



# TABITHA FOUNDATION (Canada)

Patron: Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean  
C.C., C.M.M., C.O.M., C.D. Governor General of Canada

**Newsletter: No. 1 - November 2007**

## Tabitha Foundation (Canada)'s First Annual Fundraising Event



On April 20, 2007 Tabitha held its first of what we would like to be an annual fundraising event. Being a small organization, entirely managed by volunteers, this represented an exciting challenge for us. The event was built around the visit of Janne Ritskes, who, as founder and director of Tabitha in Cambodia, is the driving force behind the organization. Over 200 people attended the dinner, held at Tudor Hall, in Ottawa. It was preceded by the sale of cottage industry crafts and a silent auction, following which Catherine Lathem of CJOH introduced Janne.



Janne is the kind of speaker who uses only essential words and images to deliver a stark and compelling picture. She described how survivors of the Khmer Rouge genocide, who are now parents and

grandparents, still suffer from post traumatic stress disorders which affect their outlook and behavior, and how this, in turn, influences their children's outlook and opportunities. She illustrated how Tabitha's savings program reaches individuals and families who would otherwise have no support. She showed how the program turns lives around, both from a mental standpoint and a very tangible and behavioral one, to dramatically improve quality of life in sustainable ways in the course of 7 to 8 years.



# **TABITHA FOUNDATION (CANADA)**

**Newsletter: No. 1 - November 2007**

In tune with this message of hope and good news, the evening was also a gathering of joy and friendship, as old and new Tabitha supporters met and mingled, including three Cambodian children adopted by Canadian families, members of Tabitha housebuilding teams from Ottawa and Montreal, two former Canadian ambassadors to Cambodia

and a representative from the Department of Foreign Affairs. The event raised both dollars and awareness for Tabitha's work. The \$8000 from the event is an amount which we hope will be greatly increased towards year end, when new donations will reflect the full impact of Janne's visit.

## **Second Annual Rockin4Tabitha Fundraiser**

The second annual Rockin4Tabitha housebuilding fundraiser was a great success, doubling last year's results.

Our venue changed to the Lonestar Café, off St. Laurent Blvd., in Ottawa, which had a larger room as well as a dedicated stage for our musicians.

While attendance was only slightly higher than last year, corporate support more than doubled, enabling us to reach this year's goal of eight houses.

It was an extremely enjoyable and entertaining evening. We look forward to holding an even bigger and better event next year.

Bob Carver and Wendy Cunning  
Event Organizers



## **Strategic Planning Workshop – Sep. 22, 2007**

The Board of Tabitha Foundation (Canada) and other friends of Tabitha gathered together in Ottawa to hold a long-overdue Strategic Planning Workshop. With the previous such session being held 8 years ago and many new supporters having joined the ranks in the interim, it was deemed necessary to take a good hard look at where we've been, where we are and, especially, where we hope to go in the next few years. Special thanks to Chris Henry for doing such an able job as facilitator. Eight members of our mainly Ottawa-based board attended, along with Yolanda Henry from Niagara-on-the-Lake (making 9 of 14 board members

present). Many of those board members and others who could not attend, be it distance or timing, did contribute thoughts and ideas to our workshop. Several non-board folks came (Selene Calef from Montreal, June Cunningham, Paulette Beauchamp, Bob Carver, Wendy Cunning and Paula Pilonen – all from the Ottawa area). They provided much needed new perspectives and energy. This is an exercise which could productively be repeated every 4 or 5 years. Tabitha (Canada) will see many changes in the next few years. Our view of where we are and where we are going must keep up.

# TABITHA FOUNDATION (CANADA)

Newsletter: No. 1 - November 2007

## Regional News

### British Columbia:

Interest in Tabitha peaked on the West Coast with the visit in April of Janne and, especially, Miriam to Victoria, Duncan, Nanaimo and Vancouver (including WestVan and South Surrey). Janne wowed everyone she met, including high school students, donors (and prospective donors), and many, many friends of Tabitha, both old (including housebuilders) and new. Warm thanks are due for the efforts of Kari Hansen Tyler, her mom Barbara, Marilyn Montgomery, Bonnie Robertson, Faye Gentry, Glenys Galloway, Jim Scott and a vast number of others who helped organize events and raise funds through the sale of handicrafts and books.

The visit has prompted three former housebuilders and long-time supporters of Tabitha to volunteer for the Board, joining Gordon Longmuir as BC Directors: they are Glenys Galloway, Jennifer Mackay and Bonnie Robertson (the latter having already joined). We learned during Janne's visit to South Surrey that Jim Scott will be organizing a housebuilding group to go to Cambodia, probably late this year or early next.

Gordon Longmuir will be travelling to Cambodia from October 30 to November 9 with a group of a dozen "seasoned travellers" and will, of course, take them to visit Tabitha and encourage them to buy the place out. Janne will be absent, but Nari is perfectly capable of hosting the group. Gordon will return to Phnom Penh by himself at the end of the month to meet Janne, and will report on the current situation in Cambodia and how it is likely to affect the work of Tabitha.

