



2011

Share the Green Winning Entries

## Smile Train

*Submitted by: Al & Diane Huras*

We would like to be able to donate the \$1000.00 to an organization called "Smile Train". This organization empowers local doctors in developing countries by providing free surgical training and education to repair cleft plates and cleft lips of children who would otherwise not receive treatment. It costs as little as \$250.00 and takes as little as 45 minutes to change a child's life forever.

Millions of children in developing countries suffer from unrepaired clefts. Many can not talk or eat properly. In some countries they are believed to be cursed by the devil and many are abandoned or killed at birth. That is something none of us can ignore and this organization is one we intend to support in the future.

For \$1,000.00, four children in a third world country will receive a new smile and a new lease on life.

Note: 100% of the donation goes to the charity 0% goes to overhead.

Every year more than 170,000 children are born with clefts and most can not afford surgery. \$1,000.00 can provide immediate relief to four children who are presently suffering from shame and isolation. This program is a "true modern day miracle that gives a child back their life".

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## Great Hope Church, Korah, Ethiopia

*Submitted by: Linda Hutchison*

Korah is the poorest area of Addis Ababa (the capital of Ethiopia). Within Korah, some 160,000 people live in abject poverty. Orphaned children, people living with leprosy, the physically disabled and family members of those individuals live in Korah as well as hundreds of children and adults who forage for food in the dump that borders Korah.

Great Hope is a church in Korah and the ministers there have been providing spiritual leadership, teachings and care for the people of this community for many years. Recently, a small group of people from a church in Tennessee (the mission name is Project 61) has partnered with Great Hope to offer further hope to the residents in Korah. One of the initiatives at the Great Hope church through Project 61 is teaching the women to make beads out of magazines which are then turned into beautiful necklaces. The necklaces are being sold in North America to provide food for families. The sale of one necklace provides food for a family of four for one month!

A need of the Great Hope Church is to build a shelter where the women can be trained and then work to make the necklaces, allowing these women to make an income for their families. In some cases, women may be the sole income earners in their families, may be without a husband but supporting children of their own and have taken in other orphaned children or may be living all on their own with little hope of income for themselves.



Providing the resources to build a shelter for these women will offer them, through the church, an opportunity to generate income in a building that will protect the materials they use to make the beads as well as provide some protection from the elements for the women.

The Great Hope church and Project 61 provides a summer school for many children living in the dump and some street children who are going to boarding school to help prepare them academically. The shelter that will be used by the women to create beads and necklaces will also be used as a lunch hall for the summer school children as well as for the children from Korah who attend the public school and who are fed a nutritious lunch daily (provided by the Great Hope church through funding from Project 61). Currently, the children attending the public school are fed their lunch in their classrooms which is very tedious and leaves their classrooms in a mess.

This shelter would be multi-functional and will benefit directly hundreds of children and many women and indirectly hundreds of family members.

One of my closest friends and her daughter travelled to Ethiopia this pass summer to bring home their adopted Ethiopian granddaughter/daughter. During this two-week trip, my friend and her daughter were able to fundraise from a distance which allowed them to serve more than 25 street children. The Guest House that my friends were staying at allowed them the opportunity to become connected with the staff of Great Hope Church and the missionary through Project 61. A visit to Korah and specifically the Great Hope Church offered them the opportunity to purchase some necklaces the women of the community had made.

Their visit gave them some insight into the abject poverty and suffering of the children and adults within Korah. It was through their account of the poverty and the needs of the people in Ethiopia that I have developed a real desire to make a difference in these people's lives.

As a single, retired teacher, I realize the blessings I have been given in having an opportunity to be educated, a means to be employed and to live in a country that is abundantly provided for. The opportunities I have been blessed with are not available to the women of Korah and yet, by providing some funds to give some of these women an opportunity to make some income, provide for their families and to open the possibilities of a brighter future is a tangible way that Green Financial and I can make a lasting difference in this community.

\$1,000.00 in Ethiopia is worth more than we can imagine and what can be done with that amount of money is surprising. The shelter built for these women will: create opportunities, provide income for many women, empower women, feed families, provide money to live in better shelter, reduce death from untreated illness because income will offer an opportunity for medical treatment, offer the opportunity for these women's children to go to school, assist the overall wellness of Korah through increased spending for necessities and create lasting change through the education of the youth.

