

Women Of Grace Widows' Fund



A Joint Mission Project of Watertown and Canton First Presbyterian Churches

Winter 2015/Spring 2016

Mission of The Women Of Grace Widows' Fund (WOGWF)

The mission of the Women Of Grace Widows' Fund is to enact and make real an ongoing structure to alleviate the extreme poverty faced by widows in Malawi by providing funding to meet basic food, shelter, and safety needs, while creating opportunities and resources that enable and empower widows to establish their own self-sufficiency and independence, regardless of religious affiliation.

Connecting, Sharing and Changing Lives

Our mission work in Malawi assisting women continues thanks to the **ongoing and generous support** of our donors and the work of **Sam Chirwa** and **Grace Chiumia** in Malawi. In March of 2015, a group composed of **Heather White** (WOGWF Board member), **Margot McGorman** and **Mike Miller**, all members of the Watertown First Presbyterian Church Outreach Council, traveled to Malawi on a fact-finding trip. Updates on each project were shared upon their return.

Michenguatuwa - Many of the widows in this group are elderly and unable to work. WOGWF meets **acute needs** such as transportation to medical appointments, housing and food.

Mbowe - Formed four years ago, these women are the youngest and most capable women in the WOGWF program. They participate in a **"Village Loan" model** to **raise pigs** for sale at market. Part of their profits are used to purchase supplies for the pigs with WOGWF providing the balance of support. The aim is to have this group **self-sufficient** within four years. WOGWF also recently built a new home in Mbowe.

Mzenga - Also using a **Village Loan model**, 18 women are working together to **raise fish** in a man-made pond which are then harvested four times a year. The team also visited a **bee farm** that has

been initiated by 5 women with bee frames constructed and plans for this project to be self-sustaining within five years. This group of widows spans all ages with the elderly working with the young to the best of their ability.

Clint McCoy Feeding Center - The center continues to provide **80 children** a hot meal two days a week. The children also enjoy **songs and lesson time** with a WOGWF volunteer. During the March visit, each child received a **new pair of shoes** and each family was given **soap and lotion**.

Keys To Education - The team was able to meet with **government officials, teacher representatives** from the Keys to Education program and **Professor Gift Dube**, director of the Children's Library Program at nearby Mzuzu University. All involved confirmed the need for **culturally appropriate** early literacy materials and training. Heather White was invited to return and teach an Early Literacy class at Mzuzu University. Plans are underway for this and for the future of the Keys to Education program. The three-year grant funding from the PW Thank Offering has concluded. Funding options along with the best way to maintain the strength of this program are being explored by WOGWF.

The trip made clear that our efforts over the years have resulted in **many lives being touched and changed** and the future is promising for more success.

Thank You (Zikomo!) To Our 2015 Donors!

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**Thanks to the supporters of
the Canton & Watertown
Cabin Fever Dessert Nights.**

Every effort has been made to provide an accurate list of donors. Please bring any omissions or errors to our attention.

2016 Sewing Trip

A two-week trip in the summer of 2016 is being planned to provide sewing training to the women in Mbowe. **Margot McGorman** of **Watertown** and **Ellen Grayson** of **Canton**, both accomplished seamstresses, will train women (who in turn will train others) on **treadle sewing machines** to reinforce basic sewing abilities and teach advanced skills which can be used to produce clothing for their families and items suitable to be sold at the market.

Plans include the buying **4 to 6 treadle sewing machines** along with **sewing supplies and fabric** in Malawi. The machines will be set up in the Mbowe Community Building where the training will take place.

Margot and Ellen will train 4 to 6 women who show aptitude and interest in sewing by **cutting patterns and sewing simple projects** to continually build skills and confidence. They also will instruct 2 to 3 women in **business fundamentals** to ensure that a percentage of the profits from the sale of these hand-sewn items at the market will be set aside to **purchase additional supplies and fabric** for a successful and sustainable sewing business.

During the trip, they also will work with all the widows in Mbowe to share **simple sewing repairs** that can be done by hand to extend the life of their clothing.

To accomplish their goals, they will conduct the trainings in **English and Chichewa** (the local native language) and provide written materials in both languages with a heavy emphasis on **diagrams for machine threading, tension adjustment and pattern instruction**.

Total costs for the trip are approximately **\$7,000** (based on recent mission trip expenses). This includes sewing machines, fabric, notions and equipment, travel, food and lodging, and translation service. Seed money of **\$1,000** has been donated by the **Presbyterian Women of Northern New York**. Fundraising efforts are currently underway for the balance. **You can support this project with a donation** (payable to Canton First Presbyterian Church with 2016 Sewing on the memo line) mailed to 17 Park Street, Canton NY 13617. Thank you!



Let's Talk!

The Board Of Directors for the Women Of Grace Widows' Fund is comprised of women who made the trip in 2008 which started this program as well as women who traveled to Malawi in subsequent years to implement Keys to Education and meet with widows to assess our ongoing programs. We are available to come and speak to your congregation, youth group or organization and share our presentations about Women Of Grace or Keys to Education. **We'd love to meet you!**

Watertown Area Board Members:

Barb Eldridge

Rita Gefell

Renee Waterbury

Heather White

heatherwhite4@gmail.com

315-778-9867

Canton Area Board Members:

Ellen Grayson

Vicki McLain

Linda Potter

nautilus@twcny.rr.com

315-386-4364

Cabin Fever 2016

Make plans to attend the third annual **Cabin Fever Coffee & Dessert**. The event, held in **Canton and Watertown**, features **live music and raffles of gift baskets and locally made desserts**, including chocolate creations, cupcakes, pies, cakes and gluten-free selections.

