

VG UPDATE

A Publication of the Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund - VGIF

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UN News

Virginia Maynard, VGIF UN Representative

The 45th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women will meet March 6-16, 2001. It will adopt its multi-year program for 2002-2005 and will focus on two thematic issues: 1) women, the girl child and HIV/AIDS, and 2) gender and all forms of discrimination, in particular racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

The UN considers HIV/AIDS not only a health issue but also a major development and security issue, and it will convene a special session of the General Assembly in June to address this problem in all its aspects.

In Durban, South Africa, from August 31 through September 7, 2001, the UN will hold a World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. The High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson, has been designated as Secretary-General of the Conference. In explaining the need

The UN considers HIV/AIDS not only a health issue but also a major development and security issue..

for such a conference at this time she said “Our world is witness to serious ethnic conflicts; to discrimination against minorities, indigenous peoples and migrant workers;

the accusation of institutionalized racism in police forces; harsh immigration and asylum policies; hate sites on the internet and youth groups promoting intolerance and xenophobia.”

In September of this year, eleven years after the World Summit for Children, the General Assembly will convene a special session to review achievement of the World Summit’s goals and consider future action for children. The draft provisional outcome document, *A World Fit for Children*, will soon be available at the UNICEF web site, which is ([www.unicef.org/special session](http://www.unicef.org/special%20session)).

The year 2001 is International Year of Volunteers and it is also the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations.

The Erna Hamburger Fund

Karen McKee and Eileen Menton

Several years ago, the Erna Hamburger Fund was started by a generous contribution from Elizabeth May. Erna was a full professor of engineering at a Swiss university—the only woman so honored in all of Switzerland. The Fund was established for the purpose of providing grants to further girls education in the fields of mathematics and engineering. The Board decided that this fund should have \$50,000 in principle to generate sufficient interest to finance a grant. Over the years, members have contributed to this fund, and it currently has close to \$40,000. We would very much like to complete this Fund in 2001. Therefore, at the last Board Meeting, we passed a motion that in the year 2001, five percent of all non-designated contributions will be allocated to the Erna Hamburger Fund until it reached \$50,000.

SPECIAL INTEREST CAUCUS FOR VG AT AAUW CONVENTION

The Gildersleeve will have two opportunities this year to meet members and friends at the AAUW Convention in Austin, Texas. In addition to the VG Breakfast (article elsewhere), there will be time after the workshops on Saturday, June 23 to get together in an informal session. This will be labeled as a Special Interest Caucus in the Convention program, and there is no charge for attendance. This is an ideal time for members and guests to relax after the workshops, with a cup of coffee or glass of iced tea, and to hear what’s new with the Gildersleeve. Since Saturday evening is a free evening, it also provides an opportunity to meet your friends before going out that night.

The VG Board is looking forward to seeing you during this session.



The President's Perspective

by Sema M. Faigen, President, 1999-2002

It's another New Year, and this time, it really is a New Millennium! May it be a time of health and joy and satisfaction to all of you and your loved ones.

The mid-year Board

Meeting last October was highly productive, largely because there is an outstanding team, which includes the Executive Secretary, in place. Some of the actions taken at the meeting are included in this report.

After much discussion, the Board adopted a Mission Statement: *The Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund, Inc. provides grants worldwide that improve the lives of women and children by funding projects for educational activities, leadership training, community development and the advancement of understanding and cooperation among women.*

Present plans call for discussion of the Strategic Plan at the Annual Meeting in March 2001.

To help VG with its member recruitment, AAUW will create a Microsoft Power Point presentation featuring some of our materials that will be shown at various times during the AAUW Convention in June. Also, there will be table space available throughout the Convention for display of our materials. The Membership Committee will see to the staffing of the table in order to accept memberships conveniently.

A motion by the Membership Committee to increase contribution levels was passed, and is more fully described in another article.

The Grants Committee moved to fund Project 1379 Nigerian AUW, Ikeja Branch, at \$5000 for a teen resource center. This project was postponed from Annual Meeting, pending receipt of supporting and additional documentation. The required information has now been received, and funds have been released.

