

The Daycare at the Centre César

In 2007, to complement the services offered to the widows of the genocide, the Centre César opened a small daycare within the village. From the beginning, this free daycare service responded to a great need felt by the mothers. Not only would their children be well cared for in their absence, but they would also receive early childhood education and ample stimulation to adequately prepare them for primary school.

When created, the daycare at the Centre César was and remains the only free daycare in the entire district of Gasabo (a quarter of the city of Kigali!) It did not take long to discover that many of the children were malnourished. Thanks to the support of Canadian benefactors, a healthy menu was established, and for the past two years, a nutritious lunch has been served each day. Also because of generous support of Canadian donors, the Early Childhood Educators have materials at their disposition to ensure an appropriate learning environment and adequate games for learning.



The three Educators received training from a Canadian teacher who also instituted an educational curriculum that took into consideration the available space, the materials on hand, the number of children, and their specific needs. It was designed to maximize the physical, social, emotional and intellectual development of children aged 2 to 6 years old.

The children learn in Kinyarwanda, French, and since the beginning of January 2009, in English as well. The positive results of our efforts are evident in the children who started their first year of primary school last January, as they had exceptional results in their first trimester!!! The eleven children had marks averaging 71.2% or higher, and one student even attained 93.5%!!! We organized a party to celebrate their success (under the watchful eyes of the youngsters set to start their first year of school in 2011) with gifts to reward their work, cookies, candies and juice! What a sight to see the pride in the smiles of the mamans!! Thank you to everyone who contributed to this success by giving their time, their money, or both!!!

Construction Project for a New Daycare Despite all of the progress made by the daycare at the Centre César, there are difficult situations that cannot be ignored. The actual location, the small size (3 metres wide, 8 metres long), and the fact that there is no running water are all issues. This makes it difficult to keep a supply of water necessary for various cleaning tasks, as well as for general hygiene of the children, and of the premises. There is no room outside the building for the children to play, they must walk a distance each day to a place where they can play and do physical activities.

In an attempt to resolve these shortfalls, it was necessary to institute a project for construction of a new building in order to:

Better respond to the need for space:

The project would see the construction of a larger building comprised of two separate spaces in order to segregate the children into age appropriate groups. This would allow for better preparation of the older children for their start at primary school. Also a sufficient space would be allotted for outside play.

Better respond to nutritional needs:

Presently, the meals are prepared at the Centre and must be delivered by bicycle each day, which in itself has risks, but also results in serving a meal that is lukewarm.

Better respond to hygienic needs:

The daycare should move to a clean environment, where the minimal hygienic needs can be easily met in order to eliminate the spread of germs and illness. To attain this necessary level of hygiene, running

water must be available in order to properly clean the interior and exterior of the premise, as well as to ensure the cleanliness of the children's clothing. In addition, the new site would contain a sanitary block with two toilets for the children to use, an improvement over the current location, which only has one latrine.

Obviously, we continue to count on the generosity of donors in order to attain this goal. The organization "A Better World" has already committed \$10,000 to the project. It will be necessary to raise between \$50,000 and \$60,000 to realize this dream! Preparing for the best possible future through education represents hope for a better tomorrow, which is the ultimate goal of the Daycare at the Centre César!

Maman Nicole