

Glacier Grannies Tea to Honour Founding Members and Celebrate our 10th Anniversary

Barb Taylor was Master of Ceremonies for the event, backed up by a planning committee of Barb Fudge, Barb Taylor, Bette Axani, Dianne Wade, Gillian Little, Judith Hamilton, Kate Clark, Jane Sigurdson, and Colleen Black

Barb Taylor welcomed current members, past members and long-time supporters, including Sally Gellard, and thanked the planning committee.

She continued: “we are here to honour and thank the women who started the Glacier Grannies in 2007. We also want to celebrate our accomplishments in the past 10 years. Kate Clark has worked very hard to put together a chart that lists our fundraisers and the years that they started and ran.”

Kate Clark spoke to the information about past events, written on a large chart.

Barb Taylor requested members to raise their hands when they hear their name being mentioned. It was no day to be shy!

She went on: “we found it very difficult to define who were founders, as the group evolved so much over the first year - 2007. There were lots of comings and goings but there were minutes for each meeting.” She thanked Bette, Kate, Barb Fudge and Linda Munro for diving into the archives with her to put together the story of our first year.

She set the stage by saying: “we are all familiar with the tragic reasons that led Stephen Lewis to start his Foundation in 2003. He was tired of waiting for the world to respond to the catastrophic AIDS pandemic sweeping Africa. In time he and his daughter would learn that the African grandmothers were holding the communities together. They needed help and support. On International Women’s day in March 2006 the Grandmother to Grandmother Campaign was launched by the Stephen Lewis Foundation.

“On August 13 2006, on the eve of the International AIDS conference in Toronto, 100 African grandmothers affiliated with the SLF were met by 200 self-funded grandmothers from across Canada. They came to listen, speak and start a movement. This is where we first heard the phrase ‘We will not rest until they can rest.’ It was the first grandmother gathering.”

She described the beginning of the group: “in November Linda Munro, Verna Power, Gladi Lyall, Brenda Cooper, and Joyce Relyea went to a presentation by Sally Gellard on her time in Kenya. She had started the Merville Grand Mothers group. They had decided to stay as a small group but were willing to take names for new people interested in starting their own group. Joyce Relyea picked up that list and called a meeting at her home on February 14. Nina Saxby and Phyllis Giovanetti attended but there were also several regrets. By the meeting in March , Gillian Farrow, Lorrie Smith, Maybeth Hoagland, Virginia Philipson and Brenda Cooper were on

board. The name 'Glacier Grannies' was voiced by Lorrie Smith as she looked out at the Beaufort Glacier from Joyce's living room window. The name stuck!

"In April, Francine Nantais, Margot Steward, Linda Munro and Gladi Lyall were also able to attend the meeting where the first executive was formed. It was decided then that each position would be shared. This decision proved to be a very wise one and has served us well. In the same month Marianne Muir gave a presentation to a small group where she received the group's first donation.

"In May, Verna Power, Norma McNellie, Cathie Talbot and Anne MacDonald attended for the first time. At the Comox United Church Marianne Muir gave her second fundraising talk entitled *Images of Africa* which captured a three-month eye-opening trip to Africa. The SLF video *Grandmothers: The Unsung Heroes of Africa* was also shown.

"At the June meeting, with new members Merrilee Cameron, Ruth Miller Kate Fairley and Judith Heron, plans were made for the next fundraiser- a talk to be given by Jean Munro on the lives of women in Nigeria. Jean's talk on July 17 at Comox United Church was well received and attracted more new members.

"By September, the group's membership had grown to 45 women. It was also the month when we hosted the luncheon for the first Victoria Bike Ride, a tradition that continues to this day. The lunch raised \$666. The names of long time members Lysbeth McCrone, Joy Goldie, Colleen Black and Lorraine Waring first appeared that month."

Barb Taylor then asked all members from 2007 to stand, and told them that by the end of the year they had raised over \$6000, hosted 2 African grandmothers at the home of Lorraine Waring, made and sold crafts at 2 November craft fairs, and finished off the year with the decision to amalgamate with the AIDS angel makers, a group formed in 2006 by David Talbot, with Maybeth Hoagland as it's coordinator. She thanked the 2007 group for getting the Glacier Grannies off to a very good start.

She then invited the first executive of the Glacier Grannies to come forward:

Co Chairs: Joyce Relyea and Francine Nantais who started in September

Co Secretaries: Brenda Cooper and Nina Saxby

Co treasurers: Margot Steward and Gillian Farrow

SLF liasons: Linda Munro and Virginia Philipson

(only Francine and Virginia were absent)

She asked them the following questions: What motivated you to get involved with the Grandmother to Grandmother Campaign? What kept you there? Is there a special memory you would like to share? Did you ever imagine that you would be here 10 years later to hear that your group had **raised \$395,379** for Grandmothers in Africa?

She said: "you and we have made a difference in the lives of African Grandmothers and children and our own lives as well," and invited Linda Munro to share the ending of a wonderful talk she had given at a Sunday service in 2008 at this church.

Linda shared what she had said: “as we raise awareness of the plight of African grandmothers, and raise funds to support the Grandmothers campaign we become more: more creative, more resourceful, more courageous, more generous, more compassionate, and more connected to each other and to the world. We thank our husbands, partners and friends for their support. They are our unsung heroes. We also thank the community for supporting our events and sales.”

A sumptuous tea was served. The hall and tables had been beautifully decorated to honour the occasion. Pictures were taken of the members of 2007.

Barb thanked everyone for coming.