This shelter will last for years and will create opportunity and change for generations. This shelter will be a beacon of hope for change. This shelter will also help the church to bring in women for employment and through their affiliation hear about God's love.



The project will provide the means to create a sustainable and meaningful change to the community, the lives of the women and the lives of the children.

From what I understand, the project could start very soon after the funding is received.

Ethiopia is one of the poorest countries in the world. Korah is the poorest area of Addis Ababa and is one that the government has basically turned their backs on. The disenfranchised live in Korah. My friends told me they saw very young children in Korah wearing basically rags and were very obviously cold and standing in the rain with the hope of being handed something from the white visitors. The disabled were seen pulling themselves along the ground with only flip flops on their hands for protection. The elderly are in Korah with little to no means of supporting themselves.

The Great Hope Church staff has the heart, the vision and is keenly aware of the needs of the people. What the ministers of the church need is money to make their dreams for the people of Korah come true. We can be the vehicle of change, the provider of the resources to enable the ministers to accomplish wonderful works for the women who will be employed making beads and ultimately their family members and community.

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## Why Not Woodstock Youth Centre

*Submitted by Harvey and Conny Masson*

As a participant in the Oxford County Drug Task Force, I learned a lot about the needs of youth in Oxford County. The 2009 United Way Report called Youth Matters included information gathered from the Task Force survey of 3600 youth in Oxford. The number one need identified by youth was for a 'safe place' to hang out and be themselves.

The Why Not Youth Centre provides a safe and positive environment that is staffed by active volunteers who listen, encourage and building trusting relationships with area youth. Many of these young people are 'at risk' for drugs, alcohol and negative peer influences. This centre offers a way to build trusting relationships with these youth and to further connect them with community Oxford County's social services and youth programs.

The Woodstock Why Not Centre is currently seeking funding in order to lease, renovate and equip a permanent youth facility. They are temporarily operating out of space on the main floor of 415 Dundas Street. They have plans to expand the drop in centre to 4 nights a week with a variety of activities available, such as music, art, cooking, tutoring, basic life skills.

We are enclosing a brochure to further explain this program. The Centre is currently in need of start-up costs and fundraising in order to make this a permanent arrangement in Woodstock. As of April 2011 they are currently seeing up to 90 young people between the ages of 12 – 16 every Friday night. They come to listen to music, hang out, play pool, foose ball, air hockey, Nintendo or Wii, do crafts, talk to the volunteers or community partners, or visit with many of the pets that have been brought in by volunteers (puppies and a miniature horse!). Of course karaoke is also a big hit. Volunteers build relationships with these young people and help to maintain a strict code of behavior that is readily adhered to if needed.



Simply put, Woodstock Youth need a centre in order to provide a 'safe' place for youth to hang out. Particularly 'at risk' youth who might not otherwise participate in organized sports or other activities due to different interests, lack of financial means or family support. Further information can be found at [www.WhyNotYouthCentres.com](http://www.WhyNotYouthCentres.com) Thank you for considering this worthwhile project.

## Two Local Families that are in urgent need

*Submitted by: Jan Vicars*

There are two families in my community who are in urgent need. Robert and Christina Lussier have struggled for many years. Their son, Jacob is severely physically and developmentally handicapped, and has been in and out of the hospital constantly since his birth 15 years ago. He requires special equipment just to live and needs 24 hour care. In the past year, his mother Christina, has developed cancer and for the past months has been undergoing chemotherapy. Her prognosis is very poor. Robert is a farm labourer, so his income is low.

The other family is George and Karen Nicol, and their children Owen and Norah. Norah is two years old and was born with serious physical and developmental handicaps. She has been in the hospital much of her life – is in fact in hospital again as I write this, having a feeding tube inserted, as she is no longer able to eat normally. Karen is a stay-at-home mom, as Norah needs 24 hour care; George has had to take a lot of time off work to help out as well.

Both of these families attend my church. I have known the Lussiers since before Jacob was born, and have seen all they have gone through in the past 15 years looking after their son. And now, Christina's cancer and her poor prognosis hits close to home, having lost my own husband to cancer 5 years ago. I can't imagine how Robert will manage if he loses Christina, and still has Jacob to care for.

The Nicols are newer to our church family, but there too, I see so much need. They are a young couple with so much stress in their lives and so little opportunity to just be a normal family and have some much needed "fun time". I know for both of these families, it is only their faith that keeps them going.

