

COVENANT KIDS

Congo

powered by

World Vision®



JOCELINE AND HER THREE-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER, PREFINA

Dear Friends and Partners,

"If you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday."

— Isaiah 58:10

In the last year, I've witnessed Covenant generosity turn into tangible hope and light for children and families in the DR Congo. Every story in this newsletter reflects that light, which is rising in communities through clean water, education, healing, and empowerment. Thank you for standing with us and continuing to invest in transformation that lasts.



Rev. Lyndsey Watson

PROGRAM MANAGER
COVENANT KIDS CONGO

From Desperation to Dignity

At just 28 years old, Joceline faced what felt like an impossible task—raising seven children on her own after the sudden loss of her husband. Living near Gemena in the DR Congo, she struggled daily to feed her children. "It was unbearable," she recalls. "Watching my child suffer without being able to help broke me."

Her turning point came when her daughter, Prefina, became severely malnourished. She was weak, unable to move, and in critical condition. During a local health screening as part of World Vision's ENOUGH program, a volunteer recognized the signs of acute malnutrition and referred Prefina for urgent treatment.

While her daughter received nutritional supple-

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ments and medical care, Joceline was invited to a culinary training. There, she learned how to prepare balanced meals using simple, local ingredients. “It opened my eyes,” she says. “I never realized how powerful our everyday foods could be when used the right way.”

Impressed by her dedication, World Vision staff provided Joceline with cassava chips to start making *chikwangue*, a traditional fermented cassava bread. That was the start of a business. As demand grew, Joceline began sewing clothes and repairing garments alongside her food sales. “People kept coming back. With what I earned, I sent my children back to school.”

Today Joceline’s business sustains her household. Her youngest children are healthy, her oldest is back in class, and her dream of seeing them go to university no longer feels out of reach. “Because of this support, I’m not just surviving—I’m building a future,” she says.

Joceline’s journey is just one example of how Covenant Kids Congo and World Vision walk alongside families, addressing urgent needs while equipping parents with tools to thrive. Through your support, hundreds of families like Joceline’s have received vocational training, startup resources, and renewed hope across Gemena and Karawa.

“You’ve changed my life,” Joceline says. “You’ve given my children a future. Thank you.”

“Because of this support, I’m not just surviving—I’m building a future.”

BY THE NUMBERS*

Health & Nutrition

24,780 children received medication to fight parasites and improve health.

97% of children under 1 supported through CKC are fully vaccinated.

3,562 malnourished children under 5 joined nutrition rehabilitation groups.

* FY2024 ANNUAL REPORT (OCTOBER 2023 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 2024), PREPARED SPRING 2025

The ENOUGH program is World Vision’s global initiative aimed at ending child hunger and malnutrition by empowering families with tools, knowledge, and support to sustain long-term nutrition. It addresses both immediate needs, like therapeutic feeding, and root causes through training in agriculture, cooking, and income generation.



PREFINA, ALONG WITH HER LITTLE BROTHER, IS IN GOOD HEALTH, THANKS TO THEIR MOTHER’S ABILITY TO NOURISH THEM THROUGH HER INCOME-GENERATING ACTIVITY—SELLING CHIKWANGUE.



HEVÉ (RIGHT) WITH HER MOTHER AND OLDER BROTHER

Hevé's Story of Hope and Sponsorship

Twelve-year-old Hevé stands tall in her sixth-grade classroom with her school bag over her shoulder and notebooks neatly stacked on her desk. She looks like a confident, joyful student, but her journey here has not been easy.

She lives in Karawa, in the North Ubangi province of DR Congo, with her older brother and mother, a woman of strength who lives with a disability that limits her ability to work. For years, the family's situation was fragile. "I went to school with clothes that weren't worthy of a student my age," Hevé recalls. "And I was often sent home because we couldn't pay the fees."

Her mother, a skilled knitter, tried everything to provide, but she lacked the resources to turn her talent into steady income. Most days the family had just enough for one meal. Some days not even that. Hope felt distant. "I remember thinking, 'Who could possibly help us?'" Hevé says.

Help came through World Vision and Covenant Kids Congo. Enrolled in the sponsorship program, Hevé received support while her mother was given a starter kit: two bags of salt, two sachets of sugar, a goat, and \$25 for yarn. With guidance, her mother began selling

goods in the market and knitting once again.

