

You Can Change Someone's Life

Issue 24

Here's How



After Maria, hope grows in Dominica

On September 18, 2017, Hurricane Maria made landfall on the small island nation of Dominica. With maximum sustained winds of 270 km/h and torrential rains, it was the worst disaster the country had ever seen.

In the aftermath, power lines were down, around 85% of houses were damaged, and thousands had all their possessions swept away. Many of our sponsored Grans spent the storm in a shelter and have had to stay there because their houses are destroyed and they have nowhere else to go.

Nine months later, much devastation remains. Sadly, around a third of sponsored Grans have passed away due to the stressful conditions in the wake of the storm, and 90% of the island is still without power. In addition, many regions still have no running water.

But many Grans relied on their resiliency and their love of life to weather this terrible hardship, and the emergency medical care they have received has given them the hope to rebuild.

Eilis Grant, our sponsorship coordinator, recently returned from a monitoring visit to Dominica. We wanted to share the stories she brought back to give you a glimpse of their courage in a time of crisis.



Arabella Joseph

**HelpAge
Canada**

age helps

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Arabella Joseph spent the night of the storm in a shelter and is now living in an empty vacation home with her daughter and her two grandsons. She is thankful for what she has and tries to focus on being positive.

Florence Stout lost most of her house. All that remains is a little shed, where she lives with one of her seven children. Instead of dwelling on the hardships they are facing, she chooses to dance to express her joy.

Listed as vulnerable by one of our partners, Rosaline Nixon is looking for a sponsor. A widow, she lives alone in a shelter now that her home was destroyed, but she holds out hope that her situation will improve.

Ursula Jno Baptiste lives in the mountains, which were heavily hit by the storm.

Maria was unlike anything she had ever lived through, but she is grateful to be alive and continues to share her joyful laughter with those around her.



Ursula Jno Baptiste

Gladys Christmas is 103 going on 104 years young. She lost her roof and her stove during the hurricane, but she is thankful to be staying with her granddaughter Sheryl. Her blindness has not stopped her from seeing the bright side of life.

The road ahead is long and difficult, as many are still without shelter and are living with only the barest of essentials. However, with your support, the Grans will be able to recover.



Little of Florence's house remains.



Rosaline Nixon



Gladys Christmas and her granddaughter Sheryl.

A light shines in Congo

North Kivu, a province of the Democratic Republic of Congo, is in crisis. Violence between various groups and attacks against civilians have taken the lives of nearly 2,500 people over the course of the last three years. During this period, the town of Beni and its surrounding area have been hit particularly hard, resulting 1,465 dead and 783 kidnappings.

Despite the insecurity, SOFEPADI, a women's organization and our long-time partner, hasn't stopped working to improve the lives of



SOFEPADI's staff.



*SOFEPADI president
Julienne Lusenge.*

vulnerable Congolese women. By supporting older survivors of sexual violence, retired activists, and Twa (Pygmy) seniors, they are giving hope to the less fortunate and allowing them to lead a dignified life. SOFEPADI also supports roaming tribunals to demand justice for survivors of sexual violence and creates income-generating activities to help those who don't have the means to help themselves.

Know that your unwavering support allows SOFEPADI to make a difference in Congo by lending a hand to those who need it most.

In exile, a safe haven

HelpAge Canada has long partnered with the Tibetan Homes Foundation, an organization that cares for destitute Tibetan refugees in northern India.

The Tibetan Homes Foundation runs two elder homes in the mountainous state of Uttarakhand—one in the town of Mussoorie and one in the town of Rajpur—which house sponsored Grans and provide them with food, clothing, medical care, and some pocket money. The seniors each have their own daily routine that allows them to engage in relaxing activities and share their



*Mr. Dara
Tsering*

stories with one another, all while staying active. They also regularly visit Tibetan Buddhist monasteries for religious ceremonies, as their spiritual tradition is an integral part of life in exile.

In this warm and caring environment, seniors are able to lead safe, peaceful lives. With your help, we can continue to support our partner's wonderful work and give older persons the support they need to age with dignity.



Mr. Chonjor



*Mrs. Pema
Dolma*

This summer, RISE to the occasion!

With sunny days and warm weather here at last, it's important to remember that summer poses its own set of challenges for seniors. Many older persons are at risk of social isolation and loneliness as many organizations cease their activities and family members, friends, and neighbours may be heading off on vacation.



Simple acts of kindness can make a big difference. Offering to help a senior with work around the house, asking them out on a stroll to enjoy the weather, or even inviting them over are excellent ways to keep older persons engaged. And remember that a heartwarming hug or smile can brighten a senior's day!

Summer safety tips

Here are some tips for a fun, safe summer:

Reach out – In the absence of family or friends, see if a neighbour can come by and check on you occasionally.

Stay in touch – Let your friends and family know if you'll be spending an extended period of time outdoors, even if you're only gardening.

Stay hydrated – Remember to drink water often, and always keep some on hand.

Keep your cool – Small increases in temperature can affect seniors coping with medical conditions. Talk to your doctor to make sure the heat won't affect any of your medications. Shopping malls, movie theatres and libraries provide welcome, cool spaces.

Wear the right stuff – Natural fabrics like cotton are cooler and more comfortable than synthetic fibres. Don't forget to wear sunglasses and a hat!

Know the Risks of Hyperthermia – Get medical attention immediately if you or anyone you know is experiencing these symptoms:

- Body temperature greater than 40°C (104°F)
- Confused or agitated behaviour
- Dry, flushed skin
- Nausea and vomiting
- Headaches
- Heavy breathing or a rapid pulse
- Fainting

Are you considering leaving a bequest to HelpAge Canada?

This act of thoughtfulness will improve the lives of vulnerable older people.

A charitable bequest is a gift in your will left to a registered charity that can include:

- A net sum of money
- Securities
- Real estate

- A set percentage of the value of your estate
- A residuary gift (the amount remaining after other payments, debts, and gifts have been distributed)

HelpAge Canada needs your support to continue assisting vulnerable older people. Please consider leaving a bequest as your legacy of caring.

Newsletter cover photo:
Amos Joseph, a sponsored Gran living in Dominica.



Thank you for caring

HelpAge Canada is a member of:

