



Advocating for the human rights of older women
Défense des droits de la personne des femmes âgées

September 2024 Update



Welcome to September! We hope you have had a good summer and are feeling re-energized and ready for an exciting new season of GRAN advocacy!



Honouring longtime GRAN member Irene Clarke

GRAN tributes flow in upon hearing the news of Irene's passing...

On July 12, we received the sad news that Irene Clarke had died that morning. As soon as this news reached GRAN members, messages of sorrow, friendship, admiration, and gratitude began pouring in via a shared email chain across the GRAN network. GRAN members from Whitehorse and Victoria, Vancouver, Calgary, and Saskatoon, Ottawa and Toronto, Fredericton and Halifax, and many points in between, sent their words of appreciation for the bright light that Irene has been for us all. Irene wore so many different hats in GRAN over the years, enabling many of our members to have the opportunity to personally work alongside her and benefit from her guidance.



Irene gave so very much to GRAN, and not just to the work for human rights or for the good of the organization, but to many of us as individuals through her encouragement and mentoring and stories and laughter and personal notes and cards and messages. She was a caring friend to so many of us.

We are deeply grateful for her presence among us.

King Charles III Coronation Award



Irene's husband, Marco, and her grandchildren proudly receiving the award

On September 3, 2024 Irene Clarke was posthumously awarded the King Charles III Coronation Award. The award is given to those who have made significant contributions to Canada or attained outstanding achievement abroad that brings credit to Canada. It is clear from the many accomplishments listed in [Irene's nomination letter](#) that she achieved both.

The award was presented to Irene's family by Irene's member of Parliament, Pam Damoff. Ms. Damoff spoke eloquently about the many visits Irene made to her office over the years, and how Irene always pushed gently but firmly for action. She commented during her speech that the sun shining through the window of the venue was a sign that Irene was looking down on the presentation and was pleased.

Many thanks to Irene's GRAN group, the Golden Horseshoes, and her G2G group for nominating her for this award, with a special thank you to Sandy Malikovic for attending the award ceremony and sending in this report. Do take time to read the nomination letter because it will give you a glimpse into who Irene was and what she cared about while outlining the amazing extent of her contributions and achievements.

All-of-GRAN Campaign

A small group of GRANs worked over the summer, gathering input and feedback from a variety of GRAN sources, including from the *Right to Food Final Evaluation* and our *Hello Friends!* conference in May, to come up with a proposal for our all-of-GRAN campaign for the coming year. GRANs were clear in their feedback that the Right to Food campaign should continue, as there is still work to be done. At their September meeting, the GRAN Steering Committee reviewed the recommendations and was excited to unanimously endorse the following proposal: ***"Extend the Right to Food (RtF) Campaign until after the next federal election with a particular focus on children."***

The extended RtF campaign will remain focused on hunger to maintain continuity and momentum, with **Children and Hunger** as the key theme for this next phase of the campaign. This will allow for us to build on knowledge GRANs already have while still being a bit of a "refresh" with a renewed focus and more learning ahead. As we know, many of the issues GRAN focuses on, such as poverty, climate change, education, and health, are all inter-linked with the issue of hunger. Children are especially at risk, as malnutrition in their early

development can have a catastrophic effect on their futures, stunting the growth of both their minds and bodies. We believe this focus on the health and well-being of children will resonate with GRANs and also with the general public.

We have identified two GRAN goals for this coming year:

1. To raise public awareness on the issue of child hunger.

This can be achieved through public events, markets, and workshops, as well as articles in community newspapers, letters to the editor, and posts on social media. We will also extend our own learning about the theme by organizing educational events, through articles in the *GRAN Update*, and by continuing *Small Sips* emails with a focus on children.



Ann Rycroft showing off the beautiful vests made by Ellen Monaghan of Calgary G2G. These vests are made to raise awareness and stimulate action around the issues of climate change and hunger.

2. To push for increased support for international assistance during the federal election campaign.

We will strike a small team to work with CSO partners to develop strategy, tactics, and messaging on international assistance (also known as ODA – Official Development Assistance) in preparation for the federal election campaign. We will supply support materials so that GRANs are prepared to play an active advocacy role in the lead-up to the election. We will encourage GRANs to have conversations on this issue with the candidates in their ridings.

To make all of this happen...

We need to form a new Right to Food campaign team, which will be tasked with developing a timeline and strategy for the fall and winter (2024-25). The Steering Committee, Watch Groups, Web Team, and Communications Team are ready to play their parts in supporting this campaign, but a small coordinating team will be required to keep things focused and moving. If you think this is something you would like to be involved in, please reach out. We need you! There are many different roles you could play depending on your skills and interests. Please contact one of the GRAN Co-Chairs within the next month with any questions you may have or simply to say, "Yes! I want to be a part of this effort!" You can reach Linda Kulkarni at ljulkarni@gmail.com and Cathy Thompson at cathy202t@sympatico.ca. As a volunteer organization we rely entirely on your contributions of time and engagement. Please consider what role you might play in helping us move forward with our advocacy on the Right to Food this year.

