

# STAND PROUD

Helping Polio Survivors and Youth with Other Disabilities in Africa to Walk

## NEWSLETTER

(formerly International Polio Victims Response Committee—IPVRC)

### Letter from the Chair

Dear Supporters,

It is my pleasure to introduce the first StandProud (formerly IPVRC) newsletter. We had been waiting to publish a newsletter until we could announce a new name, not realizing that this would actually be a lengthy process involving many months of brainstorming, consultations and debate. At last we are ready, and we hope that you feel as we do that the new name is both much easier to remember and more concisely descriptive of what we do.

We plan now to update all of our supporters on developments within the organization twice yearly through this mechanism so that people continue to feel themselves to be a part of this ongoing, high-impact effort on behalf of children with disabilities in Africa. As anyone who has met them can tell you, our beneficiaries are terrific kids who continue to inspire

us all with their courage and positive attitudes toward life in spite of being unusually disadvantaged. I hope everyone will be able to get a sense of that through the pictures and information that we will be posting here.

For those of you that are interested in getting to know some of our kids better, we now offer both "medical" and "educational" sponsorship programs, providing donors the opportunity to link up with a specific child through correspondence. Details of this program—which is also available to groups such as schools or clubs—can be found on our website.

Please feel free to write to us with your ideas and suggestions. Particularly as a relatively young and small organization, we value feedback highly.

Sincerely,

Jay Nash, StandProud Chair

#### Children in residence at StandProud centers:

- »Kinshasa: 150
- »Lubumbashi: 26
- »Bunia: 25
- »Goma: 23
- »Butembo: 13
- »Kalemie: 12

\*These figures include only children currently staying at the StandProud centers. Most beneficiaries of the program return to reside with their families after treatment and visit the centers only for equipment repairs or other ongoing "outpatient" support.



Photo by Finbarr O'Reilly. Children using practice bars at Kinshasa rehabilitation center.

### Spotlight: Nzuzi Prefina

Nzuzi Prefina will be 7 years old this coming December. She has never been to school. As a young child, she suffered from a serious bout with meningitis, which left her legs "spastic." She could stand, but her legs would not move the right way. They remained very bent at the knee and caused her to fall whenever she tried to take a step.

Because with cases of spasticity it is often very difficult to get a child walking, sometimes taking years of patient therapy and

training, most commercial facilities in DR Congo providing orthopedic equipment refuse to even deal with them. Having had surprising success with a number of spastic children in the past, StandProud (SP) was glad to give Prefina a chance. Now, after one year at the SP center, she is walking on her own and more than ready to start school.

Who will now sponsor her?

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Nzuzi Prefina

## UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Visits Kinshasa Center



Walking practice at Kinshasa rehabilitation center.

This past May, during her first-ever visit to the Congo, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Louise Arbour, visited the Kinshasa rehabilitation center run by StandProud and local Congolese partner organization, ACAOJH (l'Association Congolaise pour l'Assistance Orthopédique aux Jeunes Handicapés, or "the Congolese Association for Orthopedic Assistance to Youth with Disabilities"). The High Commissioner was accompanied by StandProud Board member Scott Campbell.

Ms. Arbour, the United Nation's highest authority on human rights and a long-standing proponent of disability rights, was impressed with what she saw. At the end of her three days in Kinshasa, Ms. Arbour opened her press conference – attended by some fifty mem-

bers of the national and international press corps – with a reference to the heartening work of StandProud and ACAOJH and the hope that such local and creative initiatives inspire.

The SP/ACAOJH rehabilitation home was the only NGO site visited by Ms. Arbour in Kinshasa, and despite her extremely busy schedule, she prolonged her stay so as to be able to visit the SP/ACAOJH brace-crafting shop as well.

Ms. Arbour's world-wide leadership around disability rights has helped to move international standards forward and to push governments towards developing appropriate legislation and programs concerning people with disabilities.

## StandProud on Global Giving

StandProud is excited to announce our new listing with Global Giving. StandProud's project can now be found at:

[www.globalgiving.com/1720](http://www.globalgiving.com/1720)

Global Giving is an online "marketplace of goodness" where potential donors can connect to "over 450 pre-screened grassroots charity projects around the world." Visit our Global Giving page and you'll find pictures, organization and staff info, and details about our Global Giving project.

