

## **MSH Update – May 2024 edition**

Dear Members,

Welcome to your May edition of Mary Sumner's House Members' update.

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### **Summer of Hope 2024**

Celebrate and give families hope for a brighter future this summer. This year our annual Summer of Hope appeal is seeking to support brighter futures for families and communities around the world. From individual donations to bake sales, jumble sales and sponsored physical challenges, this summer let us come together to give the gift of hope for a brighter future.

Literacy and numeracy are vital life-skills for all of us. Our appeal pack has a focus on our work in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), where the amazing support of members is already empowering women to release themselves from the cycle of poverty. Now we urgently need to reach more women, families, and communities, and share these crucial skills more widely so they have the skills and knowledge to transform their own lives.

Copies of the appeal pack and how to get involved can be found at

[www.mothersunion.org/summer-hope-2024](http://www.mothersunion.org/summer-hope-2024)

### **King Charles III Expresses Gratitude for Mothers' Union's Support**

We are delighted to share some heartwarming news from His Majesty, King Charles III with our members and supporters. When the news of His Majesty's health struggles with prostate cancer followed by that of Princess Catherine, Princess of Wales, the leadership of Mothers' Union extended their heartfelt prayers and well wishes to the King and the family. We are delighted to share that King Charles has responded to our letter with a message of deep appreciation for the kindness and support shown by Mothers' Union. He conveyed that our prayers and well wishes have been a source of comfort and strength to him and his family.

This response from the King is a testament to the power of compassion and community. It reaffirms our commitment to support not only our local communities but also those who lead our nation.

Let us continue to keep the King and the Royal Family in our prayers, wishing them strength and good health for the future.

### **Rise Up Celebration Service at Mary Sumner House**

On Wednesday, 22 May 2024, the team at Mary Sumner House hosted the Rise Up celebration service. Members from the dioceses of London, Southwark, Rochester, and Chelmsford gathered in large numbers to support this campaign against domestic abuse. The chapel at MSH was illuminated with laughter, happy faces, and a spirit of unity as it played host to the service under the pastoral ministrations of the Very Revd Rod Reid, MU diocesan chaplain for the Diocese of Chelmsford. Revd Reid delivered a thought-provoking sermon on the importance of listening to survivors in a world full of both good and evil, and he thanked Mothers' Union for rising up to the challenge of tackling this critical issue.

Since its launch in the last quarter of 2023, Rise Up has received massive support from the membership. As of the last count, a remarkable 89 branches/dioceses have achieved the bronze level, 3 have been awarded silver, and a further 3 have reached the gold level. This remarkable achievement demonstrates the dedication and steadfast commitment of Mothers' Union members who immediately took action. It showcases their profound devotion to their communities and their determination to bring the critical issue of domestic abuse out of the shadows and into the light, where it can be addressed with compassion, support, and a collective resolve to create a safer, more just society for all.

We are deeply thankful for every diocese and branch that has wholeheartedly embraced the Rise Up challenge, knowing that it is making a significant impact in homes and churches throughout the country. As our Patron, The Most Revd Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, says, "Mothers' Union is the heart and love of the Church."

While this marks a significant moment in our campaign, our work is far from over. The message of Rise Up has reached tens of thousands, but we must continue working tirelessly to ensure that every individual can live free from domestic abuse, both in our local communities and around the world.

If you want to find out how to bring Rise Up to your Mothers' Union or church, contact the membership team at MSH for details on how you can actively support this campaign and help it reach the hearts and minds of those around you.

### **Inspiring Visit: Sheran Harper's Tour of the Pacific Region**

Our Worldwide President, Sheran Harper, is on an inspiring tour of Zone C - the Pacific region, accompanied by Jeanette Lawrence, Regional Development Coordinator, as her term draws to its conclusion. This tour is a remarkable opportunity for Sheran to connect with members and engage in meaningful discussions about the renewed vision for the future of Mothers' Union in this vibrant area.

Sheran's journey has already taken her to Australia, where she spent enriching time with members in Perth, Brisbane, and Sydney. These gatherings have been filled with enthusiastic exchanges and a strong focus on nurturing and upskilling MU members through dedicated training programs. By boosting confidence and competence, these efforts aim to empower members to be more outwardly focused, actively carrying out the mission of MU and striving to increase membership.

A highlight of her visit to Australia was the meeting with Pam, the Zonal Trustee, who shared valuable insights and encouragement. Sheran's next stops include New Zealand and the Solomon Islands, where she looks forward to continuing her engagement with members and furthering discussions on MU's future vision in this region.

As Sheran and her team travel to New Zealand and the Solomon Islands, we ask for your prayers. May their journey be safe and their interactions fruitful, bringing renewed energy and inspiration to all MU members they encounter. Let us support them with prayers and in spirit as they work towards a stronger, more united Mothers' Union in the Pacific region.

### **Thy Kingdom Come - A Heartfelt Thank You**

As we reflect on another inspiring season of Thy Kingdom Come, MSH wishes to extend our deepest gratitude to all the members who dedicated themselves to this powerful global wave of prayer. Your unwavering commitment and fervent petitions have undoubtedly contributed to strengthening our shared journey of faith and fostering a profound sense of community.

It has been truly uplifting to hear the stories of how our members faithfully prayed for five individuals and extended invitations to one person to attend a MU event. These acts of spiritual outreach and inclusion are the very essence of our mission, and we commend you for your diligence in putting them into practice.

We were particularly delighted to learn about the Bishop of Peterborough's leadership in organising a Thy Kingdom Come prayer walk, which was attended by numerous Mothers' Union members. Such initiatives not only deepen our spiritual connections but also serve as a powerful testament to the unity and resilience of the Mothers' Union movement.

