

GoGo Grandmothers to host tea party fundraiser

By Constance Scrafield

Country Garden Tea ?Canada 150.?

High tea in an elegant garden. Ladies, perhaps in Victorian dress; an air of pleasant times in a delightful spot, freely offered by the Go Go Grannies to raise funds for the Grandmothers to Grandmothers campaign.

It set for June 17.

GoGo means grandmother in Africa, hence the name, GoGo Grannies, for the Orangeville branch of the Stephen Lewis Foundation based Grandmothers to Grandmothers. The mission of the original initiative is for grandmothers in Canada and around the world is to assist the many grandmothers in Africa who are raising their grandchildren when their own children have died of AIDS or of other disease, or through war. Grandmothers to grandmothers provide funds for small enterprises, farming, clothing, education, food, clean water ? all that and more. They give the idea of caring from afar ? that other grandmothers understand and want to help.

It was Christine Elms who attended a conference where Stephen Lewis brought grandmothers from Africa to talk about their lives and the campaign to assist them. Elms thought that the grandmothers of Orangeville and area would like to participate in such a movement. Along with others, there have been, over the last 10 years, many occasions and fundraising ideas staged, with good success.

Cathy Whitcomb has been involved for many of those years and is still. She and the current chairperson Rita Henkel joined us for a conversation about the next upcoming event.

There is much to praise in this matter. The Stephen Lewis Foundation is very strict about money raised by the grassroots going to where it is intended ? straight to the people for whom it was raised. They oversee the projects they support and The Stephen Lewis Foundation is ranked among the top three philanthropic organizations in the world.

What else makes it wonderful, as Henkel told us, ?We are able to give them constant stream of funding; we do quite well for a small town.?

It really began when more than 2,000 African grandmothers marched on Durban, South Africa, to protest the fact that widows have no rights. When the husband dies, the rest of the family can take over his wife's property. Their needs were noted and a way to help was established.

Never backward about being involved, the entire Lewis family are entrenched in the campaign to assist wherever and however they can move the Foundation forward.

?That's what inspires us,? Whitcomb pointed out. ?Stephen Lewis' family work hard for the foundation as well.?

Towns and cities across Canada have their own branches, each with its own name. Sometimes, they work together. Coming soon is a possible collaboration with the Grandmothers in Guelph.

Of the upcoming Tea Party June 17, they said variously, ?We want people to come and have a nice day. There'll be tea, sandwiches, cakes and squares.?

The Caledon Town Hall Players are coming in costume to play croquet. ?People are welcomed to come in costume if they would like. There'll be a market place and a ?granny's attic' jewellery table.?

Tours of the garden are also being conducted.

?Every effort is being made to make this a really beautiful day and all the proceeds go the Grandmothers to Grandmothers campaign.?

The garden in which this event is taking place is in Mono and the directions to it are printed on the tickets. These are \$15 each and can be purchased at BookLore or by emailing Henkel at k.henkel@sympatico.com