



Photo by Hannah Yoon

Quinte Grannies for Africa kicked off the fourth annual 'Stride to Turn the Tide' campaign by walking around the track at the Quinte Sports & Wellness Centre on Jan. 31. Participants are taking part in a symbolic walk to Africa.

Grandmothers help grandmothers

Stride to Turn the Tide campaign kicked off by Quinte Grannies

By Natalie McMullen and Hannah Yoon

The Quinte Grannies for Africa kicked off the fourth annual Stride to Turn the Tide campaign at the Quinte Sports and Wellness Centre at the end of January.

Participants in the symbolic walk to Africa are asked to record their steps and strokes between now and June 2013, with the goal of clocking a collective total of 11,600 kilometres, the distance to Rwanda's capital city of Kigali. Part of their \$20 registration package includes a pedometer and logbook to track their progress.

The event is part of a larger Grandmothers to Grandmothers movement, launched in 2006 by the Stephen Lewis Foundation. The initiative raises awareness of the devastating toll of HIV/AIDS on communities across Africa and specifically the grandmothers tasked with caring for the millions of children orphaned by the pandemic.

The Jan. 31 gathering boasted a full house – a crowd of around 100, dotted with splashes of orange T-shirts, hats and scarves – the signature uniform the Grannies wear to show solidarity with African grandmothers.

In attendance was 92-year-old Win Perryman, the oldest member of the Quinte collective, which forms part of a national network of more than 240 groups.

The evening opened with a message by Belleville Mayor Neil Ellis and featured presentations by Carole Holmes, co-chair of the National Walk Committee, and Helen Silbiger, community campaigns liaison with the Stephen Lewis Foundation.

Dynamic performer Jeanette Arsenaault entertained the audience with a mix of Acadian roots music and songs of empowerment, honouring women's strength and power.

Through registration alone, the opening celebration raised \$2,000. In total, through the three previous campaigns, the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign has brought in over \$1 million for the Stephen Lewis Foundation.

The foundation directs the funds to local, grassroots organizations that work

with grandmothers and children to address both short-term needs and long-term solutions.

For Mieke Thorne, the project's co-chair along with Dianne Raniowski, and the evening's MC, the campaign is about "awareness, health – to be involved and connected with the world."

Thorne first became involved with Quinte Grannies for Africa after hearing Lewis speak at an event held in Belleville in October 2006.

A grandmother herself, Thorne said while she enjoys spending time with her grandkids, she can't imagine what it would be like to raise them on her own at this stage of her life.

"I feel very connected to the African grandmothers. If with my eight grandchildren I had to support them, feed them, get them to school, at my age? It's amazing what these grandmothers do. Some of them are in their 80s."

Thorne, like the majority of the more than 60 group members, does not conform to the traditional grandmother figure. As Silbiger said during her talk, the women who comprise these networks are not "your typical grannies knitting in

rocking chairs; they're activists."

This past November, members of Quinte Grannies for Africa joined forces with the Grandmothers Advocacy Network in support of Bill C-398. The bill, which called for amendments to Canada's Patent Act in order to facilitate the supply of generic drugs for the treatment of HIV/AIDS and other diseases to countries in the Global South, was defeated by the Conservatives.

But the Grannies are resilient and committed, as evidenced by one of their key slogans: "We will not rest till they can rest."

The kick-off event closed with a symbolic walk around the indoor track, with Grannies and their allies raising signs with images of African grandmothers and messages of hope as they set off on their journey to Kigali.

The next stop, according to Thorne, whose passion and energy are contagious, is Cape Town, South Africa.

The Quinte Grannies for Africa meet twice monthly. For more information about the Stride to Turn the Tide campaign, contact quintegrannies@hotmail.com, or call Mieke Thorne at (613) 969-1782.

RVs issue stalls at council

By Myriam Lublink

The motion by a Belleville city councillor to limit the placement of the parking of RVs, boats and trailers on private property was defeated Feb. 4 during a planning committee meeting.

Belleville councillor Tom Lafferty brought the issue to the table at a council meeting on Dec. 12, and suggested that the motion be passed that recreational vehicles of a certain size not be allowed to be parked in driveways.

"The motion was defeated. Council's advisory committee recommended that the motion not be approved. There was a lot of public input, and the vast majority were opposed to the motion," said Lafferty last Friday.

It all started when Lafferty received complaints about RVs blocking the views from some local homes. Lafferty said that beauty is in the eye of the beholder and that RVs blocking windows can be quite an eyesore.

"I had a number of people come to me last summer who had oversized RVs parked next to their homes, blocking their view from the window. They tried a number of different avenues to get the issue resolved. They couldn't, so they came to me for help."

Chris Hill, a Belleville resident and recreational vehicle owner, started a Facebook page and a petition within days of the first discussion of the motion.

"I'm representing a group of citizens that got together in order to oppose the motion and exercise our democratic right to do so," Hill said.

Hill said he understands that even if you own your property, there are some limitations as to what you can do when it comes to safety and legal activities. He said the municipality shouldn't decide if RVs can or cannot be parked on private property.

"As residents, we feel that we should have more power over how to use our property and it shouldn't be at the whim of the municipality to decide how that property is going to be used. We feel that this one item specifically is outside the boundaries of what the municipality should be working on."

Hill said that he is happy with the decision not to pass the motion and he will continue to park his RV on his property when he isn't using it.

"It would have impacted us both convenience-wise and financially-wise. If I can't park my RV in my driveway, then I'd have to pay someone else to park it. That would take away from our budget to even use it."

Now that the motion has not been passed, Lafferty said that despite being disappointed and somewhat surprised as he thought more of council would support it, he is not going to bring the issue up again.

