On Thursday, September 29th, invited guests and members of the Los Angeles—Lusaka Sister City Committee met in the Wilshire District at the historic Broadway Federal Bank for a presentation on the implementation of their Micro-finance Project in Lusaka, Zambia, which is one component of their Women’s Entrepreneur Program in the Southern Region of Africa.

The project was conceived by Dr. Earnestine Thomas Robertson, President of the L. A.—Lusaka Sister City Committee. She recognized a need for women entrepreneurs in Zambia to have access to capital to fund business ventures that will enable them to earn moderate livings, improve surrounding communities, and create jobs. With the committee, she envisioned and developed a not-for-profit program model with a 20-year life cycle. Through the strength of relationships developed over the years with political leaders in Zambia and Zambian organizations in the United States, the plan was implemented and today, with the launch of the first cycle, twelve Zambians have received micro-loans to either start a viable business or improve or expand an existing business. The funded projects are located in seven of the nine contiguous regions in Zambia. And one woman has been contracted as a Project Point Person in Lusaka to oversee the reimbursements into a bank account which can be drawn upon for continuous redistribution. Even with some attrition, the original fund will provide ten cycles of lending through the year 2030.

Committee member, Ms. Lidia Mongerie Brown spent two months in Lusaka to direct the Micro-Finance Project and to ensure the delivery of a dual feature microscope donated by the L. A.—Lusaka Sister City Committee to the University Teaching Hospital in Lusaka. Ms. Brown was graciously received by then President and First Lady of Zambia and traveled extensively throughout the region. She met with farmers, retail entrepreneurs, textile manufacturers, dress makers and school children, twelve of whom were chosen to participate in the launch of the Micro-Finance Project. The next phase of the Los Angeles—Lusaka Sister City’s Women’s Entrepreneur Program will focus on a small scale clean water infrastructure for Garden Compound near Chaisa.