

WIBF networking bears fruit - and vegetables!!

Thatu, a charity helping disadvantaged South African communities' efforts to feed themselves and generate income would seem to have little to do with WIBF. But the two are a perfect example of the importance of networking in WIBF.

It all started a long time ago when Susan Law, Margery Povall and Margaret Carrington got together in 1980 to suggest to a few other women in banking that perhaps we in Britain could start a group for women working in banks, very much as women in America had done.

Women in Banking took off in a room at the London School of Economics which reportedly had a bucket collecting leaks from the roof - a far cry from glossy city offices. Oh and food and drink we supplied in the form of wine and juice in plastic glasses, with some bread and cheese. We invited people we knew, and particularly for those in smaller banks the group became almost a haven. So within months, impressively it had a committee, a constitution, and a monthly programme of events.



One could say that the rest is history, as the group continues to grow and flourish and has now successfully extended out of London with an impressive programme of events, and a growing professional reputation.

So how and why Thatu? At the WIBF Awards Lunch in 2004, at which Margery received an Achievement Award, Susan and Margery caught up again, and fuelled, no doubt by excellent wine discussed Margery's plans to help community initiatives in South Africa. And the result? Susan became a key founder and Trustee, which she remains to this day.

But the story does not end there. Anne Watts, another founder member of WIBF and WIBF award winner, became Thatu's first Patron. And in 2005 Thatu benefited from being one of WIBF's first charities of the year. And what a difference that funding made. Schools in the barren Cape Flats started producing organic food and learning about the environment. Poor communities which had started small food gardens learned how to withstand the weather, use household waste to fertilise the soil, feed their families better, and generate some to pay school fees for grandchildren orphaned by HIV/AIDs.

Not a bad return for all of us digging into our pockets. Which is why we who started WIBF will be back soon talking to WIBF about supporting their baby Thatu once again with money, or volunteering.

Happy 30th Birthday WIBF and Many Happy Returns to Thatu just five years old.

Take a look at what we do at www.thatu.org or e-mail us at info@thatu.org. Thatu is a registered charity No 1108655.

Susan Law and Margery Povall

