

Changing Tides

*Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign
Campagne des grands-mères à grands-mères*

Ottawa-Gatineau Region
Région d'Ottawa-Gatineau

April 30, 2026

Volume 14, Issue 4

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Editor's Notes

With spring underway with rain, floods and other temperamental surprises, there is a song in the air and a bounce in our step for outdoor ventures for all who love our burgeoning spring.

At the same time, we grieve the loss of a great giant of social justice, the eradication of AIDS, gender equality, grandmothers solidarity and grandchildren's health and education – the *man for all seasons* who has inspired multitudes with hope to raise our voices “for Canada's global health and international development spending.” Our thoughts and love are with Stephen's family,

friends and all whose lives he touched.

In our communities, spring means new growth, plant sales, celebrations for mothers, fund- and awareness-raising. And regionally we are in the throes of planning our trademark gatherings of grandmothers and grand/others and supporters to enjoy the togetherness of learning and celebrating each other and what we do.

The *Grannyfest* planning committee has drawn up a wonderful program with speakers and interactions under the theme *Reflecting, Honouring and Celebrating*.

Sarah and Sandi keep us posted on recent developments at national and local levels. There are bright ideas afoot for the 20th *Anniversary Celebration* – the latest being the *SLF's Grassroots Advocacy for 2026*. Note the documents for sharing and discussion.

Great success to all of you who are hosting fundraisers or events. Remember to share your stories and pictures – your commitment and creativity are endless! Thank You!

Mia Overduin, Editor

Honouring Stephen Lewis

1937–2026

Sunday, April 26, 2026

11 am ET

Chrysalis Theatre

Toronto Metropolitan University

43 Gerrard St E, Toronto



GRL Updates – April 2026

Spring looks like it might stick around now, even if late. Better late than never, as the saying goes. 2026 is a bumper year with individual group fundraising, education and advocacy activities as usual, or added to, or brand-new. Factor in **Grannyfest** and the **Grandmothers 20th Anniversary** - Ottawa and **O-GRGN** are on the map and ready to welcome grandmothers and grand-others from far afield!

GRANNYFEST

On-line Registration opened on schedule and, so far, the response has been very good. **You are able to Register in Person on May 21st if currently still unsure of plans.** Just appear and you will be welcomed! Several Sponsors came forward and we are extremely grateful for their support. The *Steering Committee (SC)* met twice during April and is working to finalize the Program, particularly the Afternoon Program, beginning with Acknowledgement of Early Members. Many details are being wrapped up. A big “*Thank You*” to SC members I am working with on this *Grannyfest*; without them it would not be possible. The 2026 SC members are: Sandi London, Angela Davis, Karen McEvoy, Stella Val, Mia Overduin, Brenda Mulvihill, Dianne Breton, Sheila Pepper, Lynn Pratt, and Kathy Brodribb.

MARCH GRL and CAMPAIGN CALLS

I put both calls together this month as common threads ran through them.

Firstly, Meg French, Executive Director, *Stephen Lewis Foundation*, opened both meetings, as she and then we, took time to reflect on and share memories of Stephen and his work and impact on others.

The Foundation received numerous stories and memories from around the world, celebrating Stephen’s impact on *HIV/AIDS* work, his work with African women, and the *Grandmothers Campaign*. Meg shared some of her special interactions and observations about working with Stephen, and the convictions and ethics he brought to the Foundation and its operations. Then *GRLs* and those on the Campaign call were invited to share their connections with Stephen, and the impressions he made on them. These reflections and recollections were very moving for all.

The following interview and podcast were noted as particularly eloquent in describing Stephen and his legacy.

- **Remembering Stephen Lewis** with Meg:

Here is a link to the CBC interview with David Suzuki if you haven't seen it https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3mUjzl_E7zY

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GRL Updates – April 2026

And *IDEAS* Podcast link <https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-23-ideas/clip/16207321-how-stephen-lewis-helped-changed-worlds-mind-hivaid>

I hope many were able to live stream Stephen's Memorial on Sunday, April 26 - if not, you can find it at *Toronto Metropolitan University* - [utube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...).

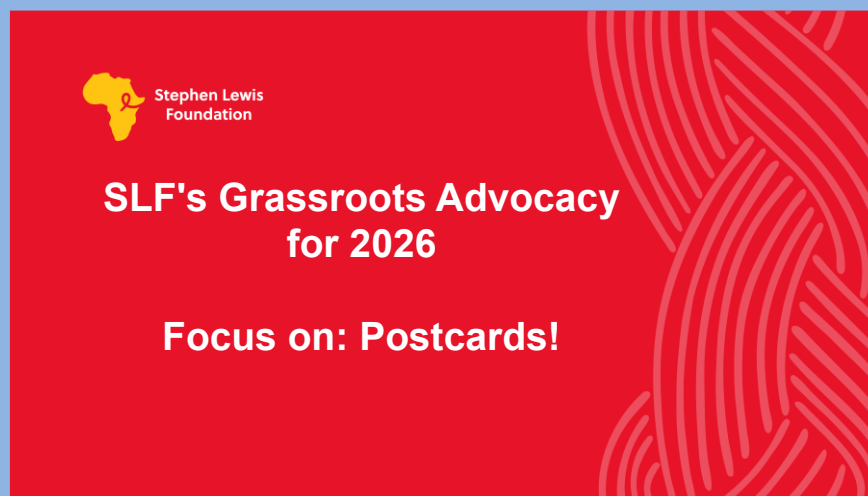
Secondly, as noted in a recent e-mail to *O-GRGN* leads, the *SLF* has launched a *Grassroots Advocacy Campaign*.

