Message from the President

On behalf of FNIF and ICN I wish to thank you for your support during the past year; one which has seen many achievements thanks to your generosity. We have been delighted with the response of individuals and organisations alike, but so much more is needed!

Each contribution is important and means we are making a difference in the lives of young girls and the communities in which they live. As well, we are influencing policy and practice internationally and locally. This newsletter provides a snapshot of some of the ways in which your contributions are making a difference.

Those of you who attended the FNIF Fundraising Luncheon in Seoul will have heard first-hand from one of the graduates of the programme what a difference the GCEF makes. Mercy Katindi, like so many of the girls who have completed high school thanks to the GCEF, is now in university following her dreams and building a future for herself and her family. FNIF concludes the year feeling confident that we have touched the lives of many people through our activities and initiatives. We thank you most sincerely for your generosity and wish you every success for 2016.

Sincerely,
Judith Shamian, FNIF President

New GCEF website

We are pleased to announce the launch of a new and improved website for the Girl Child Education Fund: www.gcef.ch The website has been designed to provide a user-friendly experience and easier donation functionalities. The site includes stories from some of the graduates of the programme, and testimonies from the nurse volunteers, teachers, guardians and parents. In addition, the new site provides background on the GCEF and the newly launched FNIF Endowment Fund (see June 2015 newsletter).
Thank you from the girls – and pleas for continued support

On the GCEF page of the ICN website you can find videos from many of the main players in the GCEF including graduates, teachers, guardians and the President of the National Nurses Association of Kenya.

Clare, a GCEF graduate from Kenya, pictured on the right, is about to complete a degree studying law at the University of Nairobi. She says, “I am grateful for the help that I have gotten and I am hoping that the moment I get employment I will be able to help other girls and most importantly, to fight as an advocate for the rights of the girl child and women generally.”

“I would like to appreciate the International Council of Nurses, our patron, because it is through them that we have been able to get the funds, and get the motivation, the annual meetings and everything and I am very grateful.”

The site also has videos of two other GCEF graduates, Lynn and Valary. Lynn is currently studying for her BA in Economics and is working towards getting accountancy certificate. Her sister, Valary, is a graduate of University of Nairobi, currently working at Chase Bank, Kenya.

“We would like to say that we are very grateful for your support and your generosity because without your support my sisters and I maybe wouldn’t have been where we are today because the education that you were able to sponsor them through is what has taken them this far. We would like to say we are very, very grateful… may you continue with that selflessness to contribute to this cause.”

Hope, a 16 year old from Zambia, who is currently being supported by the GCEF adds, “These donors have really helped me paying for my school fees and school requirements and I am really grateful. I would love to appeal to them to continue helping other orphans like me. They really helped me a lot including when it comes to my studying issues they provided us with the solar lamps which are very helpful because sometimes at night time the electricity here goes and we usually use those solar lamps they gave us to study. I am really grateful to them.”

facebook

GCEF is now on Facebook!

Have a look at our new facebook page at www.facebook.com/GirlChildEducationFund
GCEF Graduate and IAA winner speak at the FNIF Luncheon

At the ICN Conference in Seoul, Republic of Korea in June this year, over 500 guests attended a special FNIF Fundraising Luncheon where the new FNIF Endowment Fund was launched.

The Luncheon kicked off with a video from Subadhra Devi Rai (left), the recipient of the 2015 International Achievement Award. Dr Rai, a nurse and senior lecturer at the School of Health Sciences (Nursing) at Nanyang Polytechnic in Singapore, was unfortunately unable to attend the Luncheon but expressed her delight at receiving the award. “The award has shown that as nurses, we can make a difference and we can play varied roles”, said Dr Rai. “Nursing has allowed me to volunteer and work in other parts of the world which otherwise would not have been possible for me to do so.” Dr Rai also praised the work of the GCEF, saying “I feel that the focus on Girl Child Education resonates deeply with me... My parents did not focus all their resources on their male offspring but ensured that all of us had access to learning. This was despite the fact that they experienced intense social pressures from their own peers within the community to marry us off early and were often questioned why their daughters were still in school... I dream of the time to come when girls and boys are given equal access to education. This will not only be for the betterment of themselves but also the community and the world at large.”

