING FOR A PURPOSE

In order to make a small difference as part of a larger, global cause, Esther ran the Bayshore Marathon in Traverse City, Michigan, on May 25, 2019. She only started running two years ago, but has already run three marathons! Esther dedicates each one for a good cause. Born in Cameroon, Africa, as a daughter of Swiss missionaries, Esther lived the first 8 years of her life overseas. She explains, "SowHope's work in Africa appealed to me because Africa has always been close to my heart."



Esther running in the marathon

Esther chose to support SowHope in May because SowHope is a locally-based nonprofit organization with a global outlook and impact that allows people to connect locally to issues with projects that affect people around the world. She set up a peer-to-peer fundraising page for SowHope so all of the donations could go towards the Burkina Faso Fistula Repair matching gift campaign. She also designed and printed a customized SowHope t-shirt which she wore during the race to increase awareness and promote SowHope. She was able to raise over \$500 while advertising for SowHope! Esther says that all three program areas of SowHope (wellness, education, and economic opportunities) are equally important. "I believe they all go hand-in-hand and influence each other", she explains.

Although Esther has a penchant for running, she states that she can honestly say that running is not a passion. "One thing that motivates me," she says, "is knowing that I am running for a purpose." Esther echoes SowHope's belief in the ripple effect of supporting women, stating, "I think that every woman can use the help of another woman. If you empower and enable a woman, you also empower and enable the community in which she lives. The impact of your actions is not limited to today, but also affects future generations." Thank you, Esther, for choosing SowHope!

NEW DONOR RECOGNITION DINNER

As a NEW, first-time SowHope donor in 2019 you are invited to a fun event to meet the SowHope Staff and Board. Enjoy food, drink, and good conversation.

Thursday, November 7, 2019

SowHope Headquarters
3777 Sparks Dr SE
Grand Rapids, MI

Legacy Giving

Did you know you can invest in future generations of women through a legacy gift? By designating SowHope in your will or estate plan, you are making a lasting impact on the lives of women for many years to come. Call SowHope at 616-433-1575 or email info@sowhope.org to discuss giving options.

THE RIPPLE EFFECT



On Thursday, September 26th in the gorgeous Huizenga Grand Room of Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park, SowHope is hosting its 5th annual Fundraising Gala featuring SowHope President & CEO Mary Dailey Brown as the keynote speaker. Beginning at 6:30pm, the evening will include dinner and wine catered by Taste of the Gardens, live jazz entertainment, inspiring stories from the field, and an opportunity to empower impoverished women around the world.

This is SowHope's premiere event, drawing in hundreds of like-minded individuals every year. Tickets may be purchased for \$100 per person online at www.sowhope.org/dinner, by phone (616-433-1575), or by mailing payment to SowHope at PO Box 234, Rockford, MI 49341. Table of ten sponsorships are available with three levels:

- **\$2,000 Gold Level** - Includes special benefits & gold-branded SowHope decorations
- **\$1,000 Green Level** - Includes benefits & green-branded SowHope decorations
- **\$500 Purple Level** - Includes purple-branded SowHope decorations

Corporate sponsorships are also available.



Attire for the evening is dressy (dress pants and nice top, pantsuits, or dresses for women; dress shirt and tie, sport coats, or suits for men). For more information about the event or to sponsor, please contact aaron@sowhope.org or call 616-433-1575. Or scan the QR Code below:



Event address is:
1000 East Beltline Ave NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49525

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on social media:



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