

PRESIDENT MONIQUE'S VISIT

Mme Monique Misenga Mukuna, president of Woman, Cradle of Abundance, DRC (the original one) came to visit! Affectionately known as "Maman Monique," this amazing woman shared her stories, her vision, and herself with so many eager listeners. Her colleague Mme Henriette Kibadi was unable to come because the US consul refused to give her a visa. What a disappointment: but... next time!

The first event on Maman Monique's calendar was an appearance at the African Soirée of our sister non-profit, United Front Against Riverblindness (UFAR), on March 1. This included a wonderful African Market displaying beautiful items made by Woman, Cradle of Abundance. Highlights include reunions with Susan Lidstone, Barbara Figge Fox, and Nancy Beatty, and special supporters from Princeton United Methodist Church, including Vasanth & Susan Victor, Mathew & Malini Ireland, and Anne Fikaris.

The centerpiece of Mme Monique's visit was her role as a keynote speaker at the 2nd African Women Extraordinaire = AWE symposium, at Princeton Seminary on March 6. A marvelous event! The theme was "Church, Health, & Women's Development." Sponsored by PTS's Dept. of Continuing Education and Dr. McKee's class on Women in African Christianity, the day-long conference drew about 50 participants from a wide region: NY & PA as well as NJ.

Mme Monique's lecture on "Congolese Women Against Violence, Poverty, & HIV/AIDS" brought tears to our eyes and fired the hearers' imaginations to get involved: a research project by one and eager plans by others to share with friends.



March was busy! Mme Monique spoke with groups and individuals. Central Presbyterian in NYC welcomed her on March 16 for a moving presentation on "Hope in the Midst of Trials." Check it out on their website under "Vocare" & the date. Princeton Seminary students Carla Alleyne and Ted Jordan & the Women's Center hosted two very successful luncheons. Dean Deborah Blanks invited Mme Monique to speak at Murray Dodge Hall at Princeton University to a gathering which included both students and staff.



Princeton Seminary Students & Staff



Rev. Dr. Deborah Blanks at Murray Dodge Hall, Princeton University

One very lively afternoon was spent with Mrs. Cheryl Ciaranca's "Hands Across the Water" Club at Community Middle School in Plainsboro, N.J. For 6 years the Club has supported school children in Congo, where education is not free. (Besides fees & uniforms, students must also pay for state exams as proof of graduation.). The students had already welcomed Mme Monique at their exciting Talent Show on Friday the 22nd, where she got to see their fundraising in action. Now they had an opportunity to hear her stories, become better acquainted, and initiate an ongoing relationship with Woman, Cradle of Abundance. The students asked very intelligent questions; a conversation with three bright 8th-graders who stayed to talk after the presentation was an extra treat. Even the media were present; the story appeared on the front page of the *Trenton Times* on March 28: check it out on-line!



Ms. Ciaranca & the executive council of Hands Across the Water Club, Community Middle School , Plainsboro, NJ with Mme Monique & Elsie McKee

NEWS from CONGO

An immediate concern of Woman, Cradle of Abundance DRC is finding means for to pay for state exams to enable the high school students they support to graduate. This year they have 123 students, mostly divided between elementary and secondary school; 8 are in the final year. Generous friends, led by Joseph & Jennifer Williams & the Rev. Lauren Carrington (Ebenezer Baptist Church, New Brunswick) are helping these seniors graduate into a hope-filled future. But suddenly an urgent problem! One student is missing!

Solomon, an orphan who drives a motorcycle “taxi” to be able to feed himself & his brother, was unjustly arrested. He delivered a passenger, who pushed him down and stole the cycle. Solomon’s boss put him in prison: only because he did not prevent the theft! Prison is a death sentence in the DRC: prisoners starve unless friends buy their way in to bring food. Mme Monique is working to free Solomon – money is needed for lawyers. Please help!

FRIENDS and GIFTS!

KARRIN ALLYSON will be back!

Mark your Calendars for Nov. 16, 2014! Jazz benefit concert for Woman, Cradle of Abundance & UFAR. Details in our summer newsletter.

Introducing Susan Lidstone, Friend and supporter of Woman, Cradle of Abundance. Susan has been involved since before Woman, Cradle of Abundance, Inc., officially began: helping to orchestrate the first fashion show of beautiful dresses and bags at the UFAR Soirée in 2012. During Mme Monique’s visit to NJ in the spring of 2013

Susan hosted a wonderful open house for old and new friends to meet this amazing visitor, and together Susan and David Lidstone launched the Capital Campaign with the first major gift of \$10,000 for the Women’s Center! Susan’s lovely crafts have contributed in so many ways to Woman, Cradle of Abundance: the campaign tree (check out the great progress: red is rising up the trunk!) is only one of her creations. Most of all, it is Susan’s heart and generous sharing of herself that makes her such a joyful friend.

Mme Monique with daughter Nana (a nurse in VA) & Susan Lidstone on March 1, 2014 at the African Soirée



CAMPAIGN UPDATE

The capital campaign is progressing steadily and is nearly 47% to the goal of \$100,000!! By January we had \$30,000; since then donations of \$8000 and \$8000 in matching funds from the second challenge grant have pushed our total over \$46,000! At the halfway mark of \$50,000, land can be purchased. Our dollar for dollar matching challenge to \$10,000 extends to June 30th – **your** donation makes all the difference!

Contribute: Donate securely via PayPal at www.WomanCradleOfAbundance.org/get-involved. Please designate “Capital Campaign” in the purpose line to contribute to the Women’s Center, or “Sustaining Gift” to support ongoing work. Checks payable to *Woman, Cradle of Abundance* can be mailed to the following address:

Woman, Cradle of Abundance
Attn: Shari Oosting, Treasurer
262 Lambertville Hopewell Rd.
Hopewell, NJ 08525

Volunteer: Email us at info@womancradleofabundance.org or call Shari at 847.714.7784 to discuss ways to partner with Woman Cradle of Abundance.