FNIF Board member, Richard Flavell, then announced the launch of the Endowment Fund. “FNIF is determined to expand its support to the orphaned daughters of nurses, and I very much hope that you will assist us in achieving this.”

Guests were then honoured to hear a moving speech by Mercy Katindi (left), a graduate from the GCEF who is currently in university in the Republic of Korea studying computer science. She told the audience, “for the girls in the GCEF, you are our heroes!”

Finally, Paula DeCola, External Medical Affairs, Pfizer Inc. kicked off donations by announcing a $15,000 contribution from Pfizer, and offering a Florence Nightingale teddy bear to anyone who pledged $15,000 or more!

By the end of the Luncheon, pledges and donations by other guests in the room totalled over $70,000.

Jane’s story: “We are what we are because of the GCEF”

My name is Jane from Kenya. I come from a family of three girls. My mom was a nurse and my father worked for the ministry of finance. Life was good and everything went on well with my parents around. At that young age, I could see my mother was sick on and off and one time she got sick and was in hospital for a very long time. We kept hoping that she would get better. One evening our father came home in a sad mood. We could see tears in his eyes. He called all of us to his bedroom and told us mom had passed on. That was the toughest news I have ever received all my life. We went through my mum’s burial and returned to live with our father. Our father looked very depressed after our mother’s death. After a few months he too got quite sick and passed on. That marked the beginning of difficult times for the three of us.

Soon after our father’s funeral, our relatives shared everything and we were left with nothing. We were shared among our relatives. My elder sister went with our paternal uncle while I and my young sister went with my maternal aunt. Life became so tough to the point that my aunt wouldn’t take care of us because she was unemployed and also had a very big family. We found ourselves at the orphanage where we lived for quite some time. We did get some education there but we were always in and out of school. I was then in class 6 while my sister in class 3. We had no idea where my elder sister was at that particular time.

One evening my auntie came to visit us at the orphanage and we were so shocked because she had not done that in a long time. She had smiles all over her face. She told us she was taking my sister and I to go and live with her. She said the nurses were going to pay our school fees until we completed form four. To say I was happy is an understatement. We were taken away, bought for all the items required for school and enrolled in very nice schools that were just a dream.

Continued on p4
GCEF Coordinators meeting in Geneva

In November, the annual GCEF Coordinators workshop was held in Geneva to discuss activities in each country, the new Endowment Fund, local fundraising, and other topics important to the smooth running of the project. We were happy to welcome the following GCEF National Coordinators: Faith Mbehero (Kenya), Tiny Dlamini (Swaziland), Theopista Kabilisa (Uganda) and Jennifer Munska (Zambia). The Coordinators shared stories of the work they do and the incredible support they provide the girls in the Fund, many of whom drop in to the NNA offices to say “hi.” The girls keep in contact with each other and with the Coordinators through social media and have formed a strong bond. We cannot express the gratitude we have to the Coordinators, all of whom are nurses working for the local NNA. They have gone above and beyond the call of duty and each expressed how this project has changed their lives.

Some of the GCEF alumni enjoy a reunion in Kenya.

FNIF’s most generous donors 2015

As is our tradition at the end of the year, we would like to take this opportunity to thank our most generous donors. Every single donation, no matter the size, helps us to continue to support the girls in the GCEF. If you would like to support FNIF and the Girl Child Education Fund, please make a donation at www.gcef.ch.

Platinum donors ($10,000+)
- Canadian Nurses Association
- Richard Flavell
- Japanese Nurses Association
- Norwegian Nurses Association
- Pfizer
- Symphasis
- Swedish Association of Health Professionals (Vardförbundet)

Gold Donors ($5,000+)
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- Susie Kim
- Judith Shamian
- Swedish Society of Nursing

Silver Donors ($1,000+)
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- European Federation of Nurses Associations IFPMA
- Mu Theta Scholarship Research
- Myriam Gomez
- Nurses Association of Macau
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- Debra Scott
- Thai Nurses Association

Bronze Donors ($500+)
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