If I am successful in winning the \$1,000.00, I plan to match the amount myself, so that I can give each family \$1,000.00. I know this will be a big help to each of these families, as they continue to struggle financially. Hopefully, by easing their financial burdens a bit, this will also ease their stress levels and help to improve their situations all around. I have often thought that I can't imagine how families with so many struggles in their lives are able to keep going. Hopefully, this gift would be an encouragement to them, helping them know that others care and want to help. \$1,000.00 may not seem like a huge amount of money to some of us, but I am quite certain that to these two families, it will be a very large sum!

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## El Puente – The Bridge

*Submitted by: Sue Clark*

El Puente – The Bridge, is a non profit organization located in the Puerto Viejo de Talamanca area of Costa Rica. This area is not a typical “tourist” area, and is viewed more as the poorer less commercialized area of this country. Barry and Nanci Stevens are the founders of this organization and they use their own pensions and any donations (100% goes to the programs of The Bridge) for funding. Their own home (the Community Kitchen) is headquarters to achieve amazing results for those in need of assistance to pursue a brighter future.

I recently accompanied my daughter Christina to Costa Rica on a “business” vacation. While in Puerto Viejo for breakfast one morning, we met Nanci Stevens and her husband Barry. Nanci was sitting at a table with 3 young children, and she was giving them Easter pictures that she herself had drawn, and crayons to colour them. After chatting with her for a few moments, we discovered that she had never met these 3 kids and had just come to the restaurant for coffee and meet up with her husband. Nanci explained she was an artist, and pointed out the hand painted cards that were for sale in the restaurant. Proceeds from the sale of the cards went to her organization “El Puente”. And so we sat, enthralled for at least a half hour as she explained very passionately how one day, seven years ago, after visiting this poverty stricken area of Costa Rica, she said to Barry, “I’m going back to Costa Rica to stay. You can come if you want to.” Barry arrived then and gave us “his” side of the story. He is the cofounder of El Puente and a very willing and active participant. They invited us to the Community Kitchen for a visit and we did so the next day. Even though we showed up unannounced, they welcomed us warmly, and we sat with Ronualdo (one of the Bridge kids). Myra, a tiny lady who has mothered 7 children, 6 having been part of the school program also, and one waiting to become old enough to participate. There were others, and our hearts were warmed by these gentle, soft spoken and very grateful people. They sat quietly eating big bowls of stew and chunks of bread that had been prepared in Nanci’s own kitchen at tables in the Steven’s front year. Barry told us while we sipped Costa Rican coffee that Nanci had already used up the equity of the sale of her own home to give these people food and assistance. It was obvious that volunteers and financial assistance really did make a difference here, and we could see the evidence before us! We left that day feeling 100 times more grateful for our own rich and full lives.

El Puente uses the motto “Helping People Help Themselves”. The Bridge places indigenous children living in poverty and who would not have the chance to attend, in public schools. The education is free, but you must supply your own books and uniforms. In Costa Rica if you can read, write and do basic math, the government will allow you to attend any trade school in the country and teach you any trade you wish. So these children, lovingly referred to as “Bridge Kids” number 72 in 2011 and besides being given the opportunity to attend, Barry & Nanci feed many of these kids at the soup kitchen they run from their own home and even breakfast before the kids go to school. The \$1,000.00 from Share the Green would help to educate and feed these children, opening the door for a better life in the future. There is also another program that El Puente runs; a micro loan program, that allows adults to obtain otherwise unobtainable tools and other necessities to make a better life for them and their families.



I can only say, that I am very critical, when it comes to how organizations use their financial aid, and how much of it is actually used to support the cause they represent and not the “administration”. Barry and Nanci Stevens ARE the organization and they ARE the administration. Everything that happens from El Puente is by their hands. They were simply dressed, simply housed ordinary people who immersed their whole being into making a difference in the lives of people in need of assistance to help themselves – especially the children! The depth of their devotion was immediately felt, and touched us deeply. I would like nothing better than to send them \$1,000.00 to buy more school uniforms, books and food for their very personal and beneficial cause.

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## Habitat for Humanity

*Submitted by Don Fulkerson*

We mobilize volunteers and community partners in building affordable housing and promoting home ownership as a means to breaking the cycle of poverty.

I am the Treasurer for the steering committee for the Woodstock project of Habitat for Humanity.

The donation will help build a home for a worthy family from Woodstock, who otherwise would be unable to afford home ownership.