Hevé's family is one of 672 families in Karawa who received financial education and startup resources through Covenant Kids Congo's economic empowerment programs. These tools are enabling parents, like Hevé's mother, to generate income and build long-term stability for their children.

"This support gave my mother a new lease on life," says Hevé. "She began to smile again. She became the mom who could care for us."

With the income, her mother bought school uniforms, shoes, and supplies—items once out of reach. For the first time, Hevé felt like she truly belonged at school. Her journey reflects the experience of thousands of children in the region. In the past year alone, more than 9,000 children—many of them girls—have gained access to schooling, nutrition, and clothing thanks to family empowerment programs supported by CKC.

More than just

meeting daily needs, sponsorship opened doors to new dreams. "Now I'm going to school with the hope of finishing and one day becoming a national deputy," Hevé says confidently. Her favorite class is French recitation, which she hopes will help her speak clearly and defend others.

Hevé's story is echoed in hundreds of homes across Karawa and Gemena where families received support last year through Covenant Kids Congo. With income-generating kits, financial literacy training, and ongoing mentorship, families are building long-term resilience and children are dreaming again.

"To everyone who sponsors a child: thank you," Hevé says. "You've changed my life. You've helped me believe in my future."

HOW SPONSORSHIP SPARKS SUSTAINABLE CHANGE IN KARAWA

169

CHILDREN
SPONSORED

672

FAMILIES
TRAINED

29

GOATS
DISTRIBUTED

9,354

CHILDREN
IMPACTED



A Roof Overhead and Hope for Tomorrow

At twelve years old, Bénédicte used to sleep on a mat, exposed to the elements under a leaking palm-leaf roof. Her family's shelter had no walls—only open space, ants, and rain.

After Bénédicte's father died, her mother, Vero, struggled to care for the children alone. But small business training from World Vision changed everything. With two sacks of squash provided by the program, Vero started a business, saved steadily, and eventually built a brick house with a solid roof and real beds.

Vero is one of 672 parents in the Gemena and Karawa regions who received training through Covenant Kids Congo in small business management, equipping them to support their families with dignity and independence.

"Now, we sleep well. We are safe. And I can go to school without fear," Bénédicte says.

She dreams of becoming a seamstress and a nun—to give back to the children in her community. "World Vision gave us more than a roof," she says. "They gave us a future."

CLEAN WATER

Running for Clean Water: Covenant Churches Take the Lead

Every year, nearly **30 Covenant churches across the U.S.** lace up their running shoes in partnership with **Team World Vision**, joining half marathons, marathons, and ultramarathon races to bring clean water to families in the DR Congo. Together, these churches raise more than **\$600,000 annually**—funds that directly support new water access points in communities like Gemena and Karawa, changing the daily reality for thousands of children.

These runners are not just chasing finish lines—they're chasing transformation, ensuring that fewer children fall ill from water-borne diseases and more can attend school instead of spending hours fetching water. Their miles truly matter.

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This year for their Global 6K, **Mosaic Community Covenant Church, Access Evangelical Covenant Church, and Life Church Fort Bend** partnered with The Brookwood Community in Houston, a local ministry that provides jobs and housing for adults with intellectual disabilities. Hearing about partnerships like this makes the Global 6K one of our favorite invitations! **Are you signed up for next year? Use the code ECCLEADER for a free host site registration. Visit covchurch.org/6K to sign up!**



PARTICIPANTS OF THE HOUSTON



Global 6K for Water: Every Step Brings Someone Closer to Clean Water

78

COVENANT
TEAMS

2,283

COVENANT
PARTICIPANTS

\$237K

RAISED BY
COVENANT TEAMS

\$1.7M

TOTAL RAISED
WORLDWIDE

This is the impact of the 2025 Global 6K for Water, an annual walk/run where every participant covers the average distance a child in Congo travels for water each day. With the support of the Evangelical Covenant Church and World Vision, these funds are helping thousands of children and families gain access to safe, sustainable water sources in their own communities.

6K Total from 2022: \$149,227

6K Total from 2023: \$194,589

6K Total from 2024: \$219,829

March 22, 2025: World Water Day

March 21-23, 2025: World Water Day Weekend

\$86,334 raised by Global 6K Teams

\$168,615 raised by Team World Vision

Total Raised in ONE WEEKEND: \$254,949

BY THE NUMBERS*

Water, Sanitation & Hygiene (WASH)

3,519 people now have access to hand-washing stations in their communities.

