

entering 2006...

OUR LETTER TO SUPPORTERS



MARCH 22nd, 2006
Morning at Darling Point

Susannah Fullerton will entertain with insights and readings, showing how rich the novels are in comprehensive social understanding of women's lives.

Enjoy the elegant grace of the circa 1840's drawing room, the view of Rushcutters Bay.

To explain the work of the Foundation, Alice Oppen will highlight the challenges women overseas face now in seeking family planning.

Donation news:
The Jane Austen Society of Australia Inc. has named us their charity of the year, and has sent a donation of \$200, a very generous and greatly appreciated investment in women's understanding, in the spirit of Jane Austen.



RESULTS OF 2005

Thanks to you: The Auction went well, and the committees send thanks to all who donated and bid. Wonderful auction items are being enjoyed this year, including The Red Aprons, The Murder Mystery Dinner, Ellis Baker's music, the Talespinners, Tyndale and Clerevale for Kangaroo Valley stays. We are very fortunate to receive the range of international and individual donations to be transmuted for the knowledge and ability of people to plan their lives. John Williams entertained us, and Jenny Lockyer and The Women's Club provided a gracious ambience and good food.

Amounts: \$16,555 resulted; \$13,635 was raised by the auction and raffle; \$2,920 was donated to the Women's Plans Foundation Trust Fund to generate income for future donations. As well, from 2004 our growing Trust Fund generated about \$5,000 for donation to overseas work, and each year this grows.

Since the Auction we have received an anonymous offer to match donations to the Trust Fund one for one. This, with AusAID's matching, means tax deductible donations are first doubled and then the income from that is trebled each year when passed on – excellent value for donors and family planning overseas. Can you resist?

AND FROM THE FIELD...

“Accurate and credible information on family planning and reproductive health is essential to ensure women's well being. In Papua New Guinea and Timor Leste, communities are confronted with ever increasing population size with diminishing resources to satisfy basic community needs. ACF has established strong networks of community groups in both countries and recognises the need for good family planning and reproductive health information. Our collaboration with Family Planning Australia [SH&FPA] is timely and we are grateful for Women's Plans Foundation for facilitating this very important collaboration.” Lee Tan, Asia-Pacific Program Coordinator, Australian Conservation Foundation.

October 25th, Wednesday, 2006

Live and Silent Auction

Come and be entertained

Enjoy the champagne, hot and cold canapés

Join in the bidding for

exotic treasures, silks, services in overseas aid,

entertainment experiences, wines and unexpected delights.

Choosing Directions for Medical Research

Do medical scientists or funders choose? Medical research into improved or new forms of contraception is developing, notably in India, Switzerland and the U. S.

Millions of dollars from U.S. foundations and government are going into microbicides, potentially a cream or jelly as a hostile barrier against the AIDS virus. One carrier substance is existing spermicides, so this development could be combined with contraceptives -- or not. A concern is that microbicides for HIV could bypass the use of condoms, depriving many people in disease-ridden areas of one of their few ways of accessing contraception. Should this become the trend, then the reproductive health budget will be further diverted from contraception as a means of family planning, to disease.

Opponents of family planning raise spectres of peoples being made sterile, risking demographic control, by someone 'putting something in the drink'. Apart from deploring their fertile imagination, one wishes they would consider the control exercised by denying large populations the ability to choose their family size.

Another field of research is immuno-contraception, where immune reactions are sought against very specific components of hormones affecting egg release or production of sperm, (cont. at right)

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN PRESENTS AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS TO YOUNG WOMEN TO ENCOURAGE THEIR PROGRESSION TO HIGHER DEGREES. BECAUSE THERE WAS NO CANDIDATE STUDYING REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH WITH AN OVERSEAS FOCUS, AN AWARD WAS GIVEN FOR A FOCUS ON INDIGENOUS REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH IN AUSTRALIA. *Jodi Osborn, a sixth year medical student at UNSW was winner, and here is a portion of her application letter,*

A Medical Student Writes...

"Throughout my elective I have been dealing with women's and children's health issues, including reproductive and sexual health issues and the extensive level of infectious diseases in children, associated with overcrowding, inadequate diet and poor hygiene levels within the local Indigenous community. I am well aware of the continuing issues regarding the lack of available contraceptives in many third world nations, but the lack of understanding of the need for contraceptives in the local Indigenous community here has been overwhelming. Despite the ease of access to appropriate contraceptives within these remote areas of Australia, it appears that there is still a lack of understanding and education in regards to the necessity of contraceptives in order to plan and space their children....

Day after day I see young female teenagers come into the WAMS who already have multiple young children, and yet they are amazed by the fact that they are already pregnant again. This is despite the fact that contraceptives have been made available to them, as the WAMS dispenses contraceptives, including the various combined oral contraceptive pills, Depot Provera and Implanon, at no cost to the patient. Hence there is clearly an enormous area of need within the Australian Indigenous communities especially in regards to family planning....

There appears to be an incredible gap in the education and understanding of the community as to the benefits to both the parent/s / families, let alone the known benefits to the children's health. Thus I am aware of the great need to make contraceptives available to women living in third world nations, but I wish to emphasise that there are indeed third world health standards also occurring within the Indigenous communities of Australia."

(cont.) against the new cells themselves or against related hormones which are necessary for implantation. Meiosis can be targeted, through the proteins necessary for cell division, or the motility of the sperm tail. The research has yet to progress beyond monkeys and mice, and funding will determine whether enzyme use will become a simple, effective and safe contraceptive for humans.

Pharmaceutical companies, not surprisingly, select projects by their commercial potential. In reproductive health, this has meant that there is more interest in birth control for those women who wish to finish their childbearing than for the very young women who are not ready, or those who wish to space children. Possibly the more drastic interventions possible where women will never resume childbearing give more tolerance and less risk for the company. Possibly cost recovery is greater in a more affluent segment of the population. Whatever the reason, there are millions of women under-served, needing cheap, reliable contraceptives suitable for rural areas with low sanitation measures. [Compiled by Alice Oppen with the Outreach Committee]

For information about fundraising events, to join the mailing list, to donate items for the auction, to make a tax-deductible donation to the Trust Fund, contact Women's Plans Foundation, 3 Madeline Street, Hunter's Hill, NSW 2110 www.womensplans.org, oppenama@bigpond.com, (02) 9817-5175