

BATTLE CREEK, Mich. - Lakeview Assisted Living residents are always looking for opportunities to give back to the community and, recently, they've been providing support to Mustard Seeds Women's Initiative (MSWI), an organization that prepares feminine product kits for girls in Uganda. After receiving a presentation in May from Mike Erebu, MSWI's representative from Uganda, residents ranging in age from 81 to 96 started a monthly commitment to cut out materials, crochet washcloths and stamp cards that send Christian messages to kit recipients.

Over 60% of the people in Uganda are under 30 years of age. The nation is primarily Christian and education is not provided by the government. Furthermore, girls are not allowed to attend school without providing their own feminine sanitary supplies, which means many drop out of school due to absenteeism. This leads to a domino effect of young ladies having a lack of education and increasing their risk of being victims of abuse and living in poverty. MSWI's efforts help put girls on a more positive path.

The mission of MSWI is to share the love of Christ with vulnerable girls and women through the distribution of washable sanitary pad kits and programs to further their education and life skills. The ministry was started in 2018 after sanitary pads were sewn to pack in Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes; a ministry of Samaritan's Purse.

At North Athens Baptist Church, Joan Chapman led a group that began sewing washable, reusable sanitary pads and assembling them into kits for distribution in Ugandan schools. The kits include five pads, underwear, soap, washcloth, clothespins, a moisture barrier bag for soiled pads, a sewing kit and the Christian message card. The contents are packed into tote bags also made by the volunteers. Chapman has since moved to Family Bible Church in Marshall where the group meets weekly on Wednesday mornings to prepare and assemble the kits.

MSWI utilizes Erebu's help to present information about their mission through videos of kit recipients in school settings of Teso Sub-Region in Uganda. The inspiring footage and information has helped MSWI widen their network of resources and continue sending their kits to those in need.

It takes many hands and hearts to support this ministry. MSWI thanks Mac Binger of Binger Shipping Supplies of Battle Creek for providing shipping cases, tape and tape dispensers. Donations of cotton and flannel fabric, thread, buttons, washcloths and cotton yarn have been supplied by various donors including the Calhoun County Quilters Guild, St. Peter's Lutheran Church Quilters and the Maranatha Bible Study from Cornerstone Community Church.

The MSWI ministry wants to continue to present and expand this ministry throughout the community. If you know of a group that would like more information and/or a presentation about the needs and impact, or if you feel called to join the team in kit making, please contact Joan Chapman at 269-986-3247, Juli Bloch at 269-979-5601, or Barb Fitch at 269-209-7865. Financial support for ministry needs in Uganda is also welcome and can be completed online at www.familybible.church. Click the Giving link at the bottom of the site with Mustard Seeds from the dropdown menu.

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A big Thank You goes to Lakeview Assisted Living residents as they have been providing support to Mustard Seeds Women's Initiative. The Mustard Seeds Women's Initiative (MSWI) make sanitary pad kits for girls in Uganda. On May 9, Mike Erebu, the Initiative's representative from Uganda, presented the residents and families with information about Mustard Seeds. Mike showed videos of girls receiving the kits in school settings in the Teso Sub-Region of Uganda. The residents, ranging in age from 81 to 96, enjoy activities that benefit communities and charities. So it was inspiring to see the school girls excitedly receiving the kits. Each month residents cut out materials, crochet washcloths, and stamp cards that send Christian messages in each kit.

Over 60% of the people in Uganda are under 30 years of age. The nation is primarily Christian and education is not provided by the government. Furthermore, girls are not allowed to attend school without providing their own feminine sanitary supplies. Many drop out of school due to missing so much school. Lack of education increases the risk that these girls will be abused and live in poverty. The mission of MSWI is to share the love of Christ with vulnerable girls and women through the distribution of washable sanitary pad kits and programs to further their education and life skills.

This ministry was started in 2018 after sanitary pads were sewn to pack in Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes; a ministry of Samaritan's Purse. Joan Chapman lead a group of women from North Athens Baptist Church that began sewing washable, reusable sanitary pads and assembling them into kits for distribution in Ugandan schools. The kits include five pads, underwear, soap, washcloth, clothespins, a moisture barrier bag for soiled pads, a sewing kit, and the Christian message card. The contents are packed into tote bags also made by the volunteers. Joan moved to Family Bible Church in Marshall where the group meets weekly on Wednesday mornings to cutout, sew, and pack the kits.

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