

Retired minister turns to writing skills to help grandmothers

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PETAWAWA, ON— Retired minister Patricia Elford knew knitting and crocheting weren't her niche, so she turned to her skills as a writer and editor to raise money for the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign.



Patricia Elford.

Elford is a member of the Petawawa Grannies, a group that actively works to promote and fundraise for the Grandmother to Grandmother Campaign, an initiative of the Stephen Lewis Foundation.

"I thought to myself, I can educate and preach, but what else can I do?" says Elford. "Suddenly the idea for a book popped into my head."

Elford came up with *Grandmothers' Necklace*—an anthology dedicated to grandmothers in Africa and the workload they carry. The book honours grandmothers around the world and the relationships between the generations.

With more than 60 contributors, the book features work submitted by a variety of writers, ranging from poets, to educators, to published authors from across North America.

"I put a call out for submissions and I received inquiries from around the world; it was like wildfire," says Elford. "The writers who submitted pieces were responding to a need. They don't receive anything for their work; they did it for the Stephen Lewis Foundation and the campaign."

Many of the stories are upbeat and funny, however the book offers a cross section of work, including stories based on actual interviews with African grannies.

"The important thing to remember is that we're working together to achieve something," says Elford. "The grandmothers of Africa are the ones doing all the work. The campaign isn't to bail them out, it's to work with them."

Now in its second printing, *Grandmothers' Necklace* is available at the Petawawa and Pembroke Public Libraries, The Presbyterian Bookroom in Toronto, and through Essence Publishing.