Global Giving gives StandProud the opportunity to access widespread donor support, the ability to send project updates and also allows us to accept online donations from outside the United States.

Another option available through Global Giving is that you, as a StandProud supporter, can create your own registry through our Global Giving page. You can use this to ask others to support StandProud through you!

*Please come check out our page!*

## Spotlight: Guelord Kipanta

Guelord Kipanta is from Lubumbashi, in southern DR Congo, and was born with club feet (feet that are turned inwards forcing a child to walk on his ankles rather than the soles of his/her feet). Walking was painful and awkward until his mother took him to the StandProud (SP) center in Lubumbashi, where he was given two short leg braces to prevent his condition from worsening and put on a waiting list for an operation.

Guelord was transferred to Kinshasa for the surgical procedure and though he had to spend 6 months with casts on both feet following the surgery, the treatment was so successful that he can now run easily and has become quite a soccer player. He still wears braces to keep the deformity from returning but is not at all shy or self-conscious about it and sets an example for the other kids by often wearing shorts.

Since 2006, Guelord's education has been sponsored by an avid SP supporter with whom he communicates on an annual basis. As Guelord is one of eleven children, his family was unable to sustain him in school.

The sponsorship has enabled Guelord not only to continue school but to stay on at the center in Kinshasa as "teen mentor" for other children. He is a tremendous asset to the staff, always looking for some way to help out. Now in the 8th grade, his ambition is to become a mechanic. He will no doubt be a very good one, and our sincere thanks go out to L.S. in Tulsa for helping Guelord achieve his potential.



Guelord Kipanta

# StandProud November 2007 Newsletter

## Holiday Season Is Coming!

Help us bring in the holiday season and New Year with renewed support for children with disabilities in the Congo!

Here are some ways you can help:

- 1) Throw a get-together with information about StandProud.\*
- 2) Donate in honor of family and friends. You can use any of the donation options on the first page of this newsletter and note who your gift is honoring.
- 3) Begin a child sponsorship in honor of or for family/friends.
- 4) Simply take a few moments to tell your friends and family about StandProud and the difference that your support makes.

5) Use any of the following ways to support:

- [www.globalgiving.com/1720](http://www.globalgiving.com/1720) (You may create a registry directly linked to StandProud—See page 3.)
- [www.giveline.com](http://www.giveline.com) (Online shopping site where StandProud can be indicated at time of purchase and a percentage is contributed to the organization.)
- <https://www.alternativegifts.org/projects/polio-victims-congo/> (Visit this site to see the StandProud project included in Alternative Gifts International's 2007-2008 catalog of projects one can donate to as an "alternative gift.")

\*If you would like to do a house party, you can email Caroline Savitzky ([caroline.rdc@gmail.com](mailto:caroline.rdc@gmail.com)) to get copies of brochures, the DVD created by Ken Kobre and Betsy Brill, and other informational materials to assist you.

## StandProud News

- 1) After much deliberation, we chose **"StandProud: Helping polio survivors and youth with other disabilities in Africa to walk"** as our new name and tagline. We appreciate everyone's patience as we make the transition.
- 2) StandProud hopes soon to complete the registration of a new branch of the organization in Great Britain. This will facilitate giving in the future by our many enthusiastic UK supporters.
- 3) In June, StandProud's local partner organization, ACAOJH, hired an older Congolese woman to re-

organize the house where the children stay in Kinshasa and take over responsibility for the kitchen. It is rare that ACAOJH looks outside its pool of former beneficiaries for staff, but in this case it was felt the touch of an experienced mother would be a welcome addition.

"Mama Giselle" has since become very popular with the kids, having done much to vary the diet at the house and having found ways—such as the care of a new vegetable garden—to give the residents more responsibility.

## New Documentary Available

San Francisco State University Professor of Journalism Ken Kobre filmed a powerful documentary on the StandProud program in Kinshasa. The film, narrated by Betsy Brill, is available on DVD through StandProud

development officer Caroline Savitzky. Included are an interview with StandProud founder Jay Nash and footage of beneficiaries at school, playing soccer and dancing.

