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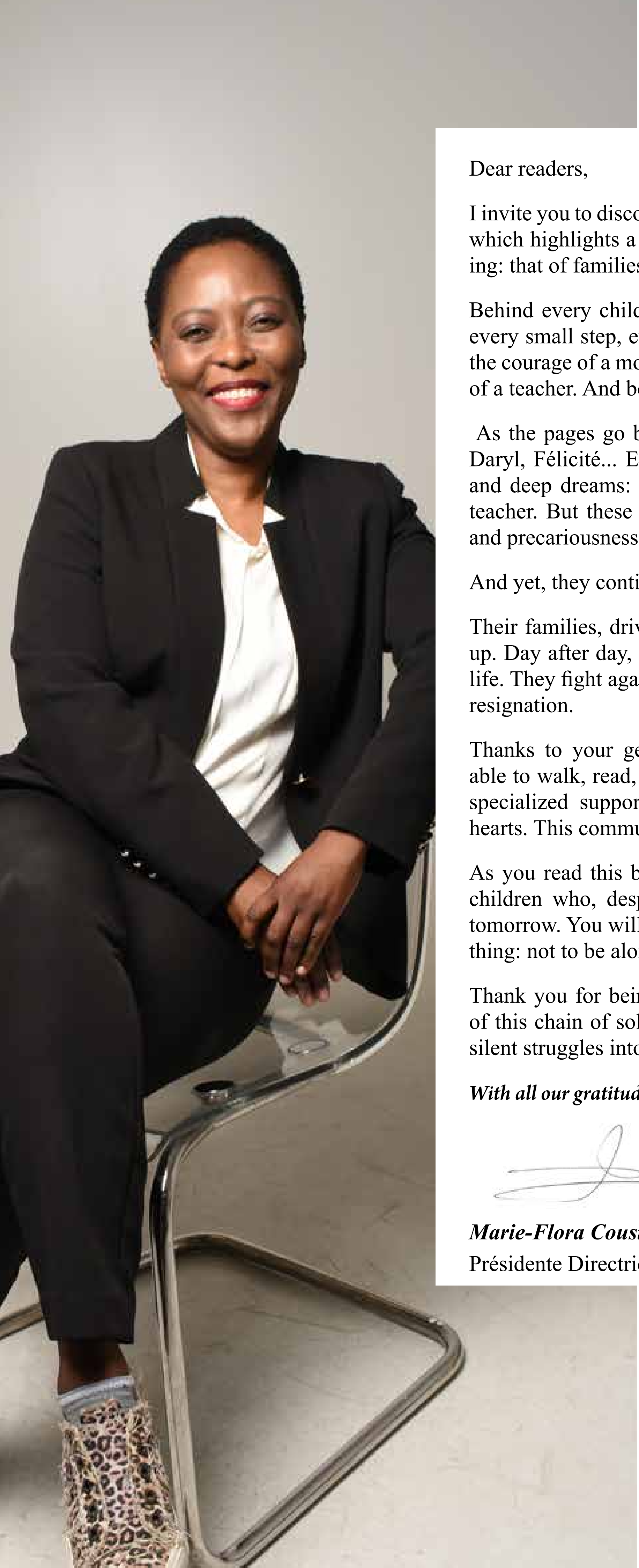
NEWSLETTER

INFORM - EDUCATE - SENSITIZE - ACT FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

N° 001 MAY 2025

Building a more inclusive society together...



Dear readers,

I invite you to discover this new edition of our 2025 newsletter, which highlights a fight that is as discreet as it is overwhelming: that of families whose children live with a disability.

Behind every child's smile, there is a daily struggle. Behind every small step, every word learned, every progress, there is the courage of a mother, the patience of a father, the dedication of a teacher. And behind every victory, there is you.

As the pages go by, you will meet Divine, Paul, Bénédicte, Daryl, Félicité... Extraordinary children, inhabited by simple and deep dreams: to learn, to play, to become a doctor or a teacher. But these dreams come up against illness, disability and precariousness.

And yet, they continue to hope.

Their families, driven by an unshakeable love, refuse to give up. Day after day, they fight to give their children a dignified life. They fight against forgetting, against indifference, against resignation.

Thanks to your generosity, lives change. For a child to be able to walk, read, dream, you need care, adapted equipment, specialized support... but above all, a community of open hearts. This community is you.

As you read this bulletin, you will come across the faces of children who, despite the hardships, continue to believe in tomorrow. You will discover heroic families who ask only one thing: not to be alone.