The Finance Committee moved that in the year 2001, five (5) percent of all non-designated contributions be allocated to the Erna Hamburger Fund until it reaches \$50,000.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Eileen Menton, Treasurer

Many thanks to all of you for your continued loyal support of VGIF. Once again, we have exceeded our fundraising objective of \$77,000 in 2000! We raised more than \$80,000 in 2000, of which almost \$3,000 is restricted to the Asian Regional Endowment and Erna Hamburger Fund. We have paid \$52,300 in project grant allocations, including a \$16,000 grant to IFUW.

Special thanks to our Benefactors, who contributed \$1,001 or more: Jean H. Colburn, Sema Faigen, Kathleen Magill, Virginia M. Maynard, Susan Meyers, Virginia F. Palmer, and Joyce Prudden. Thanks also go to our Patrons, who contributed \$501 - \$1,000: Dr. Helen S. Dunsmore, Dagmar McGill, Karen A. McKee, Brian and Louise McLeod, Eileen Shelley Menton, Patricia Oberg, Elizabeth Poskitt, Shirley Quisenberry, Janet Rochester, Florine Swanson, and Margaret Weeden.

Our goal in 2001 is to raise \$80,000 in general contributions and to disburse over \$58,000 in project grant funds approved at our April meeting. We look forward to continued member support.

Deaths Noted

MEMBERSHIP

Jeanie Page Randall

Knowing that members of VGIF span the globe is not the same as actually meeting with members from another country. In August 2000, I had the opportunity to represent VG at the Annual General Meeting of the Canadian Federation of University Women. Members of the Federation are longtime supporters of VGIF and welcomed me to their board meetings, business sessions and entertainment activities. I also had the opportunity to display VG materials and to seek renewed and new memberships. Louise McLeod and Betty Bayless, CFUW members residing in the United States, attended the AGM and guided me through the various processes that took place. VGIF benefitted by gaining thirteen new members and by receiving even more financial support from Canadian members. If you have the opportunity to attend such a conference, please let me know. Representing VGIF is every member's responsibility and pleasure.

Membership numbers remain above 1300. Groups of members are meeting and planning fundraising activities in many countries. The Membership Committee urges every member to continue supporting the work of VGIF and to encourage at least one person to join us as we make a concerted effort to help women change their lifestyles, communities and societies through positive action. One voice, one person can make a difference for many others. We know that our combined voices and numbers have and will continue to have successful grant programs that serve the needs of women we will probably never even see but will know in our hearts.

A NEW LOOK FOR VG AT AAUW CONVENTION

Our Gildersleeve Breakfast, traditionally a part of the AAUW Convention, will have a new look this year in Austin, Texas.

The breakfast will be held on the last day, Monday, June 25 and will be shared with the Educational Foundation and IFUW. This format will provide guests with the opportunity to update themselves on the interlaced – but not interdependent – functions of the three organizations.

The program will feature a short presentation by representatives of each of the groups, highlighting the major work that each does, followed by time for questions and answers.

Registration for this breakfast will be provided for in the registration package for the AAUW Convention. Sign up and meet your VG colleagues plus all the other Convention goers who are interested in the overall story of what we do to improve the lives of women.

Given in memory of:

Juanita Adams by Judy Armstrong, Patricia Russum, and Paula Winne
James Addison and Margaret Hansell Potter by Elaine Bradbury
Betty Bayless's sister-in-law by Louise McLeod
Dian Belanger's mother by Sema Faigen and Jean Colburn
Evelyn Cumming's mother by Jean Colburn
Sema Faigen's brother Richard by Jean Colburn
Dr. and Mrs. Joseph Ferrucci by Anne Ferrucci
Althea Hottel by Jean Colburn and Sema Faigen
Sheila Keifer by Sema Faigen, Jean Colburn, and Martha Garrison
Argelia Laya by Barbara Wilson
Clare MacMahon by Jean Colburn
Louise McLeod's aunt by Louise McLeod
Dr. Elizabeth Michaels by Florence Baturin, Jean Colburn, Sema Faigen, Patricia Gorton, Caroline Pickens, Lois Pulliam, and Lois Whealey
Jim Reddington by Jean Colburn
Dorothy Schwemmer by Jean Colburn, Sema Faigen, and Kathleen Magill
Harriet Van Meter by Joyce Lockard
Cecilia Zissis by Claire Fulcher

Given in honor of:

