Out of the 255 girls currently supported by the Girl Child Education Fund, FNIF is pleased to announce that 27 girls will be graduating from secondary school at the end of this year.

This is a significant moment for anyone but for these girls it is a true accomplishment of which they can be justly proud. We are certain that they will succeed in whatever they choose to do in the next chapter of their lives and wish them all the best.

Since the GCEF started in 2005, 41 girls have completed their secondary schooling, giving them a chance to better their lives. We know that at least one graduate, from Zambia, is now attending nursing school and another graduate of the Ugandan programme has been accepted this year to study nursing.

In this newsletter you will find an update on the GCEF and a report on the 2010 annual workshop of the GCEF Coordinators, whose hard work and dedication to the project helps to change lives.
GCEF Coordinators meet in Geneva

In September this year, the four Coordinators of the Girl Child Education Fund came to ICN headquarters in Geneva for the annual GCEF workshop. This three-day workshop focused on developing the leadership, management and technology skills of the Coordinators to enable them to strengthen their capacity to make this programme the best it can be for the girl scholars.

Paula DeCola from Pfizer led a skill building session on performance evaluation, which you will learn more about in this newsletter. The Coordinators were received at the UNICEF offices, where they learned about the United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative.

“Investing in girls’ education delivers well-known returns. When girls are educated, they are more likely to earn higher wages and obtain better jobs, to have fewer and healthier children and to enjoy safer childbirth.”

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon

Spotlight on the Stephen Lewis Foundation

In March 2007, ICN/FNIF received a generous donation from the Stephen Lewis Foundation (SLF) to support the Girl Child Education Fund. SLF is a Canadian charitable organisation founded by former Ambassador and UN Special Envoy for HIV AIDS in Africa, Stephen Lewis. This support enabled us to expand the project from the initial 10 girls in each country to 40 girls in each country. SLF has renewed its support and this year is providing funding for 97 girls in Uganda.

The Stephen Lewis Foundation supports community-based organisations, such as GCEF, that are turning the tide of HIV/AIDS in Africa. It supports women who are ill and struggling to survive; assists orphans and other AIDS-affected children; reaches heroic grandmothers caring for their orphan grandchildren; and sustains associations of people living with HIV and AIDS. Since 2003, SLF has funded over 300 projects in 15 countries.

SLF’s Grandmothers to Grandmothers campaign deserves a special mention. Launched in 2006, the campaign aims to raise awareness and mobilize support from Canada’s grandmothers to Africa’s grandmothers.

Through his travels in Africa, Stephen Lewis became aware that grandmothers were the “unsung heroes” of Africa. They bury their own children and then in their 50s, 60s and 70s begin to parent again, raising their grandchildren with little or no support. Today there are over 240 groups raising money to provide African grandmothers with much-needed assistance, including: food, educational fees, income-generating projects, counselling and social support, and coffins to allow for a dignified burial of their loved ones.

To get involved in the Campaign, please go to www.stephenlewisfoundation.org/grandmothers.htm

Mark your calendars! FNIF Luncheon, Malta 6 May 2011

The Florence Nightingale International Foundation is pleased to announce that it will once again be hosting a fundraising luncheon on May 6, 2011 during the ICN Conference in Valletta, Malta. Funds raised at the Luncheon help to support FNIF’s objectives and programmes, including the Girl Child Education Fund. Tickets for the Luncheon sell very quickly.

Friends of FNIF and NNA members will be contacted early next year to receive preferential table bookings.

The keynote speaker will be the recipient of the 2011 International Achievement Award, which is offered biennially to a practising mid-career nurse presently impacting health internationally and who has the potential to make a continued commitment to the profession for the next 10 to 15 years.
Update on the GCEF

Since the initiation of the programme 316 girls have been enrolled in the GCEF. In 2010-11, the programme is taking on an evaluation to better understand the impact of the programme and how best to strengthen it. Here are some comments on the GCEF from beneficiaries, guardians, teachers and nurse volunteers.

What the nurse volunteers and teachers have to say:

The glamour and joy I see in the eyes of these girl children when I interact with them through this fund gives me the inner peace which gives me the impetus to carry on.

Before she was under your programme, she had some sort of inferiority complex, you could see that she was depressed and didn’t know what was next with her education but now she feels very secure. She mixes so easily with friends in sports, other clubs and academic work. She therefore participates fully.

Girl child education is very important in our society now because previously the girl child’s position was known to only be in the kitchen but those days are gone. The girl child must forge forward and attain the highest level of education. [One of the GCEF girls] is even earning to reach university which we know she will definitely do.

A contribution of just US$ 200 will help cover the costs of uniforms, school books, and fees for the primary education of a girl child for one year, and US$ 600 for secondary education. Approximately US$ 5,000 will secure the education of a girl throughout her primary and secondary schooling years.

What the guardians and parents have to say

It has relieved me from the burden of thinking of what the future holds for her and how I was going to be able to scout for funds to cater for her financially.

