

**December 12, 2006**

Greetings Ghana Circle,

This has been an extraordinary fall, and as we head into the New Year, I want to thank all of you for making our 2006 so successful. Your support IS the WomensTrust - our programs and initiatives would not exist without you and your willingness to share your resources - time, many talents, and treasure - with the women and girls of Pokuase.

Following the success of our October bead sale which raised over \$10,000 - a number that stunned Gertie into silence (something that is very hard to do!) - Dana and I traveled in November to the **2006 Microcredit Summit in Halifax, Nova Scotia.**

The Summit was attended by over 2,000 people engaged in microfinance world wide, including Nobel Peace Prize winner Muhammad Yunus, Queen Sofia of Spain, Pakistan's Prime Minister Aziz, and everyone who is anyone in microfinance. It was exhilarating to be there, attend all the plenary sessions and workshops, and meet our heroes and peers. Microfinance is a HUGE movement, and many speakers made the argument that access to credit for the world's poor is the foundation for a world democracy.

For those of you who read the **New Yorker article "Millions for Millions"**, we met and spoke at length with Ingrid Munro, the woman who is transforming the lives of beggars in the slums of Nairobi. Her work is exceptional, and conversations with her reinforced for us that our holistic approach to development - access to credit, education and healthcare - is completely on target to help women get out and stay out of poverty.

At the end of that same week, Dana and I flew to Philadelphia, where Dana received **Mannington Floor's \$10,000 'Stand on a Better World' award** for positively impacting the economic lives of women in Pokuase. It was a very nice evening attended by former New Jersey Governor Christie Todd Whitman and Dorothy Hamill - two of the five judges - assorted politicians, and a number of Mannington employees including the CEO and the Chairman of the Board - and their wives - both of whom are driving forces in this annual endeavor.

We returned home to notification that the General William Mayer Foundation had awarded us \$5,000 in support of adult literacy classes for the women of Pokuase, for which we are most grateful. This fall, we expanded our grant-writing efforts dramatically and we hope this is the first of many successful grant proposals!

The **November 27 Barron's article "Personal Passions"** featuring Dana increased our national visibility, and we have received a number of calls from people who want to adopt their own village! (We will have an html link to the article on our website by the end of this week.)

With our website recently updated, people are able to access it first and come to us well informed, eager to talk the nuts and bolts of microlending. It is most gratifying to see this portion of our mission - inspiring others - taking hold.

The Barron's article also initiated a call from Fortune Small Business magazine and the request to do an article on WomensTrust for their section "Giving Back". The interview is scheduled for this week! We will keep you informed of the date of publication - possibly their March issue.

This coming year is shaping up to be a giant leap forward on many fronts for the Trust. Gertrude is currently negotiating for a piece of land in Pokuase just up the road from our current office, and located directly across from the proposed site of the new open air market for Pokuase's women traders. It is our hope this land will become the home of the WomensTrust resource center, and we look forward to breaking ground this spring.

The center will house a computer lab, library, office space for the Trust, and classroom space for skill-building

and literacy classes. The possibilities, however, are endless and with the right partners we will be able to offer a host of classes in a well-lit space - day and night - a rare commodity in Pokuase. An extraordinarily generous supporter interested in funding this project will be traveling with us in January, and we could not be more delighted!

Also traveling to Ghana with Dana and me is Linda Messenger president of the New Hampshire Nurse Practitioners Association (NHPNA). Linda will be working with Victoria, Pokuase's award-winning community nurse, on a medical assessment of Pokuase. This project and the NHPNA's involvement has engaged Lea Ayres and Shari Golberg of Colby-Sawyer College's nursing program, and we have had several meetings to explore ways that their nursing students can be part of this exciting initiative!

The last pair of travelers coming with us this January are two women from Skidmore's Class of '71 -Judy Willsey and Barbara Tsairis – who last June, at their 35th reunion, challenged classmates to "reunite and reignite" the passion for social justice they had as undergraduates. On this first trip, having successfully engaged their class in partnering with a village and funded it with donations, they will meet the women in a town we have located for them contiguous to Pokuase.

WomensTrust will administer their microlending program, and Judy and Barbara, emulating the WomensTrust model, will engage "their" loan clients in dialogue to determine the market-driven initiatives that will follow. This officially launches World Class, Judy and Barbara's vision to encourage college classes of the 1960s and 70s to rekindle their idealism now tempered with life experience, and make a difference in the world using the WomensTrust model. Working with them has been a joy, and we are looking forward to introducing them to Ghana!

"Team Pokuase" is eagerly anticipating our arrival and a very busy three weeks! They are pleased to report that WomensTrust - Pokuase Village will close the year with over 700 loan clients! This March, we are hoping to send Finance Officer Eric Ankrah to the Microenterprise and Development Institute's South African campus for a three-week intensive in microfinance. And, Gertrude is looking forward to her "annual" visit to the United States later this spring! Her visa interview is next Tuesday, and we anticipate an easier time of it this year!

This holiday season, as we reflect on the accomplishments of 2006 and prepare for the opportunities of 2007, both Dana and I wish to thank you all for the gift of hope that you give throughout the year to the women and girls of Pokuase. It is an extraordinary gift!

**With gratitude and best wishes for a joyous holiday season,**

*Susan*

Susan Kraeger Executive Director **WomensTrust, Inc.** P. O. Box 15 Wilmot, NH 03287 603 526-4366 501(c)(3)