

Concert helps fight ongoing AIDS crisis

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It's not over.

In an era of effective medications, it is tempting to think the AIDS crisis has passed, said Gloria Simon-Gould of Ubuntu Niagara. But in places like Africa, it hasn't.

"Because there are anti-viral drugs that work, people think there isn't a problem anymore," said Simon-Gould.

"But in Africa, there is a still a crisis. The work to protect millions of people isn't over yet."

Simon-Gould said in some countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, there isn't immediate access to medications or doctors. And in countries where women's health care is key to combating the spread of HIV, lack of access to doctors and political suppression of women's rights makes the work of fighting the virus difficult.

That's why Ubuntu Niagara continues to support efforts to help people with AIDS in Africa and programs to limit the spread of HIV, she said.

Ubuntu Niagara held a World AIDS Day benefit concert at Silver Spire United Church in St. Catharines Saturday night to raise money for the Stephen Lewis Foundation, which supports grass roots HIV/AIDS projects in Africa. The concert fea-



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Singer Mari Shantz performs at Silver Spire United Church Saturday night during a World AIDS Day benefit concert.

tured Toronto vocalist Mari Shantz and the Womenchant Chorus and Drummers. Simon-Gould said the annual con-

cert started 11 years ago. It raised a mere \$168 the first time.

Last year, the event raised \$8,000 for the foundation, she said.

Ubuntu Niagara was founded in 2015, growing out of the former St. Andrew's United Church healing and meditation group that was formed in

2006. For more information about Ubuntu Niagara visit its Facebook page at www.facebook.com/groups/ubuntuNiagara.