## Award-Winning Photojournalists Support StandProud

StandProud continues to benefit from the very active support of renowned photojournalists Finbarr O'Reilly and Marcus Bleasdale, both of whom are regular visitors to StandProud's rehabilitation centers where they have played soccer and danced with the kids as well as taken many award-winning photographs.

Their fundraising efforts have enabled StandProud to reach many more children in 2007 than would otherwise have been possible.

Their extensive work can be found on their websites:

[www.finbarreilly.com](http://www.finbarreilly.com)

[www.marcusbleasdale.com](http://www.marcusbleasdale.com)

When visiting Finbarr's website, be sure to check out his article, "Hope blooms in smiles of Kinshasa polio kids."

On Marcus' website can be found information about his recent book, "One Hundred Years of Darkness."



Getting ready for a party at the Kinshasa rehabilitation center.



Photo by Ken Kobre. Children studying at neighborhood school.

**StandProud Board of Directors:**

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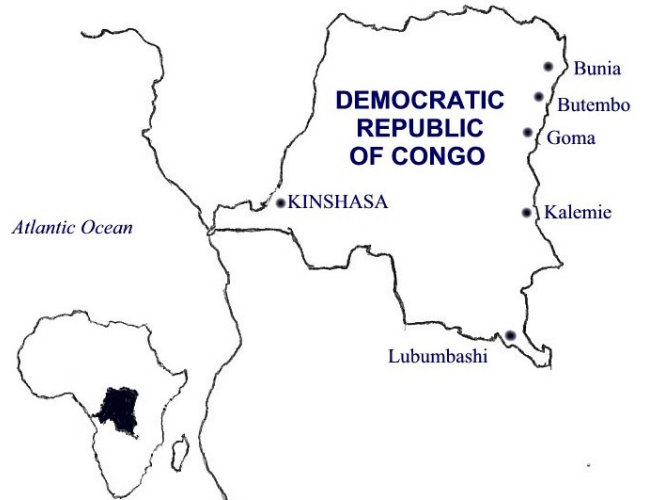
**We want to hear from you!**

For questions, more information, or suggestions contact:

Caroline Savitzky  
(StandProud Development Officer)  
Email: [info@standproud.org](mailto:info@standproud.org)  
Mail: 10250 Harrison Road  
Loveland, Ohio 45140  
USA

**StandProud Advisory Board:**

**Dr. Jon Andrus:** Chief, Immunization Unit, Pan American Health Organization  
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**Faida Mitifu:** Ambassador of the Democratic Republic of Congo to the United States  
**Ellyn Ogden:** USAID, Worldwide Polio Eradication Coordinator



StandProud center locations in DR Congo

**Visit us on the internet:**  
**[www.standproud.org](http://www.standproud.org)**

**More About StandProud**

StandProud is a U.S. registered, tax exempt, 501(c)3, not-for-profit charity created in 2000 to secure international financial support for selected community organizations in developing countries which:

- provide high-quality, locally-crafted leg braces (and accompanying necessary medical and rehabilitative treatment), at little or no cost to poor children and youth in developing countries paralyzed by polio or living with similar disabilities
- promote the full integration of disabled persons into society

Underlying all of StandProud's activities is a strong commitment to the beliefs that:

- all physically disabled persons should have access to the orthopedic equipment they require in order to achieve maximum possible dignity, mobility and independence, and that
- a healthy society is one which permits and encourages the full integration of the physically disabled into all of its normal social and economic activities.

At the present time, StandProud is concentrating its efforts on its program in DR Congo, where it works through an implementing local partner called ACAOJH (l'Association Congolaise pour l'Assistance Orthopédique aux Jeunes Handicapés, or "the Congolese Association for Orthopedic Assistance to Youth with Disabilities").

This Congolese-registered charity was founded in 1999 by a group of youth with disabilities specifically to address the problem of the lack of access of disabled persons to equipment that could make life much easier and fuller for them.

With StandProud support, ACAOJH currently maintains brace-crafting facilities in six cities in DRC: Kinshasa, Lubumbashi, Kalemie, Goma, Butembo and Bunia. The outermost of these sites are located approximately 1000 miles from each other and correspond to the west, southeast and northeast corners of the country.



Photo by Finbarr O'Reilly.