

Calendar project aims to raise \$15,000 for Lesotho's poor

Ottawa woman believes she can help AIDS-ravaged nation

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An Ottawa woman is creating a calendar to raise money for children in the disease- and poverty-stricken South African nation of Lesotho.

Peg Herbert became aware of the desperate situation of Lesotho's children when she taught an education class to a Catholic nun from that country at the University of Ottawa in 2001. The friendship that developed between the two women led Ms. Herbert to spend five weeks in Lesotho this summer, meeting people, giving lectures and looking for ways to help.

"I have a very strong conviction that one person can make a difference," says Ms. Herbert.

Lesotho is one of the poorest countries in the world and has the fourth-highest rate of HIV/AIDS in the world. More than half its population is younger than 24 and life expectancy is projected to fall from the current 46 years to 31 years within the next decade. UNICEF predicts that 30 per cent of the country's children will be orphaned by 2010.

Looking for "manageable, accountable projects with good leadership," Ms. Herbert started Project Help Lesotho, which aims, in part, to raise awareness among Canadians, twin schools between the two countries, send supplies and resources to Lesotho's schools and provide professional development to their teachers. Ottawa's Rockcliffe Park Public School has been the first school twinned.



CREDIT: Rod MacIvor, The Ottawa Citizen

Window on Africa: Peg Herbert learned about the situation of Lesotho's children while teaching an education class to a nun from that country. She spent five weeks in that country this summer looking at how she could help.

"The calendar is a way to raise funds," Ms. Herbert says. "We're hoping to raise more than \$15,000." The calendar will contain information and pictures from her recent visit to the country.

People and groups can sponsor the 2005 calendar by purchasing advertising space on its pages. Sponsorship money will go to produce a first run of 1,000; all money raised from the sale of the calendars will go to Project Help Lesotho.

For more information on the project, contact Peg Herbert at helplesotho@hotmail.com .

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