

OBITUARY

Blind Mission worker devoted life to helping

BY HANNELORE VOLPE
Staff Writer

Carol Erb-Gingerich was never afraid to roll up her sleeves to help the blind and disabled in countries such as Afghanistan, Pakistan and Ethiopia.

After decades of overseeing Christian Blind Mission International projects, she returned to Canada from Afghanistan shortly before dying of cancer last month.

In Afghanistan, Muslim authorities made an arrangement with CBMI that it could do medical work there, so long as there were no attempts to convert anyone to Christianity.

She managed the conference centre at CBMI's Canadian head office in Whitchurch-Stouffville for three years during the late 1990s. She hosted churches and service groups from around the area and also became district manager for the organization, calling on Whitchurch-Stouffville donors.

Her no-nonsense style was apparent, CBMI spokesperson Lindsay O'Connor said.

"If she disagreed with you, she would tell you to 'give ya head a shake,'" he recalled.

She began her humanitarian work with the Mennonite Central Committee in Afghanistan in 1972, joining the Christian Blind Mission in 1975 and working on projects that restored sights to tens of thousands of people.

An Afghan man asked her one day why her face wasn't covered. "She said she felt like saying if she had a face like his, she would cover up," Mr. O'Connor recalled.

She met Cyril Gingerich after returning to Ontario in the early 1980s. They married in 1983 and went to Ethiopia as CBMI's country regional representatives, where they worked until 1991 offering support to staff in more than 40 East African projects throughout East Africa.

The couple had more than a few scary moments. They were in the middle of the fighting when rebels overthrew the Ethiopian government in 1991.

The couple returned to Canada that September and Ms Erb-Gingerich managed CBMI's A World of Goods gift store in Exeter, selling crafts made by people with disabilities in developing countries.

She later moved to the organization's Canadian headquarters, where she stayed for three years.

After her husband died of a heart attack in 1999, she returned to Afghanistan after 20 years away to support CBMI's sight-giving work.

Ms Erb-Gingerich was born into a Mennonite family near Goderich in 1939.


"She would take on the toughest assignments, go to the hardest places and stay when others wouldn't," said David McComiskey, executive director of Christian Blind Mission International.

The organization has started the Carol Erb-Gingerich Scholarship Fund to train community care workers, nurses, doctors and surgeons in developing countries.

To donate or for more information, call Lindsay O'Connor at 1-800-567-2274 or 905-640-6464, ext. 289 or e-mail loconnor@cbmicanada.org



CAROL ERB-GINGERICH: Christian Blind Mission International worker was serving in Afghanistan until shortly before dying of cancer.



Specializing in
**AUDI • PORSCHE
VOLKSWAGEN**

Independent Audi Specialist!
FREE courtesy car (by appointment)
Yes, we do domestics!

ONLINE BOOKING AVAILABLE AT WWW.410AUTO.CA

138 Sandiford Dr., Unit 5, Stouffville
905-642-2886 or 1-877-410-2886(AUTO)

Announcing...

THE BEST LOCAL SEARCH FOR YOUR NEW HOME!



**The new & improved
yorkregion.com
real estate area
gives you:**

- ← The flexibility and power of searching the property YOU want based on price or other options
- ← Find an agent or a broker to sell your home
- ← Easy connections to related businesses (lawyers, contractors, etc.)
- ← Feature properties across all York Region municipalities, including Home of the Week

yorkregion.com
it clicks home

go to: homesyorkregion.com

While you're at the site, check out area schools and news from your local community!

Click on yorkregion.com for the latest auto news and reviews.

**Looking for a new car?
Check out our Road Test Library.**

NEW CROP

GARDEN PEAS

SHELLED, WASHED & INDIVIDUALLY FLASH FROZEN

FRESH

PIE CHERRIES

WASHED, STEMMED & PITTED
READY TO CAN OR FREEZE

NOW AVAILABLE!

MacMILLAN ORCHARDS
HWY. 2 (Kingston Rd.) between Ajax & Whitby
OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK 9 AM TO 6 PM
(905) 686-0388