

Friday, April 6, 2007

Nonprofit News

Local women seeking to aid the children of South Africa

Charlotte Business Journal - by [Todd Cohen](#)

Addressing the needs of AIDS orphans and vulnerable children throughout the world is the focus of an initiative launched by a group of Charlotte women.

The effort, known as Mothering Across Continents, kicks off officially May 7 with events at ImaginOn and the Levine Museum of the New South featuring broadcaster Cokie Roberts.

The founding co-chairs aim to enlist women in making donations to two international groups working in South Africa.

"The kinds of projects we're funding through this initiative mirror the collaborative philanthropy-without-borders approach of nongovernmental organizations in South Africa," says Lyndall Hare, a founder and co-chair of Mothering Across Continents and director of the Lifetime Learning Institute at Central Piedmont Community College.

Hare, a native of South Africa and political exile, created the initiative with Patricia Shafer, president of consulting and research firm Compel Ltd.

Last spring, after returning from Uganda on a mission with the HIV/AIDS Leadership Council of Save the Children, Shafer met Hare, who serves on the board of the Boston-based South Africa Development Fund.

Shafer and Hare say many women want to make a difference in the lives of orphans and vulnerable children, but they may not know how to get involved.

"Women have a new level of economic power," Shafer says. "But where people talk about women's buying power, we're focusing on women's giving power."

Mothering Across Continents, which has landed Wachovia Corp. as its founding sponsor, will divide funds it raises this year among three projects in South Africa supported by Save the Children and the South Africa Development Fund.

Instead of competing with one another, Hare says, the two groups are "looking at ways to collaborate on funding opportunities."

Shafer says Mothering Across Continents builds on the Charlotte region's active community of South Africans and individuals with a connection to the country. Last year, for example, the Embassy of South Africa, the Arts & Science Council and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation organized the South by South Africa initiative. It focused on the parallels between the U.S. civil rights movement and the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa.

To help achieve its ambition of becoming a world-class city, Charlotte should be taking on world issues and projecting itself as a global citizen, Shafer says.

"HIV/AIDS is the defining global health issue of our times," she says. "Why not begin to demonstrate our care and compassion around the issue?"

Shafer and Hare, who with three other women with ties to South Africa serve on the organizing committee for Mothering Across Continents, will be speaking to local civic groups and religious congregations. "When women become a collective force in philanthropy," Shafer says, "what a difference you can make."

QUICKINFO

Mothering Across Continents

Web site: www.motheringacrosscontinents.org

Co-chairs: Lyndall Hare of Central Piedmont Community College and Patricia Shafer of Compel Ltd.

Initial beneficiaries: Save the Children, South Africa Development Fund

Todd Cohen is editor and publisher of the Philanthropy Journal at www.philanthropyjournal.org. He can be reached at (919) 573-4642. Send story ideas to tcohen@ajf.org or fax them to (919) 573-4660.