

Love and Grace: The Price of a Smile

At HEAL Africa Hospital, one of the ministries provided for children is a day school called *Tuungane*, Swahili for ‘let’s come together.’ It welcomes hospitalized children, or those whose mothers are hospitalized due to complicated pregnancies, fistula surgery, or malnutrition. During their stay, whether weeks or months, we care for their emotional needs through counseling, and provide nutritious meals, clothes, shoes, backpacks and school supplies... and share stories of Jesus’ love, especially His love for children.

Last month, one of the *Tuungane* teachers introduced me to little Josué, a six-year-old boy who had never been to school. Born with deformed and shortened legs, he has never walked. Frail, insecure and bewildered, he had to be carried by the teacher wherever he went.

Bill and I knew he needed a wheelchair, but in a city under rebel occupation since January 2025, supplies are scarce. After days of searching, one of our drivers discovered a new pediatric wheelchair, dusty but unused, at the back of a pharmacy. It had been donated by a U.S. company called *FreeWheelChair.com*. It wasn’t free, but it was exactly what Josué needed.



Several weeks later, Josué is a different child. He has gained weight, wears new clothes, and sits proudly with his classmates, who eagerly take turns pushing him around the playground in what they call “our bicycle.” Most remarkable of all is his smile. His mother, with tears in her eyes, said to me last week, “Maman Ann, this is the first time I have ever seen my son smile.”

Sometimes, a simple gift; a wheelchair, a meal, new clothes accompanied by love can transform a life. Josué’s smile is a reminder of God’s care and a reflection of the love of churches and friends whose support makes these miracles possible

Ann and Bill Clemmer
Goma, Dem Rep of Congo

clemmer@internationalministries.org