

Diocesan A.C.W. 2007 Outreach Report

We are starting a new year and the time when many of our groups have a business meeting to choose our new local executive and disburse our hard earned funds. I would like you to know where your money was used that you sent to the Diocesan ACW in 2007.

Most recently, in December 2007, we were able to send bursaries to sixteen (16) students attending a CEGEP or a university requiring them to live away from home. In particular the bursaries are for students from Lower North Shore, Gaspé or the Magdalen Islands. Donations to the Education Fund were generous in the past year, in part due to memorial tributes to the Rev. Ruth Matthews

The "Pledge Fund" amount was somewhat less than in years past. Understandably so, as we lose an occasional group and there are less members overall. However, we did very well to support our favourite causes: PWRDF: to help in the fight against HIV/AIDS; CBMI: (Canadian Blind Mission International). Mosquito nets for a village to prevent malaria and Vitamin A for eye-sight in children; Fort Haldimand Camp: to assist children that attend the "sleep-over" sessions; Libra House: a women's shelter in Labrador. This year they used our donation to promote a self-help program. They want to show women and girls how to recognize and protect themselves against abuse. Elizabeth Hinton and Allison Blair: our two missionaries working in Africa. The Rev. Bruce Myers; one of our own priests who has taken a sabbatical to undertake a year of advanced theology studies. He will return to our Diocese with his new knowledge and hopefully we will all benefit.

The Hugh Fraser Recovery Program received support from a special fund, set up in the name of Mary Partridge Ferrabee, one of the pioneer founders of the Women's Auxiliary. The Fraser Program helps young people overcome and recover from substance abuse.

I want to tell you a little about the two missionaries working in Africa. They received money from "Pledge" and they also shared the amount in the St. Andrew's Day Fund.

Elizabeth is an R.N. and has worked in Africa for several years doing various jobs. She has been involved in treating AIDS patients and also in promoting education to prevent the disease. Presently she is doing her nursing duties in Cabo Delgado a province in northern Mozambique. She is using her donation to support a women's project to make jewellery and crafts from local natural products such as straw. We will try and have some of these articles for display at our Biennial in May.

Allison is working with a program to help young girls leave prostitution and make a living in something less degrading and dangerous. She runs a program to teach the girls sewing skills. With our donation she purchased 2 sewing machines and a full length mirror. Apparently the mirror was a big hit as now the girls can see themselves in the clothes they make. Allison tells about three of these girls.

Jolie is off the street from prostitution which began at age 12. She had to watch her parents being burned to death in 1993. Greta was a child refugee in the Congo when she was taken by rebels. She suffered through battles, saw people hacked to death and eaten by crocodiles. At 13 she was a street prostitute. She is now 16. Sandrine was orphaned at 7 years old. She eventually had to leave school for lack of fees and was refused help by

an extended family member. To survive, she became a prostitute and ended up in a refugee camp that she escaped from just several hours before it was completely destroyed by bombs. She is now 20.

The program Allison is working with will hopefully help some of these girls become proficient enough to find jobs in the sewing trade and lead better lives. Those of us fortunate to attend Synod in October were pleased that our Archbishop Bruce designated the collection at the opening Eucharist of Synod to Allison and her work.

Thank Offering collections of 2007 have started to come in and please don't forget this important fund if you have not yet done so. This fund which is collected once a year is designated at Biennial meetings. Therefore, on May 31, 2008, in Lennoxville, at our business session, delegates will have a chance at choosing where to designate this money. Thank you everyone for the good work in 2007 and we look forward to an equally good year in 2008. We are fulfilling our role as members of ACW with our varied outreach as well as by supporting our own churches. I would also like to acknowledge the various Guilds who contribute monies to our outreach programs. We must also thank all those women who are not actually "members", but work along beside us at all our church events. Let us not forget the men—they chauffeur, set up tables, help clean up and some even cook!! Thank you everyone.