Additionally, we were thrilled to hear about the Mothers' Union Deanery Festival that embraced the Thy Kingdom Come theme, further amplifying the message of prayer and spiritual renewal within our communities. These stories inspire us and remind us of the profound impact our collective efforts can have.

As we move forward, we encourage you to continue sharing your Thy Kingdom Come experiences with us. Your stories of answered prayers, transformed lives, and strengthened bonds within our Mothers' Union family are a source of inspiration and encouragement for us all.

Once again, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone for your dedication and participation in Thy Kingdom Come 2024. May the fruits of your prayers continue to bless our movement, our communities, and the world around us.

In faith and fellowship.

### **Epic 90-mile walk @90**

In celebration of her upcoming ninetieth birthday, Pam Brooks is embarking on an extraordinary ninety-mile trek along the stunning Sussex coastline. Her mission? To raise vital funds for the Literacy and Financial Education Programme of the Mothers' Union in Burundi. This walk is also a heartfelt tribute to her dear friend Pelagie Simbinuba, the beloved Mothers' Union leader in Matana Diocese, Burundi, who tragically passed away earlier this year.

Starting in Selsey and concluding at Winchelsea Beach near the Kent border, Pam will navigate the picturesque landscape of Sussex from July 5th to July 16th. She will walk alongside friends, tackling nine legs over twelve days, to support church projects through the Mothers' Union literacy programme in one of the world's most impoverished nations.

Pam, now living in Rustington, West Sussex, with her husband Pat, has deep connections with Burundi dating back to 1957 when Pat first went there with the Church Mission Society. The Brooks lived in Burundi until 1979 and continued visiting annually over Lent until 2014. During these visits, Pam's passion for supporting local communities flourished as she explored the hills of Burundi, visiting projects initiated by Mothers' Union groups to promote literacy and income-generating activities.

When asked about her inspiration, Pam shared, "I wanted to commemorate my birthday in a meaningful way, but the thought of extreme activities like skydiving or cliff abseiling didn't resonate with me. Instead, I invite others to join me as we explore the breathtaking Sussex coastline together."

You can support Pam's inspiring journey by donating through JustGiving. Your generosity will make an immeasurable difference in the lives of countless women in Burundi, empowering

them to transform their lives, build brighter futures for themselves, their families, and their communities, in line with the Mothers' Union mission.

Let us walk with Pam and make a lasting impact. Together, we can help create a better tomorrow for the women of Burundi.

### **Fatherhood in Today's World: Navigating the Teenage Years**

As we prepare to celebrate Father's Day on the 16<sup>th</sup> of June, let us reflect on the joys and challenges of fatherhood, particularly when it comes to raising teenagers in today's rapidly changing world. Five years ago, Robert Dawes from the Development team shared his story of what it was like becoming a father for the first time. His story serves as a poignant reminder of the unique journey that fathers embark upon, filled with excitement, uncertainty, and a deep sense of responsibility.

Rob recounted that when he became a father 14 years ago, he experienced a whirlwind of emotions – excitement at the prospect of welcoming a new life into the world, nervousness about the responsibilities that lay ahead, and uncertainty about what the future holds in store. Now, as his daughter enters her teenage years and his son follows closely behind at 9 years old, Rob finds himself navigating uncharted territory.

Raising teenagers in today's world is no joke as parents are presented with a unique set of challenges that previous generations may not have encountered. The digital age, with its constant influx of information and social media influence, has reshaped the landscape of adolescence. As if raising teenagers is not hard enough, parents must also navigate the digital world alongside your child, ensuring their safety and wellbeing while also respecting their needs for privacy and independence. Striking the right balance between monitoring and trust is a delicate dance that requires patience, understanding, and open dialogue.

For many parents raising teenagers, one of the most significant challenges is maintaining open lines of communication with your children. As teenagers often seek autonomy and privacy, it can be difficult for parents to stay connected and understand the complexities of their children's lives. Like many parents, Rob recognises the importance of creating a safe and non-judgmental environment where his children feel comfortable sharing their thoughts, concerns, and experiences. Despite the challenges, Rob finds immense joy and fulfilment in his role as a father. Watching his children grow and develop into unique individuals is a source of pride and wonder. He recognises that fatherhood has taught him invaluable lessons about unconditional love, patience, and the importance of leading by example.

Rob also shared in his interview that one of his greatest rewards through this experience is the deepening of his understanding of God's love. He said as a father, he has gained a profound appreciation for the sacrificial love that God has for His children. Through the joys

and challenges of fatherhood, Rob has gained a deeper appreciation for the various dimensions of God's love – unconditional, sacrificial, patient, providing, and forgiving – which has strengthened his understanding of what it means to have God as a Heavenly Father.

Raising teenagers in today's world calls us to depend on God to give us wisdom and insight to love them unconditionally. As we celebrate Father's Day, let us honour the sacrifices and dedication of fathers like Rob, who navigate the complexities of parenthood with grace, wisdom, and a steadfast commitment to their children's well-being.

Let us also pray for fathers all over the world. May they find strength and guidance as they face the diverse challenges of raising their children. May they be blessed with patience and understanding. Grant them the courage to make difficult decisions, the compassion to support their children in times of need, and the joy that comes from witnessing their children thrive. May their hearts be filled with the peace and love that only You can give, as they carry out this vital role in their families. Amen.

<https://www.mothersunion.org/news/fatherhood-todays-world-navigating-teenage-years>

Best wishes,

Membership Team at Mary Sumner House

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*We are here to help and support you; just drop us an email.*