Thank you for being by their side. Thank you for being part of this chain of solidarity that transforms tears into hope and silent struggles into promises of a better future.

With all our gratitude,

Marie-Flora Coustou
Présidente Directrice Générale

Projects supported by the Foundation

Divine 3 years, a fight for a standing life

At only three years old, Divine faces immense obstacles. Born into precarious medical conditions, she suffers from severe psychomotor dysfunction, which profoundly affects her mobility and ability to express herself.

Divine does not walk, sit alone, or speak. Her situation highlights a cruel reality: without access to specialized care, the most vulnerable children are condemned to live in suffering, deprived of the fundamental opportunities for fulfillment.

Divine's health deteriorated when her family, faced with extreme precariousness, had to interrupt all medical follow-up. In a burst of distress, his mother Mengolo Evina Ostia sought help from the Matthew Coustou Foundation, which responded with diligence and compassion.

During the visit of the President of the Foundation's Board of Directors to Cameroon on March 29, Divine was transferred to Yaoundé to be cared for by a pediatric neurologist from the Chantal Biya Foundation. On site, she underwent a complete series of medical examinations – blood tests, MRIs – and an adapted care protocol.

But this first step, as essential as it is, marks the beginning of a long road to rehabilitation. The diagnosis was formal: only intensive care, with three weekly sessions of physiotherapy, could allow Divine to hope for significant progress.

Another major challenge arises: to benefit from this specialized care, a move to Yaoundé is essential. In Sangmélima, Divine's hometown, there is no specialized physiotherapist who can offer her the required care. This displacement involves considerable logistical and financial costs for an already fragile mother. The story of Divine is unfortunately that of many forgotten children. She reminds us, with strength and dignity, that access to care should never depend on a family's place of birth or income.

To offer Divine a chance is to perform an act of humanity

Financial support is necessary to ensure continuity of care, facilitate the mother's rehousing, and guarantee appropriate therapeutic follow-up. This cost is out of reach for his family, but accessible thanks to the generosity of benefactors like you.

To support Divine is to believe in the value of every life. It's giving a little girl the opportunity to get up one day, to walk, to talk... and live life to the fullest.

Projects supported by the Foundation

The Courage of a Mother, the story of Paul, trisomy 21

When Eugénie Ivanne gave birth to her son Paul on October 15, 2010, she was filled with emotion and hope, like any mother who welcomes a new child into her life. But very quickly, the doctors come to upset this moment by announcing to her: "Your child is different".

A word so simple, but one that resonates like an earthquake in his heart. Different? What do we mean by that? The medical explanations follow one another: a peculiar face, a wider neck, signs suggestive of a genetic anomaly. But in the moment, she hears only one thing: her son will not be like the others.

In the first week, Paul underwent a series of tests. Every test, every wait is a pain for her mother. Two weeks later, a severe flu forced him to take him to the hospital urgently. There, a benevolent pediatrician speaks to her with honest: "Trisomy 21 is not a curse, nor a divine punishment. It is a genetic anomaly. And you'll have to accept it".

But how can you accept that your child may never be independent? That he encounters more obstacles than others? That his future is filled with unanswered questions?

Paul is growing up, but not at the same rate as the other children. At eight months, he still can't hold his head upright. At one year old, he doesn't sit up. At the age of two, he finally took his first steps. Every little progress becomes a victory.

But Eugénie Ivanne was worried. She wonders: What can he do later? Will he be able to be independent? Will he always have to stay at home? She doesn't just want him to survive. She wants him to live, to have a chance to flourish, to find his place in this world.

A new hope, the inclusive public school of Monavebe. An establishment designed to allow children with disabilities to integrate into an adapted educational environment. She decides to enrol Paul. From the first weeks, she sees a change. Paul becomes more curious, more expressive. He tries to tell his days, even if the words still escape him. A glimmer of hope is born in his heart. Paul can learn at his own pace, in his own way, but he is moving forward. But this type of education requires resources, specialized teachers, adapted equipment.

Paul is not just a different child. He is an extraordinary child. With you, his story can become a story of victory.

Projects supported by the Foundation

A life marked by pain, Bénédicte suffers in silence.

Close your eyes for a moment. Imagine... You are nine years old. You dream of becoming a doctor, of learning, of caring for others. But every day, your body calls you to order. The pain is there, constant. Fear too. You suffer in silence.

This is the daily life of Bitye Bénédicte, an autistic child with a bright smile and starry eyes. A student at the Inclusive Public School of Monavebe, she dreams, like all children, of a better future. But her fragile body, marked by a double hernia and incontinence that accompanies her day and night, prevents her from being a little girl like any other.