The *SLF Grassroots Advocacy Campaign for 2026* is a postcard campaign aimed at mobilizing supporters to write to their *MPs*, using the postcards, to advocate for Canada's leadership in global health funding. In English and French, and no postage required. It will be supported by the *SLF* using letters to the editors of leading newspapers, as well as Op-eds in the media.

Please review the presentation about the Advocacy Campaign as well as the instructions on obtaining the postcards.

<https://theslf.org/Advocacy-Postcard-Guide>
theslf.org/postcard-order

PowerPoint Presentation on Grassroots Advocacy for 2026 / Postcards is attached to the email distribution of *Changing Tides* (PowerPoint): (Note below image of first page of PPT)



Please also note an *SLF* "Hill Day" on Parliament Hill is planned for October 8, immediately after the *20th Anniversary Celebration*. Postcards will be delivered directly to *MPs*. If you are interested in volunteering to help with Hill Day, please contact **Brandon** and **Thushika**.

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GRL Updates – April 2026

Finally, some of the upcoming communication products and materials (e.g., G2G general flyer and bookmark promised for April) were put on hold due to Stephen's Memorial, but are planned for late May distribution. And a reminder: the Grandmothers QR code has been updated and is posted on the *Members Only* page. There is also a step-by-step guide so that everyone can now create their own group or event-specific QR code for donations. Groups wanting to schedule a "lesson" can contact Thushika.

These are such poignant and invigorating times! While there is always work to do, we are blessed to be together as a community of grandmothers fundraising for crucial partners in the field, and advocating for more equitable support for health, education and human rights in Africa and around the world.

In Solidarity,
Sarah (with support from Sandi)

20th ANNIVERSARY GATHERING – UPDATE

The *Programming Committee* has been busy behind the scenes and will send out invitations to keynote speakers this week. Only the main sessions will be recorded and/or live streamed. *SLF* is confirming which Partners and Grandmothers will attend – approximately six people.

Planning is underway for a public Marketplace. If your group would like to contribute, please contact Sandi (sandilondon01@gmail.com) who is coordinating for the *Ottawa-Gatineau Region*. There are also discussions around a march on the Hill on Tuesday afternoon. Please make sure that everyone from our Ottawa –Gatineau groups are on hand for this important event.

Something new has been added – a storytelling initiative to collect experiences and reflections from Canadian and African grandmothers. A survey will be sent following the registration email which is expected sometime in May. You will be notified as soon as registration opens.

Sandi (sandilondon01@gmail.com)

Grannyfest Registration Poster

UBUNTU



Community of Grandmothers
O-GRGN ~ GRANNYFEST 2026

Please Join Us & Bring a Friend!

Thursday, May 21st, 2026. 9:30am - 3:00pm

First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa
30 Cleary Ave. [Link](#) to Directions

Please register before May 10th, 2026

Click [HERE](#) to Register

Cost: \$30/person, complimentary admission for students
Lunch is provided followed by a Silent Auction

Featuring:

Meg French: Executive Director, Stephen Lewis Foundation

Brandon Fairley: Deputy Director, Philanthropic Partnerships

Keynote Speaker Dr. Mark Hardy: Retired Surgeon, Volunteer
Canada-Africa Community Health Alliance

Keynote ~ Challenges & Rewards: Building Communities in Africa

Plus:

Interview Panel with Founding Members

O-GRGN Wrap-Up: Reflecting, Honouring, Celebrating

Any Questions, please reach out to:

Sarah Archer ~ sjaakafelix@icloud.com or Mia Overduin ~ miawboverduin@gmail.com

GRASSROOTS EVENTS



UNITARIAN GOGOS FUNDRAISER FOR THE STEPHEN LEWIS FOUNDATION

*A variety of perennials, home-baking,
preserves, honey & jewelry*

The Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign is a social justice movement that respects, admires and mobilizes the expertise that women develop and deepen in their lifetimes. Across the Campaign, groups raise funds based on members' passions and skills in support of the urgently needed programs that grandmothers and community-based organizations are leading in 14 countries across Africa.



LOCATION: First Unitarian Congregation
30 Cleary Avenue, Ottawa, ON K2A 4A1

DATES & TIMES: Friday, May 8th 9 AM – 4:30 PM
Saturday, May 9th 9 AM – 4:30 PM
Sunday, May 10th 9 AM – 1:30 PM

PAYMENT: **Pay What You Wish.**
Proceeds to Stephen Lewis Foundation.



GRASSROOTS EVENTS

18th

GRASSROOT GRANNIES

Annual Plant Sale & Market Place

Saturday, May 9, 2026

65 Knudson Drive, K2K 2L5

8:00 AM – 12:00 NOON

What Can You Expect?

