

Woman seeks help in assisting poor seniors in India

By Jennifer Smith - Kelowna Capital News - May 25, 2008



It's been two years since Jeannie Haynes-Stoll began her quest to see Anglo-Indian grandparents, languishing in the aftermath of the British occupation of India, provided with help through a Canadian-based non-profit organization.

A McKinley Landing woman, who's managed to connect 27 Anglo-Indian seniors in Calcutta with Canadian sponsors, is looking for more help.

It's been two years since Jeannie Haynes-Stoll began her quest to see Anglo-Indian grandparents, languishing in the aftermath of the British occupation of India, provided with help through a Canadian-based non-profit organization.

Help the Aged Canada has seen 27 people adopted from the slums of Calcutta where many former British subjects are struggling to make ends meet now that their neighbourhoods have been returned to Indian rule.

The adoptions were largely local and Haynes-Stoll has found another 27 seniors in need of similar help.

"You notice in most of them their teeth are gone and their sight is not the best," she said, while showing a video presentation she's put together on the program and the people she's met.

The seniors live in shanty towns and rely on small pensions and food ratios to get by. But there is never enough to go around.

Haynes-Stoll was in Calcutta again this February to collect this new round of grandparents' names and pictures and histories to set the ball in motion with Help the Aged Canada's Adopt a Gran program once more.

One grandparent she had previously had sponsored told her she shares the money she receives with her Bengali roommate who cannot even access the small pensions Anglo-Indians are eligible for.

“These are some of the most disadvantaged people I've met.”

Haynes-Stoll is Anglo-Indian herself and began her quest to help these people after reconnecting with an old friend who remained in Calcutta after the British occupation ended.

She pays all her own expenses on her trips to India and does the research to find the seniors for her program herself.

Haynes-Stoll has a presentation she is ready and willing to share with any groups who may be interested and can be contacted at calseniorsinneed@shaw.ca.

To adopt a grandmother or for more information on the Help the Aged Canada, Adopt-a-Gran program please call 1-800-648-1111 and ask about the Calcutta Adopt a Gran project.