

ACW Diocesan Outreach Programs

By Phyllis Gauthie , ACW Diocesan Treasurer

Here we go again! As most of you know by now, I have the position of ACW Diocesan Treasurer once again, and am ready to push for continued funds. (At the next Biennial, we hope to convince someone else that this is a real cushy job.) However, I do enjoy the contacts with you and would like to tell you how the money, sent to the ACW Diocesan treasury, is spent.

All our ACW's exist to help keep our own church alive and healthy. The social aspect of our meetings is also very important, especially in the smaller communities. However, part of our mandate as a Christian group is outreach beyond our own doors. By supporting the various funds of the Diocesan ACW, we are fulfilling our mandate for "mission", even though as a single group we cannot attempt such outreach.

We have three (3) important funds that support our purpose; **Pledge, Thank Offering, and Education**. The easiest one to explain is **Education**. This Fund was set up years ago at the request of a Quebec school commissioner named McNaughton-Wood. He saw the financial burden for students living on the Lower North Shore, Gaspé and the Magdalen Islands, to acquire a college or university education. They had to undertake expensive travel and also live away from home. Since this program has been set up, the ACW has helped many grateful youths.

Many of you know that The Rev. Ruth Matthews was a strong supporter of this outreach. For several years she served as "chair" and loved meeting and corresponding with the students. In the year 2005, we gave 13 bursaries of \$100 each and in 2006 we gave 8 bursaries of \$200 each. The amounts are not huge, but students appreciate every bit that they receive.

The Pledge Fund serves a wider outreach. For the past several years we have accumulated \$5,000 each year which is allocated to local, national and international causes, chosen carefully by your Executive members. We try to keep donations at \$250 to \$500 each. In 2006 we supported:

- PWRDF- National and international aid
- Fort Haldimand Camp- Diocesan Youth outreach
- IVCF- National youth and student faith assistance
- CBMI- International children's medical help
- Chaplaincy Fund at Champlain Regional College and Bishop's University.
- Libra House- A women's shelter in Happy-Valley /Goose Bay, Labrador
- Two missionaries from our Diocese working in Africa, Allison Blair in education and Elizabeth Hinton nursing with HIV/AIDS victims.
- Aube Lumiere- a care facility for terminally ill cancer patients.
- Gaspe Ecumenical Chaplaincy- outreach to elderly and sick.

Note: IVCF is Intersity Christian Fellowship which works on campus to help troubled students and those searching for faith. They were important in helping the students at Dawson College following the shooting tragedy.

Libra House is a shelter for women and teen girls that helps them relocate from abusive home life. This facility will provide a room, food vouchers, or travel fare to relocate. A recent thank-you, said we provided a room for one, a week's food vouchers for another, door locks for protection, and a knapsack for a teen who had to be relocated. Instead of carrying her clothes in a plastic bag she was the proud owner of a piece of luggage. Something we all take for granted.

As a special request from Archbishop Stavert at Biennial, we sent \$500 to the Diocese of the Arctic to help with rebuilding their Cathedral in Iqaluit, which was destroyed by fire.

The Thank-Offering Fund is actually my favorite way that I believe we can maintain our outreach without “breaking the bank”. I would like to encourage all groups to give a small box or can (a soft drink can will do) to each member, mark it ACW Thank Offering and request each one to drop a coin in the box whenever they have change in their pocket or when they have a reason to be thankful. (a sunny day, a good meal, a phone call from family or friend, etc.) Collect the boxes once a year and you will be surprised at the amount. Some groups already use this system for Thank Offering. The Diocesan treasurer presents the amount collected to members at the Biennial meeting and choices are made for allocations. Therefore at Biennial in 2006 which was held in Quebec City, we had accumulated \$3,000 and the choices were:

- Mission to Seamen (Maison Marin)
- PWRDF
- Fort Haldimand Camp
- The ACW Education Fund
- Libra House
- Our 2 missionaries (Allison Blair and Elizabeth Hinton)

As an extra at Biennial, the amount in the Memorial Fund is usually donated to a charity in the area of the meeting. In Quebec the \$360 in this fund was divided between the Holland Christmas Hamper Program and the Hugh Fraser Recovery Program (a substance abuse rehab program).

The membership fee has been raised from \$3 to \$5 and that is used mainly to cover cost of travel for your appointed executives to attend meeting. (2 per year, and rooms are billets whenever possible. Executives also pay their own meals!!) This also covers incidentals, such as photocopies and postage.

Donations sent to the ACW Diocesan Treasurer for a specific cause, such as PWRDF or Camp Haldimand are forwarded as you request. By sending it through the ACW Diocesan Treasurer we can have an idea of how much outreach we actually accomplish.

The ACW PURPOSE: to unite women in a fellowship of worship, study and offering which will deepen the strength of their own spiritual lives and will lead them into Christian service in: parish, community, diocese, nation and world.

I hope that you will see we are fulfilling this mission as we work together.