

THE CLOSING OF THE WEST END GOGOS (ZULU FOR GRANDMOTHER) (2)

The West End Gogos, whose initial mandate was to help African Grandmothers to look after their orphaned grandchildren because of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, have decided to disband.

The main reason for this decision is the aging of our founding members and all that that entails. They have been heavily involved in raising money for this worthy cause for the last eleven years.

Other SPLBC members have been active Gogos over the years, both Grandmothers and Grandothers and we thank them too for all the work and love they put into the Grandmothers Campaign.

This year, we lost five members for various reasons and it was decided that the amount of work involved in putting on an event was too much for those left, including those who had agreed to co chair.

The difficulty of recruiting younger members because of their own busy schedules was also realized.

On November 7th, we held a lunch to celebrate all our wonderful years together and the many events we put on at the bowling club and in the neighbourhood over the years. We looked over the photo books recording our beginning years and the events many of you attended. Attached are some of these memories. Please forgive quality as they were photographed from the books.

In eleven years we hosted two garden parties at the club; three Karaoke parties at the Sands Hotel and seven spring Euchre events which were very popular. Local businesses became involved and gladly gave gift certificates and silent auction items to support our cause. We also partnered with other Gogo groups to put on larger events, including a fashion show featuring women's fashion changes in the last 100 years which was attended by over 300 people.

I especially want us to remember, the Late Wendy Gerhard, our staunch supporter, who was the bowling club board chair in 2014 when we asked if they would adopt us as their charity and allow us to hold events at the club. The board agreed and Wendy made sure they knew that as all the Gogos were members of the club, they should be given the rental rate members enjoy.

What would we have done without the bowling club and its members for all the support they have given the Stephen Lewis Foundation Grandmothers Campaign over these years. You have been amazing, supporting us by attending events, bringing your friends and raising money through our donor's online page and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

This closure does not mean we have abandoned the grandmothers or the Stephen Lewis Foundation. There are still many grandmother groups in the lower mainland and across the country who still adhere to the statement "We will not rest until they can rest". Some of us will join other groups, or attend other Gogo events, or become regular donors. We cannot give up now. Especially as the US has cut USAID, crucial foreign funding that has affected thousands of Africans who received life supporting HIVAIDS medications from that source.

We encourage you to donate on December 1st, International Aids Day:

<https://grandmothercampaign.org>