

A Cow... a Medal... a Certificate...

In economic terms, it is said that if an enterprise is still running successfully after five years, the outlook is good. The Centre César has been in existence for five years now, and since the beginning of 2010, recognition of the Centre's achievements have been plentiful.

For instance, there have been articles written in Rwandan newspapers, a report done on BBC, and on



Radio-Canada television. Also, during the official opening of the new Centre, which took place on March 25th, we received a cow from the Ombudsman of Rwanda, who presided over the event. This is a very important and significant gift to receive in Rwandan culture. To thank or honour someone, a cow is given, as it symbolizes health because of the milk it produces. Historically, we even swore by the name of the person who offered the gift, as it was a sign of sincere friendship. She has been named Ineza by the widows, which signifies a gift of goods.

Much to my surprise, on the 25th of April, I received a medal directly from the Governor General of Canada, Mme Michaëlle Jean, during her visit to Rwanda. In presenting the medal, she emphasized our Canadian values of compassion, of generosity, of solidarity and of inclusion. This is an honour that is also to be shared with both the donors who have supported us for the past five years, and have made possible to develop our various aid programs, as well as our courageous and dynamic mamans.



During the Rwandan Labour Day celebrations, which took place on May 1st, the Centre César was recognized and congratulated for its contribution to the development of employment opportunities. A certificate was presented to commemorate this honour, which was accompanied by a cheque for 500,000 Rwandan francs (equivalent to about \$1,000 Canadian dollars). The training that is given at the Centre César in sewing, embroidery, knitting and crafts, the education provided to the young children at the daycare, as well as to the young adults in the auto mechanics class, have all been recognized as assisting in developing employment.



The Centre César is continuing its development by seeking out contracts for the sewing group, as well as seeking out markets to sell the artisan products. The training in the sewing is progressing, and might possibly be expanded to include embroidery produced by machine. As for the auto mechanic class, it will soon be complemented by a course in electricity.

As we have successfully completed our first five years of operations, we have no doubt that the next five years will be just as productive and rewarding... We are hopeful that those who have supported us through this, and who believe in our goal of self sufficiency for this Rwandan community, will continue to assist us in reaching this goal.

Maman Nicole