

June 2022

Newsflash

Fundraising in 2022 – We hope to see you this Fall!

As mentioned in the January newsletter, we are planning to have an in-person fundraiser this fall. We are currently reviewing a few exciting options and will let you know as soon as we have our plans confirmed. **Stay tuned!**

World events, including COVID, are impacting people around the world including Rwandans. We thank you so much for your support in the past and hope that you will continue to support Rwanda's survivors this year. Please visit our [website](#) for more information on how you can help.



2022 Calgary Commemoration of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda

On April 10, the Rwandan Canadian Society of Calgary facilitated the 28th Commemoration of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsis in Rwanda. It is called 'Kwibuka' in Kinyarwanda which means 'to remember'. The event was held on Zoom again this year and the focus was on youth and telling stories so that the next generation understands the humanity behind the history.

Special messages, focusing on remembrance, hope, resilience, community, and the importance of sharing these stories with our youth were read or broadcast from government officials, including our Prime Minister and Alberta Government. There were 2 compelling and timely messages from groups who in many ways can relate to the Rwandan community. There was a letter of support from the Calgary Jewish Federation and a personal message from the Calgary branch of the Ukrainian Cultural Association expressing their understanding and support as a country who is in the midst of turmoil that has been building for many years.

Two very personal genocide survivor stories were told, emphasizing the tragic time of both the 1994 genocide as well as events starting in 1959 that drove so many Rwandans to seek refuge in Uganda.

The keynote speaker was Consilee Nishimwe from New York. She has written a book about her experience called 'Tested to the Limit: A Genocide Survivor's Story of Pain, Resilience and Hope'. She emphasized the need to share these stories with the next generation so they know the real stories behind the history, especially in a day and age when there are those who deny the genocide.

Calgary's Christine Magill spoke about the book she published in 2019 called 'The Hope That Remains: Canadian Survivors of the Rwandan Genocide'. Viewers were left with the message of 'Living a determined future – tell your stories and find strength and support in community'.

To watch the complete event or selected segments, please click on this [link](#).

A Word from Our Partner: Survivors Fund (SURF)

This month, we are sharing a story of how the Helpline and legal support that is funded through your donations, continues to provide help to survivors in Rwanda.

In 2018, Eustockie, a survivor of the Rwanda genocide, planted 5,000 eucalyptus trees on 20,000 square metres of her land in rural Rwanda. After one year of planting, her neighbour's cows had destroyed all of her trees. To receive compensation for her loss, Eustockie filed a claim through her local government. Alas, no help or support was received.

Eustockie heard about the Helpline, and in 2021, she called the Helpline and was quickly provided with face-to-face consultation with a legal counselor. In the meantime, local officials tried to mediate a solution with the parties, however, the neighbour refused to compensate to the value of Eustockie's property damage. The Helpline counselor then supported Eustockie to file a claim in the Primary Court of Ndora Sector. In court, Eustockie was assisted by a Helpline lawyer and the case was successfully resolved. The court ordered compensation of 3,780,000 Rwandan francs (approximately \$4,668 Canadian) - the value of the damaged eucalyptus trees - and the court decision was enforced.

Eustockie noted that she had been trying to file her claim with the local government

office since 2019 and did not get anywhere, but once she called the Helpline, she received a rapid response. Within one year of the Helpline lawyer filing her claim in court, her case was successfully resolved and enforced. She added, “Now I have been compensated for my property damage and I am very happy and thankful to the Helpline.”

As you can see, your donations to the Helpline continue to make a real difference in the lives of Rwandan survivors.



A Word from One of Our Donors: Jim Arthurs

When did you go to Rwanda with INSPIRE!africa and what do you remember most about your trip?

Why do you continue supporting survivors by donating to INSPIRE!africa?

I was part of the INSPIRE!africa group that visited Rwanda in 2016. I was about to begin by saying that I had the pleasure of visiting but in fact, it was part pleasure and part heartbreak. To see the incredible resiliency of the Rwandan people and the recovery underway, yet to also see the absolutely horrific nature of what we are capable of as a species. The hatred and dehumanization which grew out of the self-interested colonization of an indigenous people was a wake-up call to me. If we don't learn from our mistakes and watch, more genocides could happen again.

My most vivid memory is of one of an underground genocide memorial where the skulls of victims are stacked row upon endless row. Roughly a million people were brutally massacred. This is not a trauma which is readily overcome and there is still raw multigenerational trauma to be healed.

On a much more positive note, I also had the pleasure of seeing how resilient the Rwandan people are. They strive to see themselves as one people now, tell their stories bravely and do not hide from the past. At the same time, they work very hard to move forward. And INSPIRE!africa is truly a part of that effort. This small yet mighty organization is doing fine work. Balancing giving with wise seeding, creating programs that encourage the recipients to do it themselves. I can bear witness and say it's working. But there is still a long way to go. That is why I still give today.

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Take Care

COVID-19 reminds us how connected we really are to each other. We are all in this together. Take care of yourself and each other, and stay safe.