

DIRECTOR'S NOTE...

Deanna Wallace

AAO Executive Director



Meet Joyce, a 2 year old, who was abandoned by her parents and came into our care through the Sierra Leone Ministry of Social Welfare this past month. She is one of 4 new children at the Children's Center, and, overall, she's adjusting well.

When I look at this photo, I see a face that both captivates and breaks my heart. She looks so innocent – so very lovable. It is hard to believe that she was abandoned – that someone or, more accurately, everyone, walked away from her.

How and why does abandonment happen? I wish I knew the answer, so that I could try and stop it from happening for so many other children. What I do know is that there are no government-run (or funded) child welfare organizations in Sierra Leone. This means the government cannot take abandoned children into care. The Sierra Leone government relies on partnership with All As One and other organizations for the essential care of these children. **Literally, without our intervention, Joyce and others like her, would have nowhere to go.**

Can you imagine little Joyce's life if she were left on the streets? How long do you think she would last? Could you look into her face and walk away? I can't either. That's why All As One needs to continue our work for Joyce and all the others like her.

There is no way to walk away. **Yet each month we struggle to make our budget and keep our doors open.** This year has been the most difficult financially in our 11-year history, but we're still here. Joyce needs us! That means Joyce needs you too!

Please consider giving very generously this month to help us get beyond this challenging time. Even a small amount can make a huge difference! We're sending lots of thanks and hugs from Joyce and all of her friends!

Our Sierra Leone kids are now enjoying a **2-week art therapy project**, featuring digital photography, presented to them through the **Helping Others Worldwide** (www.hownp.org) program. They are having a fantastic time and learning so much. We look forward to sharing photos from this project in the next newsletter!

Keith Wilson and his step-daughter, **Madelaine Plail**, recently ran in a UK race to help benefit AAO (photo at right). Here they are after the race – winded, but happy! **We're so grateful for their support!**

Calling all Dubai supporters! We are once again organizing the DHL shipment of gifts to the children of All As One! This is now the sixth year that you have made the holiday season so joyful for the kids! To make sure that every child receives a gift, we pool all the presents together to send to Sierra Leone. Once the shipment arrives at the Children's Center, our staff there will ensure that each child receives something appropriate to their age and gender. **This has worked very well in the past, and the children were thrilled to receive your gifts!** This year, we are in need of the following items for both boys and girls, from **ages 1–16 years old:**

- **Clothing** – *light-weight (suitable for tropical weather) and hard-wearing materials such as denim and cotton are great. Keep in mind that clothes are stone-washed in Sierra Leone.*
- **Shoes** – *trainers, Crocs, sandals.*
- **Hair accessories** – *for girls of all ages.*
- **Toys** – *small toys with minimum packaging and volume. No batteries or water toys.*
- **Books** – *children's, all ages.*
- **Underwear** – *boys & girls, all ages.*

The deadline for gift donations is December 2, 2011. We would also appreciate the gifts **unwrapped**, since Customs will need to review all items before sending. If you have a gift to send, or have any questions, please contact **Geri Mitchell**, our Dubai Director of Operations, at **050 450 8360**. We will be happy to arrange a convenient drop off or collection of your present. Thanks so much to all of you and DHL for making this a wonderful holiday for the children in Sierra Leone!

Art For Shelter, an event **to raise the 2012 rent money** needed for the Children's Center, will be held on **December 1** from 5–8 pm at the South Sound Manor Event Center, McElroy Room, in Olympia, WA. **We are actively seeking donations of art from all media for this event, including paintings, photographs, jewelry, mosaics, etc.** If you or someone you know has art to donate, please e-mail us at info@allasone.org.



Thanks to our first time supporters in September 2011 :

Cynthia Johnson - Jeffrey Ward - Jerry Glass - Patricia Albert - Ron & Robin Richardson - Sara - Stan Rumbaugh

Thank you to those who gave over \$500 in September 2011:

Christopher Alan Peet - Fitness First - Ghislaine Bourgeacq - Jebel Ali International Hotels - Martha Davis
Robert Harris & Jodie Hampshire - Sahar Masud - Thomas Richler - Zakia Demaghelatrous

And thank you to our regular monthly supporters, who make our work possible!