Global petition urging increases in Official Development Assistance (ODA)



At this time when the world is facing unprecedented challenges and a growing number of humanitarian emergencies in Gaza, Sudan, the DRC, and elsewhere, reducing ODA budgets is not only short-sighted but also undermines our shared humanity. For this reason, [Global Citizen](#) has launched a petition urging all governments to maintain and increase their Overseas Development Assistance budgets to at least meet the internationally agreed target of 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI). The petition also urges governments to prioritize funding for programs and initiatives that address poverty alleviation, healthcare, education, gender equality, climate action, and sustainable development in low-income and vulnerable communities. You can read the full text and [sign the petition here](#).

Join the Seniors' Day of Climate Action



October 1 is the UN's International Day of Older Persons and is celebrated in Canada as National Seniors Day. We are being invited to participate on that day in a [Seniors' Day of Climate Action](#), an initiative spearheaded by one of GRAN's partners, [Climate Legacy](#), along with five other Canadian seniors' climate

organizations. The goal is to mobilize Canadian seniors on National Seniors Day to act nationwide on climate to demonstrate our growing concern about the impacts of climate change and our desire to rebuild a healthy environment for future generations. Watch [this one-minute video](#) to inspire you to action.

This is a great opportunity for individual GRANs and GRAN regional groups to collaborate with seniors' groups in your communities. To date, climate action events are being planned across the country in over 50 communities, and that number continues to grow. Visit the [Seniors for Climate](#) website to learn more, and check out [this map](#) to find an event near you.

We hope that this opportunity to join with other older Canadians to take action on climate will help strengthen your community networks and make a difference for our children's and grandchildren's futures.

If you participate in a local event on October 1 and have stories and/or photos to share, please send them in to us at info@grandmothersadvocacy.org. We'd love to report on GRANs' engagement in the next edition of the *Update*.

“Grandma Magic” Podcast



Phyllis Webster

Victoria GRAN members Diane Scaletta and Phyllis Webster were recently featured as “grandmother changemakers” in an episode of the *Grandma Magic* podcast from the [Grandmother Collective](#). GRAN is a member of this international collective that believes that “*the wisdom and experience of grandmothers is a powerful force for change around the world.*” The Collective hosts regular online meetings of



Diane Scaletta

international grandmother organizations and, through advocacy and shared learning, supports their efforts to create change. Diane and Phyllis ably represent GRAN at these meetings and bring any important news and opportunities back to our organization. You can listen to the very personal and engaging interview with Phyllis and Diane [here](#). (You will need to scroll down the webpage to find the episode featuring them: ***Diane Scaletta and Phyllis Webster: Grandmother Advocacy in Action.***) The two of them do such a great job of representing GRAN during their interview. Don’t miss it!

GRAN Leadership Changes – Good-byes and Hellos

Both Phyllis and Diane, pictured above, have served faithfully and with good cheer and a can-do attitude on the GRAN Coordinating Team (CT) over this past year. Their terms have now come to an end and they have each stepped down from this leadership role. We are so grateful to them both for their commitment to the success of GRAN through their many and varied contributions on the CT. We look forward to their continued involvement in GRAN in other roles. Their knowledge, experience, and passion for social justice will continue to be of great value to our organization.



Sharon Graham

We would also like to extend a special thank you to Sharon Graham who is stepping down from her role as Co-Chair of GRAN and her years on the Coordinating Team. Sharon has shown herself to be someone who sincerely cares about people and is passionate about grassroots voices being represented. Fellow outgoing CT member, Phyllis Webster, had this to say about Sharon: “*It has been such a pleasure to work with Sharon on the CT, Education Watch Group, and Right to Food Campaign Team, and other committees over the last 10 years. She is so organized, committed, compassionate, inclusive, and thoughtful. She looks*

at problems from many angles and is always open to new ideas and ways of doing things. Her tactful approach to solving problems has been a good role model for me!”

Thank you, Sharon for your years of commitment to GRAN in these leadership roles. We hope you will find new GRAN “hats” to wear as you step away from your time on the Coordinating Team.



Cathy Thompson

We would also like to thank Cathy Thompson who is stepping up to join Linda Kulkarni as a GRAN Co-Chair. Cathy has been serving on the Coordinating Team for the past year and is one of the Co-Chairs of the Health Watch Group. We know she will continue to serve and represent GRAN well in this new role. We are also very grateful to



Linda Kulkarni

have Linda Kulkarni commit to another year in her role as Co-Chair. GRAN has benefited greatly from her knowledge and talents over the years and we continue to be inspired by her passion for climate justice.

GRAN Coordinating Team members for 2024-2025 are Linda Kulkarni (ON), Cathy Thompson (ON), Suzanne Dufresne (QC) and Sue McKenna (NB).

Action

[Click here](#) to sign the petition put out by Global Citizen urging governments worldwide to reaffirm their commitments to ODA.

Participate in the [Seniors' Day of Climate Action](#) on October 1st and report your activities to GRAN at info@grandmothersadvocacy.org.