- * *Hardy perennial plants, herbs and vegetable seedlings*
- * *Hand-crafted garden art*
- * *Gently used garden tools & ornaments*
- * *Raffle table*

There will be horticulturists on site for advice on landscape design and plant care

**WE ACCEPT CASH, CHEQUES
& CREDIT CARDS**

RAIN OR SHINE THE EVENT GOES ON



GRASSROOTS EVENTS

grandmas AIDing grandmas

PLANT & GARDEN SALE

With Bearbrook Retirement Residence

Saturday May 23

9am - 2 pm

Corner Bearbrook & Innes

Blackburn Hamlet
Annuals Perennials
Houseplants

Crafts Baking Raffle

Information: 613-824-3524
grandmas59@gmail.com

**Plant donations always
appreciated. Will pick up**

Questions? Horticulture expert on site

All proceeds to the Stephen Lewis Foundation
Grandmother campaign, community-based
support for African grandmothers caring for
orphaned children due to the AIDS pandemic,
now needed more than ever with recent world
events.



Harvest Moon Oriental Poppy



An Evening of Comedy with
**Sandra
Shamas**



TUESDAY, JUNE 16, 2026
ALGONQUIN COMMONS THEATRE
7:30 PM

TICKETS AVAILABLE ONLINE AT
WWW.ALGONQUINCOMMONSTHEATRE.COM

*In support of the Stephen Lewis Foundation's
Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign*



**Algonquin
Commons
Theatre**

Cathy Blauer writes: The event “is presented by **One World Grannies**. Known for her sharp wit, sassy humour and celebrated career, Shamas promises an unforgettable performance that’s hilarious, heartfelt and fresh.” Tickets are available but limited. Order yours today at <https://www.ticketmaster.ca/event/310064909D104DCF>.

GRASSROOTS EVENTS CALENDAR

Editor's Note: Submissions for the monthly newsletter are due on the 23rd of the month.

| DATE | GRANNY GROUP | EVENT | LOCATION/TIME/CONTACT |
|-----------------------|---|--|---|
| May 8, 9, 10, 2026 | <i>Unitarian GoGos</i> | UNITARIAN GOGOS FUNDRIASER – PLANT SALE Pay What You Wish All proceeds to the SLF | <i>First Unitarian Congregation</i> 30 Cleary Avenue, Ottawa May 8 – 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. May 9 – 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. May 10 – 9:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. |
| May 9, 2026 | <i>Grassroot Grannies</i> | ANNUAL PLANT SALE & MARKET PLACE Perennial plants, herbs and vegetable seedlings, hand-crafted garden art, gently-used garden tools, ornaments, raffle table | 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon 65 Knudson Drive, Ottawa Cash, Cheques, Credit Cards Accepted |
| May 21, 2026 | <i>Grandmothers Groups</i> | REGIONAL GRANNYFEST 2026 Speakers, Lunch, Silent Auction, Interview Panel, Celebration, Closing | 9:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. <i>First Unitarian Congregation</i> Fellowship Hall 30 Cleary Avenue |
| May 23, 2026 | <i>Grandmas AIDing Grandmas</i> | PLANT & GARDEN SALE With Bearbrook Retirement Residence - Annuals, Perennials, House plants, Crafts, Baking, Raffle Plant donations welcome – Will pick up | 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. May 23, 2026 <i>Bearbrook Retirement Residence</i> Corner Bearbrook & Innes Information: (613) 824-3524 Grandmas59@gmail.com Horticulture experts on site |
| June 16, 2026 | <i>One World Grannies</i> | AN EVENING OF COMEDY WITH SANDRA SHAMAS In support of the <i>Stephen Lewis Foundation's Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign</i> | 7:30 p.m. <i>Algonquin Commons Theatre</i> Tickets online at www.algomacommonstheatre.com |
| Oct. 5, 6 and 7, 2026 | <i>Groups from Across Canada and Grandmothers from Africa</i> | 20th Anniversary Gathering – Stephen Lewis Foundation Celebration, march on Parliament Hill, host all our grandmother friends from across the country and Africa. | <i>Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ontario</i> DAY 1 – Celebration DAY 2 – Education and Learning DAY 3 - Recommitment |

REGIONAL CONTACTS

REGIONAL GRANDMOTHER LIAISON:

GRL

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2) Grannyfest Coordinators

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1) Changing Tides Newsletter

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www.stephenlewisfoundation.org

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GRANDMOTHERS ADVOCACY NETWORK

(GRAN):

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Joanne Stead

Stella Val

GRAN Contact

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REGIONAL/NATIONAL EVENTS 2026

GRANNYFEST 2026 - May 21, 2026

Location: 30 Cleary Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario

**20TH ANNIVERSARY GATHERING - STEPHEN LEWIS
FOUNDATION - October 5-7, 2026**

Location: Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ontario

Note: O-GRGN members to consider billeting for out-of-town guests

PRESENTATIONS: AFRICA TRIP 2025 (By Request)

Presenters: Sandi London & Robin Scobie