268 families attended hygiene and sanitation training sessions.

15 school-based hygiene clubs were launched to promote healthy habits among students.

* FY2024 ANNUAL REPORT (OCTOBER 2023 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 2024), PREPARED SPRING 2025

◀ Spotlight: Grant Buchholtz—Running for Clean Water

What began as a one-time college challenge has become a lifelong mission. When **Grant Buchholtz** ran his first marathon in Chicago during his senior year of college, he thought it would be a bucket list moment. This year, on April 27, 2025, he crossed the finish line of the **London Marathon**—his **ninth race**, and the final run to complete all **six World Major Marathons**, across **seven countries** and **four continents**.

But for Grant, the finish line has

never been the end goal.

Over the years, **many of his marathons have raised funds for ministries and causes close to his heart**, including the most recent in partnership with Covenant Kids Congo. Grant raised a remarkable **\$23,580** in partnership with one of his supporting churches, Christ Church, a Covenant congregation in East Greenwich, Rhode Island, which hosted a Chosen event on his behalf.

“This race combines two of my

passions,” Grant says. “Running and bringing hope to a broken world.”

Grant and his family currently serve as **global personnel** in **Tokyo, Japan**, and Covenant Kids Congo was honored to partner with him to meet this goal and bring sustainable transformation to children and families in DR Congo. “Thank you for partnering with our family and me in bringing life and hope to Japan—and to places like Congo,” he says.



▲ **David**, six years old, smiles brightly as he fills his bottle at the water point installed by World Vision. Grateful for the clean water, David can now quench his thirst and stay healthy!



▲ **Marthes**, ten years old, joyfully fetches water with her friends at the fountain installed by World Vision, ensuring they have clean water to drink and keep them healthy!



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: CHARLIE (ELEVEN), THERESE (TEN), DIDIER (NINE), EMANOU (EIGHT), AND LAGRACE (EIGHT) ARE EACH HOLDING THEIR SPONSOR'S PHOTO

Chosen is not just child sponsorship—it is a powerful shift in dignity and empowerment. Instead of sponsors choosing children, children choose their sponsors. This simple act affirms their value and gives them the opportunity to step into their future with confidence.

Through Chosen, your church can join in a life-changing movement that not only transforms communities in the DR Congo but also ignites compassion and spiritual renewal within your own congregation. It's a tangible way to live out Christ's love—empowering children, families, and entire communities with clean water, education, health care, and hope.

We are inviting Covenant churches to host a Chosen event in the coming year. Whether your church is large or small, new to CKC or a long-time partner, this is a meaningful way to engage your people in global mission.

Let's walk alongside children in Congo as they choose hope, choose connection, and choose us!

We continue in partnership with the Evangelical Covenant Church of Canada (ECCC). In the past year, Canadian churches have helped sponsor 35 children in Karawa! We invite more Canadian congregations to participate in Chosen, empowering children to take the first step in sponsorship and transforming entire communities in the process. To learn more or get involved, contact Lyndsey Watson at lyndsey.watson@covchurch.org.



CKC BY THE NUMBERS*

Economic Empowerment

3,021 women and men are active members of savings groups—boosting household resilience.
30 new savings groups were launched this year alone.
9,447 children have a parent or caregiver engaged in an income-generating activity.

Child Protection & Family Support

394 highly vulnerable children were reintegrated into family care this year.
1,741 parents learned positive parenting skills.

Faith & Youth Engagement

17,985 children and youth participated in personal development and discipleship activities.
5 new faith groups launched child well-being campaigns.

Sustainable Livelihoods

1,523 families received farming tools and materials to improve household food security.
1,523 women and men were trained in small business skills to grow income and independence.

* FY2024 ANNUAL REPORT (OCTOBER 2023 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 2024), PREPARED SPRING 2025

DID YOU KNOW?

Covenant Kids Congo is under the umbrella of **Covenant World Relief & Development (CWRD)**. CWRD partners in a variety of community development projects around the world. For information about partnering with CWRD through partners and programs like Covenant Kids Congo, visit covchurch.org/cwrld.

Learn more at
CovChurch.org/CovenantKidsCongo

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