

Dear Friends of the Tennessee Western Kentucky Annual Conference,

Where there is war, there is suffering. Where there is poverty, women are struggling to feed their children and provide basic needs. Where there is evil raging...there is the body of the resurrected Christ...shining forth like the sun! The church: it is us!

Our friends in the Congo need our help. The ministry of the Mama Lynn Center has an open door for the most vulnerable who arrive on their doorstep. While the war rages on in the region of Goma and Bukavu (east of Kindu, Congo), the Mama Lynn Center offers people safety, medical and psychological help and support. That's not all, but that is how it often begins.

**Today we write to share a critical need, and we need your help.**

The war is still going on in the Goma/Bukavu area, although there are now truce and settlement discussions ongoing. More young girls and women are arriving at the doorstep of MLC asking for help and protection. More classrooms and dorms must be built to accommodate the need for these young girls and women. The walls have been built, the roof paid for, but we need money to complete the project including ceilings, windows, doors, tables and chairs.

The need is \$25,000. In Congo, they have two seasons, dry season and rain season. It does not rain for about six months of the year, but when rainy season begins, it rains often all day long or several times a day. Rainy season is about to begin in Kindu, and we need to finish the buildings to protect what has already been built from the rains.

The Mama Lynn Center only has two classrooms. The students were crowded on top of each other, often 40 – 50 in a classroom. Because of the cramped space, there is no room for each woman to have their own sewing machine for instruction, instead eight women had to share one sewing machine.

I invite you to pray about giving a generous gift to this very important project so that more young women and girls can receive the love and care to overcome the trauma they have experienced and get the education they need to start their own business and share the love of God.

Please give generously to the Mama Lynn Center so that these young girls and women can have a future life, not only survive, but thrive.

**Reflections**

Below I share some reflections on our recent visit to the Congo and the Mama Lynn Center. We barely made it home before traveling this area became near impossible with the increasing violence since 2024.

YAMBO! In a recent newsletter, you had an opportunity to read about Niels, Rob, Amy and my visit the Mama Lynn Center in Kindu, Congo. It was an amazing experience; the hospitality we were shown were outstanding. The people we met were welcoming and excited to show us their churches and the work and ministry going on at the Mama Lynn Center. The experience made us

proud to be a part of the world-connected United Methodist Church and to know that the money we send to the Mama Lynn Center, is well spent!

The Mama Lynn Center offers an astounding ministry to these young women and older girls, who have been abused, abandoned or neglected in the worse possible way by civil strife, poverty, family estrangement and by rebels who are fighting the war in in region of Goma and Bukavu, east of Kindu, Congo.

The Mama Lynn Center offers them safety, medical and psychological help and support. The women also receive an education in reading and writing, how to make patterns for dresses, school uniforms, and sewing. They learn how to “balance a checkbook”, how to make soap, and how to cook simple dishes with as little as possible. They have Bible studies and learn how to lead a Bible study. In other words, the women learn how to be independent and start their own businesses and share their faith with others.

On our trip we met some of the women who were about to begin at the Mama Lynn Center. Their stories made us upset, feeling helpless and left us with tears rolling down our cheeks. The young girls were very soft spoken, timid and obviously in distress. At the end of our trip, we met some of the women who had received the love and care from the Mama Lynn Center, and the education to start their own business. We met them in their work context on the side street shops and at their booths in the marketplace. Their backs were straight, and they were speaking with confidence; they were smiling, they were sharing with us how grateful they are for the education, sewing machines, love and care they received from the people working at the Mama Lynn Center, and especially Dr. Marie Claire, who is the director of the Center.

The MLC only has two classrooms. The students were crowded on top of each other, often 40 – 50 in a classroom. Because of the cramped space, there is no room for each woman to have their own sewing machine for instruction, instead eight women had to share one sewing machine. The mission and ministry at The Mama Lynn Center save lives. Because of the education the women receives, they are able to impact other young women and families to live a sustainable life.

Again, I invite you to pray about giving a generous gift to this very important project so that more young women and girls can receive the love and care to overcome the trauma they have experienced and get the education they need to start their own business and share the love of God.

Please give generously to the Mama Lynn Center so that these young girls and women can have a future life, not only survive, but thrive.

God’s Grace & Peace,

Rev. Dr. Birgitte T. French

*Photos attached*



The Mama Lynn Center



one of the overcrowded classrooms



Women sharing a sewing machine.



New incoming students.



Two graduate from Mama Lynn Center



CAMON 20 Pro

Zoom 1/1.7 V100 50%

The new classrooms that needs ceiling, windows and doors.

The 2025 graduates