Wes Cady by Anne and John Newland, Peggy Nolan, and Marion Delaitsch
Irene Camperell by Carmen Wyszomierski
Jean Colburn by Martha Garrison
Sema Faigen by Grace Olin and Mary Grefe
Virginia Maynard by Boliver Lee Hait
Renu Vischanchi Measures by Lois Measures
Ruth W. Nave by T. Dorothea Garwick
Virginia Palmer by Eileen Menton
Margaret (Nancy) Radford by Claire Fulcher
Beth K. Stocker by Nancy Woodling
Dr. Marie Yevak by Audrey Leef

IN MEMORIAM

Elizabeth Stanton Michaels

Elizabeth Stanton Michaels was twice VG Secretary, twice AAUW State President of Ohio and Massachusetts and twice President of Framingham-Wellesley, MA Branch. She was also LAC for the AAUW Convention in Boston, MA, 1981 and sponsored a Named American Fellowship, AAUW Educational Foundation.

UPDATE FOR GRANTS FUNDED IN 2001

Florine Swanson, Grants Convener

861 Diagnostic Women's Movement for Science Development (DWMSD)

Accra-North, Ghana, West Africa \$5000
The VGIF contribution in 1998 served as a platform to help create awareness in young girls of gender stereotypes that militate against females who pursue science, mathematics and technology. The group has succeeded in breaking through the perception, especially in rural areas, that girls who pursue science and mathematics courses have no feminine qualities and therefore find it difficult to get life partners when they grow up.

The program has encouraged young girls who participate in the clinics to develop scientific attitudes such as experimentation and observation and to cultivate special interests in science and mathematics. The girls interacted and shared personal experiences with females who have made it to the top in their boards. These women serve as role models and a number of them devoted time to the girls. The number of participants in the program has doubled each year.

Future goals are to have their own printing equipment and a permanent structure instead of having to rent.

#1292 Albanian Women Federation (UNION Gender Task Force Albania)

Tirana, Albania \$4000
The Albanian Women's Federation was founded in 1997. Gender issues have been the focus since it began. The name of the organization was changed in 2000 to UNION Gender Task Force Albania to reflect the purpose of the organization.

Their funded project taught students in schools about gender programs as well as training teachers. The long-term goal is to mainstream gender programs into the schools' curricula nationwide.

1303 Croatian Association of University Women

\$4,500
A computer workshop was established in the primary school of Ceminac. Ceminac is a municipality located in the eastern part of the Republic of Croatia-Baranja. The funds purchased 8 used, but good quality, computers with additional spare parts as well as a PDV. Funding also paid for an educator's fee for the adult class as well as traveling expenses. Emphasis was placed on putting as much money as possible into the computers, with other activities carried out by volunteers. Project leader Mrs. Mara Kezele and project coordinator Dr. Vlasta Vince-

Ribaric supervised all the activities at the workshop.

The computers were installed and connected to a network. The schoolmaster indicates that classes are provided two hours twice a week. Pupils are divided into groups of 15 boys and girls, lead by the teacher who is an expert in informatics. The Ministry of Education and Sport finances part of the program.

A group of 20 women and girls ages 20-44 years was formed. The majority of the participants are housewives or work as shopkeepers or in building and economics businesses or in secondary education. All expressed awareness of importance of such education today. One of the women said, "We don't want to be less educated than our children".

The educational plan is for 4 hours per week during a 4-month period beginning in November: four hours in basic information, 10 hours in MS Windows, 21 hours in MS Word, and 8 hours in MS Excel for a total of 64 hours instruction. With the completion of the agricultural activities in the fields, all of the participants were glad to put their effort in additional education. This course is regarded as a good way to socialize, similar to sport activities.

The project coordinator indicated that "it has been a great pleasure to feel the spirit of optimism, unity, and the desire for personal improvement, which could be seen in the reconstruction of the whole village, happening after expelled people returned." There is still a lot to do in this community that was devastated by the war.

#1335 UGO Women Development Group

Anambra State, Nigeria \$4700
This project provides support for women in agricultural production. Virginia Gildersleeve funds matched funds generated locally. Funds purchased planting materials including bundles of cassava cuttings, kilos of maize seeds, melon seeds, and pigeon pea seeds. The planting materials were distributed to the women farmers free of charge.

Three demonstration farms were established. Numerous difficulties resulted from the late arrival of rainfall. In addition the land was filled with many stumps and roots from palm trees. Extra labor was required for their removal. Erosion resulted in sloppy and hilly areas, so contour bands were used to check erosion.

