

Take a child by the hand



The year 2010 is a fantastic year when it comes to the financial aid for the education of the children of the widows of our village. In effect many Canadians made a donation of \$150 to ensure that 122 primary students and 106 secondary students could attend school.

As well, 32 young children from the daycare were also sponsored thanks in large part to a volunteer from Calgary, Rose Marie Jullion (see photo), who recruited the majority of sponsors. This allows for a uniform for each child, a nourishing lunch each day, and a good pre-school education from our educators who care for them. Volunteers who come and spend several weeks at the daycare are an important and welcome addition.

This year is the fourth year of the sponsorship program for Ubuntu. Each year we must spend on things such as backpacks full of school supplies, supplies necessary for high school students who all go off to boarding school, and of course for the school fees at the primary school level. We purchase some of the uniforms and the mamans of the sewing cooperative make many of them as well. On the day that we distribute the supplies, we must also take pictures of the children for their sponsors as well as providing transportation money for the high school students, as the majority of them attend school outside of Kigali. All of this must take place in December as it is at this time that most of the money is received from the sponsors, and classes start between the 4th and the 8th of January, depending on the school. With Christmas vacation in the mix, there are sometimes errors that can happen, which then cause additional work for Normand Doyon, the volunteer responsible for the sponsorship program in Canada.



This year, due to special circumstances, classes did not start until the beginning of February. We took advantage of this time to perfect our system and to educate the mothers of the children of the daycare and of primary school of how much of a difference this education program was making in the lives of their children. As for the high school children, we had a meeting with them all on the 28th of January to explain to them just how the sponsorship program worked. Many of them were surprised to know that they actually had a sponsor; they just thought that Ubuntu had a budget put aside for their schooling. They were touched to learn that there was a special person out there that had a sincere interest in them, and who would give generously, as there was no way their own mothers could have found the means for them to continue their educations. The very next day, we received many letters from these young people asking us to send them to their sponsors. Some were in French, others in English, and other in Kinyarwanda. Our coordinator here at the Centre, Mwizihire Thimotée suddenly saw his workload increase, as he would be responsible for translating these to send to Normand Doyon, who will in turn send these letters to their respective sponsors. Normand will be coming to spend two months with us at the Centre in May and June, and will work together with Thimotée on the program.



Certain parts of the letters from these young people were very moving. Here is a sample:

Edie: *"It is with joy and gratitude that I write to you..."*

Ernest: *"May God bless you for the help you have given me with my studies..."*

Samuel: *"This is a very important moment for me, and I am writing you to say thank you..."*

Rachel: *"All of my thanks to you, as you have given me all that I needed to go to school, and may God bless you, you are in my prayers..."*

Fidèle: *"This year I will be going into my 3rd year of high school, and it is thanks to the support you have given me for 2 years..."*

Jean-Paul: *"I am an orphan, and to know that I know have a parent who loves me enough to help me without even knowing me makes me very happy..."*

Gabrielle: *"Thank you, may God give you 1000 times more money for your generosity of sending me help..."*

Marie Nadine: *"You can't understand how happy I am, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart, and I thank God for allowing me to have you. May the peace of God be with you and your family. For me, I have only my mother left..."*

There are many others, but there is just a taste of the gratitude felt by these young people whose studies are essential. So it is in the name of the mamans, the children, of Normand, of Timothée, and of all of the people at the Centre César that we say Murakoze cyane (thank you very much).

Maman Nicole