What if you were the one who changed her destiny?

At school, she often has to leave the classroom in an emergency. At home, her grandmother watches over her with the means at hand. “I make indigenous remedies... Just yesterday, I bought ibuprofen to calm her pain,” she confides, heartbroken. Every night, Bénédicte wakes up in damp sheets. She doesn’t cry. She doesn’t complain. She endures. Because she knows that there is no other choice.

You can offer him a future without suffering, appropriate care.

But when asked about her fondest memory, she doesn’t talk about her pain. She talks about Christmas. That day when she felt surrounded, loved. “I was proud to be with my family,” she says, her eyes sparkling, a shy smile on her lips. As if, for a moment, the disease had faded.

Bénédicte needs you. You can be the one who gives them hope. Don’t leave her alone. Reach out to him.

Projects supported by the Foundation

Daryl and Marie-Noël, a fight for the future

Francis Daryl, 15, a student at the Inclusive Public School of Monavebe, gets up every morning with a challenge ahead of him. It is not a visible enemy that he is facing, but a disease that weighs on his life. Since birth, convulsions have punctuated her journey, and each crisis leaves her with heavy after-effects, making expression and learning a constant struggle.

His mother, Marie-Noël, witnesses this daily struggle. She watches him grow up with infinite love, but also with a worry that never leaves her. She remembers the first few months, when doctors mentioned acute malaria, but the medication brought little relief. The seizures continued, and finally, examinations in Yaoundé revealed a brain problem. Since then, every day has been a struggle for Daryl, but also for Marie-Noël, who fights with him to give him a better life.

At home, Daryl is cheerful and affectionate. He likes to be surrounded; he loves to play and smile. But sometimes, frustration takes over. Simple tasks that you do without thinking about it, such as getting dressed or bathing, become mountains for him to climb.

Marie-Noël asks herself the question that every parent fears to ask: What will be my son's future? She dreams of seeing him realize his potential. Daryl loves music. He memorizes the songs at an incredible speed and dreams of becoming a teacher. But to make this dream a reality, he needs regular care and constant support.

At the inclusive school, thanks to the caring attention of his teachers and the love of his classmates, Daryl is making considerable progress. The Matthew Coustou Foundation's support has provided him with valuable school supplies and support, but much more needs to be done to reach his full potential. Today, Marie-Noël is launching an appeal to all those who can reach out, an appeal for Daryl and for so many other children like him. "We need you. You can change my son's life.

You can give them a future, allow them to live a life full of possibilities," she implores with the hope that a simple gesture on your part makes all the difference.

You can be a beacon of hope for Daryl and his mother.

Projects supported by the Foundation

A home of love for abandoned children.

In Sangmélima, in the southern region of Cameroon, where resources are scarce, but hearts are great, the Tendre la Main orphanage takes up an immense challenge: to take care of fifty children without families, some of whom live with a disability. They are infants, children or young adults — all with the same essential need: to be loved, protected and supported.

Despite the precariousness of the place, this is where a future can slowly take shape... thanks to you. The needs are urgent: food is scarce, clothes are worn out, beds are too few to accommodate the children, and electricity is scarce. And yet, every day, **Mrs. Lucie Essa'a Meze'e**, founder of the orphanage, pursues her mission with admirable dedication. But it cannot act alone.

For children living with a disability, every gesture of solidarity is essential: a simple mattress becomes a comfort, a lamp a source of autonomy, a pair of shoes a promise of freedom.

Because beyond rice, soaps or school supplies, what you offer is much more: a dignified living environment, a newfound hope, a strong message — you are not forgotten.

Your generosity can feed, enlighten, care, clothe ... but also to reassure, console and restore confidence.

The children of the Tendre la Main orphanage are between a few months and 25 years old. Some have lived there forever. Their needs are multiple: food, hygiene, clothing, schooling, medical care...

In a world that too often looks the other way, you can embody this outstretched hand: the one who lifts up, who protects, who loves.

Giving is building a future. It's believing in these children. It is simply telling them: you have value.

Helping families, bringing hope:
The mission of the Matthew Coustou Foundation

Your generosity transforms lives!

Send your donation to: Matthew Coustou Foundation From continent to Continent
Address: 8082 A Rue Lévis-Sauvé, Lasalle, QC, H8P3L4
Phone: +1 514 373-9000
Website: https://fondation-matthewcoustou.org
Email: info@fondation-matthewcoustou.org
N° Non-profit organization: 76445 1159 RC0001

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