

Congo Connections: Annette Scarpitta's Discovery Mission in DR Congo



Prelude: A Bin of Clothing



Clothing distribution from funds sent by Cedar Lane UU Church 7th graders to the Association of Christian Mothers for Assistance to Vulnerables (AMCAV), a small Congolese NGO in Uvira, South Kivu, eastern DR Congo

Aftermath to Clothing Distribution

The clothing was distributed to the 239 children then affiliated with AMCAV.

3 months later, there were 517. The additional mothers were appealing to AMCAV's director, Bernadette Ntumba, for more clothing, but she had none to give. Cedar Lane was starting a new year of 7th graders, and no funds had been raised.

We needed another solution.

A NEW CHAPTER BEGINS

The second fundraising year at Cedar Lane—2010-2011—found adult members of the congregation joining the 7th graders in their efforts to help the children of AMCAV. Part of the fundraising success came with the sales of paper-based jewelry made by Ugandan women entrepreneurs. In August 2011, AMCAV partnered with Annette, representing the 7th graders—to create the first education program for the primary-school-age children of violated women in 3 of the 5 villages served by AMCAV. After exhaustive due diligence, the program was accepted by GlobalGiving.org, which enabled donors known and unknown to contribute to and sustain the program. Cedar Lane, in the meantime, continued its own efforts.

A New Distribution Day



Uniforms, shoes, and backpacks



EOLE PRIMAIRE VIJANA Luberizi/ UVIRA/DRCONGO, BEFORE DISTRUBUTION



EOLE PRIMAIRE VIJANA Luberizi/ UVIRA/DRCONGO, DISTRIBUTION

Report: “The girls are improving and adapting in all 3 schools and are becoming more confident in their lives.”



Report from male teacher:

We would like to thank the organization and say that we are happy that our school in Rwenena has been selected among other schools in the district of Uvira. Thank you for allowing us to be represented for this wonderful project that you have in this district. Second, we want to thank you again for bringing education and supplies to the children. The children are happy and we [at the school] are also happy. We have seen change in the children. This program you have started is something good. We ask that you continue to advocate for us for this project that is helping these disadvantaged children to see if they can get out of illiteracy. Especially for the girls, in our culture, it is always believed that there is no need for a girl to be educated, but if we see reality, the girl is more valuable than a boy in the family. Therefore we plead that you continue to assist us and we wish you all the best.

Gratitude to “Mama Annette”



By spring 2013, fundraising had slowed.

Communications obstacles convinced Annette that in-person meetings with Bernadette and the three communities were needed, so she made arrangements and traveled on what she deemed a social justice mission. In tow were uniforms donated from 2 Baltimore-area schools, enough toothbrushes and toothpastes for all the children, and a sorely needed French laptop for Bernadette.

Team Annette in Uvira



Interviews with Students



An Evolution of Truth

School was nice, but the kids reported that they remained hungry.





PROTECTOR L'ENFANT VULNERABLE DE LA RDC / UNIVIRA
TRAVERS AMO

*BESOIN DE MEDIATION
BESOIN JURIDIQUE
BESOIN DE PLAIDOYER

VIOLENCE VERBALE:
- INJURES
- MENSONGES
- LANGAGE CHACAL.

VIOLENCE CULTURELLE:
- la veuve ou l'orphelin violé par sa belle-famille.
- le mariage forcé ou l'union libre doit passer par la coutume.
- le mariage n'est pas

VIOLENCE PSYCHOLOGIQUE:
- Humiliation
- Discrimination
- L'absence de la famille
- L'absence de la communauté

Reports from Other Kids

Etuzi and Josephine like school “for the future.” Etuzi believes that school will help her with work. Both girls aspire to be teachers.

Bernard likes school “because of tomorrow’s life.”

Miriam enjoys studying because she believes it will allow her to have a good life.

Dorcas, Oliver, Bukuru, and Lucien want to go to school to help their families. Bukuru also reports the need of clothing.

Mairie reports she has no uniform, no food, and no exercise books.

Joseline aspires to obtain a secondary school degree.

Bahati likes school because it will help her have a nice life. She would like to help other women and be like Bernadette. She adds that she is hungry and needs clothing.



Smiles Emerge: Gratitude to St. Mark's School, Baltimore, Maryland



Gratitude to St. Agnes School, Baltimore, Maryland



Mothers: Grateful, Though Still in Need



Gertride



Claudine





The Grandfather

Welcome Reception at Rwenena Primary School



Kids Reenacting Realities

Militiamen murdering. The child reenactor played the role of a dead person for many minutes.

Other reenactments suggested rape and how the community appealed to AMCAV for help, resulting in education for the kids and limited assistance for the women.



A Math Lesson

Sitting in close proximity with no desks and no paper, students learn and respond verbally.

Teachers do the best they can but are in dire need of training and materials.



Mothers Speak Out and Appeal for Help

Needs include health care, clean water, and repair of a flour-grinding mill.



Gratitude and Hope



Partial Uniforms for Some, Not All





Rwenena Clinic

The Gatekeepers

3 Sick Beds



IV Bottle



Examination Room



Supply Room



Never Forget