The project taught organic farming, inter-cropping with pigeon pea as a natural fertilizer with the potential of rebuilding the soil and using melon as cover crops. It is hoped that the project will provide self-food sufficiency and increase incomes sufficient for the basic needs of the family.

Mrs. Grace Onyemelukwe who benefited from this

project, said that they had no hope of cultivating food crops this year because of their poverty, but now she has benefited from this project by receiving planting materials. "The yields will serve my family a long time and reduce our poverty, provide food for them and some portion of the out-put will be sold to raise money for my children's school fees."

#1364 **Fundación de la mujer**

Quito, Ecuador

\$2500

The project is based on "Reorientation of family, school and social practices facing student pregnancies and sexual violence in marginal urban sectors of Quito."

During the summer, meetings were held with community leaders, youth leaders, health care personnel, school principals, and local authorities with the purpose of emphasizing the social aspects of the project and obtaining their involvement. Ten schools were selected to work with. Three communities were selected to work with parents and adolescents who do not go to school. They have also been in contact with 5 health centers to get them involved with the project.

Due to a teacher's strike that lasted 5 weeks, the project was delayed in starting by three months. Focus groups were conducted with parents and adolescents, KAP surveys (knowledge, attitudes and practices) aimed at adolescent students and teachers, and semi-structured interviews for school principals and health personnel. Testing of the instruments has taken place in one school.

Difficulties appeared due to the subject theme, because sexuality is not treated openly, and adults tend to keep quiet about it. It has taken many meetings to build trust. Adolescents in the focus groups spoke very openly. There was minimum resistance to the surveys to be filled out by teachers. Sexuality is not a topic talked about in schools. This diagnostic phase allowed the development of an intervention phase that will truly be responsive to the interests of the adolescents and other community participants.

Samples of all survey documents were provided with the first project report. The next report will cover the intervention stage.

#1350 **St. Jude Jumuiya Self Help Group**

Kish, Kenya

\$4000

FGM (Female Genital Mutilation) is the destruction of the female external genitalia through female circumcision by removal of either the clitoris or labia minora and labia majora or both. In some communities the vaginal opening is stitched to narrow the opening.

Seminars teach the consequences and danger of female circumcision including the immediate dangers as

well as later dangers pertaining to childbirth and sexual complications. Each attendee receives a certificate indicating their attendance as well as summary of the content of the class. Other pamphlets are distributed in public settings to reach those who won't attend seminars.

Workshops were conducted to train the trainers, then the trainers to train the community and for community training itself. Funding has been used for booklets, pamphlets and visual aids.

The Elders summoned members of the Group to share their advice. "Yes, you talk to us and our people about Female Circumcision Eradication". We as parents, have accepted to stop doing it because we have know its dangers, but one thing you must remember is that our children are so motivated that they have to be circumcised, and if they are not circumcised, we may be in problems with them. So as well as telling us to stop, you should also tell the children why they are not to be circumcised any more."

An example was given of an adolescent girl who poisoned herself when she learned that she was not going to be circumcised with the others because her parents had attended the seminar on the subject of FGM. She feared that she might miss a husband (early marriage) if not circumcised in the ritual. She was rushed to the hospital where she recovered after a few days.

As a result of this advice, the Group will immediately begin approaching both primary and secondary schools, training institutions and colleges where students can be found so that they can be addressed on the consequences of FGM.

A great deal of resistance has been put up by the women who perform the circumcision because they will lose their income.



#1383 *Lotus Children's Centre, Ghana*

#1370 Krim Community Development Project

Pujehun, Sierra Leone, West Africa \$4,500
 Aims of the project are to sensitize members of the community about the project activities, to organize the women into activity groups, to organize a two day workshop, solicit funds to procure tools and inputs, to make loans available to members at low interest rates, to group short duration crops such as maize, groundnut, potatoes and cassava, to organize training sessions for members and to monitor and evaluate activities undertaken.

Forty-five groups have been formed with leaders identified and work days set aside. A two-day workshop on "Passing on the Gift" was conducted. Fifty group leaders attended. In March two members also attended a workshop organized by SAPA (Social Action and Poverty Alleviation). The theme was "Micro-Credit for Grassroot Groups." They later reported to a group meeting.

In addition to the crop production, soap making and baking were started. Ten sets of tools were purchased and rotated among the groups. Ten acres of corn, 15 acres of groundnut, 20 acres of cassava and 250 ridges of potatoes were cultivated.

