Dear Clinic Partners,

It is my privilege to serve as the Executive Director of the Paul Carlson Partnership and to join you in this effort to develop a knowledgeable heart for Congo and raise the standard of healthcare through the Congo Clinic Initiative.

We are in Phase 3: Access to Clean Water. As you may know, clean water is vitally important to our health! Water is a natural, precious resource we cannot do without. Many Congolese men, women, and especially children, suffer from water-borne illnesses due to lack of clean water. Our approach is to assist our Congolese partners in creating sustainable clean water sources in clinic communities. PCP has initiated pilot projects with 5 communities to determine the most effective community involvement and will be assessing the results before moving into other areas.

As you learn more about clean water development in Congo through this newsletter, please be in prayer for the following:

- medical leaders who will meet with communities about health, hygiene, and the water source
- communities’ commitment to own and maintain the water source
- people seeing real change in their health due to clean water
- leaders who will care for the water source on a long-term basis and train others to do the same

Thank you for your support and prayers!

Renée N. Hale
PCP Executive Director

In this relay, kids can see how well they’d do in Congo! Prepare ahead of time a bundle of clothes, a bucket of water, a plate of food (like a bunch of bananas), or other items to carry. It will need to be fairly self-contained, no loose ends flopping around. Gather the children together and form teams for the relay. Each person must carry a bundle on his or her head to a fixed point across the room and then back again to hand it off to the next person. You may want to make a rule that if a bundle drops, that person goes back to the starting (or the halfway) line. You can have the teams run the relay in turn, one team at a time, or both racing at the same time. In that event, you’ll need two bundles, as alike as possible.

This game is especially fun in the summer if you use buckets of water!
We believe the best way to achieve clean water is by working through our local partners and with communities to identify problems and possible solutions. Through organized community meetings, the village clinic personnel are working with a delegation from the village that includes women, youth, religious leaders, and other representatives to discuss, teach, and assess the primary causes of health problems.

In a recent meeting, many of the women quickly realized that the water they drink was causing serious health problems, especially for their children. After a bit of resistance from the men, some of the women said, “If you could see what you drink, you wouldn’t be drinking it!” Since then, they’ve spent time together at the water source. We were able to arrange for a water technician from a nearby town to help them assess their water source and highlight possible solutions. Already, community members are discussing things that they can do on their own to improve their village’s water source!

In fact, over the last several months, pilot projects in 5 clinic communities were started. One clinic community in Bogose Nubea has already completed the construction of capped springs! In our recent trip to Congo, we saw the results ourselves. The clinic doctor reported that people from all over are coming to the spring to collect clean water. The patients are drinking and bathing in clean water, the clinic is cleaning the hospital and sanitizing equipment with clean water. And, clean water is actually reducing the number of deaths. Malaria and diarrhea both cause severe dehydration, but having clean water for people to drink can prevent death and reduce disease.

We rejoice in the progress being made by our local partners! Taking what is learned from the pilot phase, we will begin to roll out community water projects throughout the region.

We love the tangible impact that many of these projects have. However, we realize that the intangibles are often more important! Even the best installation will eventually crumble if it isn’t valued and owned by the people who depend on it. By working through local leadership and with community members, we believe that these water projects will be of much more use to the communities we serve.

A Congolese technician was brought in for an assessment with the men and women in the community. When asked, “What can be done?” Mr. Caesar responded, “I was involved with the initial work of creating this water source, so if PCP is ready, we will begin by gathering iron ore and raising awareness among our brothers and sisters and others. However, we will need pipes, cement, and technicians committed to the work.”