



# Sharing Opportunities with Women NEWSLETTER



*Esther, Mary, & Kathleen*

## NEW OPPORTUNITIES IN ASIA

**A**lways on the alert to find countries where women could benefit from SowHope-funded projects, President Mary Dailey Brown and Board Member Kathleen Muedder traveled to Myanmar and Nepal last December with Kate, the Executive Director of Harvest Bridge, an international nonprofit that has done work in South Asia for years.

This exploratory trip gave Mary and Kathy the opportunity to learn about work that is currently underway in these countries and to determine if it aligns with SowHope's mission and efforts. In Myanmar, they met Esther, a leader who stood out because of her passion to serve very poor women and her ability to formulate developmental projects. She knows many rural women who could immediately benefit from raising pigs. Esther, who works at a veterinary hospital, explained that pig farming is a business that has low start-up costs and can be profitable when best practices are applied. SowHope invited Esther to apply for a grant in 2020.



*Piglet and future profits*

The team next traveled to Nepal where nearly 41 percent of the people live on less than \$3.20 a day—the population that SowHope serves. They visited several small businesses in and around Kathmandu, where they saw a variety of livelihoods from goat farming to leather shoemaking. While there, a female Nepalese leader, Jothi, expressed a critical need for medical help for rural women, who often suffer from a prolapsed uterus after giving birth. SowHope also invited Jothi to apply for a grant in 2020.

*Stay tuned for updates on both of these potential projects.*

### SOWHOPE EXISTS

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

## HOPE VERSUS VIOLENCE IN DRC



*Mother and newborn in SowHope-funded DRC birth center*

**F**ew places have endured violence and unrest for as long as the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Nine pregnant women and a nurse were brutally murdered at a SowHope-funded birthing clinic last year. Because of this ongoing conflict, it was with some relief that SowHope recently received communication from Ngadjoy, a longtime SowHope partner. Although there was comfort in knowing that Ngadjoy and other community leaders were alive, Ngadjoy's report was disturbing. She stated that although "beneficiaries of SowHope projects are doing well, we are still faced with terrorist activities and problems in our area where we have lost many women and children."

In her communication, Ngadjoy explained that even with the disruption caused by the terrorists and daily life being difficult, some of the clinics SowHope has funded were still open. She also shared news that one of the other leaders, Beatrice, was "progressing with her project despite the situation with the terrorists"; although Novi, a leader in another village, was unable to continue her project because the violence was too great.

Ngadjoy's report confirms that the local leaders with whom SowHope partners exhibit uncommon character and strength in the face of evil and unimaginable challenges. With their courage and leadership in mind, SowHope will continue to provide support and hope to women in the DRC.

## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY EVENT

Help SowHope raise awareness about bias and celebrate the achievements of women across the world by attending our International Women's Day event on Sunday, March 8, 2020, in Grand Rapids.

This celebration will be open to the public—so mark your calendar! Details will be shared soon.

## BOARD MEMBER, FRIDAH KANINI

**“My** soul was touched,” answered Fridah Kanini, Board Member of SowHope, when asked what attracted her to the organization. In 2015, when she attended the Annual Gala at Frederik Meijer Gardens, she was mourning the loss of her mother, who had died nearly three years prior. “My mother was my best friend. When I watched the video and heard Mary Dailey Brown speak about the projects SowHope funded, I was reminded of my mother, who was dedicated to empowering women. I know she would have been a perfect partner with SowHope.”

Born in Kenya, Fridah and three younger brothers were raised by their single mother, Ms. Flora, and their Grandmother Elizabeth. Although her maternal grandfather did not always live with the family, he attended school functions with Fridah. He was an advocate of education and empowering women, which influenced the paths Fridah pursued.

By the time Fridah moved to Michigan in 2005, she had graduated from Kenya Utalii Hospitality College in Nairobi, studied at the American Hospitality Academy, and worked in the hospitality field in the United Kingdom and Florida. Today, she works full-time at the Cultural Intelligence Center in Grand Rapids, serves as CEO and owner of Flora’s Elegance Events Décor (a small event-planning business), and takes business courses at Grand Rapids Community College. She is also the founder of *A Glimpse of Africa*, a festival that showcases African culture and provides a platform to promote talents and businesses in West Michigan.

Fridah loves to give back, so it was no surprise when she began to volunteer with SowHope in 2015. SowHope’s mission to inspire women by providing wellness, education, and economic

opportunities that give them the hope and skills to be self-sufficient motivated Fridah to support the organization—and, most importantly, it was a way for Fridah to continue her mother’s legacy.

Fridah knows SowHope truly changes women’s lives and positively affects children and communities in parts of the world that need it the most. She believes once women have their health and the knowledge they need to flourish, they will find it easier to create economic opportunities—a philosophy that aligns with SowHope’s commitment to promote sustainability rather than dependency.

Fridah is a vibrant speaker who donates her time and energy to other local nonprofits, including as a youth leader at her church. She is motivated by positive people, good energy, and knowing that her work will make a difference in someone’s life. When she can, she enjoys traveling, fashion, culture, music, cooking, shopping, going to the beach, car shows, and meeting people.

Fridah’s dream is to return to Kenya someday, to open a center in her mother’s name that is dedicated to empowering women and girls. SowHope is very fortunate to have Fridah on our team and we have no doubt Fridah will realize her goals.



Fridah Kanini

## NEW VENUE FOR 2020 SOWHOPE GALA

The Board of Directors is excited to announce that SowHope’s 6th Annual Fundraising Gala will be held on **September 24, 2020**, at **The Pinnacle Center in Hudsonville, Michigan**.

This venue provides easy access for both driving and parking, and it gives you the opportunity to invite family, friends, and business partners who live on the west side of the state.

For information on the availability of corporate and table sponsorship opportunities, please contact Aaron Hoxworth at 616-433-1575 or [aaron@sowhope.org](mailto:aaron@sowhope.org).

## BECOME A SOWHOPE STAR

If your New Year’s resolutions included simplifying life and doing more good—we have the solution to satisfy both: become a SowHope Star. It’s easy. It’s effective. And it helps sustain our mission.

SowHope Stars are people who donate monthly. You can set up automatic withdrawals from your credit card or bank account, or you can write a check every month. It’s simple to arrange—just call the office at 616-433-1575 or go online at [www.sowhope.org/donate](http://www.sowhope.org/donate).

SowHope Stars receive special recognition throughout the year—please, join today.



[www.facebook.com/sowhope](https://www.facebook.com/sowhope)

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