



FREEDOM
from
FISTULA
Foundation

2010

Welcome to our fourth edition...
Help make a difference...

TRUSTEES MESSAGE

The Freedom from Fistula Foundation has three trustees, Ann H Gloag, Elizabeth (Liz) Tinto, and Lois Boyle. In this issue, Lois tells us about a special trip to the United Nations in New York.

"Last October, our Founder Ann Gloag was honoured by the National Council of Women of the United States on a very special night at the United Nations. Ann was presented with the inaugural *Susan B. Anthony Humanitarian Award*, named after one of America's most famous human rights pioneers and the only woman to appear on a US coin.

"The award recognised Ann for her dedication to help women and children around the world and the Freedom From Fistula Foundation figured prominently throughout the evening. I was privileged to be there on the night and witness the overwhelming response to Ann's charitable endeavours from the hundreds of guests gathered in the room. I have no doubt the work of the Freedom From Fistula Foundation was genuinely appreciated and supported by everyone who was there."

This March, Ann returned to the United Nations to chair a break-out event on fistula at the '54th Commission on the Status of Women'. This was another opportunity to raise the profile of the Foundation among decision-makers at the highest level.

AMBASSADORS OF FFFF



President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf,
President of Liberia

"We are delighted to be working with Ann Gloag and the Freedom From Fistula Foundation to create a dedicated fistula department at the refurbished JFK hospital in Monrovia. We must match our works and enthusiasm with concrete actions. This Foundation will rescue the most important members of our society: our mothers, sisters, daughters. In the developing world, their very survival is threatened and we need to take action to save them."

THE TRAGEDY OF FISTULA

Today an estimated 2 million women in Africa are suffering serious damage both physically and mentally through vesico-vaginal fistulas (VVF), caused by obstructed childbirth. Rendered incontinent, sometimes doubly incontinent, these women are shunned by their families and communities and in many cases cast out of their villages. The tragedy is that surgical intervention can provide a positive solution. In up to 90% of cases, fistula can be successfully surgically repaired, and most of those women who receive appropriate treatment can go on to have children, usually by caesarean section.

The **Freedom From Fistula Foundation** (FFFF) has been established to provide free surgeries for women who have been injured during labour due to lack of medical care and to help women in Africa receive healthcare during pregnancy and childbirth to prevent fistula from developing.

'HELP MOTHERS IN MAY'

It is the 2nd Anniversary of the FFFF in May - can you help us raise funds for fistula during May?

*1 woman every 2 seconds is injured or disabled in childbirth. That means **1,339,200** pregnant women will be injured during the 31 days in May.*

We are challenging you to do something big or small to help us provide free surgery to these women and start them on a journey of physical and emotional healing.

It's the perfect excuse to get together with the girls and we've come up with some ideas to help you on your way:

- Give up chocolate for the month of May – and ask for sponsorship!
- Have 10 friends round to the house for coffee and cakes and charge them £10 each.
- Do a 10k or marathon in aid of FFFF.
- Meet your friends for a glass of wine and sell a prize to the highest bidder.
- Hold a quiz night at your local gym/golf club/tennis club.
- Have a jewellery/candle night and ask the company to donate 20% of the proceeds.
- Hold a 'Wii FIT Hula Hoop Challenge' with friends and ask them to pay to compete.

In order to encourage support for the campaign we are offering a superb prize of one week's holiday for 4 people in a cottage on Beaufort Estate, near Inverness, to the person who raises the most money in May. So get your thinking caps on and get fundraising for FFFF!

Please email info@freedomfromfistula.org.uk to let us know about your fundraising endeavours or for further information.

Alternatively, you can make a donation at www.justgiving.com/MothersinMay.

FUNDRAISER PROFILES

In July 2009, Ann Gloag was delighted to receive a cheque for £2270 from Kirriemuir Rotary Club. The fantastic donation was made by the club's vice-president, Barbara Lovegrove, in response to a talk given to the club by a representative from The Freedom From Fistula Foundation.

WORK IN AFRICA - SIERRA LEONE



Ballay Sessay is a 26 year old Limba mother from northern Sierra Leone. Having had three children already, Ballay and her husband were

surprised to discover they were expecting another baby. Ballay went into labour whilst working as a petty trader in her local village. She went home alone and delivered a beautiful baby boy. However, following the delivery Ballay felt all was not well, and on examination of herself she felt a tiny hand protruding – twins. Her husband assisted her through the bush to the nearest hospital, which took most of the day, only to discover no doctor in attendance. They transferred her to Margbenth Hospital where her stillborn daughter was delivered via emergency caesarean section. Ballay lost a lot of blood requiring multiple transfusions and the entire ordeal cost over 400,000 Leones (US\$ 100) – money Bally's husband will be paying off for a long time to come. As if the emotional pain of her loss was not enough, soon after her prolonged delivery she started to leak urine constantly.

Ballay was discovered in her village and brought back to Aberdeen with one of the Mercy Ships screening trips in March. Ballay says "When I arrived I was very frightened because of the last time [C-Section] it was a white doctor when I had to have the blood. I thought the same thing would happen this time."

As Ballay sang and danced with her son Alhassans at her Gladi Gladi, a ceremony celebrating her successful surgery and healed body, she cried tears of joy "Mercy Ships has saved my life – now I will be happy with my children when I am old. Tenki!"



OUR SHARED VISION

Please bear in mind the vision of the FFFF - "for all women in Africa to have access to healthcare during pregnancy and childbirth and to help eradicate obstetric fistulas" - and remember that ultimately 'The women we are helping are like you - mothers, daughters, cousins, wives, aunts, nieces.....'.

SPECIAL AWARD

On October 15th, 2009, Ann Gloag was awarded the inaugural Susan B Anthony Humanitarian Award by the National Council of Women of the United States. The award has been established to recognize individuals that



are dedicated to making a difference in people's lives, communities or the state of the world. It will be given annually and will recognize people that possess the vision, drive and determination of its namesake, Susan B, Anthony, one of the original founders of the National Council of Women of the United States. Upon receiving the award, Mrs Gloag said: "This is a huge honour and I am humbled that the National Council of Women of the United States chose me to receive the inaugural Susan B Anthony Humanitarian Award."

Now you can help us... when you shop!

We have now registered on the 'Easy Fundraising' website. This website enables our supporters to raise funds



for FFFF when shopping online. Over 2000 of the best-known UK retailers are featured, and up to 15% from every purchase you make is donated to us, when you follow the links on www.easyfundraising.org.uk. There are even special offers with online discounts from time to time! You can also earn money for FFFF by signing up for different deals. To use the site, you need to register and then go to 'Find A Cause', where we are listed under 'F' for 'Freedom From Fistula Foundation'. Once you have listed us as your default charity, money is donated to FFFF every time you shop through the 'Easy Fundraising' site. Why not make the easyfundraising page your homepage? It'll remind you how you can support us every time you surf the net!!

CONTACT US

Further detailed information can be found on our website at www.freedomfromfistula.org.uk and if you have any questions please do not hesitate to give us a call on 01738 633264 or email us at info@freedomfromfistula.org.uk.

NEXT ISSUE...

If you would like to submit any information for inclusion in our next newsletter, please contact Karen McCleary via the FFFF email or by post to the address given below. We would love to hear about your own fundraising efforts.

Freedom From Fistula Foundation, Unit B1,
Highland House, St. Catherine's Road,
Perth, PH1 5RY.

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