

## Read a Calgary Herald article about Eveline Goodall

**The horrific event took place more than 20 years ago but it remains etched in people's minds forever!**

People in Rwanda are still suffering from the effects of the 1994 genocide and a Calgary foundation is helping them deal with that pain and loss.

INSPIRE!africa, a non-profit organization established eight years ago by Margaret McQuiston and Alexandra MacDonald, has raised more than \$600,000 to fund projects that are helping hundreds of people in Rwanda.



“All of our programs have been successful because they were created and run by survivors,” says McQuiston. “They know exactly what the country needs to move past the genocide and towards hope for the future. Rebuilding the life of a genocide survivor leads to healing an entire community. “So much of my faith has to do with caring for others. I saw when I was in Rwanda that there were opportunities when I came back to support them in what they were doing by raising funds and allowing them to carry on and to expand and to touch more people in Rwanda for the projects that were there. This was my way of doing what I could to help out.”

On Monday at 7 p.m. at Hillhurst United Church (1227 Kensington Close N.W.), McQuiston and Eveline Goodall will be making a special public presentation on Rwanda: 20 years after the Genocide. They will also be speaking the day before at the church's Sunday morning services at 9:05 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. McQuiston says she was invited by a friend in 2006 to go to Rwanda. Her friend had interest in the issues of the genocide.

“I was just really, really impressed and moved by what I saw and what was happening there,” she says. “I could see that the reason why these projects were so successful in terms of the ones she was working on was because they were started and run by survivors of the genocide. So these survivors they knew what they needed to move past the genocide. “It was pretty amazing what they were doing and how people were moving past the genocide.”

Projects by INSPIRE!africa include a countrywide helpline to counsel youth still dealing with the trauma from the horrors they witnessed. Callers also receive free legal advice to recover land that was confiscated when family members were murdered, and access their parents' pensions or other financial benefits.

Another program assists widows and orphans with basic housing and training to generate income and build businesses. Livestock for Widows provides women with food and an income well above the poverty line. The organization also provides sponsorships to help orphans complete secondary school or

university. “This is what I am going to speak about on Sunday is how much more they have really given to me in terms of learning about moving past terrible things that can happen in one’s life and it’s your faith, it’s your community and it’s those that are around you that you need to draw upon in order to allow that to happen,” says McQuiston.

For more information, visit [www.inspireafrica.org](http://www.inspireafrica.org).

Most churches celebrate Epiphany — the day remembered for the three wise men who brought gifts for the infant Jesus — on Sunday. Epiphany, however, actually falls on Tuesday. “We are approaching Epiphany, which is translated ‘ah ha’ or awakening, or bright idea, or ‘manifestation’ of the wise men who came as part of the Nativity story. It was an enlightening moment. For us, this marks several weeks of the beginning ministry of Jesus. It is a time of openness to new beginnings, of awareness,” says Rev. John Pentland of Hillhurst United Church.

“As we considered why we might host this event early in January, it was because it seems many people are seeking ways to be engaged in projects of importance overseas. Being engaged hands on. When we held an outreach meeting in the fall, 15 people came and there were 14 people active in projects of concern both in Calgary and abroad. Poverty, homelessness, climate change, women’s support, etc. This is a new phenomenon I think, where people are both getting involved in their own work overseas in a micro way, and that people don’t come to see what the church does, as much as the church seeing how it can support what is being done already. That is awesome. This event represents one of many worthwhile projects overseas.”

Goodall says she had wanted to go to Rwanda for some time and was able to do so in May/June of 2014. It was an opportunity for the 74-year-old retired social worker to volunteer there. “The organization that Margaret McQuiston and Alexandra MacDonald founded in 2006 is a model I wish was followed by more charitable organizations,” says Goodall. “The overhead is low, maybe seven per cent, because most of the work is done by volunteers. There is a four-member board that chooses the projects that (it) supports. They are all bottom up as opposed to top down. That is, projects chosen are based on the premise that people in need are best able to know what help they need.

“These are projects that the Rwandan people requested: they know best what they need and what will make a difference in their lives ... Do I think I am changed by the experience? Most folks are changed. I think I am more of who I have always been. I think the trip has added years to my life.”

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