

## WELCOME

**“Muoyo wenu! Life to you!”** This is the Tshiluba “hello” and our warm greeting to friends of Woman, Cradle of Abundance. Together, Congolese and Americans, we are partners to help women and girls empower each other and be instruments of Muoyo mvulu! Life abundant! for themselves and their communities. Welcome to our first newsletter and some exciting happenings and hopes.

**Meet Luta |** Luta was a young orphan whose parents had died of AIDS. Their deaths were considered mysterious and Luta was accused of sorcery, abandoned to live on the streets where she contracted tuberculosis. The 13-year-old was skin and bones by the time Monique Misenga Mukuna, the president of Woman, Cradle of Abundance in the Congo, rescued her. Monique took Luta into her home and secured medical care on her behalf. Luta gradually regained her health and was thriving in Monique’s home when her uncle came asking for her, perhaps expecting that he could secure a bride-price in another year now that she was in good health. Because of Luta’s age, Monique had no legal means to prevent her from returning to her relatives, so Luta was obligated to go with him. Once in her uncle’s home, she was turned into a housemaid. Within a year, Luta had returned to Monique wanting more for her life. She is now enrolled in the sewing and literacy schools of Woman, Cradle of Abundance and has the bright hope of a respectable trade and a living wage when she completes her education.

## 2013 UPDATES

**Sewing School |** The sewing school works with 50 students under the instruction of 3 teachers. They work in one small room and an open courtyard, which means that during the rainy season classes are often cancelled or very few

students can attend because the courtyard floods. A donor supplied funding to cover part of the courtyard with an iron roof and to pave the floor. Other donors supplied new sewing machines, allowing more girls to attend at one time, in spite of heavy rains. Each of this year’s ten graduates of the sewing school received a donated sewing machine to begin her new career.



**Flour Mill |** Several years ago an industrial flour mill was donated to the organization to help provide food as well as a reliable income stream to sustain the work of Woman, Cradle of Abundance. Conditions and circumstances in Kinshasa have made it nearly impossible to get the flour mill operational: special cables and installation needs, unreliable electricity, and flooding in the market where space was originally secured, all of which led to an expensive move to a new location. In spite of all of the challenges, the mill began operating in August. Everyone in Kinshasa has to grind corn for food, so the mill will provide this service as well as an income to pay tuition for orphans and destitute children in the city. Woman, Cradle of Abundance currently sponsors the education of 147 children in elementary and secondary schools. With sustaining gifts from friends in North America, more elementary and secondary students can be assisted with tuition, uniforms and supplies.

## News from Woman, Cradle of Abundance – North America

**Organization** | Formally organized as a North American partner to support the work of our sister organization in the DR Congo, Woman, Cradle of Abundance incorporated in North America in early 2013. Thanks to the pro bono dedication of Lauren Pelikan Shores, Esq. at the law offices of Bryan Cave, the application process for tax-exempt status with the IRS was approved. We are grateful for the donated time and expertise that streamlined the process for us. We the American partners are all volunteers, with varied gifts and a common passion. Beginning in our next newsletter, we will introduce the “worker bees” of Woman, Cradle of Abundance, Inc.

**Announcing our Capital Campaign** | Woman, Cradle of Abundance (DRC) has been housed in the residence of the organization’s president, Monique Misenga Mukuna. However, the limited space in her courtyard has meant that the 50 students of the sewing school have to come in shifts, and part-time study delays their graduation. Her home has also been used as a shelter. One of the greatest needs for the women to continue their work more efficiently and to offer private counseling space and shelter is a multi-purpose women’s center. Woman, Cradle of Abundance (USA) is launching a capital campaign to raise \$100,000 to purchase and develop a Women’s Center in Kinshasa. We are off to a good start: See the brochure and consider a year-end gift to take advantage of a challenge grant so that the Women’s Center becomes a reality soon!

**Jazz Benefit** | On November 14, Grammy-nominated jazz artist Karrin Allyson will perform a benefit concert for Woman, Cradle of Abundance: “Karrin Allyson in Concert: A Song for Congo.” Jazz lovers will have a feast! plus meet the artist and get her autograph. And a surprise bonus: an appearance by Bill McGlaughlin, classical music radio host-composer-conductor. Venue is an elegant private clubhouse in Princeton; sponsorship \$250, ticket \$60, student ticket \$30: visit our website to reserve your place.



## Monique Misenga Mukuna’s Trip to the U.S.

In May we had the pleasure of hosting Monique Misenga Mukuna, the president of Woman, Cradle of Abundance (DRC) on her visit to the United States. While in New Jersey, Monique was able to meet many people who support her work, and speak to audiences to raise awareness at: Titusville Presbyterian Church, Kingdom Church, Witherspoon Presbyterian Church, Nassau Presbyterian Church. An open house was hosted by Susan Lidstone, Aruna Arya and Joy Bechtler. Monique was also able to travel to Richmond, Chicago, Boston and Atlanta. For those of you eager to meet her, Monique will be one of the featured speakers at a one-day conference on March 6, 2014: African Women Extraordinaire II (AWE II) at Princeton Theological Seminary. During this spring visit she will also be able to visit friends old and new. More soon!

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## GET INVOLVED

**Contribute** | Donate securely via PayPal at [www.WomanCradleOfAbundance.org/get-involved](http://www.WomanCradleOfAbundance.org/get-involved). Please designate “Capital Campaign” in the purpose line to contribute to the Women’s Center, or “Sustaining Gift” to support ongoing work. Checks payable to *Woman, Cradle of Abundance* with either “Capital Campaign” or “Sustaining Gift” in the memo line can be mailed to the following address:

Woman, Cradle of Abundance  
Attn: Shari Oosting, Treasurer  
262 Lambertville Hopewell Rd.  
Hopewell, NJ 08525

**Volunteer** | Email us at [info@womancradleofabundance.org](mailto:info@womancradleofabundance.org) or call Shari at 847.714.7784 to discuss ways to partner with Woman, Cradle of Abundance in its aims to raise consciousness and support women and girls in the DR Congo.

**Raise Awareness** | Like and share us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/WomanCradleOfAbundance](http://www.facebook.com/WomanCradleOfAbundance). Share this newsletter with friends and family and encourage their involvement.