

Women Of Grace Widows' Fund



A Joint Mission Project of Watertown and Canton First Presbyterian Churches

Winter/Spring 2013

Mission of The Women Of Grace Widows' Fund

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.

“Keys To Education” Literacy Grant

In **May 2012**, the Women Of Grace Widow's Fund was awarded a **\$34,000 grant** specifically dedicated to **improving literacy** for Malawian children by the **Women's Organization of the Presbyterian Church (USA)**; funding for this grant through its **“Thank Offering.” “Keys To Education,”** a three year literacy program, was kicked off with a **July 2012 trip** to Malawi by Women Of Grace board members **Heather White, Renee Waterbury, Rita Gefell** and fellow teacher, **Sue Remington**.

During their **ten days in Malawi**, the group shared **teaching methods** at a full day workshop attended by **35 teachers**, many of whom walked several hours to be there, and through **visits to schools throughout Malawi**. The purpose of these visits was to work with teachers one-on-one in their school environments. The schools visited included: a **nursery school**, a **primary school** and **Catholic school** in Mzuzu, and **several schools located “in the bush.”**

To demonstrate effective teaching methods, in spelling in one instance, **magnetic letters on metal cookie sheets** were used to form words. Though Chichewa is the official language of Malawi, English is the most common spoken language in that country. Spelling with the letters was well received, but first an explanation of the cookie sheet was needed. *“Many Malawians still cook over an open fire, so*

the cookie sheet was pure magic to them,” said Heather White, the trip coordinator and **co-author of the grant**.

Most Malawian schools are **long wooden buildings with no windows, one entrance and one blackboard**, if any. Most children practice writing their letters with a **stick on the dirt floor** of the school. Along with magnetic letters and cookie sheets, the grant monies provided for **alphabet and number charts, pocket charts to store laminated letters and numbers, chalk, books** and many **additional teaching resources**. Money was also allocated for the **construction of storage units** at the schools and the **refurbishing of existing blackboards**.

Sam Chirwa, WOG Field Manager, will **visit the Malawian teachers** in their schools over the next year to **distribute additional curriculum materials** and to assist as needed with the storage unit and blackboard projects..

During **2013**, the **second year** of implementation of the three year Keys To Education literacy grant, a **team of three teachers**, headed by Heather White, will return to Malawi to **make improvements to the program** with feedback from Malawian teachers and **assure that all the children involved are making progress and understanding the concepts**. See page 3 to help with the 2013 trip.

Thank You (Zikomo!) To Our 2012 Donors!

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Additional thanks to all those who attended and supported our special events:

- **Mom Prom 2012** in Canton
- **Women Listen To Women Dinner Club**
- **Piggie Roast Dinner** in Watertown.

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

WOG Web Site

Check out all the new features at our website - www.WomenOfGraceWidowsFund.org. There you will find **information, video and photos** from the “**Keys To Education**” **July 2012 trip**. Also, there is a **news reel from Malawi** which highlights the work of **Grace Chiumia**, the inspiration for the Women Of Grace Widows’ Fund and a member of the Malawian Parliament. Grace spotlights some of the work we have done with these widows.

While at the web site, take time to view the **WPBS segment** featuring Women Of Grace board member **Heather White** as she participated in the “**Turning Oppression Into Opportunity**” program which aired in October 2012 in conjunction with the PBS airing of “Half The Sky.”

Good Women & Good Men

The **Clint McCoy Community Center** in Mzenga was opened in 2010 and dedicated in 2011 in the memory of Rev. Clinton McCoy, former Executive Presbyterian of the Presbytery of Northern New York. Over the past two years, this center has evolved into a building which **truly embodies “community.”**

Built with the labor and hand-made bricks of the villagers, the roofing and other materials were supplied by the Women Of Grace Widows’ Fund. Currently, it is used by Ekwendeni Hospital staff to provide **check-ups** for children and for pregnant and nursing women. It also is a **classroom** for the children in the village and surrounding area. Its main purpose is as a **feeding center** where **90 children** are fed. When it opened, Women Of Grace funding was able to provide for two feeding days per week.

The **men in the village**, watching the widows work diligently those two days a week to feed the children, came forward to help the widows provide a third day of feeding. Traditionally, widows are held in low-regard in Malawi. But the men recognized the role these women were playing as **necessary and vital** to the lives of the children. The support of the men and the cooperation which came of it strengthened the village as a whole. A small but significant step to changing the status and view of widows. **One building, 90 children served and one community truly changed.**

Making A Difference

Since the initial trip in **July 2008** to Malawi to discern the best ways to help the widows, the Women Of Grace Widows’ Fund has grown to where we are now assisting 30 widows through direct funding for acute needs, resources for buildings and the creation of micro-loans for small businesses run by widows on their path to self-sufficiency.