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## Orphans in the Village of Mochudi in Botswana, Africa

*Submitted by Diann Deller*

To utilize the “Share the Green” funds to assist the orphans in the village of Mochudi in Botswana, Africa.

Southwestern Ontario YFC/Youth Unlimited have sent a ‘Project Serve’ team to Mochudi in 2010 and another team is going this July. We also have a young woman working there on a volunteer basis, helping in the day care centre.

Personally, I have adopted this village in memory of my daughter, Vashti who said “I would not hesitate to give of myself, if it brings a smile to another person”. Vashti’s name means, “Thread of Life”, and the Vashti Village Project is based on being the “thread of life” for young people in Africa whose support has been eliminated due to poverty and HIV/Aids.

The purpose is to help those children, orphaned by HIV/Aids by providing access to an established daycare that cares for their personal needs as well as their education. The funds would be used to provide food and transportation.



This project benefits the children orphaned by HIV/aids. The Botswana government does not endorse orphanages and instead provides food incentives for extended families to take in their orphaned relatives. Often these children are not welcomed, cared for or provided for. The day care, run by YFC Botswana, provides the children with meals, interactive play and education. When these children enter the public school system they are reported to have an advantage due to what they learned in the day care.

July 2011 – the funds would accompany a 'Project Serve' team travelling to Botswana. If the 'Share the Green' funds aren't allocated by that time the YFC Director from Botswana will be visiting us in September 2011 and we can give him the funds then.

We have adopted this village and just like adoption it requires a long-term commitment.

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## Uzima Centre, Mwanza, Tanzania

*Submitted by: Tara Vicars*

Uzima Centre is an organization based in Mwanza, Tanzania that works with orphans, vulnerable children and people living with HIV and AIDS. It is a forward thinking organization that hosts support groups, tutoring and counseling as well as supporting children through education, food, uniforms and medical care.

I live in Mwanza and every day I see how horrific life is for the majority of the population here. The director of Uzima Centre, Joanne Miya, has inspired me and encouraged me not to give up many times along the way. She believes in this Centre, she believes in the people here, she believes that life should not be this difficult. Seeing how hard she works for every penny that comes into the Centre and how well that money is used has impressed me.

Consider that the average cost of medical care for someone living with HIV is \$100 for an entire year – this money could take care of ten people for an entire year. Or, it could provide protein and vitamin rich food to 100 children for a month. It could go towards supporting the children in school with uniforms and tutoring. But wherever the funds were directed within Uzima Centre, they would be put to good use for people who didn't have hope in the future before getting involved with Uzima.

Because Uzima Centre is a small, but well established organization, the money would be used immediately to fund programmes, supply food and equipment and ensure that the poorest of the poor had someone to care about them.

Thank you for considering this proposal.

[www.uzimacentre.org](http://www.uzimacentre.org) may provide further information about the organization.

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## Local Family in Need

*Submitted by: Don & Monica Nickel*

This is a family that we know through our church and our children's school, whose father was recently diagnosed with terminal cancer. Their children are 14, 12 & 10 years of age (3 boys) and the father can no longer work because he lost his license as a result of the cancer. He has been told he has 6 – 12 months to live. He is 46.

We have been friends for a number of years, first through our children being in the same classes in school and then through our church. We are doing whatever we can to help them through an obviously difficult time.

This has caused significant upheaval in their family already and will likely only increase as the cancer progresses. This will help lessen the financial stresses since he is no longer working and his wife is only working part time due to the numerous doctor's appointments.

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## Ugali Growing Project

*Submitted by Don & Natalie Minato*

Ugali Growing Project in Ingersoll is a grassroots fund-raising initiative that raises money for Canada Foodgrains bank. Each year, the Ugali Supper in Ingersoll features dishes native to a country that Canada Foodgrains Bank supports. The dishes are cooked by a group of volunteers who research the food, gather recipes and then recreate them for the guests attending the supper. The supper features a speaker who has some connection or expertise on the region that is featured.

We have been regularly attending the annual dinner fundraisers for many years and are humbled by the efforts of the volunteers who are involved in supporting the project. The project relies on donated land, labour, seeds, fertilizer and other resources. The crops are harvested and either sent to third world countries or sold to support the project.

Canada Foodgrains Bank partners with countries requiring food aid. CFG works to assist them by providing food aid and also encourages local development programs with food for work programs.

We would like to donate the \$1,000.00 to Ugali Growing Project in Ingersoll.

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