### Quebec:

On March 29, 2007 a benefit fashion show in Montreal's Chinatown district. Nisay, a Cambodian word meaning loved from afar, was the theme. Featuring the creations of fashion designers Eugenia Leavitt, Lei Xu and Astri Prugger, many of the pieces were worked in silk produced by Tabitha's cottage industry. Approximately 200 guests enjoyed a glass of wine, canapés, bidding on silent auction items and shopping at the Tabitha cottage industry table (manned by Lisbeth Mousseau and Lucia Dolcetti from Ottawa) before sitting down to enjoy the show. A troupe of Cambodian dancers started with a traditional dance and then the models appeared. The music was fun, the clothes were gorgeous, the girls were exquisite and the audience was appreciative. Ticket sales, donations, and silent auction bids resulted revenues of close to \$4500 for the Tabitha Foundation. Selene Calef and Theany Chan, chaired the organizing committee.

On August 15, 2007 'To Speak', a feature film set in Cambodia and based on the work of the Tabitha Foundation, made its world premiere at this year's Montreal World Film Festival. Based on actual events, 'To Speak' tells the story of Ratana, a young girl living in an impoverished village, who dreams of building a new and permanent home for her family. Tabitha hopes to show this film next year as our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Event.

### Southern Ontario:

On a cold, snowy tour, Janne Ritskes, with her sister Nancy and daughter Miriam, visited a seniors group in Ajax, St. John the Evangelist School, Whitby; O'Neill H.S., Oshawa; St. Stephen's on the Mount Church, Hamilton; St. Ann's Church, St. Thomas; Holland Homes, Brampton; and Bethel C.R. Church, Brockville. (St. Ann's held their 3<sup>rd</sup> annual walkathon in May to raise funds to build 5 houses.)

\*\*\*\*\*

### Just a reminder of how you can make a tax deductible donation to Tabitha Foundation (Canada):

- Send a cheque to: Box 65057, Merivale Postal Outlet, Ottawa, ON K2G 5Y3
- Donate with a credit card using Canada Helps secure website: [canadahelps.org](http://canadahelps.org)
- Give a gift for Christmas, or another special occasion (a gift card or certificate will be sent to the recipient)
  - 2 pigs are \$35                      ○ 1 well is \$120                      ○ 1 partnership is \$120/year for 5 years
  - 1 bicycle is \$20                      ○ 1 house is \$1000                      (support for a family for 5 years)
- Make a donation in memory of a loved one who has passed away.
- Official receipts are issued for donations of \$10 or more.
- Purchase cottage industry items from one of the many sales that will happen around Christmas, or through the website. Details of sales can be found on the website [www.tabitha.ca](http://www.tabitha.ca)

# TABITHA FOUNDATION (CANADA)

Newsletter: No. 1 - November 2007

## Chairman's Letter

Dear Friends of Tabitha,

Our Board, in an effort to keep you better informed of our activities, has decided to initiate a newsletter to provide updates on our activities in Ottawa and across Canada, as well as highlights of the work we support in Cambodia. We are mailing this first issue to all members as our fall mailing. We hope it will remind you just how far your money goes toward helping the devastatingly poor in Cambodia, and we ask you to consider donating again this year. In this age of the internet, we can send out an electronic newsletter to interested members at virtually no cost. So we ask that if you wish to receive all future issues of the newsletter, that you provide us your email address. Simply send your email request to friends@tabitha.ca and we will add you to our private and confidential distribution list.

Tabitha Foundation is now helping over a quarter of a million people out of poverty and despair, and into lives of dignity, hope and active participation in their communities in Cambodia. Over the years, Janne Ritskes and her all-Cambodian staff have improved the lives of over half a million of the poorest in Cambodia; earning the respect of both the Cambodian people and their government.

Here in Canada many of you had a chance to meet Janne when she did a combination speaking tour / family visit in April. Many of you also attended the 1st Annual Tabitha Foundation Dinner on April 20<sup>th</sup>, which featured this remarkable woman, the force behind Tabitha's creative and efficient efforts in Cambodia. This was a great success, due in large part to the efforts of the all-volunteer board and many others who contributed time to insure a class event.

We are gratified by the increase in support in Canada away from our Ottawa base. Groups, often with a core of folks who have been to Cambodia on housebuilding trips, are springing up in various population centres across the country; most notably in SW British Columbia, Montreal and Southern Ontario. This bodes well for our future.

You, our supporters, may take justifiable pride in having helped, in so many different ways, the amazingly successful work of Tabitha in Cambodia. Thank you for your continuing financial and volunteer support of Tabitha Foundation (Canada), allowing so many people now to lead lives of optimism and opportunity, rather than helplessness and despondency. Our Canadian all-volunteer board gives joyfully of its time and energy to support this proven program for fighting poverty, making each of your dollars go that much further. Please stand with us, as we continue to reach out, helping thousands of people make the transition to a better life of basic security and dignity. Your help will last a lifetime.

With warm wishes for a joyous family Christmas and New Year,

Respectfully submitted,  
Larry E. Neily, Chairman, Tabitha Foundation (Canada)



**Very special note:** She is our Cottage Industry Coordinator in Ottawa and Tabitha Foundation (Canada)'s Webmaster. Her energy and commitment inspire us all. **Lisbeth Mousseau**, a remarkable woman who has been a member of our Board since 1998, has just joined the ranks of the octogenarians. At a party to celebrate this auspicious occasion, many of her friends and family gathered and gift donations were made in her honour for two wells and a house. She was later heard to declare, "It was a most wonderful birthday party!"



*The help that we give will last a lifetime, rather than a moment.*

Tabitha Foundation (Canada), Merivale Postal Outlet, Box 65057, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K2G 5Y3  
Please visit our website for news updates and cottage industry products: [www.tabitha.ca](http://www.tabitha.ca)