"It's a dead issue now. Once something has been deterred by council, you cannot bring it up again in the same calendar year. There was such overwhelming support for the no side, so there really is 'no point in going through it again.'"

Belleville boat show anchors at Quinte Mall last week

By Jason Prupas

Boats lined the walkways of Belleville's Quinte Mall last week for the annual Boat Show, which has taken place for more than 20 years.

Many boat manufacturers and dealers alike advertised their wares all over the mall from Feb. 4 to Feb. 10.

Darren Merritt represented North Country Marine for his sixth year at the show and worked 12-hour days since the

show started.

"It was worth it," said Merritt. "Basically what it does is it gives us a client base for the season. Some people may not be ready to buy, so we give them as much information as we can."

Joshua Thompson, a sales representative with Triumph Boats, agreed the boat show is great for the mall and for boat sales.

"We are unveiling quite a few new designs this year that I think the public will be interested in," said Thompson.

That ranged anywhere from a 20-foot fishing vessel, to an expensive boat designed to tow water-skiers or wakeboarders that comes equipped with directional speakers so you can hear music perfectly clear while you are out behind the boat doing your activity.

However, manufacturers are starting to take a more practical approach with newer features that might attract the more eco-conscious demographic. For example, there are those who want a boat

but don't want an engine or hull to leak or decay into the water and pollute their lake after a few years.

Dealers are promoting new boat designs they say are more eco-friendly. A company like Triumph has come out with a new polymer, which makes the boat virtually indestructible as well as almost entirely recyclable.

"Every year, we are invited down to the mall and we take the opportunity to bring the savings to the Belleville public," said

Thompson.

The dealers were offering a limited sale on almost all of the watercraft to attract buyers during the wintertime, which is the off-season for boaters.

The boat show will be moving to Brockville for a week and then Kingston and then back to Belleville again for the Boat and RV Show on March 8-10, 2013.

"We have a big area that we support and we try to give the best service we can," said Thompson.

Students express importance of International Women's Day

By Taylor Hermiston

What Does International Women's Day Mean to You?, a youth art exhibit kicked off Thursday, Feb. 7 at the library's art gallery. The exhibition was presented by the Parrott Art Gallery and the International Women's Day committee to mark the event.

"International Women's Day is celebrated on March 8 worldwide and in Belleville the committee normally organizes a rally and a downtown march," said Cheryl Holland-Hughes, of the International Women's Day Committee. "This year we opted to do something different, so we enlisted the help of all the people of our community to raise awareness of what International Women's Day means a little bit before the event."

The exhibition was an opportunity for youth to showcase what they felt International Women's Day meant to them. They were encouraged by the International Women's Day committee, in Belleville, to express their thoughts and feelings through any art form.

"As you go around the gallery, we are firmly convinced that people from our community that come into this gallery will walk out with a very different perspective of what International Women's Day is and what it means," said Holland-Hughes.

The students' artwork varied between paintings, drawings and photography and was paired with written statements from each artist explaining their piece and why it is important to them.

"I decided to take on this project because I never did an art show before and I wanted to express how many women have influenced me and how they influ-



Photo by Taylor Hermiston

St. Theresa Catholic Secondary School student Kiera Dinsmore stands with her art piece called *Precious Strength, Sacred Diversity* at the International Women's Day youth art exhibit at the John M. Parrott Art Gallery last Thursday.

enced my own sense of self and my pride of being a woman," said Kiera Dinsmore, a student of St. Theresa's Catholic School.

Dinsmore created a collage piece of black and white photography called, *Precious Strength, Sacred Diversity*, featuring portraits of women who influenced her life. Some of those include her grandparents, aunts and a close friend who is battling cancer. Her photographs were taken over a series of two months all over Canada.

Another piece of art was a painting featuring a damaged woman with burn scars on her face and burning books beside her called *Marred*.

"The books and they are burning because a lot of people in other countries don't get an education. I called it *Marred* because her face is burned and in society girls are shunned for stuff like that, more than men," said Sarah Arendt, the artist of the painting.

Arendt worked on her painting over a two week period, working on it before and after school.

"She was really interested in the woman who had come and talked about Afghanistan and a young girl getting shot. I think a lot of that was her inspiration," said her mother, Carol Arendt.

Through-out the exhibition, people were asked to keep in mind their favourite art piece and vote. The three pieces

with the most votes will be featured at the "What Does International Women's Day Mean To You?" adult art show on March 5 at the Belleville Core Centre.

"I am really happy with the creativity they showed dealing with that question and that lets me get into their minds," said Jan Coombs, who added she has been influenced by her grandmother and mother all her life about woman becoming persons in society.

Observer, Tom Thorne said, "It should celebrate women. Women should celebrate themselves but I think pointing this out is extremely useful. We have a lot of talented people. Look at all the women who are premiers now. It's all about equity."

Thank you went out to Susan Holland, the gallery curator of the John M. Parrott Art Gallery, and the staff for preparing the show, Emily Terpstra, for her work on publicity, Lynn Hunt, the art teacher from St. Theresa's, for encouraging her students to enter the show and the students themselves for their inspiration, plus the Bridge Street United Church Foundation and ETFO, the Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario, for their sponsorship.

This was the first of many International Women's Day events that will be happening from now and until the first week of March.

Other events relating to the International Women's Day festivities continues with a presentation by From Childhood to the Quinte Grannies for Africa on Wednesday, March 6. International Women's Day on Friday, March 8 featuring a presentation and a march through downtown Belleville, and a meet and greet with Marina Nemat, author of *Prisoner of Tehran* and *After Tehran* on Saturday, March 9.