Profits from the 2016 Cabin Fever events will support the upcoming Sewing Trip to train women in Mbowe.

Catch some Cabin Fever on **Saturday, February 6th** from 2 - 4 p.m. at Trinity Episcopal Church in **Watertown** and from 7 to 9 p.m. at the **Canton First Presbyterian Church**. Hope to see you!

www.WomenOfGraceWidowsFund.org



Women Of Grace Widows' Fund 2015 Photos

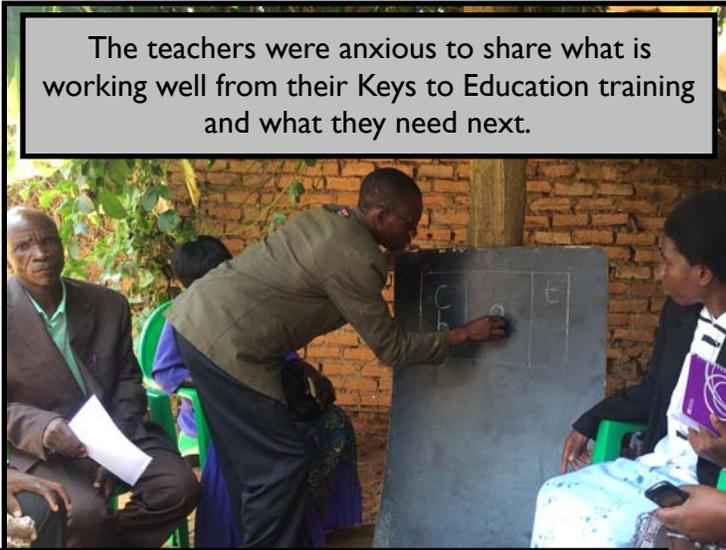
See more photos and watch videos at our website www.WomenOfGraceWidowsFund.org.



The widow Njikko pictured with her family will move into their new home being built by WOGWF.



Above is the March 2015 team (Margot McGorman, Mike Miller and, Heather White) after a meeting with teachers from the Keys to Ed. program.



The teachers were anxious to share what is working well from their Keys to Education training and what they need next.

We couldn't do all we do without our team in Malawi: the Honorable Grace Chiumia, field manager Sam Chirwa and volunteer Ruth Chiumia.



Heather White fits the children from the Clint McCoy Center with new shoes.

Donate Online

You can make donations to the Women of Grace Widows' Fund online via **PayPal** through our website, www.WomenOfGraceWidowsFund.org. Click the **"Donate"** button in the top bar.

You also can learn about other ways that you can support WOGWF such as **hosting a potluck** meal at your home or church to share information and raise funds or encourage your church or organization to make a **yearly donation**.

Your continued and generous support makes our mission work in Malawi possible. **Your donations and efforts on behalf of WOGWF are greatly appreciated.**

You can receive this annual newsletter via email. Sign up by contacting Linda Potter at nautilus@twcny.rr.com.

Easy As ABC

The **ABCs of Malawi** is available for **\$7 each** or **\$24 for a set of 4**. Perfect gift for young ones! Contact heatherwhite4@gmail.com to order.

A

Africa



Gift Giving Made Easy

You can make a **gift in honor or memory** of a loved one to the Women Of Grace Widows' Fund for any occasion - **Christmas, anniversary, birthday, Valentine's Day, Mother's Day** or any day you want to recognize with generosity and sincerity. Complete the information below and send it in with your donation. The Widows' Fund will **notify the individual** that the gift has been given in their name and that it will be used to **assist widows in Malawi with daily needs and improve their futures.**

Enclosed is a donation of \$_____ to The Women Of Grace Widows' Fund
which is being made in honor/in memory (please circle) of:

_____.

(Amount of donation is not disclosed on the gift card.)

Please send notification to:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

This gift is from: (names to appear on card): _____

Your name(s): _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____

Make checks payable to: Canton First Presbyterian Church & note Widows' Fund on the memo line. Please mail to the First Presbyterian Church, 17 Park Street, Canton NY 13617.

Your Support Of Our Continued Efforts Is Greatly Appreciated!

Every year since 2010, when the Women Of Grace Widows' Fund began to raise money to assist the widows in Malawi, we have met our goal. This tremendous act of generosity is the result of you - our donors. Together as church congregations, community groups, neighbors and friends, we have become a strong and steady source of hope and support for widows in Northern Malawi. Please consider a gift today that will support our efforts in 2016 as we work toward our goal of raising \$16,840 to assist, empower and support widows with funds to meet immediate acute needs and long-term goals of building self-sufficiency through education, training and micro-loans for small businesses.

___ Yes, I want to support The Women Of Grace Widows' Fund with their continued efforts to assist and empower widows in Northern Malawi. Enclosed is my/our donation of \$_____.

Name: _____

Address: _____

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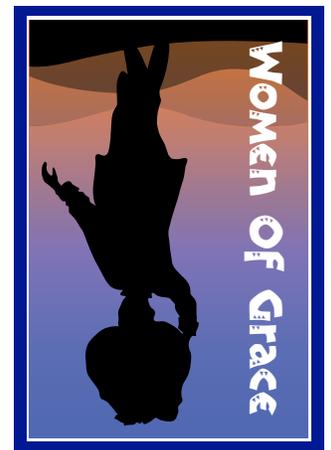


Please send future Newsletters (twice a year) via email (in PDF format).

Thank you! Please make your check made payable to:

Canton First Presbyterian Church (On memo line: Women of Grace Widows' Fund)

Mail check and completed form to: First Presbyterian Church, 17 Park Street, Canton NY 13617.



Women Of Grace Widows' Fund
17 Park Street
Canton, NY 13617