Together, we have provided:

- **Iron Sheets** (metal roofing) placed on eight homes.
- **Six new homes** built in Michenguatuba & Mzenga.
- **Beds and beddings** for all these homes.
- **Fees** to allow children to attend **secondary school**.
- Funding for two widows to attend a **business workshop**.
- The **roof, painting, chairs and new exterior kitchen** for the **Clint McCoy Community Center**.
- **Training** for widows in the area of **organic farming** to reduce dependence on fertilizers.
- Purchase of **sewing machines** & training in sewing skills for widows to develop goods for retail sale.
- The ability for widows to attend a new program started by Grace Chiumia to learn how to establish and run a **fish pond**.
- **Micro-loans** to widows to run small businesses with **six women now independent**, running their own business.

With a helping hand, the lives of these widows and their families have been changed for the better.

1 + 1 = A Greater Good

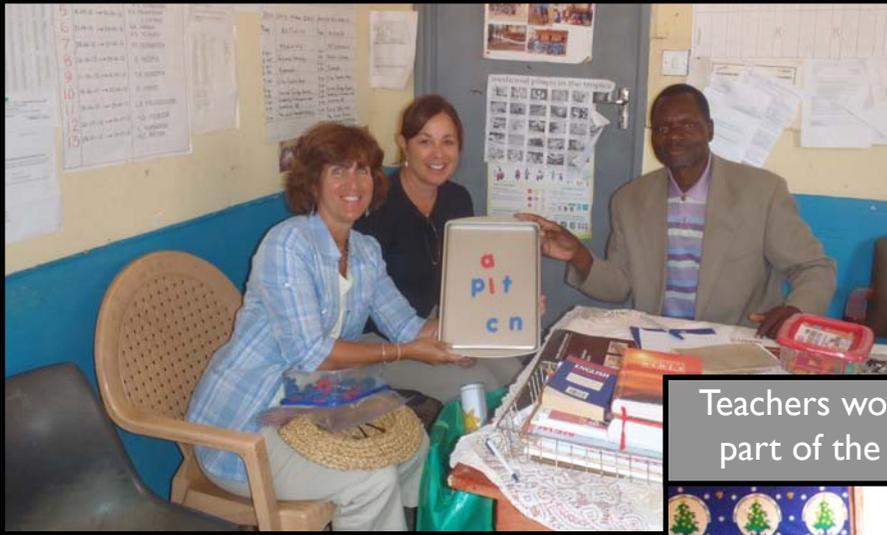
For the **2013 “Keys To Education” trip**, Heather White, trip coordinator, is looking for **donations of math flashcards**. You can mail them to Heather at 424 Paddock Street, Watertown NY 13601.

The “Keys To Education” grant provides funding for curriculum materials and training for Malawian teachers. The U.S. teachers traveling to Malawi must supply \$1,000 each toward their **travel expenses**. Fund raising covers the rest of the U.S. travel expenses which is an additional \$1,750 per person. If you would like to make a **donation** to help with these travel expenses, send your donation to Women Of Grace Widows’ Fund, 17 Park Street, Canton NY 13617 and write “**WOGWF-EDU**” **on the memo line**. **Zikomo** (Thank You)!

Women Of Grace Widows' Fund 2012 Photos

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

As part of the July 2012 Keys To Education Trip, **Renee Waterbury & Rita Gefell** met with the headmaster at the **St. Peter's School**.



Our newest widows' project...
...raising pigs.

Teachers working at the teacher training workshop, part of the 3 year **"Keys to Literacy"** Grant.



"Do not withhold good from those whom it is due, when it is your power to act."

- Proverbs 3:27



Children eating at the **Clint McCoy Community**

Students inside the **Kanninga School**.



Sharing The News About Women Of Grace

Since their return from Malawi in 2008, the **eight women** from Canton and Watertown who were part of that mission trip have shared their experiences with many. We would love to come and **speak to your group** and share updated information about our **efforts in Malawi, photos** of the people and the land, and answer any questions about what this **mission program** is doing and **how you can help**. To arrange for a speaker, contact **Linda Potter** in Canton, (315) 386-4364, nautilus@twcny.rr.com or **Heather White** in Watertown at (315) 788-9867, heatherwhite4@gmail.com.

“And do not neglect doing good and sharing; for with such sacrifices God is pleased.” Hebrews 13:16

Women Of Grace Widows’ Fund Board Members:

Watertown:

Julia Bonisteel

Rita Gefell

Renee Waterbury

Heather White

heatherwhite4@gmail.com

Canton:

Ellen Grayson

Katrina Hebb

Vicki McLain

Linda Potter

nautilus@twcny.rr.com

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 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 2013 as again we work toward our yearly goal of raising **\$14,000** 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: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Email: _____

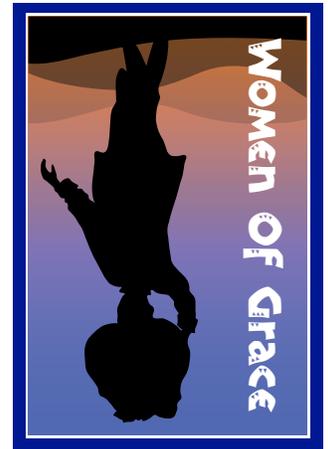


Please send future Newsletters (twice a year) via email (in PDF format).

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.



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17 Park Street
Canton, NY 13617