Now that she has been in the programme for two years I can see a bright future for the child as she will manage to finish school/education. There are changes since she has joined the programme: her performance at school is promising, and she is a happy girl as she knows that the programme is meeting her needs.

When my husband died in 2004, my children were still very young. I knew that no one was going to help me raise my children, let alone take them to school. I started looking for part time jobs and doing small businesses to raise funds for food and school requirements. The funding that we get from [the GCEF] will help my children complete their education. Without this programme I do not know what I would have done.

What the girls have to say:

This program is my mother and my father it means everything to me.

The future is promising because the GCEF came into existence and my dreams will be accomplished.

This programme is the reason I am in school and why I am where I am because, trust me, when I lost my father in my primary everything seemed to have come to an end because he was the sole provider and I have other siblings so it was not easy for me to continue. My paternal relatives wanted me to get married and someone was telling me to enroll in something else so if I am to tell any one about this I would say this is the reason I am in school. It is the reason why I am where I am today via my academics and my school and my future at large because many other girls like me have their future in education.

What I love about this programme is that we as girls would continue our education and not drop out of school. I would like to see the programme help other girls like me who will need help. And I wanted to say thanks for everything you people have done for me and what you people are doing to encourage girl child education.

Supporting the girls is now easier than ever: to make a secure on-line donation, please go to: www.icn.ch/vmchk/Donations.html

2010: Florence Nightingale Centenary

In 2010 the centennial of the death of Florence Nightingale was celebrated in many different ways all over the world. The FNIF Friends newsletter has already reported on many of these events – including the special service at Westminster Abbey led by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the commemorative service held at Washington National Cathedral, which was organised by Sigma Theta Tau International and raised US$ 4291 for the GCEF.

A similar service was held at St George’s Cathedral in Kingston Ontario, Canada, during which the Nightingale Initiative for Global Health (NIGH), St George’s Cathedral and the Ontario Anglican Diocese raised CAN $500 in donations for the Girl Child Education Fund.

ICN’s nurse consultant, Elizabeth Adams (pictured here), attended the centenary celebration at Dublin Castle in Ireland in September. Hosted by the Department of Health and the Health Service Executive, the event saw nurses and midwives from all over Ireland coming together to celebrate the contribution of Irish nurses and midwives to health care over the last century.

(Source: WIN October 2010, Journal of the Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation)
It has now been over a year since you took over the Presidency of the Florence Nightingale International Foundation. What can you tell us about the kinds of donors who support the Foundation?

RB: Since its establishment, FNIF has received donations from people from all walks of life. Individuals, many of whom are nurses, have supported us with regular gifts, one-off donations, to celebrate Nurses Day, to honour their colleagues, friends and family – in countless ways! Nursing associations have also been very supportive. Many of ICN’s members give a donation once a year or book a table or two at the biennial FNIF luncheon. Other nursing organisations and nursing schools have also supported us regularly. This past year corporate donors have been very generous, particularly in support of FNIF’s Girl Child Education Fund. No matter the size of the donation we are truly grateful to each and every one of our supporters. I would particularly like to thank those donors who have been so loyal to FNIF and have given generously over the years.

How can an FNIF Friend best support the work of the Foundation?

RB: Regular donations – once a year, once a month – are essential in helping us to continue our work. One individual has regularly donated £100 a month for the past four years. Our NNAs in Australia, Denmark, Japan, Norway, Sweden, the UK and the USA have made annual donations to FNIF for many years now. Sigma Theta Tau International, Winchester Hospital in Massachusetts, USA and the nursing students of Bellarmine University in Kentucky, USA have also been committed supporters of FNIF. And we have received very generous long term commitments from corporations such as Medicus Shuppan in Japan, the Stephen Lewis Foundation in Canada, Eli Lilly in the USA and Symphasis in Switzerland. Regular donations are particularly important for the Girl Child Education Fund.

When a girl is supported by the GCEF we make a commitment to continue to fund her schooling until she graduates from secondary school. Regular donations enable us to keep that promise.

Honouring our most Generous Donors in 2010

Platinum Donors ($10,000+)
- Norwegian Nurses Organisation
- Pfizer Inc.
- Stephen Lewis Foundation
- Symphasis Foundation

Silver Donors ($1,000+)
- Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions
- Danish Nurses Organisation
- Christine Hancock
- Irish Nurses & Midwives Organisation
- Japanese Nurses Association
- Swedish Association of Health Professionals
- Angeles Zapata

Gold Donors ($5,000+)
- American Nurses Association together with:
  - American Nurses Credentialling Centre
  - American Nurses Federation
  - American Academy of Nursing
  - Danish Nursing Students & Bauta Forsikring
  - Sigma Theta Tau International

Bronze Donors ($500+)
- Bellarmine Nursing Students
- European Federation of Nurses Associations
- Kappa Delta Chapter, STTI

Thank you for your support!