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# MANITOBA GRAM-A-GRAM



Photo by:  
Alexis MacDonald

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AWARENESS  
SOLIDARITY  
FUNDRAISING

## Manitoba GRL Report: April 2020

What a difference a few days make.

On March 7 I was at a busy farmers' market selling raffle tickets and talking about Grands 'n' More Winnipeg and the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign to anyone who would listen. Less than a week later I had lunch with three friends at a busy restaurant, although then a lot of the conversation revolved around whether we should be doing it. March 16 was the last day I had contact at a distance of less than two meters from anyone outside my immediate household. Now I'm working up the courage to go to a grocery store. I imagine we have all had similar trajectories.

As you will guess, all Campaign fundraising activities across Canada that involve gatherings of any kind have been cancelled at least through April, nearly all those in May, and June will probably follow. Grands 'n' More Winnipeg's comedy night set for May 8 has been postponed with the hope that it can be revived at a later date. BC groups holding virtual Stride to Turn the Tide events in June are of course proceeding. Perhaps Manitoba groups could look at that option. Count your steps with a Fitbit or equivalent technology, or the old-fashioned way, and tally the accumulated distance travelled over days or weeks to bring in your sponsor dollars. One BC group is aiming at covering the distance between two African capitals with a goal of \$30,000 raised. If nothing else, a good way to keep fit while self-isolating. (cont. next page)

I hope that as grandmothers' group members we can resolve to maintain our connections and focus within our groups and across the province. With member meetings in April and May cancelled and coordinating committee meetings to be by email, our online selves will be all we see. For those of us who greatly valued the chance to see and chat with other members at meetings or other events, this is a real loss. But I am discovering that social media and other online connection approaches have brought people together, more open and gregarious than before. Before it was just a way to share an opinion or funny story as a small part of the day, like reading a newspaper where you know most of the reporters, now it is for me becoming a way to participate in a different kind of community that is nonetheless real.

Keep checking the SLF website. There are regular postings on Facebook from the Campaign and the Foundation. April 16 is the next Canada-wide conference call open to all group members, this time on the subject of donor stewardship. Contact me for information on joining in.

Listen to Stephen Lewis' interview on CBC Radio on March 25 concerning the impact of COVID-19 in Africa by following this link:

<https://www.cbc.ca/radio/thecurrent/world-will-survive-covid-19-only-if-swift-action-taken-to-help-africa-un-humanitarian-says-1.5509728>

All of us have been through very trying times in our lives, and none of us welcomes another, but we will work together to ensure we all have the best chance to avoid more risks to health and wellbeing.

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## Letter From SLF Staff

*Dear Grandmothers and Grandothers,*

*Spring is always a busy time across the Grandmothers Campaign, and we are deeply*

*appreciative of all that you do in support of the Campaign, the time you dedicate, and the energy that has already been invested to organize 2020 events. Given the current situation with COVID-19, the SLF is monitoring the situation and adapting our work as necessary.*

*Your health, and the health of your loved ones, your supporters and our community-based partners is our priority. We feel the best path forward is to adhere to the "social distancing" and other recommendations put forth by health experts, and ask grandmothers groups, if you haven't already, to **postpone in-person fundraising events scheduled between now and May 1**. During this time, we will continue to monitor, reassess, and move forward together from there.*

*We thought you would also like to know that the Stephen Lewis Foundation continues to support our community-based partners and their holistic responses to the AIDS pandemic. We are remaining in close contact with them and will support them through their own response to COVID-19.*

*Many of you have reached out to us in the last few days expressing your concerns about the impact of COVID-19. Some of you have inquired about how best to fundraise online at this time. In response, we have created a special Grandmothers Campaign solidarity donation page should you wish to use it. Here is the link to the online fundraising page: <https://slf.akaraisin.com/grandmothersolidarity>*

*One of the wonderful aspects of the Grandmothers Campaign is the strong sense of community. You have nurtured caring, supportive networks. You check-in on one another regularly and care for each other. These relationships and connections are especially important at this time. We will also keep in touch with you.*

*We appreciate your flexibility, understanding, and solidarity. Please don't hesitate to be in touch with us if you have questions or concerns.*

*Warmly,  
Sarah, Megan, Winnie and Ruth-Ann*

## AROUND THE REGION

### Grands on the Red

Our last official meeting was in November 2019 when we discussed our September 07 Potluck Dinner.

Grands on the Red is in somewhat of a Hibernation mode. Our small membership has had a great winter, but we are finding it difficult to schedule formal meetings around snowbirds, vacations, colds and flu bugs and now Corona Virus. We are wondering how other groups are faring in these times.

In the fall we were talking about trying to partner with a bigger organization to make mesh vegetable bags as a fundraiser. This has not met with a lot of enthusiasm and of course now is on hold until we can begin to meet and plan once again. Likewise, our hopes for BBQ and displays in the library and local Gwen Fox Gallery are on hold. There is still a possibility of getting involved with the Selkirk Waterfront Market.

I have wondered if it would benefit our group to attend the Winnipeg Ft. Rouge meetings when they get going again. I suspect we would gain strength from their energy. This is something we can discuss when things return to normal. Please keep us on the Winnipeg mailing chain so we are aware of upcoming events.

We are all concerned about our African Grandmothers and families during this Pandemic. Please keep in touch with the Foundation and let us know how you are doing and if we can help. Messages from Toronto and from the Foundation are always welcome and help to keep us focused. Our members are all committed to the SLF Grands and want to continue learning together and contributing to the cause.

*Submitted by Kay Shewfelt Boyd*

### Grands 'n' More Winnipeg

Sharon has done an excellent job capturing our sentiments regarding the extraordinary times we are living through.

It is hard to sit at home and not be a part of our extended families' lives. We know that our children and grandchildren are staying away from us to keep us safe, as we distance from each other to collectively 'flatten the curve'. Most of us have been using FaceTime, Zoom, Skype and other platforms to stay connected.

Perhaps we too can embrace technology a little bit more and continue some of our fundraising - but move it online. The 'Donate' button on the Grands 'n' More Winnipeg website will be linked and members can encourage people to donate directly to the Grandmothers Campaign in this way. "

On "pause" in Winnipeg,

*Submitted by Donnie Fridfinnson*

### Grannies Go2gether

We are just a group of three in a couple of small towns. We are each involved in many changes because of the 'STAY HOME' directives. Between us we are involved in so many boards that our time has been spent making many decisions regarding closures, layoffs, alternate meal delivery plans, church services, you name it.

In between we have all tried to keep touch with our own grandchildren by various methods. It is our hope that we all come through this with a new appreciation of what is really important in life.

One of our plans was to spend time together making cards and Christmas tags ready to sell at the fall gathering in Winnipeg. Only time will tell if this all happens.!

Also, we had hoped to make more of our produce bags that have sold so well.

*Submitted by Shirley Tate*

