



Sharing Opportunities with Women NEWSLETTER



*Lune's son, in the house
burned down by the military*

HOPE NEEDED IN MYANMAR

In December 2019, just before the COVID-19 pandemic, a SowHope team visited Myanmar for the first time. They met with a few leaders from different areas around the country and decided to fund projects with two of these leaders. One was Lune, who wanted to do a small microloan project, and the other was Esther, who applied to run a pig-rearing project for several women. The projects proceeded well, and the women were very happy with their new small businesses and the income they were producing.

In February 2021, a brutal military coup overthrew the government of the country, and to this day a junta still controls it. As the junta moves through the country, they leave a trail of destruction. Recently, we got word that Lune's house and her whole village were burned to the ground. She, her family, and her neighbors had to run for their lives. Lune and her family managed to survive and are now safe, living with relatives far away.

We also recently heard that Esther's project, the people in the area, and the local economy have been upended by the military. She said, "The pigs in our project were all stolen by the military. We are heartbroken. This project was functioning well. The women were able to move forward making some money to help provide a better life for their families." Many people including Esther, her husband, and their child had to flee the area to find safety.

More than one million people are now displaced in Myanmar since the military coup began. With continuing violence in the country and the current monsoon season (mid-May to late October), the UN warns of "dire" conditions forming there. These conditions make it hard to promote sustainable development. We await word from our partners to advise us on how to best assist them during this difficult time.



Lune (right) and her mother (left)

Thank you for your support of impoverished women in some of the toughest places in the world. They need hope.

CARRYING ON

Claudaline was one half of a formidable couple until her beloved husband Bishop Desire passed away suddenly two years ago. They worked together to positively impact many people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Despite the difficulties of



Claudaline and her late husband Desire

being a widow, Claudaline continues to build the legacy she and Desire formed by passionately serving impoverished women with sustainable development projects. Her latest report shows that the activities funded by SowHope over the past year impacted more than 350 women.

The economic project formed groups of women to farm together. They rented land, purchased seeds and farming implements, and distributed animals to women in four areas of eastern DRC. The farming was so successful that the women scrambled to figure out what to do with all the excess food they harvested! The surplus also caused a drop in agricultural product prices.

They decided they will need to build a warehouse to store the food, which will allow them to sell the product little by little and retain profitable earnings over a longer period. The women reported that they used the money they made to build houses, educate children, buy small plots of land, and purchase sewing machines. One group even donated money to buy musical instruments and choir robes for their local church.

For the wellness project, a doctor and a nurse provided basic medical services to the groups for the women who needed them. Most people in the developing world never have the opportunity to see a doctor even once in their lifetime.

Claudaline also offered trainings in female self-empowerment, involvement of women in the electoral process (even as candidates!), and in protecting the environment by planting trees. After the conference, some of the women planted trees in a public place. The local chief wrote, "Thank you to Claudaline and SowHope for ALL the benefits to our community that your projects have produced."



Women planting a tree

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

Become A SowHope Star

Consider becoming a hero for women by committing to a monthly donation. Call SowHope at 616-433-1575 to discuss giving options.

VOLUNTEERS, MIKE & JOYCE BOLTHOUSE



Mike & Joyce Bolthouse

like we're a part of it", said the couple.

Mike and Joyce have been married for 42 years and are recently finding out what it means to retire, sharing time with friends and family – and enjoying every minute. Part of this process has been volunteering with worthwhile organizations, like SowHope. "We began volunteering in 2018," explained Joyce, "working on the mailings, stuffing, and stamping." The couple continues to help in this area because they know that asking for support and updating SowHope followers are key to fulfilling the mission, ensuring that women get the opportunities they need. The couple also enjoys the camaraderie of the group of volunteers who help with the mailings. And, of course, the delicious coffee cake made by another star volunteer. "It keeps us coming back! No doubt!"

In a full, vibrant sky, Mike and Joyce Bolthouse are some of the brightest SowHope stars. Friends of SowHope CEO Mary Dailey Brown for over 20 years, they have been regular donors since 2006, the first year of the organization. "Watching Mary and the stories that come from her...we feel

With five grandchildren, Mike and Joyce love being "parental" toward the next generation. For young women, they want them to understand: "The programs of SowHope (wellness, education, and economic opportunities) are first and foremost a 'state of mind'", they said, "Rather than hopelessness, they should always be aware of and ready for opportunities that should arise and pursue them with all their heart, no matter how small. SowHOPE offers this."

Volunteers are crucial components for any organization, yet only one in four U.S. adults volunteer in some capacity for a nonprofit, at an average of 52 hours per year. Volunteers help organizations save on labor costs and time and generally make the work for staff more enjoyable. So having consistent (and fun) volunteers like Mike and Joyce make every mailing that much better.

Mike and Joyce are proud of their friend Mary, "We've seen her negotiate through many things – good, bad, and everything in between. We are glad to see her in her 'sweet spot.'" We hope Mike and Joyce will continue to cheer SowHope on through their support for at least another 16 years. Hopefully 32.

If you would like to join the wonderful pair at the next volunteer mailing, or if you'd like to volunteer in any capacity, please reach out by emailing info@sowhope.org or call 616-433-1575 for more information.

Thank you, Mike and Joyce, for being true heroes.

BE A HERO

SowHope's annual fundraising gala will take place at The Pinnacle Center in Hudsonville, Michigan on Friday, September 30th, beginning at 6:30pm. Join us to celebrate the work of true heroes, our partners, as we share the challenges they've faced and successes against all odds. For those who are not able to attend in person, we will be livestreaming the event at 7:30pm on our website, www.sowhope.org.

The keynote speech will be given by SowHope CEO Mary Dailey Brown, with the theme Be A Hero. Learn how you can make a heroic impact while enjoying live music, wine, and dinner catered by the professional culinary team of the Pinnacle Center. Tickets to attend in-person are \$125 individually. Please consider sponsoring a table of 8 at one of three levels:

1. **\$2,500 Gold Level**
2. **\$1,000 Green Level**
3. **\$500 Purple Level**

Finally, if you can't attend or watch the night of the gala, you will be able to stream the event at www.sowhope.org anytime and anywhere! We can't wait to have you join us.



MAKING FRIENDS IN DC



Landey & Becky Patton

On June 10th, SowHope seeds took root in the DC area. Long-time friends of SowHope, Landey & Becky Patton and their five daughters, organized an incredible "friend-raising" event at Maggiano's in McLean, Virginia.

Leecie Patton Brown, the oldest Patton daughter and a SowHope Board Member, introduced founders Doug and Mary Brown (no relation to Leecie) to the crowd and conducted a Q&A about how the organization started.

Mary shared more in depth about SowHope.

About 90 people attended the event and the reception was overwhelmingly positive. So much so that the Pattons decided to move forward with a gala to help raise funds for SowHope.

We are excited to announce that on **Friday, November 11th**, at the Fairview Marriot in Falls Church, Virginia, SowHope will be hosting the "Be a Hero" fundraising gala. So "Save the Date" and join us for an inspiring evening! Table sponsorship levels as listed in the article to the left are also available for this gala. Consider inviting friends and filling a table. We hope to see you there!

Leave a Legacy

Please consider investing in future generations of women through a legacy gift to SowHope. Contact SowHope at 616-433-1575 to discuss giving options.

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