A delay in the transfer of our funding resulted in decreased production levels because the initial stage was carried out without our funds. The struggle with weather and the high cost of inputs, particularly transportation costs increased difficulties in carrying out the program.

#1383 Lotus Children's Centre

Accra, Ghana \$5000
 Funding is being used to establish a library at an orphanage. There are currently 11 orphans in the system and additional AIDS orphans will be accepted shortly. The donation of books and the organization of the materials in the library by the older girls in the institution have already improved the reading level of the children. Two of the children were invited to read in a primary school competition. The library is to be fully open in January and will be utilized as well by children in the community.

The Ghana Nursery School Teachers Association will be assisting with the coverage of the opening. Two volunteer mothers are assisting with the sorting of the over 5000 books. In addition 5 young women are being trained as teachers.



#1383 Lotus Children's Centre, Ghana

Dates to Remember

March 30-31, 2001: Annual Board and Committee Meeting, New York City

June 1, 2001: Deadline for the *UPDATE*

June 22-25 2001(?): AAUW Convention, Austin, Texas

August 10-17, 2001: IFUW Triennial Conference, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

November ?: Board and Committee Meeting, New York City

GROUP CONTRIBUTORS DURING 2000**American Association of University Women**

Alameda, CA
 Alma, MI
 Alton, IL
 Arcadia, CA
 Baltimore, MD
 Berkeley, CA
 Big Bear Valley, CA
 Birmingham, MI
 Cabrillo-San Diego, CA
 Carlsbad-Oceanside-Vista, CA
 Cass City, MI
 Citrus Heights-American River, CA
 Concord, CA
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 Dearborn, MI
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 Downers Grove, IL
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**Asociación De Mujeres
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**Australian Federation of
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 NSW North Shore
 Queensland
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**British Federation of Women
 Graduates**
 Warwick and Leamington

Canadian Federation of University Women

Belleville and District, ON
 Burlington, ON
 Calgary North, AB
 Cape Breton, NS
 Georgetown, ON
 Milton and District, ON
 Montreal-Lakeshore, QC
 North Toronto Scholarship Fund, ON
 Orillia, ON
 Ottawa, ON
 Parksville-Qualicum, BC
 Portage La Prairie, MN
 Sackville, NB
 Saint John, NB
 Scarborough, ON
 Stratford, ON
 Weyburn, SK
 White Rock-Surrey, BC
 Windsor, ON
 Wolfville, NS

Fiji Association of Women Graduates

Fiji

**Japanese Association of
 University Women**
 Kanagawa

Irish Federation of University Women

Cork Association of
 University Women
 Dublin Univ. Women Graduates
 (Trinity College)
 Queens Women Graduates
 Association
 University College Dublin Women
 Graduates

New Zealand Federation of University Women

North Shore, Auckland
 Viva Group, Auckland

Join Us!

Membership categories:

Friend	\$15 to \$24	Contributor	\$25 to \$50
Donor	\$51 to \$100	Supporter	\$101 to \$250
Sponsor	\$251 to \$500	Patron	\$501 to \$1000
Benefactor	\$1001 and above		

Preferred Title (please circle): Ms. Mrs. Mr. Dr.

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NAMED GIFTS: Contributions may be made to honor particular individuals.

THE ERNA HAMBURGER ENDOWMENT FUND: Contributions may be made to this endowment, the interest from which supports projects enhancing the scientific and mathematical skills of women and girls.

THE ASIAN REGIONAL ENDOWMENT FUND (ARE): This first geographical fund develops a substantial and sustained financial resource for targeted project funding in Asia.

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Contributions to the **Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund** are tax-deductible in the United States.

27TH TRIENNIAL IFUW CONFERENCE
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
August 10-17, 2001



There will be two (2) lunches at IFUW in the Westin on Aug 13 and 16. The meals will be included in the registration package and should be approximately \$40 Canadian. Service will be buffet with vegetarian meals available.

VG Update

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Sema M. Faigen, President:
 Massachusetts, USA
 M. Louise McLeod, Editor:
 Pennsylvania, USA

**Information for publication
 should be submitted to
 Fay Kittelson, Executive Secretary
 VGIF c/o AAUW
 111 East 37th Street
 New York, NY 10016-3041 USA**

www.vgif.org