



## ACWW USA Area Newsletter Summer 2020

When I started this newsletter, I wasn't sure summer was on the way. It surely did not look like it was summer as I looked out on my deck! The only hint that summer might be on the way was the green leaves on the trees and the flowers we planted during the shut down! The sky was grey, it rained and hailed off and on for a couple of days, the wind was blowing and it was a cold 50 degrees. But the sun kept peeking out from the cloudy cover and each breakthrough lasted a little longer and dispelled the clouds a little more, as if it knew the world needs its light and warmth. And it worked! We are now running in the low to mid 90's most days.

The sun's determination to shine through the clouds reminds me of a quote I read and often read it over again for personal strength: "The world needs strong women. Women who will lift and build others, who will love and be loved. Women who will live bravely, both tender and fierce. Women of indomitable will." Amy Tenney

I see the members of our organisation in the words of this quote. We are a strong force for good in the world today. We lift and build others, we live bravely and put our hands to doing what needs to be done. Sometimes in the pain and darkness of what is going on around us we may tend to think that we cannot make a difference. Yes, yes we can, and yes we do!

I have had reports of our members making masks for many different places. The masks have been sent to health care workers, nursing homes, essential businesses and essential workers and the homeless. How grateful I am for your goodness. I have also had messages from members telling me of the experiences they are having making "to go" meals for those on the frontlines of this pandemic, or for the homeless who depend on soup kitchens and other places for meals when those places were closed for a time. Other members were helping by being involved in packing food boxes at shelters and food banks. Thank you for being the good you want to see in the world around you.

As we learn to navigate the "new normal" world around us, I know we may be experiencing turmoil and some uncertainty. We have had many of our activities and conferences cancelled, and I know there will be many more in the weeks and months to come. If you cancel your activities and meetings, please do not cancel your care of those in your organisations and groups. Keep in touch with them via phone calls or emails and make sure they know you are aware of them. Many of our members are vulnerable, some are shut-ins and need safe outside contact with others. That is part of our responsibility to be those who lift and build others. Some groups are reporting to me that they are using ZOOM or similar options to hold meetings. Aren't we grateful for technology!

Last December, I received an email from ACWW with information on a special activity for the celebration of International Women's Day in 2020. ACWW would be celebrating that day by marking the 25th Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the ground-breaking treaty on women's rights signed in 1995. Each Area was given a brief from the Declaration to use as a guide to make a visual presentation on fabric. The USA Area was given the brief "Women in Power and Decision Making" along with the statement that went with the title.

I thought about our members and their talents and I had so many great examples to choose from. Our members are talented in so many areas and so willing to share those talents. I contacted Denise Smith, an individual member from the Hawaii FCE. I have some of her works in my home and I am so impressed with her abilities. Denise and I communicated about the brief and I am so grateful for her willingness do what she could do to help the USA Area be a part of this great celebration. Below is the brief she had to work with, the picture of her finished product, and her explanation.

**Women in Power and Decision Making:** The empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of women’s social, economic and political status is essential for the achievement of both transparent and accountable government and administration and sustainable development in all areas of life. The power relations that prevent women from leading fulfilling lives operate at many levels of society, from the most personal to the highly public. Achieving the goal of equal participation of women and men in decision-making will provide a balance that more accurately reflects the composition of society and is needed in order to strengthen democracy and promote its proper functioning. Equality in political decision-making performs a leverage function without which it is highly unlikely that a real integration of the equality dimension in government policy-making is feasible. In this respect, women’s equal participation in political life plays a pivotal role in the general process of the advancement of women. Women’s equal participation in decision-making is not only a demand for simple justice or democracy but can also be seen as a necessary condition for women’s interests to be taken into account. Without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women’s perspective at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved.

**Denises description:**

“The brief assigned to me was: Women in Power and Decision Making.

My interpretation of this brief is to show this young woman, in her colourful native head wear, raising her hand to:

- Vote at a meeting
- To be recognized at a meeting
- To signal that she is the leader and that others are to follow her

I feel her motion could be any of the above and demonstrates powers and decision making.”



Thank you so much, Denise, it is a beautifully simple piece that makes a commanding statement! More information can be found in the last issue of the “Countrywoman” magazine.

In April 2019, at the Triennial a resolution was passed that our member societies support rabies education. In September 2019, ACWW is launched a training through a partnership with the Global Alliance for Rabies Control. On the ACWW website you will find a link to the training website, it is under the “Advocacy and Policy” tab, and listed as Rabies in Rural Areas. I have registered and

taken part of the training and I encourage all of you to do the same. It does take a while to complete, but you do not have to complete the training in one sitting. Please share this information with your society members, family and friends. People do not have to be ACWW members to participate and take the training. I earnestly hope all of our members know about and are willing to take this free training on the ACWW website to educate us about Rabies, and then share the information.

Please remember that because we will not be holding most of our meetings and activities where we normally collect Pennies for Friendship, donations that support ACWW will be down. Please think of creative ways to collect donations for this cause. Perhaps ask each member to donate a penny a day for each of the days they were on stay at home orders, or donate a certain amount of pennies per day for each day they went out of the house while on shut down, or a certain amount for each drawer, closet or room they cleaned or neglected projects completed while staying home! Have fun with these ideas, or find your own, and try to generate a goodly amount of money for ACWW. We need to remember that just because the world has slowed down somewhat, all overhead to keep the organisation running still needs to be paid! A few members have expressed concern for ACWW support, so please let them know that Pennies for Friendship funds can still be sent and donations can also be made on line.

Women Walk the World has been postponed to October 15, 2020. The theme for the walk is Will Walk for Food. There will soon be five posters to use in raising awareness about the walk, a PowerPoint presentation, leaflets that will show how the donations are used, and the availability to have a personalised fundraising page for your walk! Please read the article on Women Walk the World in the most current issue of the Countrywoman magazine. I encourage you to visit the ACWW website and read the current issues of the magazine, read the information that is there for you, and then share information with your groups, and lastly encourage your members to use the ACWW website. It is full of useful information that can be used to raise awareness of issues facing women and families.

I sincerely hope that you have used this “slow down” time to your advantage. Whether you have caught up on reading, on handiwork, on cleaning, on family history or genealogy, on journaling or spent more time communicating with friends and acquaintances, I hope you feel fulfilled, rejuvenated and have been inspired to make positive changes in your home, your life and the lives of those around you.

Eleanor Roosevelt said that “The purpose of life is to live it, to taste experience to the utmost, to reach out eagerly without fear for newer and richer experience.” I’m sure that what we are experiencing in our lives is certainly a new experience, it is up to us what we make of these times and experiences.

Be well, be happy and stay strong and healthy.

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