

Building Our Dream

The Centre César opened its doors in June of 2005, in a small house that was transformed into a community centre. Quickly, the centre became too small for the dozens of widows who frequented it, whether it was to learn sewing, crafts, embroidery or crocheting. We even had to set up an outdoor workshop that we also outgrew after a short period of time.



Thanks to a generous Canadian donor who committed to assuming the cost of our rent for three years, we were able to move into a larger house which we also transformed into a community centre. We set up shop for our mothers who are part of the sewing cooperative, and we obtained some industrial machines. The women who make arts and crafts benefit from a larger space, and we have developed new training courses. The new house was large enough to create a small clinic where we have a doctor come every Tuesday; this allows us to follow the health of our mothers and children more closely. A young massage therapist also joined the team, and contributes to the healing of wounds that were suffered from the events of 1994. More recently, a young psychiatrist has begun to visit each Thursday to help in the healing of the hearts and souls of the widows.

Surrounding the house, a large yard has been transformed into a garden which allows us to add two full crops of fresh vegetables to the food bank each year. Over the last two years, thanks to the efforts and generosity of the people from Calgary who held two benefit dinners, we expanded our services to establish an auto mechanic course for unemployed youth. We also increased the day care service which, thanks to a group of people from Kitchener, Ontario, now includes a nutritious lunch each day. With the support of many individuals and school groups, we have 154 young people in elementary school, and 86 in high school who are sponsored.

The third year of our stay ends in December of 2009, we must find a way to secure the future of our Centre. A very generous donor from Toronto has made it possible for us to secure a lot of land in the same village where the widows live, and we have started the construction of our dream. A real centre, one that is larger and more functional, and one that will be totally administered by the widows within a few years. Ubuntu is currently working on a financing campaign to raise the necessary funds to transform this new building, one that will allow us to better serve the population of Kimironko.

Once sad and disillusioned, these courageous women have raised their heads up high, and have chosen to live. Through generous Canadian donors, Ubuntu Edmonton was able to provide them with the tools they needed. Their progression toward independence is well underway. They have become excellent seamstresses and artists. They are full of hope, and are very attached to their Centre. Following the example of the Rwandan government, they have a vision of sustainable development, and of achieving financial autonomy.

To secure their future is to also to secure that of their children, and of a community of 742 people. Financially supporting the development of our centre is to give back a bit of humanity to these people, who in 1994, were denied humanity. Providing financial support for this project is beyond providing bricks and mortar, it is instilling love into the hearts and souls of the mothers of Kimironko.

Maman Nicole